


COR2173350

33 St Andrews Place  
East Melbourne Victoria 3002  
Telephone (03) 9637 2000  
DX210083



Michael Petterson MLA  
Chair  
Standing Committee on Education and Community Inclusion  
[lacommitteeeci@parliament.act.gov.au](mailto:lacommitteeeci@parliament.act.gov.au)

Dear Mr Petterson

Thank you for your correspondence of 6 April 2021 addressed to the Hon. James Merlino MP, Minister for Education, regarding the Inquiry into the Management of Australian Capital Territory (ACT) School Infrastructure. To provide assistance and inform the ACT's inquiry, the Minister has asked me to provide information on the management of Victorian government schools.

With a school building asset base valued at over \$20 billion and more than 1,540 government schools, 27,000 core buildings, and additional assets to maintain and care for, the Department of Education and Training (Victorian Government) understands that having modern and up-to-date classrooms and school facilities is a fundamental part of ensuring that every child has the best possible education. The Department is committed to ensuring that Victoria's high-quality education system is matched by high-quality learning environments, where students are engaged, stimulated and encouraged to be creative thinkers.

In March 2016, the Victorian Auditor-General's Office (VAGO) announced a review into the management of Victorian school infrastructure. The VAGO review considered how effectively the Department was planning for, and managing programs to deliver maintenance works, build new schools, and upgrade existing schools in established areas. On 11 May 2017, VAGO tabled its report, *Managing School Infrastructure (the Report)*, to Parliament.

The Report contained seven recommendations for the Department to: complete the delivery of reforms that were underway at the time; clarify governance arrangements around asset planning and management roles and responsibilities (between the Department, school councils and school principals); establish a monitoring and evaluation framework for the Department's asset strategy; test the accuracy of the Department's enrolment forecasts; establish guidelines to inform decisions for managing changing enrolments in established areas; work with local councils and other partners to strategically plan and design multi-use, shared, and co-located facilities before new schools were funded; and develop an investment strategy for government school assets to optimise maintenance over the entire life of assets.

The Department accepted each of the report's recommendations and made a submission outlining how it would address them (included the Report). The Standing Committee on Education and Community Inclusion (the Committee) can find further information on the Report and the Department's responses to each recommendation at: <https://www.audit.vic.gov.au/> (search: managing school infrastructure).

More recently, on 23 September 2019, the Public Accounts and Estimates Committee (PAEC) resolved to conduct a follow-up inquiry into the Report (that is, the Inquiry into the Auditor-General's report No. 253: Managing School Infrastructure). Consequently, the Department made a submission to the inquiry in February 2020, outlining the context of school asset management in Victoria, the challenges in managing such a large system, and the extensive work undertaken to manage school infrastructure.

The Department's submission detailed: the history of asset management in Victorian government schools; the delivery of the School Management Reform Program; how the Department is managing growth; recent investment in school infrastructure; future asset management reform considerations; and the responses to the recommendations made by the 2017 VAGO Report as well as the Department's performance against them. The Committee may find further information on the PAEC inquiry and the Department's associated submission at: <https://www.parliament.vic.gov.au/> (search: Inquiry into Auditor-General's report No. 253 Managing School Infrastructure).

Victoria is now growing faster than any other jurisdiction in Australia. School enrolments have grown more than 10 per cent since 2014, and the Department expects this trend to continue with 115,000 additional students anticipated to enter the system over a five-year period (from 2020–25). Approximately two thirds of these students are expected to attend a government school. The Department, nonetheless, is confident that Victoria is well placed to deal with the challenges of population growth and the requirements to manage its school infrastructure asset base. Overall, the Department is proud of the work undertaken so far in relation to school asset management reform.

I trust the above information is of use to the inquiry into the management of ACT school infrastructure.

[REDACTED]

Yours sincerely

[REDACTED]

**Tom Kirkland**  
Acting Chief Executive Officer  
Victorian School Building Authority  
27/04/2021

Cc: Danton Leary, Committee Secretary, [danton.leary@parliament.act.gov.au](mailto:danton.leary@parliament.act.gov.au)