**Victorian Home Education Advisory Committee**

Meeting 17 (22 February 2021)

**Communiqué**

The seventeenth meeting of the Victorian Home Education Advisory Committee (VHEAC) was held on 22 February 2021. Due to COVID-19 related restrictions, the meeting was held using video-conferencing technology.

The Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (VRQA) provided an update on VRQA regulatory activity regarding home education. VHEAC members also discussed a range of issues including VRQA’s progress in undertaking reviews and improving communications to home educators, opportunities to mitigate the challenges facing students transitioning from home education to TAFE and progress on the independent evaluation of the *Education and Training Reform Regulations 2017* .

**VRQA Update**

Jonathan Kaplan introduced himself as VRQA new CEO and emphasised the importance of ongoing consultation with the VHEAC. VRQA’s focus will include the completion of the outstanding reviews, new applications and improved communication with the home education community.

The results of VRQA’s client and stakeholder survey for 2020 indicated 85% of respondents were satisfied with VRQA and its services, an increase compared to previous years. Qualitative responses also described the VRQA as providing timely support and help throughout the pandemic.

The VRQA typically took on average of 16 days to review complete applications, 19 days to review incomplete applications and 28 days to assess applications and notify providers. The number of incomplete applications as a proportion of the total number of applications has fallen over the years.

There has been a 37% increase in home schooling registrations in the 2020 calendar year. However, the increase in the number of applications received cannot necessarily be attributed to COVID, as the number of applications also rose by 33% in 2019.

The VRQA will continue to improve efficiencies and timelines associated with application assessments and reviews, in consultation with the VHEAC.

**Transition to TAFE**

The Department of Education and Training continues internal stakeholder consultation in relation to streamlining the process of home educated students transitioning from home education to TAFE. Efficiencies will be adopted where possible.

**Evaluation of home schooling regulations**

Regulatory Impact Solutions has been appointed as the independent consultant to undertake the evaluation of the Regulations after a competitive Expression of Interest and Request for Quote process. Regulatory Impact Solutions has previously conducted over 110 regulatory reviews across several jurisdictions.

The Director of Regulatory Impact Solutions outlined the company’s key skills, capabilities and approach to the evaluation. Further background reading and research will be undertaken by the consultant to fully understand the context of the evaluation. This will be followed by determining what additional data will be required.

The VHEAC subcommittee will meet every 3-4 weeks with Regulatory Impact Solutions to provide input in the evaluation process.

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