**VICTORIAN HOME EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

**COMMUNIQUE NO.21:** 26 APRIL2022

The twenty first meeting of the Victorian Home Education Advisory Committee (VHEAC) was held in a hybrid format on 26 April 2022. The Committee welcomed Eleanor Donovan, Director, Partnerships and Sector Support Branch as the new Chair and Dr Lina Di Paolo, Manager, Non-Government Schooling and Sector and Support Unit.

**VHEAC TERMS OF REFERENCE**

Committee members reviewed the VHEAC Terms of Reference. Written feedback from members will be incorporated into a revised 2022 edition of the Terms of Reference.

**VHEAC ACTION REGISTER**

The Committee reviewed the VHEAC Action Register to assess the status of items. VHEAC members provided important contextualised detail, and shared valuable insights and experiences to inform further investigation of priority matters with stakeholders and relevant department business units.

**TRANSITION TO FULL TIME STUDY OR EMPLOYMENT**

When a student is seeking to transition from home education to full time tertiary study or employment, prior to age 17, they must receive an exemption from home education registration from the relevant regional office.

The department continues to examine what a tailored exemption process for home education students might look like.

**VOCATIONAL TRAINING FUNDING OPTIONS**

The Senior Secondary Pathways Reform Taskforce are exploring opportunities that may exist to provide access to subsidised vocational training to home education students.

**SUPPORT OF HOME EDUCATION STUDENTS IN HOSPITAL**

VHEAC Home Education Representatives raised the importance of clarifying and strengthening hospital staff understanding of the requirements associated with home education when a student has a hospital stay.

**RECORDS MANAGEMENT AND PRIVACY SAFEGUARDING**

VHEAC members discussed the importance of having an updated and clear record management process in place to safeguard privacy. The Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (VRQA) will investigate timelines for the review of its current records management and retention policy.

**STUDENT CARDS FOR HOME EDUCATED STUDENTS**

Home Education Representatives enquired whether home education students can access student cards. Although VRQA currently issues a confirmation of home education registration which can be used to obtain a student pass for public transport, there are other benefits of a student card. Options for home education students to access student cards will be explored.

**REGISTRATION OPTIONS FOR STUDENTS PAST THEIR COMPULSORY SCHOOL AGE**

VHEAC members discussed the issue of home education registration beyond the age of 17. Not every home educated student completes their education at 17, especially students with additional needs. Options for home educated students who wish to remain registered with VRQA past age 17, will be explored.

**EDUCATION OPTIONS FOR VICTIMS OF FAMILY VIOLENCE**

VHEAC members discussed the impact of family violence on applications, particularly in relation to applications involving court orders and those where one parent is not supportive of home education. The VRQA will meet with VHEAC Home Education Representatives to discuss current processes and ensure appropriateness.

**VRQA UPDATE**

Members agreed to defer this item to the July meeting.

**HOME EDUCATION REPRESENTATIVE UPDATE**

Members agreed to defer this item to the July meeting.

**ABOUT**

VHEAC was established in the context of the regulatory changes to home schooling that commenced in Victoria on 1 January 2018.

VHEAC provides guidance, information and feedback to the Department of Education and Training (the department) and the Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (VRQA) on the operation of the home education regulations and on home education matters in Victoria.

VHEAC meets at least three times each year and Communiques are shared publicly after each meeting. The department provides secretariat support to the VHEAC.

Previous Communiques can be found online on the department’s website: <https://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/department/structure/Pages/vheac.aspx>

**APRIL 2022 MEETING**

The April meeting was attended by the following members:

* Eleanor Donovan, Director, Partnerships and Sector Support Branch, Department of Education and Training (DET), Chair and representative for the department
* Dr Lina Di Paolo, Manager, Non-Government Schooling and Sector Support, DET
* Chris Ingham, Deputy CEO, Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (VRQA)
* Chris O’Sullivan, Manager, Home Schooling Unit, VRQA
* Dr Glenda Jackson, Director, Australian Home Education Advisory Service
* Sue Wight, Home Education Representative
* Ben Clark, Home Education Representative
* Faye Coker, Home Education Representative
* Kirsty James, Home Education Representative
* Megan Fisher, Home Education Representative
* Kamya Foster, Home Education Representative
* Heidi Ryan, Disability Advocate

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**VHEAC SECRETARIAT**

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