

# E-ACT



# CORPORATE PLAN 2011





## CONTENTS

FOREWORD .....	1
STRATEGIC CONTEXT .....	3
PERFORMANCE IN 2009/10 .....	5
GOALS .....	7
ACHIEVING OUR GOALS .....	9
KEY RISKS .....	13



## FOREWORD

THIS has been a significant year for E-ACT and our corporate plan seeks to build on the success of our academies as we develop as the leading provider of Academy and Free School education.

E-ACT is now at the cutting edge of state educational reform. Our second corporate plan encapsulates the success of our early development and positions the organisation to grow and deliver our core vision - excellence in education for all.

The last 12 months have seen huge developments within the field of education - particularly with regards to the freeing up of education provision. This has meant that all schools now have the potential to move to academy status. In addition the development of Free Schools which are designed to meet the particular needs and aspirations of the promoter group provides new opportunities to work with parents and others to establish high-performing schools adopting the E-ACT brand and approach to transformation. E-ACT is embracing each of these developments and is well positioned to take an active role in a way that complements, rather than distracts from, our core purpose.

The last 12 months have also represented a period of extraordinary growth and development for the organisation. Our family of academies has grown from one, Trent Valley Academy that opened in 2008, to 11 with 6 academies opening in September 2009, North Birmingham Academy that opened in January 2010 and three further academies that opened in September 2010; Dartmouth - our first 'all through academy catering for children from 3 - 18, Oldham and Winsford in Cheshire. We are also delighted to have seen our first full year of results as a multi-academy sponsor where our open academies on average achieved a 9.5% increase in GCSE results where students gained five or more GCSEs graded A\*-C including English and Maths. Our drive to improve attainment in our academies from day one has delivered some impressive results, notably in London where the Crest academies in Neasden delivered significant improvements despite complex circumstances. We commend our students and staff for the enormous amount of endeavour they have demonstrated; ably supported by parents/carers and the wider community.

Dr Noorzaman Rashid, Chairman, E-ACT

Sir Bruce Liddington, Director General, E-ACT



## These results confirm the effectiveness of the E-ACT model.

The next 12 months will be focused on embedding these successful strategies, continuing to raise attainment within each of our academies in a repeatable and sustainable way. We will further leverage the benefits of our group organisation to ensure that local issues get the support from the best the group has to offer and that more recently-joined members benefit from the experiences of those that have already broken this ground. We also intend to create 'engines for improvement' within our academies that complement the direction and support being provided by Head Office and through academy-led improvement groups.

At the core of our organisation is a coherent strategy that secures the improvement in attainment for an academy irrespective of the particular challenges it faces through constant scrutiny and monitoring: rapid, early and decisive intervention when necessary and involvement from the centre that is inversely proportional to local success.

The contraction in public spending will require innovative solutions for new academies and other forms of new school provision. E-ACT has a track record of delivering transformation in a value for money environment. Moreover E-ACT can use its experience as provider of a complete suite of services that can take the concept for a new educational establishment and see it nurtured, developed, implemented and ultimately housed in a purpose-built facility to enable the continuation of the dramatic, sustained educational attainment that is the heart of our organisation; supporting improved student aspirations, choices and employability.

We will look for opportunities to engage with schools, promoters and other organisations outside our established academy family, drawing from our experience and strengths in a thoughtful and discerning way to add value.

Finally, we are committed to reinforcing the E-ACT brand as being synonymous with the provision of the highest quality teaching and learning; delivering rapid, sustained improvements in educational attainment. Each academy will benefit from its association with its sponsor and E-ACT's reputation will be enhanced by the performance of every one of its academies.



