



**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL  
TERRITORY**

**STANDING COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION  
AND COMMUNITY INCLUSION**

(Reference: [Inquiry into the management of ACT school infrastructure](#))

**Members:**

**MR M PETTERSSON (Chair)  
MR J DAVIS (Deputy Chair)  
MR P CAIN**

**PROOF TRANSCRIPT OF EVIDENCE**

**CANBERRA**

**TUESDAY, 14 SEPTEMBER 2021**

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**Acting secretary to the committee:  
Dr C Regan (Ph: 620 50142)**

**By authority of the Legislative Assembly for the Australian Capital Territory**

Submissions, answers to questions on notice and other documents, including requests for clarification of the transcript of evidence, relevant to this inquiry that have been authorised for publication by the committee may be obtained from the Legislative Assembly website.

**WITNESSES**

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*Amended 20 May 2013*

**The committee met at 1.34 pm.**

**RAYMER, PROFESSOR JAMES**, Professor of Demography, Australian National University

**THE CHAIR:** Good afternoon and welcome to the eighth public hearing of the Standing Committee on Education and Community Inclusion inquiry into the management of ACT school infrastructure. Before we go any further, the committee wishes to acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land we are meeting on, the Ngunnawal people. The committee wishes to acknowledge and respect their continuing culture and the contribution they make to the life of the city and this region. We also acknowledge and welcome other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who may be watching today's event.

During the proceedings today we will hear evidence from Professor James Raymer from the ANU School of Demography. Please be aware that proceedings today are being recorded and will be transcribed and published by Hansard. The proceedings are also being broadcast and webstreamed live. When taking a question on notice it would be useful if you used these words "I will take that as a question taken on notice". This will help the committee and you to confirm questions from transcript.

Please be aware that today's proceedings are covered by parliamentary privilege, which provides protection to witnesses but also obliges them to tell the truth. The provision of false and misleading evidence is a serious matter, and all participants today are reminded of this. Please ensure that you have read and understood the pink privilege statement that was, hopefully, circulated to you.

**Prof Raymer:** I have, yes.

**THE CHAIR:** Do you have an opening statement?

**Prof Raymer:** I do. I thought I would introduce myself to let you know where I am coming from. I am an academic in the School of Demography at the Australian National University. My research interests and expertise are in migration and population modelling. I also have expertise in general modelling of demographic behaviours, fertility, mortality, migration and population projections.

My relationship with the ACT Education Directorate is as a consultant on several projects, going back to 2015, where I mainly provided, I guess, advice and modelling related to demographic demand for school enrolments across the ACT. More recently we have had a major project ongoing that is developing a projection modelling and analysis tool. That is what I thought I would start off with.

**THE CHAIR:** I will lead off with a question and we will make our way through the committee. Because this is Zoom, it might be a little less than elegant, but if members have supplementary questions they can just jump in or shout. We will make it work.

I was wondering if you could explain to us how the school enrolment projections are modelled in the ACT now? Is there any differences to how historically they were projected?

**Prof Raymer:** Yes, there are two models. There is the historical one that the ACT directorate has used, which predominantly takes bursts in a suburb and then four years later it distributes those to preschools. Then those are used to inform kindergarten and so on. It is what is called a cohort transition model.

The big difference between the old model and the new model that we have been developing is that each school is treated independently of other schools. In the work we have been doing there is not much attention given to what is driving the change. You would just have a ratio of change, “We know that year 1 students increased by 30 per cent last year and it was 20 per cent the year before,” and so on. You might make an assumption about that growth and, in conjunction, the reverse.

What we are doing now is developing, I guess, a programming package that allows the ACT directorate to simultaneously model all schools in the ACT, that is, public and non-government schools, by academic levels, from preschool all the way to year 12. All schools are connected to each other so that we know that year 6 graduates will go to certain schools and how many year 5 students will transition to the next year in the same school. It is quite a big advance.

