

Victorian Government Response to the Parliamentary Education and Training Committee Inquiry into Effective Strategies for Teacher Professional Learning

Chapter 2 – Effective Policy

Inquiry Recommendations	Response	Comments
<p>Recommendation 2.1</p> <p>That the Victorian Government develop a strengthened policy framework for all levels of the teaching profession, linking teacher professional learning to standards, certification and recognition for teaching expertise.</p>	Accept	<p>The Government recognises the need for continual workforce improvement to ensure the provision of high quality teachers in Victorian government schools and early childhood services. Effective professional learning for teachers and school leaders is a central tenet of “Workforce Reform” within the Blueprint for Education and Early Childhood Development.</p> <p>The Department requires all school teachers to prepare annual Performance and Development Plans that identify areas for growth and outline the related professional learning they will undertake. As teachers then demonstrate improved teaching practice, against the appropriate teaching standards, they are recognised with salary increments. The Department also encourages linking of professional learning to the Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT) professional standards. This process effectively links teacher professional learning to standards and recognition.</p> <p>The 2008 Review of the VIT recommended expanding the regulatory scope of registration and other relevant functions to include early childhood teachers. The Government’s interim response to the Review accepted this recommendation in principle, subject to further analysis and consultation.</p> <p>Nationally-agreed and endorsed teacher professional standards, linked with professional learning, certification and recognition, are a key component of the National Partnership on Improving Teacher Quality and the subject of collaborative national work being led by Victoria.</p>
<p>Recommendation 2.2</p> <p>That the Victorian Government further support the Supporting Provisionally Registered Teachers Program, by:</p>		
<p>(i) enhancing opportunities for beginning teachers and their mentors to work together</p>	Accept	<p>The Department, together with the VIT provides a mentor training program for experienced teachers and supports those mentors to work with beginning teachers. Schools also have the capacity to build mentoring responsibilities into the roles of leaders and experienced staff.</p> <p>The Performance and Development Culture “Self Assessment Framework” highlights the importance of appropriate induction processes, including mentoring for beginning and new staff.</p>

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(ii) strengthening assessment processes for provisionally registered teachers, including the possible involvement of an external assessor.	Accepted in principle	The Department is supportive of any measure that quality assures teacher competence. However, further research, analysis and consultation is required on this component of the recommendation. A strength in the current process is that it requires provisionally registered teachers to show that they have met the standards to a local panel who have observed them over an extended period of time.
<p>Recommendation 2.3</p> <p>That the Victorian Government strengthen the requirements for registered teachers to undertake 100 hours of professional learning in every five-year registration period, by:</p> <p>(i) developing a system of accreditation for providers of teacher professional learning;</p> <p>(ii) modifying the requirement for at least 50 hours to be sourced from outside the school environment, to require that no less than 50 hours be delivered by an accredited professional learning provider; and</p> <p>(iii) developing a system of credentialing for teacher professional learning programs not recognised under the Australian Qualifications Framework, and listing any credentials gained by teachers in records of teacher registration.</p>	Accepted in principle	<p>The Department contributed to the development of the standards and requirements that were developed by the VIT for teacher professional learning and supports teachers to meet those requirements.</p> <p>The Department is supportive of any strategies to quality assure the professional learning programs and presenters that are provided for teachers. However, developing systems for accrediting providers or credentialing programs, as proposed in points (i) & (iii) will require further consultation and consideration in the context of the Government’s Education agenda.</p> <p>Professional learning is a key component of the National Partnership on Improving Teacher Quality and the subject of collaborative national work.</p>
<p>Recommendation 2.4</p> <p>That the Victorian Government develop advanced categories of teacher registration, incorporating:</p>		Nationally-agreed/endorsed teacher professional standards and a process for certifying/accrediting Accomplished and Leading teachers are key components of the National Partnership on Improving Teacher Quality and the subject of collaborative national work being led by Victoria.

