



















VIT data shows that only 98% of the PRTs supported through the PRT Grants Program during the reporting period are registered. Of the PRTs supported through the Grants Program in 2021-22, 61% have moved to full registration, with the acquittal period still to be completed for this cohort. With 18-months of the acquittal period remaining for 2022-23 recipients, 34% have already progressed to full registration.

**Public Accounts and Estimates Committee  
Inquiry into 2021–22 and 2022–23 Financial and Performance Outcomes**

**Responses to Questions on Notice**

**Question 8**

Portfolio:	Schools
Witness:	Jenny Atta
Committee member:	Nicholas McGowan
Page/s of transcript:	12

**Transcript:**

**Nick McGOWAN:** Thank you. Good afternoon to everyone. Page 147 of the Department of Education and Training annual report 2021–22 refers to employee expenses, including payroll tax. **Secretary, can the department provide a list of how much each school in Victoria pays in payroll tax?**

**Jenny ATTA:** Mr McGowan, are you talking about the reporting period?

**Nick McGOWAN:** For any period. The two reporting periods would be great, but if you can do this year as well, that would be awesome.

**Jenny ATTA:** Anything you would add, Mr Bates?

**Anthony BATES:** Yes, we can, Mr McGowan. **Payroll tax for most school staff, so teachers and support staff, is all paid centrally, so we do all of those payroll tax calculations and remissions on behalf of schools. I do not have it at hand, but my team can produce a list by school.**

**Answer:**

Refer to **Attachment 1: Payroll tax by Victorian government school (2021-22 and 2022-23)**.

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**Responses to Questions on Notice**

**Question 9**

Portfolio:	Schools
Witness:	Jenny Atta
Committee member:	Danny O’Brien
Page/s of transcript:	3

**Transcript:**

**Danny O’BRIEN:** Thank you, Chair, and good afternoon, Secretary and witnesses. Secretary, can I ask: during the reporting period, was any work done to determine the areas across the state suffering the severe shortage of teachers?

**Jenny ATTA:** Yes, Mr O’Brien, we have been very, very focused on that, and carefully trying to map what supply and demand looks like across the system because it is uneven. The majority of our schools are fully staffed, or close to fully staffed, but we have other schools that are under significant pressure.

**Danny O’BRIEN:** **Where are they? Is there a geographic area that is –**

**Jenny ATTA:** The geographic areas are most particularly the growth corridors of Melbourne and different parts of regional Victoria.

**Danny O’BRIEN:** **Is there data on that that could be provided to the committee?**

**Jenny ATTA:** **Yes, it is possible that we could –** Mr Robinson might be able to talk to our key areas that we are focused on, but we could certainly provide –

**Danny O’BRIEN:** **I do not want to go through a whole lot of detail but if there are actually lists of areas that are under-served at the moment that would be good.**

**Jenny ATTA:** Yes, we will follow that up, Mr O’Brien.

**Danny O’BRIEN:** Okay. Take that on notice. Thank you.

**Answer:**

Recruitment metrics by departmental Area for Victorian government **primary** schools which had the most significant workforce challenges in attracting and recruiting teachers for the 2022 calendar year are as follows:

Area	Application rate*
Brimbank Melton	2.8
Goulburn	2.1
Hume Merri-bek	4.0
Inner Gippsland	3.2
Loddon	3.4
Mallee	2.4
Outer Gippsland	1.9
Ovens Murray	2.2
Wimmera South West	2.2
Western Melbourne	3.5

\*Application rate is the average number of applications received per teaching staff vacancy in the indicated area. The average application rate across Victorian government primary schools in 2022 was 5.3 applications per vacancy.

Recruitment metrics by departmental Area for Victorian government **secondary** schools which had the most significant workforce challenges in attracting and recruiting teachers for the 2022 calendar year are as follows:

Area	Application rate
Brimbank Melton	1.7
Goulburn	0.9
Hume Merri-bek	2.0
Inner Gippsland	1.8
Loddon	1.8
Mallee	1.0
Outer Gippsland	0.7
Ovens Murray	1.8
Wimmera South West	1.3

\*Application rate is the average number of applications received per teaching staff vacancy in the indicated area. The average application rate across Victorian government secondary schools in 2022 was 2.8 applications per vacancy.

