

## APPENDIX A

# Submissions and comments

We consulted with the Department of Education, and we considered its views when reaching our audit conclusions. As required by the *Audit Act 1994*, we gave a draft copy of this report to the department and asked for its submissions and comments.

Responsibility for the accuracy, fairness and balance of those comments rests solely with the department head.

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### Responses were received as follows:

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| Department of Education..... | 53 |
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## Department of Education

Secretary

2 Treasury Place  
East Melbourne Victoria 3002  
Telephone +61 3 9637 2000

BRI23121552

Mr Andrew Greaves  
Auditor-General  
Victorian Auditor-General's Office

Dear Mr Greaves

**Proposed report: Principal Health and Wellbeing performance audit**

Thank you for your letter of 29 May 2023 and the opportunity to comment on the proposed report for this audit.

The department welcomes the opportunity represented by this report to evaluate the progress that has been made to support the health and wellbeing of government school principals. The audit report will be an additional input to ongoing efforts to review and improve our principal health and wellbeing services and to reduce principal workload.

The unprecedented context in which Victorian government schools and principals have operated in 2020, 2021 and 2022 was not anticipated at the outset of the Principal Health and Wellbeing Strategy in 2018. Victorian government school principals have played a critical role as leaders of their school community through extraordinary times.

The impacts of the disruption caused by COVID-19 will continue to be felt for some time and the department will continue in its efforts to support principals to address these challenges.

As is noted in the report, the services provided by the department have been positively received by government school principals and have played a critical role in protecting the health and wellbeing of principals that have accessed the services during this challenging time.

It is pleasing that the results of the Australian Principal Occupational Health, Safety and Wellbeing Survey have consistently found that the health and wellbeing scores for Victorian Government Principals are better than that of principals in all other jurisdictions. Many of the department's reforms to support principal health and wellbeing have been nation leading with a high uptake and level of appreciation by principals who have utilised the services and products.

The issue of principal health and wellbeing remains a top priority for the department, and I believe the work that has been progressed in recent years provides a strong platform for further improvement.

Your details will be dealt with in accordance with the *Public Records Act 1973* and the *Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014*. Should you have any queries or wish to gain access to your personal information held by this department please contact our Privacy Officer at the above address



Response provided by the Secretary, Department of Education – *continued*

Yours sincerely



**Jenny Atta**  
Secretary  
13/6/2023

*Encl.: DE's feedback on VAGO's proposed report and action plan*

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**DE’s action plan: Principal Health and Wellbeing**

| # | Recommendations: That DE:  | Response            | #   | The department will:   | By end of (mm/yyyy): |
|---|--|---------------------|-----|--|----------------------|
| 1 | <p>progressively rolls out an opt-in organisational design implementation project that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>provides intensive support to school leadership teams, such as through coaching, advice and feedback, to implement organisational design changes</li> <li>ensures time is available for school leadership teams to participate in the project</li> <li>communicates to school councils and communities the benefits of organisational design and the need to allocate funding to it</li> <li>uses lessons from the early implementation to inform whether, and how, the changes are rolled out state-wide.</li> </ul> | Accept in principle | 1.1 | Refresh the organisational design guide and supporting materials.  | January 2025         |
|   |  |                     | 1.2 | Develop an implementation plan for the updated organisational design guide and material. This will include a communication action plan to communicate the benefits of organisational design to school leadership teams.                                      | June 2025            |
| 2 | <p>uses the School Administration Support Hub (or a similar model) to support principals with administrative tasks by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>progressively increasing its capacity and expanding access to more schools (on an opt-in basis)</li> <li>progressively expanding its services in response to school demand, and in consideration of other DE initiatives (to avoid duplication and maximise efficiency and economies of scale)</li> <li>routinely monitoring, evaluating, and reporting on its effectiveness in meeting principals’ needs and reducing their workloads.</li> </ul>                                     | Accept              | 2.1 | Expand access to more schools by promoting School Administration Support Hub (SASH) services and actively tracking number of schools supported.  | December 2024        |
|   |  |                     | 2.2 | Conduct an evaluation of SASH to explore its effectiveness in meeting needs and reducing workloads. The department will then build on findings of the report to produce formal consideration of expansion of services and synergy with other DE initiatives. | December 2024        |

| # | Recommendations: That DE:   | Response            | #   | The department will:   | By end of (mm/yyyy): |
|---|---|---------------------|-----|--|----------------------|
| 3 | <p>develop and implement a principal health and wellbeing evaluation framework that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• monitors, evaluates, and reports on the following for Victorian government school principals:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• number and types of workers compensation claims</li> <li>• number and types of injuries that did not progress to an approved workers compensation claim</li> <li>• return-to-work rates</li> <li>• sick leave</li> <li>• attrition</li> <li>• job application rates</li> <li>• general health perception</li> <li>• job satisfaction</li> <li>• stress</li> <li>• burnout</li> <li>• depressive symptoms</li> <li>• sleeping troubles</li> </ul> </li> <li>• sets a workload reduction target for principals, including a timeframe for its achievement, and monitors, evaluates and reports against it</li> <li>• monitors, evaluates and reports on principals' average weekly working hours, and the ACU's 'quantitative demands' and 'work pace' measures</li> <li>• addresses issues in its current datasets to allow it to accurately monitor outcomes, including by monitoring the number of principals who leave their principalships to take up other roles within the department</li> <li>• reports progress against the achievement of the outcome measures to principals at least annually.</li> </ul> | Accept in principle | 3.1 | Develop and implement a principal health and wellbeing evaluation framework that uses a range of data to measure outcomes, in considering the intent of this recommendation. | December 2024        |
|   |   |                     | 3.2 | Monitor and report results to the government school principals (or key stakeholders as appropriate) on progress against outcomes measured in action 3.1.                     | June 2025            |