## STRATEGIC CONTEXT



### **E-ACT's Vision and Aims**

## **'Excellence in Education for All'**

### **We aim to:**

- **Develop and/or maintain and enhance Centres of Excellence through innovative approaches to teaching and learning, in order to ensure that all students achieve their personal and academic potential.**
- **Provide the highest quality of educational experience and widest opportunities for all, irrespective of ability, gender, faith or race.**
- **Invest in the community to improve opportunities for everyone.**

### **With the objective of:**

- **High attainment and achievement.**
- **Improved social mobility and inclusion.**
- **Strong student employability.**





## **E-ACT aims to build a successful track record through:**

- **Clarity of purpose and approach.**
- **Creating a clear vision for the innovative delivery of excellence in teaching and learning.**
- **Relentless rigorous qualitative and quantitative assessment of our performance to ensure that we continue to learn and evolve and secure ever-improving outcomes for our students.**

The recent policy developments enshrined within the Academies Bill 2010 open up the possibility for E-ACT to pursue its vision across the whole spectrum of educational provision within England. We believe that the freedoms and innovations envisaged in the establishment of 'converter' academies and Free Schools could allow for more rapid improvements in the delivery of teaching and learning that is relevant to local need and progressive in the context of our 21st century, global society.

This opportunity and ambition must be set, however, against a backdrop of the significant economic challenges currently facing every part of UK Government spending. Inevitably all parts of the educational establishment will be expected to deliver more for less. As a growing multi-academy sponsor with educational provision as our core purpose E-ACT has, and will continue to, reduce the costs incurred outside the classroom, maximising the resources used in the direct delivery of teaching and learning.

## **E-ACT is focused on reaping the benefits of scale and of our growing experience so that we can:**

- **Secure continued dramatic improvements to educational attainment in the face of challenging economic circumstances.**
- **Ensure that we can provide an appropriate level of challenge and support for different academy/Free Schools groups.**

**and**

- **Approach the requirements for capital investment within schools from the basis of seeking to maximise the value of every pound spent - relentlessly striving to secure tangible benefits from this investment.**

Within this dramatically changed landscape E-ACT will seek to continue to grow its family of 'traditional' academies. We also intend to be at the forefront of provision in establishing Free Schools and to explore the role of sponsor in the support and challenge of 'converter' academies, particularly as this latter group grows and matures over time.



We believe that E-ACT can offer real benefits by drawing on its experience in delivering the whole spectrum of activities required to take forward the concept of a school seeking to transform by becoming an academy or Free School. We also have a strong governance model that ensures that an academy will quickly identify any issue that may have a detrimental impact on teaching and learning and appropriately respond to any challenges that arise.

We look to the future with the confidence that E-ACT will continue to improve against its goal of educational excellence for all and in consequence achieve its aims as a social enterprise, equipping students, families and communities with greater choice and enhanced opportunities.

## PERFORMANCE IN 2009/10

We are delighted to report that in our core objective - raising educational attainment - such significant progress has been made.

E-ACT academies, most of which have been open for just one full academic year, have increased the number of students achieving 5 GCSEs at A\*-C with English and Maths by an average 9.5% - over four times the national rate of improvement. Students at our Crest Boys' and Girls' academies in London have flourished, despite a range of complexities. Our academies in Birmingham, Leeds, Gainsborough and Sheffield have all delivered improved results.

### Results for 5+A\*-C GCSEs including English & Maths by Academy

	2009	2010
Crest Boys' Academy, London	23%	45%
Crest Girls' Academy, London	29%	46%
Leeds West Academy	30%	37%
North Birmingham Academy	27%	32%
Shenley Academy, Birmingham	25%	33%
Heartlands Academy, Birmingham	41%	48%
Parkwood Academy, Sheffield	22%	27%
Trent Valley Academy, Gainsborough (opened 2008)	31%	35%

\*All figures are unvalidated and subject to final confirmation.



One key objective for 2009/10 was the establishment of a comprehensive performance management infrastructure for our academies. We are pleased to report that each of the key elements outlined in the corporate plan have been delivered. This is now a core building block for sustainable improvements across our academies.

We are delighted to have construction underway at the Leeds West and Parkwood academies. Whilst still some months away from completion, both serve as a motivator and source of inspiration and source of learning for students and staff alike.

In Oldham we have secured capital funding for a new building as part of our plans to transform education and opportunity for a diverse community.

Our Trent Valley Academy hosted its first OFSTED inspection in June and was assessed as making good progress towards raising standards, providing further confirmation of the progress being made there.

Finally, opening Dartmouth Academy brings the primary dimension to the organisation as E-ACT's first all-through academy; whilst the Winsford E-ACT Academy successfully opened following what was amongst the most rapid academy projects ever undertaken by DfE - and against a backdrop of delays arising from the intervening General Election.

