## FAQs: Victorian Government School Cleaning Reform

## General

### What is the Government doing?

The Government is improving cleaning arrangements in Victorian Government Schools by:

• introducing an area-based cleaning model in metropolitan schools comprising eight separate areas; and

• strengthening existing compliance and cleaning arrangements in regional schools.

This new approach will be introduced during 2018.

### Why is it being done?

The Government is taking these measures to ensure:

• high-quality cleaning contractors operate in Victorian government schools;

• a consistent standard of cleaning in schools; and

• all cleaning staff working in Victorian Government schools receive their legal wages and entitlements.

### What is the area-based cleaning model?

The area-based cleaning model involves a competitive tender process providing each of the eight metropolitan school areas with one cleaning contractor that will deliver cleaning services to the schools in each area.

Each school area will be a separate tender process. A single cleaning company can tender for multiple school areas.

Further design and implementation aspects will be communicated through the procurement phase of the reforms.

### Is my metropolitan school impacted?

Schools which are determined to be out of scope of the model are those which are serviced through public-private partnership contracts or where the cleaning is organised by other Government departments such as hospital and youth justice schools.

All other metropolitan schools will be included in the area-based model. Smaller cleaning contractors defined as sole proprietors or those cleaning a single metropolitan school will get an extended transition time as well as transition support to help them adapt to these changes.

### Is my regional school impacted?

Existing arrangements will be maintained for regional schools with enhanced compliance requirements for cleaning contractors servicing those schools.

Cleaning contractors servicing regional Victorian government schools will be subject to an ongoing audit program to ensure they maintain the requirements in the Panel Agreement and the obligations under their cleaning contract.

The Panel Agreement requires cleaning contractors to, among other things, ensure the following:

• high cleaning standards in schools;

• current Working With Children Checks for all staff;

• high standards of occupational health and safety; and

• correct payment of wages and entitlements to employees.

### How will you ensure the providers maintain appropriate award levels, when some of the identified providers with suspected low records of compliance were large contractors?

There will be a strong vetting process for the cleaning service providers through the procurement stages and the new arrangements will be supported by an ongoing audit and compliance process to assure the quality of the reformed cleaning arrangements.

### Who do I contact if I have further questions regarding these changes?

You can contact the Department on 1300 842 754 and cleaning@edumail.vic.gov.au.

## More information about the area-based model

### How many schools are in each area?

The eight metropolitan areas contain between 57 and 152 schools.

### Are both primary and secondary schools included in the model?

Metropolitan primary and secondary schools are included in the model. Schools which are determined to be out of scope of the model are those which are serviced through public-private partnership contracts or where the cleaning is organised by other Government departments such as hospital and youth justice schools.

### How many cleaning contractors will service each area?

Each of the eight metropolitan areas will be serviced by a single cleaning contractor.

### How will cleaning contractors be selected?

The selection of cleaning contractors will be subject to an open and competitive tender process complying with Victorian government procurement standards.

### How soon will the model be in effect?

These arrangements will come into effect during 2018, with support provided to schools in the transition phase.

### What will happen to existing cleaning contractors?

Existing cleaning contractors will be able to apply for the open tender to service the schools in the eight areas.

### What will happen to existing cleaning employees?

As part of the tender process, the successful contractors must recruit from the existing Victorian government school cleaning workforce.

Cleaning companies are responsible for advising and communicating with their current employees, and are legally required to pay the correct entitlements, regardless of the outcome of the tender process.

### Do schools need to do anything right now?

Schools need to keep their current cleaning contract information up-to-date on the Department’s database, including all Working With Children Checks (WWCC).

### When will schools find out more about the area-based model?

Metropolitan schools will be contacted in the coming months by the Department regarding the next steps of the process.

### Why is this only being implemented in metropolitan areas?

To date, most evidence of poor practice has concerned cleaning arrangements in metropolitan schools. It is therefore appropriate to focus these changes on metropolitan schools. Where evidence of poor practice emerges as part of the strengthened processes in regional schools, action will be taken to correct and rectify that situation.

