

Official Statement No. 26, 13 March 2026

School Policy and Funding Advisory Council

Council update

Council acknowledged the significant collaboration in recent months on a range of cross-sectoral issues that impact both Government and non-government schools.

Cross-sector approach to developing the capability of teachers and leaders

Council noted the approach of the Victorian Academy of Teaching and Leadership (the Academy) to delivering high-quality, evidence-informed professional learning to Victorian teachers and school leaders, to deliver excellence in teaching and school leadership, and to support and recognise the Victorian school workforce across all education sectors.

Members discussed opportunities for further collaboration to increase Catholic and independent school sector participation in the Academy's professional learning programs.

Cross-sectoral public reporting of NAPLAN results

Members discussed the suitability of publishing cross-sector NAPLAN results in response to the Victorian Auditor-General's Office (VAGO) recommendation to publish government-sector NAPLAN data.

The VAGO report on *Literacy and Numeracy Achievement Outcomes for Victorian Students* recommended that the Department of Education make NAPLAN outcomes for Victorian government school students and student subgroups publicly available.

The department has accepted this recommendation in-principle, committing to provide advice to government following consultation with ACARA and the non-government school sectors.

Child safety in schools

Council noted the updates to the PROTECT guidance launching at the end of Term 1 2026 and implementation supports for schools and discussed approaches for sector leaders to support practice change.

Members heard that the Department of Education and the Department of Families Fairness and Housing have developed refreshed PROTECT guidance to support schools to support and refer students and families to The Orange Door and report to Child Protection.

The guidance will be hosted on a new PROTECT website at www.vic.gov.au/PROTECT. This will create an online hub for child safety information for all Victorian schools and early childhood education settings.

Members also noted changes to the Working with Children Checks (WWWC) scheme in response to the Child Safety rapid review.

Commonwealth-State update

Council noted the update on the following Commonwealth-State matters:

- Update on the Better and Fairer Schools Agreement (2025–2034)
- Key outcomes from Education Ministers Meeting in February 2026
- Update on the Antisemitism Education Taskforce established in December 2025.

Regulation and Legislation update

Council noted the following Victorian Government legislative amendments to address child safety based on recommendations of the *Rapid Child Safety Review* released in August 2025:

- Worker Screening Amendment (Strengthening the Working with Children Check) Act 2025
- Social Services Regulation Amendment (Child Safety, Complaints and Worker Regulation) Act 2025.

About

Established in 2015, the Council provides advice to the Minister for Education on regulatory, policy and funding issues that affect public and non-government schools.

Council meets 3 times each year and an Official Statement is shared after each meeting. The department provides secretariat support to the Council. Previous statements can be found online on the department’s website: <https://www.vic.gov.au/school-policy-and-funding-advisory-council>

Membership

Tony Bates Secretary Department of Education (Chair)	Professor Elizabeth Labone Chief Executive Officer Victorian Catholic Education Authority	Rachel Holthouse Chief Executive Independent Schools Victoria	Chris Wardlaw Independent Member	David Howes Deputy Secretary Schools and Regional Services Department of Education
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Contact the Council Secretariat if you need this information in an accessible format.