

## About this Communique

The Department of Education and Training (DET) – Community Sector Organisation (CSO) Governance Group is a quarterly forum for communication, consultation, engagement and collaboration between the Department and the community sector. Meetings are co-chaired by DET and the Victorian Council of Social Service (VCOSS) and reflect topics of mutual interest to DET and the sector. You can read more about the partnership agreement that underpins this work on [VCOSS](#) and [DET](#) websites.

This Communique has been prepared by VCOSS to increase the visibility of this forum.

## What was discussed in the September 2021 meeting?

The focus of this meeting was Transitions.

### Transitions

**Pippa Proctor, Director, Early Learning Reform, ECE and Rosie Pizzi, Acting Director, Early Learning Participation, ECE** presented on the transition supports and programs available to increase enrolment in kindergarten. These include targeted supports for priority cohorts including Aboriginal children, children from culturally and linguistically diverse communities, and children living in disadvantaged areas. Pippa and Rosie provided an update on resources and tools available to support transitions from early learning into primary school.

Further information on support available to transition into kindergarten, and from kindergarten to primary school can be found below:

- Transitions - <https://www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/professionals/learning/Pages/transition.aspx>
- Best Start - <https://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/Pages/beststart.aspx>
- LOOKOUT - <https://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/Pages/lookout.aspx>
- Access to Early Learning - <https://www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/professionals/health/Pages/access-to-early-learning.aspx>

**Sandra Dickins, Senior Policy & Project Officer, Learning and Teaching Division, SEPS** provided an update on the work being undertaken to review the transitions framework and related resources to support transitions from primary school to secondary school. An implementation plan is being developed to support this work, which will include resources to support parents and carers, and strategies to support vulnerable students.

**Jack Watt, Project Director, Senior Secondary Pathways Reform Taskforce** provided an overview of the reforms to Senior Secondary School following the Firth Report into vocational and applied learning. These reforms include an integrated single VCE certificate with a vocational specialisation stream, and a separate Foundation Pathways Certificate. DET is looking at communication strategies to ensure the reforms are effectively communicated to the diversity of all students and families.

Further information on the Firth Review and Senior Secondary Reforms can be found below:

- <https://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/department/Pages/vcal-pathways-review.aspx>  
<https://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/victorianseniorsecondarycertificatereform/Pages/Index.aspx>

**Will Trimble, Job, Skills and Pathways Manager, Mallee** presented on the new Jobs, Skills and Pathways Manager positions as part of the Firth Report. DET has funded one manager in each of the 17 DET regions to bring in local industry, applied learning opportunities and VET into the classroom.

## Supporting collaboration between the community sector and government

**Katrina Herbert, Head of Children's Programs, Brotherhood of St Laurence** spoke about enablers for successful collaboration between non-government organisations and government departments: trust in organisations; regular engagement opportunities with a network, not just individual relationships; having funding for evaluation and measuring impact built into contracts and shared understanding of priorities. Katrina used four case studies to highlight these enablers:

- the Family Learning Support Program which has assisted parents of preschool-aged children to access and engage with early childhood education during COVID-19, including during periods of remote learning. It is a targeted and tailored response for residents and families living in public housing estates and supported transitions into kindergarten
- the Frankston North Education Partnership which aims to break the cycle of disadvantage for children and young people in Frankston
- Cross Cultural Responsiveness – a targeted approach for culturally and linguistically diverse communities that shares knowledge and practice across the sector and enables training, coaching and community consultation projects
- Yarra Resident Voice Group, which empowers residents from public housing estates to have their say on improvements they want to see on the estates.

Further information about programs delivered by the Brotherhood of St Laurence can be found here:

<https://www.bsl.org.au/>

## Next meeting

The Term 4 meeting will be on the theme of Disability. Please contact VCOS if there is something that you'd like to share with us, to guide our planning for future meetings.

Deb Fewster, Director, Policy and Advocacy

Email: [Deborah.fewster@vcoss.org.au](mailto:Deborah.fewster@vcoss.org.au).

Talisha Ohanessian, Policy Advisor

Email: [Talisha.Ohanessian@vcoss.org.au](mailto:Talisha.Ohanessian@vcoss.org.au).