The main demographic mechanism that keeps the overall level of school enrolments going, I would say, is births. And then we have information on migration. The data that is used to inform these projections—most of it, almost all of it—comes from the ACT Education Directorate’s administrative register on school enrolments. But we also bring in some information from both the national Treasury and also the Australian Bureau of Statistics on their projections of births.

**THE CHAIR:** You might have to circle back for me. I was listening intently. What are the inputs that are now being utilised to formulate these models that were not utilised previously? Are there any new inputs of information or is it the same information just being calculated differently?

**Prof Raymer:** The same information has been broken up into what we call sources of growth. You can think of it on a school or an academic level. Let us take a year 5 as an example. If you are trying to predict next year’s year 5 student population, the key inputs are those that are in year 4 now that you think will stay. Students progress through the school system year by year. That is the main driver of change. That is what we call cohort progression—knowing where students are and how they move through the school system throughout their education career.

A key input to that actually starts off at preschool. That is probably the biggest—where you decide to send your child to preschool and to kindergarten, whether they are going to go to a government school or a private school. That makes a big difference. So one input is what we call retention or the cohort transition.

We have people moving in and out of the ACT school system. That is migration. We have people moving amongst schools within the ACT. You can move from any school to any other school. Of course you are restricted by your academic level. People can exit the system through graduation—year 12 graduates—and they can enter the system through preschool.

I guess the other piece of information—and this is new—is that we also take into account sector-level components of growth and changes so that people can transition from, say, a Catholic school into a public school or from a public school into an independent school. I guess the big difference is that this is a big, major projection model—what is it, a 1,000 by 1,000 matrix?—that allows people to transition from one academic level to the next but also to any other school in the ACT, again given that consideration that they cannot jump from, say, year 4 to year 10. Then our main inputs are migration and/or preschool.

**THE CHAIR:** Is there a measure of how accurate this model has been in the ACT?

**Prof Raymer:** Yes. We evaluate that every year. And they are always doing this. Before the 2021 student numbers came out we had a projection for 2021. We can compare the observed census counts with our projected. I think we were off—I cannot remember exactly; we do analyse it—by about maybe 200, plus or minus, which is really excellent in terms of overall performance, considering there are 80,000 students in schools here.

**THE CHAIR:** When you say you were off by 200, is that 200 across the ACT or is that 200—

**Prof Raymer:** On all academic levels, yes. We did really well last year. That does not mean we will do as well this year. Sometimes we are lucky. No projection is perfect. What we do is project, say, 2021 year enrolment by school and academic level. There will be some schools where we are off by quite a bit and some schools where we are right on, exactly, perfect. But the ones we look at are the ones where we were way off and we try to understand what the reason was for being way off.

Sometimes it was a brand-new school—Margaret Hendry or Evelyn Scott, these new schools—and we were making pretty basic assumptions about what we expected. We do not know until they show up. Once they show up and they have been there a few years we have a lot of power in the model. But new schools are difficult, and they are based on weak information. But we analyse it.

Other times we look at schools which may be established schools but we are still off by 100 students or something. We look at what caused that. It could be something simple like a policy change. Recently, in the past couple of years, the ACT government restricted where New South Wales students could go to school. They made them go to certain schools, and that affected our projections because the projections were based on past trends. We did not know the effect. Now that we know the effect it is included in the model.

There are some things that nobody could have got right. Generally we do really well. It is usually just about maybe 10 schools we have to keep a close eye on. And eight of those 10 schools will be brand new schools or schools in areas that are rapidly changing—usually in Gungahlin or Molonglo.

**THE CHAIR:** You mentioned Margaret Hendry. Margaret Hendry is a school close to my heart as it is in my electorate, a newly built school that almost immediately

needed to be expanded. Could you talk the committee through what the modelling showed for Margaret Hendry, what the inputs are that you used and why that one might not necessarily have been a great example of projections in action?

