

**Yvette Berry MLA**

Deputy Chief Minister

Minister for Education and Early Childhood

Minister for Homes and New Suburbs

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Member for Ginninderra

Mr Tom Duncan

Clerk

ACT Legislative Assembly

[clerk@parliament.act.gov.au](mailto:clerk@parliament.act.gov.au)

Dear Mr Duncan

Thank you for your letter dated 8 April 2025 about petition *E-PET-047-24 - Inclusion of Hackett in the Shirley Smith High School Priority Enrolment Area*. I am writing to provide the Government Response to the petition.

The ACT Government prioritises access to Education as a universal human right and supports all school-age children in the ACT to have access to their local government school. The *Education Act 2004* (s21(4)) requires the Director-General to establish procedures that give priority to the enrolment of children in their local government school and this is achieved through the establishment of Priority Enrolment Areas (PEAs). PEAs are reviewed annually, with changes made where they are the most reasonable response to factors including the establishment of new schools or longer-term changes in population and enrolment demand.

The ACT Government does not plan to amend the existing PEA for Hackett-resident high school age students.

The establishment of the Shirley Smith High School PEA boundaries were carefully considered with regard to the size of the high school age resident populations in each surrounding suburb and balancing forecast student demand with the available capacity at the new school and existing nearby high schools. Consultation also occurred with impacted school principals, as well as Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate (TCCS) with regards to safe and connected school travel.

The high school age population in Hackett has been relatively stable over the last five years and is projected to remain stable over the next 20 years. The suburb has been in a long-standing PEA arrangement that gives residents access to Campbell High School. Campbell High School is not



anticipated to face any capacity pressure in the next ten years, despite increasing residential development in the City and Inner North District.

The establishment of PEA boundaries also aims to prioritise and support smooth transitions between levels of schooling. Hackett residents of primary school age are in the PEA for North Ainslie Primary School. The majority of students enrolled in North Ainslie Primary School are from suburbs that are within PEA for Campbell High School (except for Dickson). This means Hackett residents can currently transition from primary to high school with the majority of their peer cohort.

The ACT Government manages and maintains approximately 3,190 kilometres of community paths across Canberra. Each year improvements and maintenance activities are carried out across the network. This includes adding new connections and upgrading existing connections as needed.

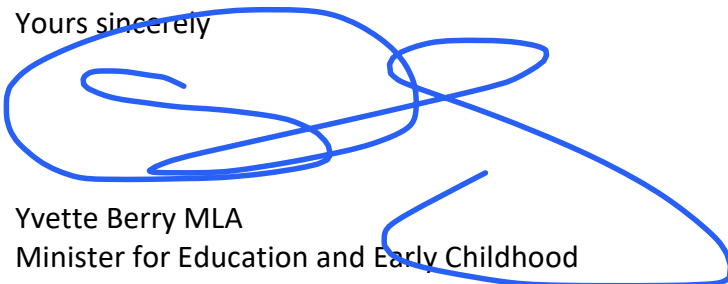
TCCS has assessed the travel routes from Hackett to Campbell High School and notes children can cross from Hackett to Ainslie at the Phillip and Majura Avenue intersection, which has both signalised and zebra pedestrian crossings. From there, students can travel along Officer Crescent, Ebdon Street, Chisholm Street, Limestone Avenue and Treloar Crescent toward Campbell High School. Alternatively, children can cross into Ainslie opposite 215 Phillip Avenue by using the left-hand side of Duffy Street, Chisholm Street, Limestone Avenue and Treloar Crescent toward Campbell High School. Both of these routes offer well-established pedestrian networks for mostly off-street active travel from Hackett to Campbell High School.

The proposed Garden City Cycleway provides a safe active travel route which will improve the connectivity between North Canberra suburbs and Central Canberra, including Campbell High School. The route will connect schools, local centres and green spaces. More information can be found at the following link <https://www.cityservices.act.gov.au/Infrastructure-Projects/city-inner-north-and-inner-south/garden-city>.

In relation to bus travel, school bus services are designed to ensure they operate within a 30-minute window of each schools' official bell time. TCCS has advised the Hackett to Campbell High School – bus route 1032 currently serves three schools: Campbell High School, Campbell Primary School and St Thomas More's Primary School. Residents in the northern part of Hackett can also access the Watson to Campbell High School – bus route 1031.

I trust this information provides the petitioners with assurance their concerns are understood and have been acknowledged by the ACT Government.

Yours sincerely



Yvette Berry MLA  
Minister for Education and Early Childhood  
18 June 2025