**VICTORIAN HOME EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

**COMMUNIQUE NO.20:** 15 OCTOBER2021

The twentieth meeting of the Victorian Home Education Advisory Committee (VHEAC) was held on 15 October 2021. Due to ongoing COVID-19 related restrictions, the meeting was held on-line. The Committee welcomed the following four new members: Heidi Ryan, Kamya Foster, Megan Fisher and Kirsty James.

**VRQA UPDATE**

VRQA provided VHEAC with an update on 2021 application numbers. VRQA advised that application numbers had decreased; however there had been a larger than normal increase in phone enquiries in October. VRQA noted that there is no annual cut-off date to register for home education.

VRQA advised that 2020 home education reviews had mostly been completed with only a small number of reviews still to be finalised. 2021 reviews will occur between October and 30 June 2022. VRQA will continue to randomly select families for review. Families who were reviewed in the last two years will be excluded.

VRQA confirmed that 10% of families would be reviewed annually. The VRQA will publish all quarterly reports on their website.

**TRANSITION TO TAFE**

The Department of Education and Training (the Department) will amend Ministerial Order 705 (MO 705) to clarify transition processes for home-educated students and to address challenges faced by students seeking to transition from home education. Consultation with key areas of the Department have occurred, and once the amendments are finalised, the Department’s Legal Division will draft the amended Ministerial Order.

**TAFE FUNDING OPTIONS**

VHEAC was advised that the Senior Secondary Pathways Reform Taskforce (the Taskforce) consulted with the Home Education Representatives on the issue of TAFE funding. A further update from the Taskforce is anticipated in November.

**EDUCATION OPTIONS FOR VICTIMS OF FAMILY VIOLENCE**

The Home Education Representatives provided the Department with a paper describing issues accessing alternative education for victims of family violence in situations where a family separates and one parent is not supportive of home education.

The Non-Government Schooling and Sector Support Unit consulted with the Family Violence Practice Branch on the issue. The Department will provide an update at the next meeting.

**EVALUATION OF HOME EDUCATION REGULATIONS**

Following feedback and input from the VHEAC Sub-Committee, Regulatory Impact Solutions submitted their final report to the Department. The review found that the Home Education Regulations were generally working well and no changes were recommended. It was noted that the report was accepted by the VHEAC Sub-Committee, with some caveats and notes. The Committee discussed next steps and will decide whether to incorporate the findings into the committee workplan.

**VHEAC TERMS OF REFERENCE AND FUTURE WORKPLAN**

The VHEAC Terms of Reference will be sent to Committee members for comment.

 The Home Education Representatives identified the following items to be added to the workplan:

• Education of students while in hospital.

• Additional data sources that could be provided to the Committee in relation to home education registration.

**ABOUT**

VHEAC was established in the context of the regulatory changes to home schooling in Victoria outlined in the Education and Training Reform Regulations 2017. The changes commenced 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 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>

**OCTOBER 2021 MEETING**

The October meeting was attended by the following members:

* Marion Frere, Executive Director, Department of Education and Training (the Department) (Chair and representative for the Department)
* 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
* Pavlina McMaster, Home Education Representative
* Kirsty James, Home Education Representative
* Megan Fisher, Home Education Representative
* Kamya Foster, Home Education Representative
* Heidi Ryan, Disability Advocate

**Contact the Department if you need this information in an accessible format. Please phone (03) 03 7022 5724 email** **vheac@education.vic.gov.au**

**VHEAC SECRETARIAT**

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