**Prof Raymer:** I do not even know if I can pull that up. I could come back to you with the explanation for that. Margaret Hendry is in an area that is rapidly growing, with new housing developments. Let us see if I remember. It was challenging because the births data that we had to say how many preschool students should be in the area was defective. The projections were off. They were done in 2017. Some of our inputs especially about preschools were not very good; that has proven to be out.

The ACT government is in the middle of doing new population projections. That is going to help the school enrolment. Whenever you have a new school, most of the students that come in will be in the early years, preschool, kindy and year 1. There will be some students in later years. Everybody, say, from kindergarten onwards, has already, in the previous year, been enrolled in some other school. So they are not, in some ways, tied to that school.

New students are not. The new students were preschool students. And the only information we had about the likelihood of preschool students would be births four years prior. Around Margaret Hendry there were not houses four years ago. So it was a difficult problem, I would say. For a school like that in an area that is rapidly growing, it is challenging. All school districts would struggle with that situation. If you want exact details on that, I am happy to dig them up and pass them on.

**THE CHAIR:** I would love them.

**MR DAVIS:** I am interested in digging just a little deeper into some of the numbers for the inner north schools, if you would not mind? The committee heard some evidence in its earlier public hearings from P&Cs within inner north schools, in particular, who would suggest not only that their schools are currently well beyond capacity but that specialist learning environments have been sacrificed for standard classrooms. In some of your modelling you indicate that the numbers within the north are predicted to remain stable. While I would never compare my anecdotal evidence to the kind of considered stuff that you do, it raised an eyebrow for me, because I am also aware of movements in the planning space over the short to medium terms that I suggest might see population increases in the inner north greater than we might see in other parts of the ACT. Your statement about those numbers remaining stable did seem curious to me. I was just wondering if you could talk me through what assumptions drive those predictions.

**Prof Raymer:** There are a couple of things to mention here. First, the assumptions that drive everything are based on historical data. We look at what has happened in the past five years and going forward. I live in the inner north and two of my kids go to Turner. Turner is a good example. The assumptions are based on historical growth for established schools—that is one thing. We try not to intervene too much because basically we assume that the growth that has happened in each one of the, I think, six components of change will continue. And by and large we have done pretty well for the inner north in terms of projections. I cannot think of any inner north school where we were way off. Some things have changed though.

Of course the big thing that has happened here is the urban intensification and the effect of all this high density living on existing schools that were designed, say, for more sparse living—people living in detached homes and so on. That has definitely been at the top of the ACT Education Directorate’s mind. We have done specific reports on that. We have not found anything that would scare us terribly. There is definitely going to be a bump in population growth, and that is going to put pressure on schools.

Some schools, like Turner, have capacity, even though they have not expanded it. I do not know how they define their capacity. But we have a maximum level that they think, not me, they could handle. It based on, I do not know, classroom size and so forth. Actually Turner’s growth has been about as flat as could be.

What has changed for Turner is where the students come from. The students are increasingly coming from the priority enrolment area and are less likely coming from places like Watson or further out. What has happened with urban intensification is that you are seeing an increasing combination of students coming from homes where they are supposed to come from. There are not as many students coming from outside the area.

This happened in places like Lyneham and others where they cracked down on the priority enrolment areas, whereas before, I think, principals had more discretion on whom to admit and not. There has definitely been an effect. I think schools have mitigated that by being stricter about their priority enrolment and now allowing many people from outside the area to come in. That said, Majura Primary School has faced a lot of pressure. That has grown a lot. I think it is a consequence of tightening up on the priority enrolment areas.

The other thing I want to say about the urban intensification is that the way the world is you tend to have young families with kids moving. We try to find out whether kids were more likely to be in apartments versus detached homes. There was a debate a few years ago about whether young families could afford houses in Australia anymore. This is hitting a lot of media. We could not find any evidence—whether it is an apartment or a detached home, the likelihood of having children was about the same. It was not like we were going to have relatively more kids living in apartments than in detached homes. There seems to be a mixture going on. In some ways that was good because it did not complicate our modelling.