#### **Other measures of progress identified in our 2009/10 Corporate Plan include:**

- **Close the overall FSM/non-FSM gap at 5A\*-C GCSE including E&M by 5%..**
- **Increase student progress in other areas by at least one grade in attainment.**
- **Demonstrate that attainment indicators are positive in all key subject areas and for different groups of pupils as shown by the indicators in RAISEonline.**
- **Increase overall attendance by 3% and reducing any overall persistent absence by 2%, reducing overall exclusions.**

An update will be provided on progress as the information becomes available.



## GOALS

We have identified a number of goals that will define the areas of focus for the organisation over the next 3 years and form the basis of the operational plan for the coming 12 months.

E-ACT's core goal is the raising of attainment within our academies. This is fundamental to achievement of our broader aims of improved chances and choices for students and stronger, more inclusive communities.

**Therefore, over the next 3 years we will seek to:**

- 1. Achieve a 10% improvement in attainment at GCSE 5 A\*-C including English & Maths annually.**

**As part of this relentless drive for excellence, E-ACT will also:**

- 2. Grow to achieve economies of scale in terms of value for money, operational resilience and excellence in teaching and learning.**
- 3. Seek to create other income streams that can be used to invest in our academies to drive further improvements.**
- 4. Continue to strengthen our brand - recognising the value that can be provided to students when they graduate from an establishment enjoying the highest reputation as a centre of excellence, complementing their academic success.**



Improvement in attainment	Grow to achieve economies of scale	Seek new sources of income	Strengthen the Brand
Increase results at GCSE 5A*-C, including English and Maths at each academy by 10% each year.	Continue to grow our family of 'traditional academies' to have a minimum of 20 open by 2013/14.	Continue to secure funds to invest within the academies through fund-raising activities.	Continue to articulate the core brand values.
Embed our Academy Improvement Strategy.	Clearly define how we would work with converter academies to add value and secure their academic performance.	Identify areas where E-ACT by leveraging its core competencies can add value to external organisations.	Evolve our brand to recognise and celebrate the broadening of our involvement within educational provision beyond our traditional role.
Achieve the situation where the 'at least 70% of lessons delivered in each academy is 'good' or 'outstanding'.	Actively participate in the formation of Free Schools through support of promoter groups or by promoting the school directly.	Explore how these opportunities may be undertaken in ways that generates a surplus that can be re-invested in E-ACT's core operation.	Ensure that the E-ACT brand enhances the reputation of each academy and in turn is enhanced by the reputation of each academy.
Develop clear development pathways for staff within and across our academies and Head Office to maximise our talent pool.	Build capacity and capability within and across academies and head office to ensure that local issues (for example leadership, curriculum area, ICT, finance, HR, procurement) can be supported by E-ACT to prevent undue disruption to the operation of the academy.	Determine what partnerships and alliances are necessary to deliver services such that their quality matches that of E-ACT's core operation and their delivery does not impinge on or distract the core operation.	Demonstrate that the reputation of an academy from its 4th year onwards is a positive enhancement to any qualifications gained by students.
Achieve an average increase in applicants for staff positions in academies open for more than 2 years by 50% compared to the predecessor school.	Establish 'engines of improvement' in our academies for one or more specific areas of expertise around attendance, behaviour, curriculum delivery, leadership development or community engagement.		
Achieve the situation in any academy open for more than 3 years whereby ICT* and the VLE* is the backbone of teaching and learning.			
Continue to narrow the attainment gap between students with or without free school meals by at least 5% annually at each academy.			

