



Victorian Principals Association

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VPA Position Paper

Building Maintenance Funding

Purpose

The Victorian Principals Association (VPA) calls for an increase in school maintenance funding and clear timelines outlining when this funding will be received.

Background to the VPA Position

The VPA position has been determined in the following context:

- The School Buildings and Facilities audit revealed that many schools across Victoria require building and maintenance and that \$120 million worth of work is needed to address this. The audit identified priority spending areas known as the 'Pipeline'.
- The time between audits and when work commences is too long. Furthermore the time that has passed since the last audits is unacceptable with some schools still having received absolutely no funding. Schools have deteriorated further since the last audit.
- A clear timeline of when and how maintenance funding will be distributed across Victoria has not been shared with schools. The payment of maintenance funding has been erratic, with some schools receiving payment whilst others are still waiting. This makes planning difficult for schools.
- The amount of money allocated to schools to tackle maintenance issues is inadequate. The cost of tradespersons and maintenance services has increased. Many schools that have received funding have found that the amount provided does not cover the cost of the work that needs to be done. Schools are forced to fundraise to pay for school maintenance. This process produces stress and requires a lot of time for principals.
- In numerous instances, yearly allocated maintenance funding has only been used as a band aid measure. Many school buildings earmarked for maintenance are in a clear state of disrepair and need to be replaced or remodelled.
- DET does not have an accurate picture of what buildings are in use and which require repair within the school system.
- The online activation process for grants is problematic.

VPA Position

The VPA advocates for:

- DET to provide a clear, transparent timeline outlining when and how much additional maintenance funding will be allocated to specific Victorian schools as prioritised in the audit.
- School maintenance priorities should be determined by an independent body and removed from the political spectrum.
- Schools should have the option to allocate maintenance funding to urgent works.
- DET to provide additional, more realistic and timely levels of funding to schools that require building maintenance.
- When allocating funding, DET to show an increased awareness of the difficulty in securing specific tradespeople in country areas.

- The problems with the online activation programs to be rectified.
- A cyclical audit process with regular updating of information.
- The audit to include differentiation for older school buildings with high repair costs.