**MR DAVIS:** I am interested in your Turner example because it actually led me quite nicely to my next point. One of the things I know that we are particularly encouraged by is the gradual trend of parents actively choosing government education over non-government education. We have got the competing priority, as I am sure you know, not just of population increasing but also of more parents choosing government schools. I have seen that. I understand that to be the case, particularly in the inner north. I think that speaks to perhaps your Turner example of cracking down on the priority enrolment areas in part so that those schools need to ensure that they can accommodate the demand within their own localities.

Would you be able to speak to how much that gradual trend of parents choosing



government education over non-government education has informed your modelling in addition to population growth analysis?

**Prof Raymer:** Yes. I am trying to pull up that slide I think I sent you guys. I just want to get my statistics correct. Did I put it in there? No, I do not have it. Sorry, bear with me for a second. I will just see if I put it in there.

**MR DAVIS:** I usually do have a point of asking questions that have people needing to go through their notes; so I will take it as a compliment.

**Prof Raymer:** Let me see if I can dig up. I was trying to get the exact statistics for you. I can come back to you on that.

**MR DAVIS:** I am happy for you to take it on notice.

**Prof Raymer:** I want to say that the population of the ACT, say over the past 10 years, up to, say, 2020, prior to COVID-19—things have changed now; now it is even more difficult—had grown by, I think, 12 per cent in the past nine or 10 years. But the Catholic and independent sectors hardly grew at all; they grew by about two to four per cent. The government schools grew by 17 per cent. There was a much higher growth in the public sector than we observed in relation to population growth and also in relation to other sectors in the ACT. I know that for sure. I think that my number is correct. I can dig it up for you. That 17 per cent was the figure we were looking at.

It is exactly what you were saying. We did not actually go with that, because we did not talk to parents to find out that they were actively choosing public schools. It could be that they were. It could also be that their options were limited depending on where they lived. There are not a whole lot of options in Gungahlin for Catholic schools and independent schools. I might be wrong there. No, there are not a lot of Catholic schools out there relative to, say, Tuggeranong. One thing is the choice, relative choice, and convenience, where they live.

The other thing is that the other schools have not been growing. They are already at capacity. They are happy with their numbers. With population growth, if the other sectors are not growing, kind of meeting the line of population growth, then obviously their kids have to go to school somewhere and they are going to go to public schools. It could be a mixture of choice and also just availability. I think the ACT Education Directorate would like to think it was choice. But as an academic I am always trying to be sceptical and look at other things.

**MR DAVIS:** Of course, there was a lot of implication in my question that I too would like to think it is choice, which is why it was good to get your more authoritative answer. Thank you.

**MR CAIN:** I have a question about infrastructure decisions that are made based on your modelling—in particular, whether an increase is accommodated by a permanent classroom build as opposed to a demountable. I know you are probably not the one making the decision that we should put up a demountable versus a new improvement, but what is your understanding of what distinguishes a response to growth and whether that leads to a building that is a new improvement to the site, as opposed to

dropping a demountable?

**Prof Raymer:** A lot goes into that. I do not make the decisions, but I help provide the evidence for making a case for whether a new school should be built or a demountable or expansion. In the first project I did—I was subcontracted—we looked at schools in Gungahlin. Our modelling said that if we built a school tomorrow it would be filled up the day after—that type of thing. This was almost seven years ago. There was huge population pressure demand, especially for primary schools.

We showed that some of these effects are temporary. As I said earlier, a brand-new neighbourhood tends to attract young families predominantly, based on people who can migrate. They come in with kids or have kids. That initially puts a lot of pressure on primary schools, but not so much on high schools or colleges. Over time, the pressure on primary schools reduces and the pressure on high schools and colleges increases.

