
SCHOOL POLICY & FUNDING ADVISORY COUNCIL

OFFICIAL STATEMENT: NOVEMBER 2017

ABOUT

Welcome to the first Official Statement of the School Policy and Funding Advisory Council (Council).

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

Council has five members:

- Gill Callister, Secretary, Department of Education and Training (Chair)
- Stephen Elder, Executive Director, Catholic Education Commission of Victoria
- Michelle Green, Chief Executive, Independent Schools Victoria
- Katy Haire, Deputy Secretary – Early Childhood and School Education Group, Department of Education and Training
- Professor Kwong Lee Dow, Independent Member, representing the views of students in all Victorian schools.

Council meets at least three times each year, and the school community will receive an Official Statement after each meeting. The Department provides secretariat support to the Council.

NEW MEMBER APPOINTED TO COUNCIL

We are delighted to welcome the new independent member to Council, Professor Kwong Lee Dow. Recently appointed by the Minister for Education, Professor Lee Dow has kindly agreed to serve in the role of an independent member to Council, representing the views and the voice of all Victorian students. Professor Lee Dow attended his first Council meeting in November 2017.

Professor Lee Dow is a renowned educator and academic with vast experience over many decades. Professor Lee Dow will provide Council with unique insights into the key issues affecting schools, including the Commonwealth needs-based funding arrangements articulated through the Gonski Review into Achieving Education Excellence.



Photo: Members of the School Policy and Funding Advisory Council, 2 November 2017. Left to right: Mr Bruce Armstrong, Professor Kwong Lee Dow, Mr Stephen Elder, Ms Gill Callister, and Ms Michelle Green. (Bruce Armstrong, Deputy Secretary – Regional Services Group, DET, representing Katy Haire.)

VICTORIA AS THE EDUCATION STATE

Since 2016, the three sectors have been working together through the Council to support Victoria's Education State school targets and improve outcomes for all Victorian students.

Within this framework, Council has discussed a broad range of policy priorities including school funding, integrity reform, child safety standards and facilitating stronger collaboration between schools across the sectors.

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CROSS-SECTORAL COLLABORATION

Since its inception, the School Policy and Funding Advisory Council (Council) has acknowledged the importance of the three school sectors working together to lift the educational outcomes of all Victorian students.

Council discussed some of the challenges and opportunities in working across sectors identified by school principals from each sector, and how school sector leaders could work together to address these issues.

Council endorsed a new practical resource for schools, *Improving Together: A cross-sector collaboration toolkit for principals* (the Toolkit). The Toolkit aims to help principals identify when cross-sector collaboration might be most useful for their schools.

The Toolkit includes practical steps for principals to establish a partnership with a school from another sector. It also provides a number of best practice examples of successful school collaborations across Victoria.

The Toolkit will be distributed to schools in Term 4.

SCHOOL LEADERS FOR GENDER EQUALITY AND RESPECT

Council has endorsed an exciting new initiative, *School Leaders for Gender Equality and Respect*, a group of principals, students and education leaders representing all three sectors to promote gender equality in schools.

The initiative will focus on promoting respect and gender equality in schools and the group's first priorities are to develop an Action Plan for 2018.

Adam Fennessy, former Secretary of the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP) has been appointed as independent convener. Adam is a Male Champion of Change and led a major gender equality initiative at DELWP.

ARTS EDUCATION

The Council is committed to the value of arts education and creativity in helping to equip young people for the challenges of the future.

Supporting more Victorian students to reach the highest level of achievement in the Arts is a target of the Education State. Council is exploring initiatives to promote cross-sectoral approaches to arts education, including research, information-sharing, and arts events and activities.

An initiative of Independent Schools Victoria, the Arts Learning Festival was held in May 2017. The Council-supported festival was highly successful with all school sectors and the wider community participating in a range of innovative and creative arts events.



Ms Gill Callister (Chair) Secretary Department of Education and Training	Mr Stephen Elder Executive Director Catholic Education Commission of Victoria	Ms Michelle Green Chief Executive Independent Schools Victoria	Ms Katy Haire Deputy Secretary Department of Education and Training	Prof. Kwong Lee Dow Independent Member University of Melbourne
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