



VPA Position Paper

Consultation Process

Purpose

The Victorian Principals Association (VPA), in representing the interests of PCOs, seeks timely, thorough and transparent consultation processes with representatives of the DEECD.

Background to the VPA Position

The VPA position has been developed in the following context:

- A history of inconsistent approaches to consultation with DEECD representatives.
- Undue pressure placed upon PCOs and staff as result of untimely and demanding implementation of policies, programs and initiatives.
- A history of ineffective implementation of policies, programs and initiatives.

VPA Position

- The VPA expects DEECD representatives to honour the consultation definition within the 2008 VGSA:
Consultation is not perfunctory advice on what is going to happen. This is a common misconception. Consultation is providing the Individual, or other relevant persons, with a bona fide opportunity to influence the decision maker....Consultation is not joint decision making or even negative or frustrating barrier to the prerogative of management to make decisions. Consultation allows the decision making process to be informed.....
- The VPA is afforded opportunity to comment on *consultation plans* prior to commencement. The VPA will provide advice on the content of the consultation plan.
- The VPA will support consultation processes that:
 - Include VPA representation
 - Are broadly based with representatives from regions, schools and, when appropriate, academics
 - Have a clear implementation process, including a rationale for the choice of pilot schools
 - Provide for documentation from pilots being available for review
 - Provide funding for implementation deemed sufficient by PCOs
 - Provide PCOs with adequate advance notice
 - Provide PCOs with briefings preceding public announcements
 - Include a staff and school councillor communication strategy
 - Provide information for parents in appropriate languages.

The VPA *Consultation Process* position paper was initiated by VPA Board and Council Members in August 2009. Further work on this document was undertaken by VPA President and Executive Officer.