\* ICT - Information and Communication Technology; VLE - Virtual Learning Environment



## ACHIEVING OUR GOALS

### 1. Achieve an annual 10% improvement in attainment at GCSE 5 A\*-C including English & Maths at each academy.

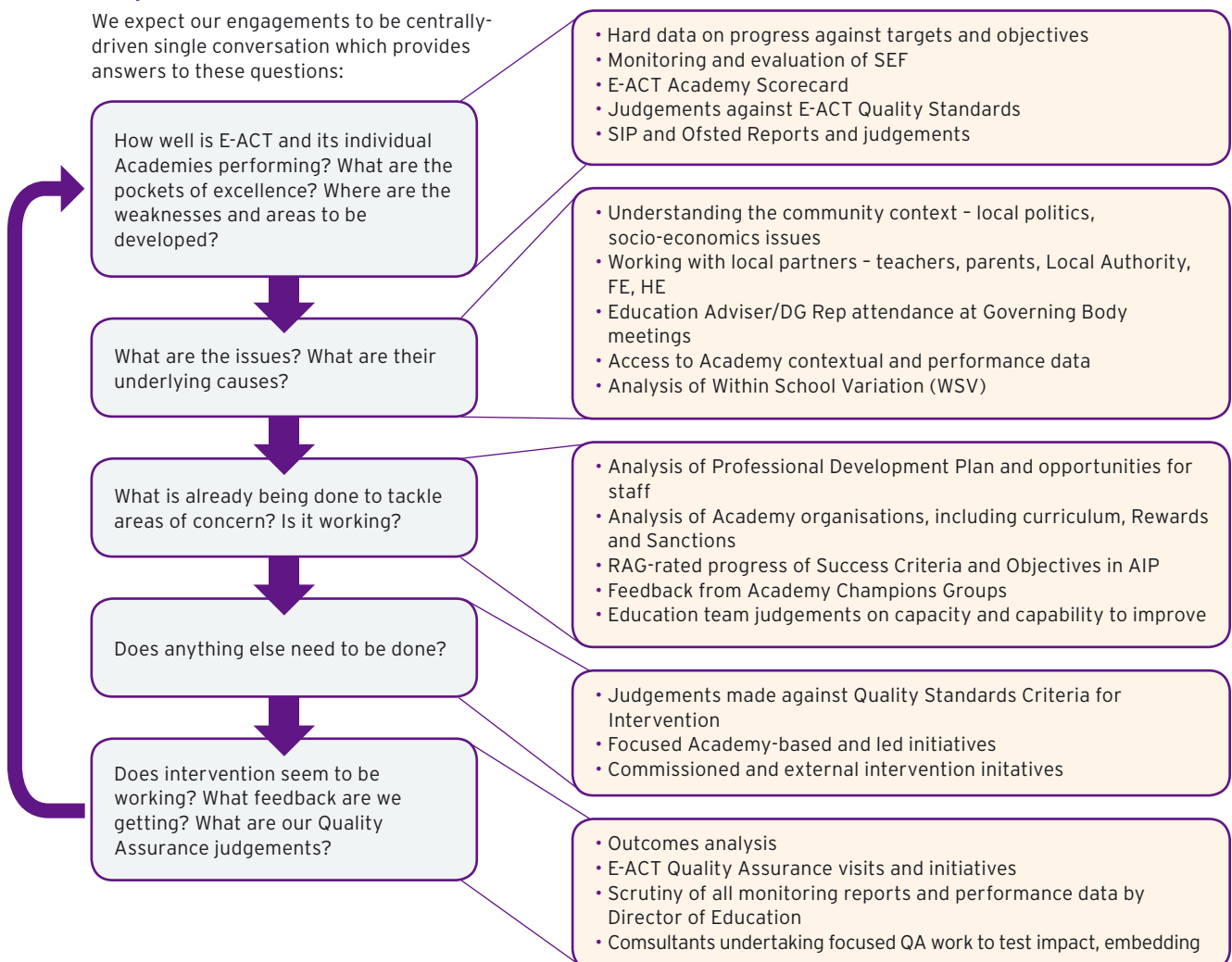
At the heart of our drive for continued achievement and rapidly improving attainment in each academy is our 5-Stage Improvement Strategy Process. See diagram 1.

We will work in conjunction with every E-ACT academy to embed this process into the fabric of the organisation so that we actively scrutinise timely and relevant data to constantly focus the efforts of the academy where it will maximise attainment for its students.

Our experience in being able to quickly identify, analyse and diagnose early symptoms of potential issues is already well developed. Over the coming year we will seek to strengthen our range of options when determining the appropriate course of remedial action. In particular we will look to strengthen our links with providers across the educational support spectrum and will focus in particular on ensuring that solutions become embedded within the academy so that an issue need only be dealt with once.

