
SCHOOL POLICY & FUNDING ADVISORY COUNCIL

OFFICIAL STATEMENT No. 9: JULY 2020

ABOUT

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

Council meets three times each year and Official Statements are shared with the school community after each meeting. The Department provides secretariat support to the Council.

Previous statements can be found online on the Department's website: www.education.vic.gov.au/spfac.aspx

JULY 2020 MEETING

The July meeting was attended by the following appointed members or their delegate:

- Jenny Atta, Secretary, Department of Education and Training (the Department) (Chair and representative for the Department)
- Jim Miles, Executive Director, Catholic Education Commission of Victoria (CECV)
- Michelle Green, Chief Executive, Independent Schools Victoria (ISV)
- Professor Kwong Lee Dow, Independent Member (representing the interests of students in all Victorian schools)
- Stephen Gniel, Deputy Secretary, Department of Education and Training (representing the government school sector).

CROSS-SECTOR RESPONSE TO COVID-19

Note: Council met on 30 July 2020, while Stage 3 restrictions were in effect.

Council acknowledged the further and ongoing challenge presented by the COVID-19 pandemic and commended the continuing collaboration across school sectors in response to the crisis. Council recognised the continued uncertainty facing schools and students, in particular due to repeated closures and increasing numbers of confirmed cases in school communities, and the subsequent disruption to student learning.

Key issues that the three sectors are working collaboratively to address include:

- prompt responses to confirmed cases in schools and close contacts
- providing reassurance to anxious school communities and increasing the confidence of students and staff
- logistical and operational challenges including the distribution of personal protective equipment and school cleaning
- the ongoing impact of remote learning on education quality and student learning, in particular for VCE and Prep students.

Council is committed to continuing communication and collaboration to ensure a consistent response across all sectors. Processes are in place to ensure that regular dialogue continues between the school sectors and that key issues are responded to effectively and consistently.

REGULATORY POLICY UPDATE

Council discussed key developments in regulatory policy that seek to ensure child safety, including the introduction of the *Education and Training Reform Amendment (Regulation of Student Accommodation) Bill 2020* (the Bill) to the Legislative Assembly in March 2020, the introduction of new Child Safe Standards, the drafting of the policy and guidelines for implementing the National Redress Scheme for Institutional Child Sexual Abuse (National Redress Scheme), and the implementation of reforms which respond to the recommendations of the Victorian Parliamentary Inquiry into the Handling of Child Abuse by Religious and Other Organisations (Betrayal of Trust).

The drafting of the policy and guidelines for implementing the National Redress Scheme remain on track and implementation of the Betrayal of Trust reforms remains on track to meet the January 2021 deadline for compliance.

Council will continue to monitor and discuss updates of regulation matters that impact on all school sectors in future meetings as part of its remit to provide advice to the Minister for Education on regulatory issues that affect both government and non-government schools.

Contact the Department if you need this information in an accessible format; please telephone on 03 7022 2820, or email sp.fac@edumail.vic.gov.au.

Ms Jenny Atta (Chair) Secretary Department of Education and Training	Mr Jim Miles Executive Director Catholic Education Commission of Victoria	Ms Michelle Green Chief Executive Independent Schools Victoria	Prof. Kwong Lee Dow Independent Member University of Melbourne	Mr Stephen Gniel Deputy Secretary Department of Education and Training
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MEDIA ENQUIRIES

Catholic Education Commission of Victoria	media@cecv.catholic.edu.au	(03) 9267 0228
Department of Education and Training	media.unit@edumail.vic.gov.au	(03) 8688 7776
Independent Schools Victoria	enquiries@is.vic.edu.au	(03) 9825 7200

COUNCIL SECRETARIAT

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