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(i) standards for higher levels of teaching practice beyond full registration; and	Accepted in principle	Work pertaining to the development of standards is the responsibility of the VIT. The Department has a structure for teacher employment that utilises standards for graduate teachers and provides further standards for Accomplished, Expert and Leading Teacher classifications. The standards are used to assess the suitability of teachers for promotion to higher classifications.
(ii) opportunities for teachers to demonstrate the attainment of these standards through completion of credentialed professional learning programs and/or evidence of advanced teaching practice.	Accepted in principle	The Department provides opportunities for school teachers to demonstrate attainment of standards through the annual performance review process. The Department supports any strategies that provide evidence of teacher professional improvement. However, developing a system for credentialing professional learning programs requires further research, consultation and consideration in the context of the Governments Education agenda.
<p>Recommendation 2.5</p> <p>That the Victorian Government develop a mandatory standard for entry into a school leadership role, linked to a credentialed school leadership preparation program, to reflect international best practice.</p>	Accepted in principle	<p>From 2010 the Department, through the newly established Bastow Institute, will deliver principal preparation programs which will equip participants with the requisite knowledge and skills to be effective school leaders.</p> <p>The Institute’s programs will be research based and guided by Quality Standards for Professional Learning. Participants will undertake a range of modules to address their individual learning needs.</p> <p>However, at this stage it is not intended that successful completion of these programs, or other courses, be a prerequisite for appointment to school leadership roles and moving to that arrangement will require research, consultation and consideration.</p> <p>Leadership is a key component of the National Partnership on Improving Teacher Quality and the subject of collaborative national work being jointly led by Victoria and New South Wales.</p>

Chapter 3 - Types of Content and Delivery

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<p>Recommendation 3.1</p> <p>That the Victorian Government and individual schools promote and facilitate access to teacher</p>	Accept	The Department provides a comprehensive range of professional learning opportunities for teachers that are based on principles of effective professional learning and encompass a wide range of subject and content areas including those listed in this recommendation.

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<p>professional learning that addresses a variety of content, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) high quality curriculum and pedagogy, including the development of subject area specialisations; (ii) student engagement and behaviour; (iii) supporting students with special learning needs; (iv) supporting student transitions; (v) use of information and communications technology; (vi) student wellbeing; (vii) teacher wellbeing; (viii) parent and community engagement; and (ix) ongoing and emerging government initiatives. 		<p>The Department will continue to develop professional learning opportunities for teachers across a range of areas in line with emerging needs and government priorities. For example, in 2008 the Department developed the e⁵ Instruction Model, which provides a clear description of quality teaching practice. Implementation of this model commenced in April 2009.</p> <p>The Department provides support for teachers to attend professional learning opportunities through a range of methods including professional development grants to schools, the Teacher Professional Learning program and a range of on-line programs and materials.</p> <p>The range of content areas and access options allows teachers to undertake tailored professional learning related to their own or their students' needs.</p>
<p>Recommendation 3.2</p> <p>That the Victorian Government and individual schools prioritise school-based modes of delivery for teacher professional learning, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • action research; • peer observation; • mentoring; and • professional learning teams. 	Accept	<p>The Department applies the <i>Seven Principles of Highly Effective Professional Learning</i> to the development and delivery of professional learning programs and materials and encourages/requires schools and teachers to utilise these principals also when selecting professional learning activities. The <i>Seven Principles of Highly Effective Professional Learning</i> embrace the modes listed in this recommendation.</p>

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<p>Recommendation 3.3</p> <p>That the Victorian Government and individual schools ensure that school-based professional learning is supplemented with input from external sources, by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) bringing sources of external expertise into schools, including the development of professional learning coaching and consultancy roles; and (ii) providing opportunities for teams or individual teachers to attend off-site professional learning activities, which then inform school-based programs. 	Accept	<p>The Department encourages schools to ensure that professional learning is informed by the best research on effective learning and teaching. In that context schools provide additional stimulus to school based professional learning through the use of experts including partnerships with universities. They also use a variety of methods to release teachers to attend off-site professional learning.</p> <p>The Department develops coaches to work in schools in priority areas including literacy, numeracy, leadership and the Ultranet. From 2010 the Bastow Institute will also provide programs to develop content knowledge and coaching skills.</p> <p>The potential for teachers to access external knowledge and expertise will be enhanced through the Ultranet project, through which, online experts and video conferencing will provide teachers with access to a range of professional expertise.</p>

Chapter 4 - Implementing the Policy Framework in Schools

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<p>Recommendation 4.1</p> <p>That the Victorian Government ensure that adequate resources for teacher professional learning are available to all Victorian schools, including resources to meet the special needs of rural and regional and underperforming schools.</p>	Accept	<p>The regional network structure and role of Regional Network Leader is part of a system-wide strategy to address the issues of adequate resourcing for school improvement, particularly for those schools with special needs.</p> <p>The Department will continue to examine and promote appropriate ways to support a coordinated and differentiated approach to the design and delivery of professional learning within schools, networks, regions and centrally planned and managed programs.</p> <p>The Bastow Institute will provide high quality professional learning to all teachers and leaders across the state, regardless of geographic location. The Department will explore methods such as video-conferencing to increase professional learning opportunities. The Ultranet will also provide extensive resources for the professional learning of teachers and leaders.</p>