We try to also look at the long-term effect and let that roll out. You think: “Here is the population pressure. These are the characteristics of the population we believe is coming in. It is going to peak at some point and then it is going to come down.” The real questions are: “When does it peak? How far will it go down?”

I was not here when they did Tuggeranong, but the impression of Tuggeranong is that they overbuilt. They built too many schools. A lot of those schools are at half capacity now. It may change in the future, and they will be thankful that they built those schools, but at the moment it seems as though there was a lot of waste of money and energy. We are always trying to think about what the long-term trajectories are. The projections usually go for 10 years, but sometimes we are looking beyond that.

**MR CAIN:** Excuse me for interrupting, but it is not so much whether there is a new school built but whether an existing school is improved with, say, an extra classroom. It is not just a demountable versus a new school; it is a demountable versus extra capacity on an existing site as well. I am very interested in what is the tipping point, decision wise, where you say, “Okay; based on these numbers, we need a new classroom built on this site,” versus, “Let’s drop a demountable in.” What distinguishes that?

**Prof Raymer:** I am not involved at that level. All I can say is that whatever information we provide is about where these schools are under pressure. We give them information on where the pressure is in terms of academic levels and what we expect the future pressure to be like, and we have information on all schools in the area. We know where the students come from. I guess that if there is not enough pressure to warrant a new school, a demountable would be used.

Some of the schools I know, like Turner, are old but they have quite a bit of land. There is not much other land in the inner north on which to build schools or there is not the money to purchase the land. I am not involved in that level of detail. That is left to them. They make those arguments and make those decisions. We just tell them basically what schools are under pressure. That pressure could be that we think the school has a capacity of 600 kids and they are going to have five years where there are going to be 700 kids. But it just does not go down. That might be where they decide

whether to make a demountable or not.

**MR CAIN:** What is your understanding of how the decision-makers conclude whether a demountable or a new classroom is constructed?

**Prof Raymer:** My impression is based on the level of projected demand.

**MR CAIN:** I am getting a lot of freezing on the screen.

**Prof Raymer:** I can hear you still. If we are talking about 500 kids versus 50 kids, I think it is based on whether it is a long-term problem or a short-term problem. We have what are called cohort effects. Once kids are in a school, they are pretty much locked into that school at least until they graduate. There is not much movement in and out, because kids have friends. It is those types of things. That is my impression.

I hope you could hear that.

**MR CAIN:** I got that last bit. I have switched my camera off to see if that makes the speed smoother, but there was quite a lot of interruption on my feed there.

**THE CHAIR:** I could hear everyone clearly the whole time.

**MR CAIN:** I am in a particular spot that is problematic.

**MR DAVIS:** Would you mind if I picked up a supplementary question, Chair?

**MR CAIN:** I am happy for a supplementary on the theme.

**MR DAVIS:** At the risk of being a bit self-indulgent, Tuggeranong schools were invoked there, and I am interested in deep-diving into that a bit more. I am interested particularly in the suggestion that historically we have overbuilt schools in Tuggeranong, that there have been too many schools. To be honest, philosophically I would argue that the government should build enough schools to accommodate every young person that lives in the community, but I accept that philosophically that is not the reality when there are other school sectors.

In your data and the data that you have brought to government that helps them make these programs, is there an assumption that a certain level of families will continue to choose a non-government education? Are we working from the simple base assumption that the government should ensure that it has the physical capacity to teach and adequately house all the young people who might live in an area?

**Prof Raymer:** I think they have an obligation to take care of any kids who want public education. I do not know if they have a choice in that matter. It also depends on things they have no control over, such as reputation. Catholic schools have been hit pretty hard on reputation in recent years. Some independent schools do fantastically. They pick and choose every year. Others struggle to survive. There is a lot of variety in independent schools. With public schools that have good reputations—and most in the ACT have good reputations—they do. But in Tuggeranong, if you look at the numbers, I think they had reputational issues, population issues and a lot of

competition with other sectors, so you have seen school populations decline.