#### Diagram 1

We expect our engagements to be centrally-driven single conversation which provides answers to these questions:





We will continue to develop our performance management culture at all levels within the organisation. Concerns will be identified at an early stage and remedy sought. Successes will be sought out, shared and celebrated. We will build capacity within and across the family of E-ACT academies for more effective talent management, development, retention and succession planning.

As our success and reputation as an employer grows we will look to attract candidates for the roles we offer in ever increasing numbers from NQT positions to senior leadership team/ Principal appointments and support staff to technical specialists.

Technology pervades every aspect of society; business & commerce, social & recreational. This needs to be reflected in our approach to teaching and learning.

E-ACT will move Information and Communication Technology (ICT) to the heart of classroom experience and the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) as a critical means of extending the opportunities to engage with the curriculum beyond the bounds of the academy itself. By the end of its third year every E-ACT academy will have ICT as the backbone of teaching and learning delivery so that it pervades the classroom environment in a way that technology pervades modern life at work and at home.

## 2. Grow to achieve economies of scale in terms of value for money, operational resilience and excellence in teaching and learning.

E-ACT is dedicated to educational excellence. Critical to this success is the quality of teaching and learning delivery. However, resources directed towards the classroom are maximised when the quality, availability and cost effectiveness of the host of support services required in a complex organisation that is a modern academy is of the highest order.

To ensure that Head Office support functions offer increasing value for money we will reduce the cost of supporting an academy through the benefits of economies of scale, experienced operation, centralised procurement where appropriate and continuous improvement to our processes.

The correct blend of local expertise and central capability enables E-ACT to rapidly mobilise in the face of local difficulties. Therefore in the coming years we will seek to recruit or engage with suitable highly skilled and effective curriculum specialists, middle and senior leaders including principals, technical specialists and project specialists to support any academy through a period of challenge. This may be in the design of a new building, a major contract negotiation, a period of staff turnover or the unexpected loss of a Senior Leadership Team member or principal. Effective use of this core group strength enables individual academies to secure their performance in terms of attainment when in other circumstances this may have been significantly compromised by the demands of the issues detailed above.

Each academy will be expected to achieve excellence in one or more areas including, but not limited to; attendance, behaviour, curriculum delivery, leadership development, community engagement so that it can effectively support its peers.

We will seek to grow the organisation primarily through the expansion of our family of traditional academies. Our ambition has always been and remains to operate not fewer than 20 academies of this type and we aim to achieve this within 3 years.



In the area of converter academies we also see the role as a support and challenge organisation as critical to the continued success of these high-performing schools, particularly secondary schools converting from community school status and primary schools. E-ACT will be able to work with these schools to free them from unnecessary encumbrance regarding support and technical workload and, through the governance it offers, ensure that the school is equipped to deal with the unexpected.

The Free Schools policy aims to empower parent, teacher, faith and community groups as well as charities to be promoters of new schools in areas where, for example, demand outweighs supply, the standard of provision in the area is not acceptable, or the closest school is not close enough.

### **There is a range of ways E-ACT is planning to be involved in Free Schools:**

#### **i). Supporting promoters to establish and maintain the Free School they want. E-ACT would supply services to the promoter.**

This will establish a new way for E-ACT to sell its services in the future, using a project manager or link person identifying the need and commissioning the solution from within E-ACT.

#### **ii). Supporting promoters to establish an E-ACT school, with the promoter having a significant input into the vision, establishment and running of the Free School**

Where we support a promoter who does not have the capacity or ambition to maintain the Free School, we can agree that we develop an E-ACT Free School, with the promoter having key representation on the governing body.

#### **iii). E-ACT identifying the need for a Free School and finding a local promoter to work in partnership with in order to establish the Free School, which will be an E-ACT Free School. E-ACT can identify the need for a new school and look for a promoter in that area, who we can support to develop a Free School, especially if their proposal has not taken off yet. This would be an E-ACT Free School reflecting the vision of the partnering promoter group.**

#### **iv). E-ACT promotes a Free School, finding a site and establishing demand in an area we feel a Free School can be established.**

E-ACT can promote our own Free Schools in areas we feel it is possible to find a site and then establish enough parental demand, through a survey, to propose the Free School. We have developed a template for a primary, secondary and all-age Free Schools and will actively develop this capability.