## Cleaning workforce in metropolitan schools

### What if my employer makes me redundant once the area-based model commences in metropolitan schools?

Cleaning contractors awarded the contract for your area will be expected to recruit from the existing cleaning workforce in accordance with the terms of the Expression of Interest. Information is available on the Victorian Government Tenders website ([www.tenders.vic.gov.au](http://www.tenders.vic.gov.au)) where members of the public are able to view the successful winners of Victorian Government tenders.

### I am a cleaner employed directly by the school – can this arrangement be maintained?

All metropolitan schools are expected to use the cleaning contractor who wins the tender for that school’s area. As a result, metropolitan school councils will no longer need to employ their own cleaners. Current cleaning staff may be offered employment with the cleaning contractors awarded the contract for the area-based model.

### What if my employer does not apply or is not successful in the tender process?

If you wish to continue to provide cleaning services to Victorian government schools, cleaning contractors awarded the contract will be expected to recruit from the existing cleaning workforce in accordance with the terms of the Expression of Interest.

### Will there be support to assist me throughout this period?

Support and advice will be provided to you through this transition. The cleaning contractor awarded the contract for your area will be expected to recruit from the existing cleaning workforce in accordance with the terms of the Expression of Interest.

### Why are these changes happening?

The Victorian Government wants to improve the quality, standard and consistency of cleaning services in all Victorian government schools. The Government is committed to providing greater assurance that all cleaning staff working in Victorian government schools receive their legal wages and entitlements.

### What can I do now if I feel like my employer is not acting lawfully?

All complaints about cleaning contractors working in Victorian government schools are treated seriously. Please contact the Department in writing via cleaning@edumail.vic.gov.au so these complaints can be investigated.

We would advise you to also contact the Fair Work Ombudsman (www.fairwork.gov.au/) regarding your rights.

### Who can I contact if I have questions about my pay and entitlements in general?

If you have general questions or concerns about your pay and rights, we would advise you to contact the Fair Work Ombudsman ([www.fairwork.gov.au](http://www.fairwork.gov.au)).

## Cleaning workforce in regional schools

### What will happen to my job when the area-based model commences in metropolitan schools?

Your job as a cleaner in the regional school will not be affected by the changes in the area-based model in metropolitan schools.

### What do the strengthened arrangements entail?

Cleaning contractors servicing regional Victorian government schools will be subject to an ongoing audit program to ensure they maintain the requirements in the Panel Agreement with the Department.

### What are the requirements in the Panel Agreement with the Department?

The Panel Agreement requires cleaning contractors to, among other things, ensure the following:

• high cleaning standards in schools;

• current Working With Children Checks for all staff;

• high standards of occupational health and safety; and

• correct payment of wages and entitlements to employees.

### What can I do now if I feel like my employer is not acting lawfully?

All complaints about cleaning contractors working in Victorian government schools are treated seriously. Please contact the Department via cleaning@edumail.vic.gov.au so these complaints can be investigated.

We would advise you to also contact the Fair Work Ombudsman ([www.fairwork.gov.au](http://www.fairwork.gov.au)) regarding your rights.

### Who can I contact if I have questions about my pay and entitlements in general?

If you have general concerns about your pay and rights, we would advise you to consult the Fair Work Ombudsman ([www.fairwork.gov.au](http://www.fairwork.gov.au)).

## Metropolitan Schools

### What will happen to the funding we receive for cleaning?

Student Resource Package (SRP) funds that are allocated to cleaning will be centrally administered by the Department for metropolitan schools in the area-based cleaning model.

### How will I be able to specify my cleaning requirements with the new cleaning contractor?

Arrangements will be put in place to minimise disruption to metropolitan schools and ensure each schools’ needs are met by their new cleaning contractor.