The demographic factor would be that this is overbuilding. I am sure the schools were at full capacity at some point in the past, but since then, all those kids have left home. Where do kids go when they leave home? They go to cities. They seek education. They move out. They do not stay in the same area. That is what causes that.

The only way you can get new kids coming in is by new families moving in. That is starting to change in Tuggeranong. I think it will change, especially the way things are happening in Canberra. If growth continues to happen, and with housing prices and so on, some of that growth will come back just by young families moving in and seeking that housing. In the short term, there is going to be a decline, mainly because kids have left home and it is the parents that are left there in the houses.

I do not know if that answers your question. We could not find any strong drivers. First, we do not have the information. But based on what we can infer, we try to explore what makes families from a certain area choose a public school versus a non-public school. There were not any strong predictors. It was not necessarily the school itself. But there is something. If you live really close to an independent or Catholic school, you are more likely to go there than is someone who lives far away. It is the same thing with a public school. Some of it has to do with convenience and so on.

**THE CHAIR:** I want to circle back to the model and its accuracy. The model is quite accurate at a district level. Could you expand on how the modelling works for an individual school and its priority enrolment area? The feedback I get is that certain schools will have capacity issues. When I look at your district-wide modelling, it is pretty accurate, but the priority enrolment areas are constantly changing. How do we make sure we get these projections right if potentially the enrolment areas are going to be shuffled around? I do not think you necessarily have any say in that.

**Prof Raymer:** There always has to be an element of error in any projection. It will never be 100 per cent accurate; it just takes too much energy to be 100 per cent accurate. The best we can do is try to do the best we can overall. I think the model is doing that at the school and academic level.

Ninety per cent of the schools in the ACT, government or non-government, are pretty easy to project. There is quite a bit of stability. It is the new schools or the areas that are affected by urban intensification that are the challenging ones. We concentrate on those schools and try to get our assumptions right. Half the time we do and half the time we do not, but we are always reflecting on what works and what does not work.

The other problem is that every school is different. Margaret Hendry is very different from Evelyn Scott in where the students come from and the composition of the area, Molonglo versus Gungahlin. And some of the other new schools are coming in. There were lots of potential schools that Margaret Hendry students could transfer from within the priority enrolment area. With Evelyn Scott, there was only one school available in that area. Those things are factored in.

It is pretty complex. There are 130 schools in the ACT, with 14 academic levels. Over

time, growth does not happen evenly. Population growth tends to be concentrated in certain areas. I think we are doing a pretty good job. We are certainly doing a better job than we were when I first started doing this. We have put a lot of energy into it. I think I have got it pretty right, but new schools are always going to be hard.

**THE CHAIR:** In terms of priority enrolment areas, let me explain to you how I think this model is working. You get all this data. You calculate the projected enrolments across a district and then for schools. When you are calculating for the schools, that is contingent upon the priority enrolment areas for the school. Correct?

**Prof Raymer:** No, not really. It should be, but in reality we take information on where students live and where they go to school. No matter where you are, you have a probability of going to any school practically—though maybe not for younger children. That happens. Kids’ parents move elsewhere. They move to a different school district, but they decide to keep their kids in school to maintain their friends, relationships or whatever, or because it is close to work. Once you are in a school, you have the right to remain and you have the right to bring in your siblings. It is only in those entry points—increasingly preschool, but kindergarten—where priority enrolments can take effect, and also for year 7 or year 11, when the government can say, “No, you can’t go to that school.”—or you have to be on a waiting list or something like that.

We look at the data. We let the data drive the model, by and large. The only instance in which where people live matters is in the preschool entries. There, we take where they live, the suburb they live in, and we calculate a kind of proportion that we expect will go to a public school. Not everybody in a suburb will go to a public school. The second thing we take in that locational information is migration, people coming into the system. There again, we model where they are likely to move to and then we distribute those students based on the schools. But it is not 100 per cent. We would like to think that if they move into an area there is a 100 per cent probability that if they are going to go to a government school, they go to the school. But it is not always that way in the observed data.