The precise nature and number of schools and/or groups that E-ACT will act as sponsor for or form a formal partnership with will be determined following discussions with a range of stakeholders and groups. We have already been contacted by numerous organisations and groups who are interested in working with us and benefiting from our expertise.



### 3. Seek new sources of income

E-ACT remains committed to its focus on the achievement of educational excellence for all its students to secure the benefits of improved social mobility and employability. Equally however, we recognise that this work can be enhanced with additional funding streams.

As a consequence E-ACT will investigate possible activities whereby other organisations procure our skills, expertise and services. This could be in support of a school, education provider or other related organisation nationally or internationally.

We will determine the relative fit of any activities against the opportunity to generate additional investment income for our core organisation, the degree to which the opportunity complements and aligns with our normal activities and ensuring that we do not distract the organisation from its core purpose.

We believe that there will be multiple opportunities for E-ACT to use its skills, expertise and know-how in supporting other organisations which may require new organisational structures.

### 4. Continue to strengthen our brand - recognising the value that can be provided to students when they graduate from an establishment enjoying the highest reputation as a centre of excellence, complementing their academic success

As a leading provider of educational services as multi-academy sponsor, E-ACT has worked successfully with government, local authorities, schools, students, carers and the wider community to deliver on its brand promise.

We will continue to actively monitor and support the positive evolution of the E-ACT brand recognising that the value provided to our students rests, in part, in ensuring that our reputation truly reflects our success in raising standards.

We also believe that membership of a strong, well-known, respected and trusted national organisation is a further benefit of being part of the E-ACT academy family. E-ACT in turn benefits from the positive associations of endeavour, achievement, vibrancy and renewal that are a feature of the reputations of our academies within their local communities.



## KEY RISKS

As important as focusing on the positive action being undertaken in support of achieving our goals are the strategies we employ to manage our risks. Whilst the current environment offers huge potential for E-ACT to flourish and grow, equally there are significant potential challenges we may face. Key amongst these are:

- 1. High attainment.** Our ambition is high. We will actively guard our ambition by constantly re-committing ourselves to high achievement and ensuring that any setback proves temporary.
- 2. Managing our reputation.** The topic of academies remains controversial and opposition remains vocal, organised and determined in places. It is important that we continue to demonstrate high levels of transparency, welcome of public scrutiny and challenge and to ensure that the organisation continues to deliver its goals and brand promise.
- 3. Academy numbers on roll.** To succeed, E-ACT academies need to be thriving and valued centres of their communities. We will strive to ensure that the reputation and attractiveness of each academy reflects the level of attainment and expectation that exists within the academy and that this in turn is reflected in a healthy yearly intake at year 7 and where appropriate year 12.
- 4. Growth.** We recognise the significant benefits that accrue with increasing scale as a multi-academy sponsor for every part of our organisation. We continue to monitor the performance of our organisation in terms of its project capability and operational processes and have bolstered our capacity through relevant partnerships and agreements.
- 5. Cost challenges.** The need to achieve more for less is unavoidable. E-ACT will carefully balance the need to be financially prudent without erring into over-caution and failing to invest in securing the improvements being sought for our academies.
- 6. Reduced the cost of investment in buildings.** Whilst each project has its unique challenges, all are significantly aided in dealing with these by the opportunities presented by a new academy building. We will have to work constructively and positively with DfE to secure the maximum available funding for each academy and be creative in the way we put such funds to use.
- 7. Retaining and attracting good people.** Without doubt, the calibre, commitment and ability of our staff is a key organisational asset. We must husband this resource carefully, being able to support the development of staff at all levels and able to attract fresh talent to refresh and re-energise our teams.
- 8. Relationship between Head Office and the academies.** With freedoms come responsibilities. The dynamic between head office and our academies has in-built tensions between the dual roles of supporter and challenger. This is undoubtedly healthy.
- 9. Wider stakeholder engagement.** It is critically important that E-ACT successfully manages its relationship with a wide range of stakeholders at local and national level. We recognise that each of our academies is established as a long-term investment in educational provision within their communities and they will flourish best when we are able to positively engage with stakeholders.