Schools will maintain oversight of some practical cleaning arrangements for their school to guide an arrangement that suits each school’s needs.

### Why are these changes happening?

The Government is taking these measures to ensure that in metropolitan and regional Victorian government schools, the following occurs:

• only high-quality cleaning contractors operate in Victorian government schools;

• a consistent standard of cleaning in schools;

• there is greater assurance that all cleaning staff working in Victorian Government schools receive their legal wages and entitlements.

### We are happy with the existing arrangements so why are these changes happening?

The Victorian Government wants to improve the quality, standard and consistency of cleaning services in all Victorian government schools. The Government is also committed to providing greater assurance that all cleaning staff working in Victorian government schools receive their legal wages and entitlements.

Support will be provided to both schools and the existing cleaning workforce throughout the transition process.

### Do we need to do anything right now?

Schools need to keep their current cleaning contract information up-to-date on the Department’s cleaning database, including all Working With Children Checks (WWCC).

### When will we find out more about the area-based model?

Schools will be contacted in the coming months by the Department regarding the next steps of the process.

### Why are regional schools not incorporated in the area-based model?

To date, most evidence of poor practice has concerned cleaning arrangements in metropolitan schools. It is therefore appropriate to focus these changes on metropolitan schools. Where evidence of poor practice emerges as part of the strengthened processes in regional schools, action will be taken to correct and rectify that situation.

## Regional Schools

### What will happen to the funding we receive for cleaning?

Regional schools will continue to receive funding for cleaning purposes.

### Will my existing arrangements change?

Regional schools will continue to tender and contract for their own cleaning arrangements.

### Why are these changes happening?

The Government is taking these measures to ensure that in metropolitan and regional Victorian government schools, the following occurs:

• only high-quality cleaning contractors operate in Victorian government schools;

• a consistent standard of cleaning in schools;

• there is greater assurance that all cleaning staff working in Victorian Government schools receive their legal wages and entitlements.

### Why are regional schools not incorporated in the area-based model?

To date, most evidence of poor practice has concerned cleaning arrangements in metropolitan schools. It is therefore appropriate to focus these changes on metropolitan schools. Where evidence of poor practice emerges as part of the strengthened processes in regional schools, action will be taken to correct and rectify that situation.

### What do the strengthened arrangements in regional schools entail?

Cleaning contractors servicing regional Victorian government schools will be subject to an ongoing audit program to ensure they maintain the requirements in the Panel Agreement with the Department of Education and Training.

### What are the requirements in the Panel Agreement with the Department?

The Panel Agreement requires cleaning contractors to, among other things, ensure the following:

• high cleaning standards in schools;

• current Working With Children Checks for all staff;

• high standards of occupational health and safety; and

• correct payment of wages and entitlements to employees.

### Do we need to do anything right now?

Schools need to keep their current cleaning contract information up-to-date on the Department’s cleaning database, including all Working With Children Checks (WWCC).

## Cleaning Contractors

### Will my existing contract with the school be honoured?

Existing cleaning service contracts will remain in place until the tender contracts for each metropolitan area have been awarded and further transition arrangements have been determined.

### What if I am not successful in winning the new contract?

Both successful and unsuccessful applicants will be notified of the outcome of the tender process, as per standard practice in Government procurement.

### These reforms will mean I need to make my employees redundant – can you advise how I can avoid this?

If redeployment is not possible, and your employees become redundant to your business requirements, you will need to honour their employee entitlements in accordance with your legal requirements.

In addition, cleaning contractors who are successful in the tender process will be expected to recruit from the existing Victorian government school cleaning workforce in accordance with the terms of the Expression of Interest.

### When will the new contracts come into place?

Arrangements will be put in place for the successful cleaning contractors to begin servicing metropolitan Government schools during 2018.

### When will more information be available about the tender process?

Information is available on the Victorian Government Tenders website ([www.tenders.vic.gov.au](http://www.tenders.vic.gov.au)).