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<p>Recommendation 4.2</p> <p>That the Victorian Government assist schools to optimise the use of available resources for teacher professional learning, by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) continuing to develop and promote flexible models for integrating teacher professional learning within teachers' working hours; (ii) supporting and enhancing collaboration through school clusters and networks; (iii) supporting and enhancing partnerships between schools and other sectors in the delivery of locally-based professional learning; (iv) incorporating adequate resources for high-quality teacher professional learning in all government education reforms; and (v) supporting schools with an identified professional learning need to access additional resources through targeted programs. 	Accept	<p>The Department provides a comprehensive range of professional learning opportunities for teachers within teacher's working hours and supports a range of strategies to ensure all teachers have access to professional learning. Many of the strategies include working collaboratively and developing/maintaining ongoing partnerships across networks and all education sectors.</p>
<p>Recommendation 4.3</p> <p>That the Victorian Government support schools to establish and maintain effective processes for planning and monitoring teacher professional learning, in line with a performance and development culture, by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) requiring all teachers to maintain annual professional learning plans and records of 	Accept	<p>Through the Department's annual performance and development process teachers are supported to identify professional learning needs and to record and reflect on professional learning undertaken. Schools are supported to collect and maintain professional learning plans that balance system, school and individual teacher priorities.</p>

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<p>their professional learning activities and outcomes;</p> <p>(ii) requiring schools to maintain professional learning plans, available for public viewing, that balance system, school and individual teacher priorities; and</p> <p>(iii) making additional support available for the development of professional learning and school improvement plans in schools with an identified need.</p>		
<p>Recommendation 4.4</p> <p>That the Victorian Government provide teachers with an online facility to:</p>		
<p>(i) search a database of accredited professional learning providers, including descriptions of their programs and participant feedback</p> <p>(ii) plan and organise their professional learning, including online registration for programs delivered by accredited providers</p> <p>(iii) reflect on their current practice against relevant professional standards, to identify future professional learning needs</p>	Accepted in principle	The VIT is developing an on-line instrument to assist teachers to search and register for professional learning activities and record their participation. The Department is supportive of the VIT initiative; however including a system of accredited professional learning programs requires further consultation and consideration.
<p>(iv) record their professional learning activities, including analysis of the impact of professional learning on teaching practice and student outcomes.</p>	Accept	The Department's Ultranet initiative will allow teachers to record the professional learning they have participated in. The annual performance review process requires school leaders to assess teacher professional growth and discuss improved practice.

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<p>Recommendation 4.5</p> <p>That the Victorian Government promote and facilitate improved professional learning opportunities for casual relief teachers, by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) encouraging schools to include casual relief teachers in relevant professional learning activities; and (ii) exploring options for assisting professional learning providers to develop and deliver professional learning activities that address the specific needs of the casual relief teaching workforce. 	Accept	<p>The Department's Refresher Courses for Teachers Returning to Government Schools is a comprehensive seven day program that attracts Casual Relief Teachers looking to re-enter the workforce. Particular aspects of the program have been developed in direct response to the needs of Casual Relief Teachers.</p> <p>Schools are encouraged to support casual relief teachers to participate in all school-based professional learning activities.</p> <p>The Department currently supports the VIT in the provision of professional learning for casual relief teachers and provides a number of programs specifically designed to support casual relief teachers to improve their knowledge and skills in current curriculum and pedagogy.</p>

Chapter 5 – Early Childhood Sector

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<p>Recommendation 5.1</p> <p>That the Victorian Government support professional learning for all professionals involved in the delivery of early childhood education and care, by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) supporting expectations for early childhood professionals to engage in ongoing professional learning, and for their employers to provide opportunities for them to do so; 	Accept	<p>The Department will provide professional learning centred on the Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework and the use of Learning and Development Statements for children starting school.</p> <p>The Department will release an Early Childhood Workforce Strategy in response to the need for increased qualification levels.</p> <p>The Department will encourage high performing entrants into early childhood services and will support the provision of professional learning opportunities to build and sustain the capacity of the current workforce.</p>

<p>(ii) facilitating clearer pathways for articulation between certificate, diploma and degree qualifications, including opportunities for the recognition of prior learning where appropriate;</p> <p>(iii) continuing to make scholarships and other forms of support available for existing early childhood professionals seeking to upgrade their expertise; and</p> <p>(iv) encouraging early childhood professionals to pursue opportunities for collegial professional learning, through site-based programs, networks or collaboration with schools and other service providers.</p>		
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