

FINDINGS OF THE INDEPENDENT REVIEW OF THE VICTORIAN COLLEGE FOR THE DEAF

Response from the Department of Education and Training

The Department of Education and Training welcomes the Victorian College for the Deaf Review Report, and has accepted all of the recommendations.

The Department would like to acknowledge the response received throughout the review panel's community engagement period and thank the school and broader community for their input and feedback to the review. The Department would also like to thank the review panel led by Ms Veronica Pardo.

The report clearly highlights that more needs to be done to improve student outcomes and their aspirations. This will be a significant focus for the Department and the school leadership team in the coming years. The Department has been working to develop an action plan in consultation with the school to act on these recommendations.

It also found that there are a number of broader systemic challenges in the education of Deaf and hard of hearing students including teacher education and pathways which will be the subject of further work by the Department.

Advisory group

The report recommended the establishment of an advisory group to provide support and expert advice to the school leadership team as they implement the report's recommendations, as well as the School Strategic Plan and the Annual Implementation Plan.

The Department is working with the College to confirm the membership of the advisory group, by invitation, and to schedule its inaugural meeting.

The Department is currently looking to engage an international expert in sign language and bilingual/bicultural education, to act as a 'mentor' for the College for the remainder of 2019.

The Victorian Deaf Education Institute (VDEI) will also develop a plan to support the College in implementing these recommendations, including opportunities for the College to position itself as a centre of excellent practice in the bilingual/bicultural education of Deaf children.

Student outcomes

The recommendations are underpinned by a focus on improving student outcomes through the development of tools and consistent approaches to assessing students' needs and developing effective Individual Education Plans that maximise academic, social and wellbeing outcomes.

The College's 2019 Annual Improvement Plan has identified this work as a priority. It has engaged specialist staff to undertake language assessments of students to ensure teaching and learning is tailored to the individual student's point of need.

The report also highlighted the need to strengthen career pathways for students. Effective pathways planning is crucial to redressing the barriers to workforce participation faced by young people with disabilities.

The Department will support the College to develop a Pathways Plan that accesses the suite of Career Education Plan initiatives and the Enhanced Work Readiness for students with a disability, and which lays the groundwork for developing partnerships with local secondary schools and higher education providers.

The Pathways Plan will expand learning opportunities that align with students' aspirations and specific learning goals, preparing them for the jobs of the future.

School Performance

An accredited school reviewer worked closely with the school leadership team in late 2018 and identified several key improvement strategies, goals and targets for inclusion in the School Strategic Plan and embedded into day-to-day practice. The school has been progressing this work and has several actions in place for 2019.

Transport arrangements

The report recommended a separate review of transport arrangements for enrolled students. This work is currently underway and is being assessed in accordance with the Students with Disabilities Transport Program.

This review will also consider daily travel times for students attending the College. The College will consult with families should there be a proposal to change the current arrangements.

Conclusion

To quote the report, there is a 'universal hope that the College could be supported to grow and thrive as a centre of excellent practice in the education of Deaf children and as a focal point for connection with the Deaf community'.

The Department supports this view and is committed to working as partners with the school and broader community to develop and deliver a shared vision for the College's future.

For further information; see:

- www.education.vic.gov.au/about/department/Pages/vcd
- or email swvr@edumail.vic.gov.au

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