**MR CAIN:** What is the influence, if any, of COVID on your modelling—the influence of the current lockdown as it affects school attendance? Do you factor in any impact of the lockdown on school projections?

**Prof Raymer:** We have modelled it. Last year when this was happening, we were trying to figure out what the effect would be on projections. Because our model now has all these sources of growth, we can separate out the migration component from the people staying in Canberra component. Yes, we have modelled it. It did not go into the official projections; it was more of an exercise. On one hand, it proved to be really good. One question was: if there were no migrants, what schools would be affected? That part we did really well on.

The other one was that we thought maybe there would be an economic implication—that with unemployment and things like that, due to COVID-19, people would be more likely to go to public schools. We made some assumptions about that and put that into the model. That turned out to not work out at all. People did not change their behaviour, or the non-government sector kicked in and helped out families that were

struggling and trying to keep their kids in school.

We are always in a difficult situation where we want to be consistent with the ACT Treasury's per population projections. That is what gives us our inputs. The long-term inputs into school and normal growth are basically through births and population growth.

I am working on another ACT government project. I have been working with the ACT Treasury to revise the population projections which they have set out. They are better than the previous ones. I know that it has been circulated locally, but they have not publicly released them yet. So I have influence indirectly through working with Treasury. My argument throughout has been that we do not do our own population modelling. We want to be consistent with what the ACT government thinks is going to happen with the population. That sometimes put us in a bad position because we see that the numbers are going in a different direction. In those cases, we may say, "This does not make sense."

In answer to the first question, I mentioned that the projected births were okay for some areas, but for some of the new Gungahlin suburbs they were way off—either way too high or too low. In those cases, we would intervene if things did not make sense.

**MR CAIN:** In terms of anticipating people's decisions, given that families are schooling at home in unprecedented numbers, and we all hear how horrible that is in some cases, some people may say, "Hey, this could work, and it saves travel and maybe money." Do you have any anticipation for home-schooling numbers increasing after the enforced lockdown, because for some it was working out?

**Prof Raymer:** I have three kids at home right now. We often have five laptops running at the same time and several different Zoom meetings happening. Based on the parents I talk to—this is anecdotal, of course—the expectation is that kids will go back to school at some point. None of us likes working from home. Most of us do not like working from home on a regular basis. And there is having to juggle our kids' education and having them missing their friends.

It may happen—I am not saying it will not—but I do not think I have come across anyone who says that home schooling is great. I think most people are struggling or seeing their kids struggling. My kids are older; they are self-sufficient. But if you have young kids, it is difficult to juggle your job and your kids at the same time. I expect that things will resume at some point once we get over COVID-19.

The migration question is a bigger one. I am a little more sceptical about whether the whole ACT area of Canberra will resume its high growth patterns in the long run. I think Australia is going to be hit hard by migration or going to be changing.

**MR CAIN:** Because it has been restricted?

**Prof Raymer:** Yes, and just because people's employment behaviours are changing. People are becoming more risk averse. I may be wrong. The government thinks it will bounce back, but I do not know.

## PROOF

**MR CAIN:** I have been ringing around the electorate to see how people are doing. One family has decided to leave the ACT altogether—that is probably a very unusual reaction; it is not something you would expect to hear normally—because of the effect on their business and their schooling.

**Prof Raymer:** Yes; it is definitely a tough time.

**THE CHAIR:** On behalf of the committee, thank you for being here today. The secretary will provide you with a copy of the proof transcript of today's hearing when it is available, for you to check for accuracy. I think you have taken one question on notice about Margaret Hendry School.

**Prof Raymer:** Yes.

**THE CHAIR:** I will personally be very excited to see that one. If you could liaise with the committee secretary as to how to provide that answer, that would be wonderful.

**The committee adjourned at 2.20 pm.**