



## VPA Position Paper

### SSSO Network Restructure

The Victorian Principals Association (VPA) welcomes the provision of School Service Support Officers (SSSO) in government schools. The VPA acknowledges that students are better prepared for learning when they are healthy, safe and happy and that student welfare is the responsibility of all staff working in a whole school context.

#### **Purpose**

The Victorian Principals Association (VPA) notes *The Framework for Student Support Services in Victorian Government Schools* outlines the principles, arrangements and the additional resources provided to strengthen student welfare and support services. The Framework also outlines the concepts of 'continuity of care' and 'partnerships between the school and the community' as the key to improving the services provided to students and their families.

VPA considers the role of the SSSO as essential, therefore increased hours and consistent support according to individual student need is vital for positive student learning outcomes.

#### **Background to the VPA Position**

The VPA position has been determined in the following context:

- Reduced support hours for some students.
- Increased turnover of SSSO within DEECD.
- Insufficient SSSO availability during times of increased needs, eg Black Saturday Bushfires.
- Restructure has dislocated relationship-building within schools.
- Additional funds being spent on SSSO administration rather on SSSO provision.

#### **VPA Position**

- Increase in SSSO/student ratios at the service delivery to students level.
- Staffing levels reviewed to take into account distance, growth corridors and student enrolments.
- SSSO hours aligned with individual student need.
- Consistent individual SSSO support of individual students to increase student learning capabilities.
- DEECD partnerships with SSSO service providers increased and targeted for specific times of need eg Black Saturday.
- Referral process to be time efficient and response times effective, not delayed by paper warfare.
- SSSO Network Leader position to be implemented to co-ordinate working conditions for SSSOs, funded outside the network.
- Individual schools to agree to the service priorities.
- Program for Students with Disabilities assessments to be funded on top of existing SSSO allocation.
- Clear guidelines, roles, responsibilities and contacts including:
  - Key SSSO contacts in each network
  - Roles and responsibilities of SSSO, school, family, SSSO family leader
  - Responsibilities of banker schools - purchase of equipment, tests, and storage of confidential information
  - Responsibilities of banker school principal in relation to ICT, furniture, OHS, attendance SSSOs

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- Role in PSD timelines, reviews and appeals
  - Complaints processes
  - Critical incidents
  - Autistic Assessments
  - Network responsibilities
  - Housing dispersed throughout network or on one site, in schools co-location.

The VPA *SSSO Network Restructure* position paper was initiated by VPA Board and Council Members in June 2009. Further work on this document was undertaken by VPA President and Council at the Council Meeting on 28 August, 2009.