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**Question 10**

Portfolio:	Schools
Witness:	Jenny Atta
Committee member:	Danny O’Brien
Page/s of transcript:	4

**Transcript:**

**David ROBINSON:** Thanks, Secretary. There is a range of things that we do to both support the system as a whole and rural and regional Victoria, as well as individual targeted schools where they need it. The first thing to say is we have the targeted teacher financial incentive program, which is providing incentives of up to \$50,000 for teachers to move into rural and regional areas, with retention payments of \$9000 per year for every year that they stay in those schools.

**Danny O’BRIEN:** Was that just geographically based or on particular specialties?

**David ROBINSON:** It is geographically based, but the incentives increase based on how rural and remote a particular community is. It is \$25,000 for those regional schools, and then it rises to \$50,000 for those schools that are in more rural areas.

**Danny O’BRIEN:** **And has it actually worked?**

**David ROBINSON:** We have filled all of the incentives that were available over the reporting period. For the reporting period there were 400 of those funded, and all of them have been filled. The retention of those teachers in schools has been relatively good, with upwards of 90 per cent staying within the school that they were recruited to or staying within the government school system, so –

**Danny O’BRIEN:** **For a period of how long?**

**David ROBINSON:** Over the period of the funding of the program since 2019 – the most recent data on that retention is not available, but for that period that is what we have seen.

**Danny O’BRIEN:** **Would you be able to share that data with the committee?**

**David ROBINSON:** Yes, we can take that on notice.

**Answer:**

The Teacher Financial Incentives (TFI) initiative seeks to attract and retain suitably qualified teachers in hard-to-staff positions in Victorian government schools.

During the reporting period 401 incentives of up to \$50,000 have been filled under the program. Teachers taking up positions through the program at outer regional and remote schools received a \$50,000 incentive, teachers taking up positions in inner regional schools received a \$21,000 incentive and teachers taking up positions in metropolitan schools received a \$9,000 incentive.

Number of Incentives	Financial Year
250	2021-22
151	2022-23

In addition, retention payments of up to \$9,000 are paid to the teacher on the completion of their second, third and fourth year of employment at the school.

For the 2021-22 cohort 79% of the 250 TFI teachers who received upfront financial incentives remain in their same (original) TFI school. An additional 13% remain teaching in another Victorian

government school. This means that a total of 92% remain with the Victorian government school system.

For the 2022-23 cohort 93% of the 151 teachers who received upfront financial incentives remain in their same (original) TFI school. An additional 4% remain teaching in another Victorian government school. This means that a total of 97% remain with the Victorian government school system.

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**Question 11**

Portfolio:	Schools
Witness:	Jenny Atta
Committee member:	Danny O’Brien
Page/s of transcript:	5

**Transcript:**

**Danny O’BRIEN:** Yes. That would be good. Sorry, just back on schools – **can the department provide a breakdown on schools across Victoria who have an acting or temporary principal and have not had a permanent principal for more than 12 months?**

**Jenny ATTA:** Yes. We will have a look and see what we can provide on that, Mr O’Brien.

**Question on Notice:**

How many schools have had an Acting Principal/vacancy for more than 12 months?

**Answer:**

As at June 2023, 3% of Victorian government schools (51 schools) had an acting principal between July 2022 to June 2023.

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**Responses to Questions on Notice**

**Question 12**

Portfolio:	Schools
Witness:	Jenny Atta
Committee member:	Nicholas McGowan
Page/s of transcript:	13

**Transcript:**

**Nick McGOWAN:** Okay. Just picking up on some of the conversation earlier about the schools for children with some disabilities. Heatherwood School I know obviously had the fire just recently, and I know the kids and the community there are very keen to make sure that they have as little interruption as possible, notwithstanding there is construction occurring there, so it was very, very bad timing on many fronts. **I am wondering if you could give some assurance at least to the community locally that starting the new year next year there will be some sort of certainty going forward for them in terms of what their future looks like there.**

**Jenny ATTA:** Look, I do not have the details with me, Mr McGowan, but we would be absolutely wanting to make sure that at every step of the way the school community had as much clarity as we could give them. It is really unfortunate and tough on that school community.

**Nick McGOWAN:** Totally. If the local member there could have a briefing perhaps with you or with the department or anyone you deem fit, that would be very useful.

**Jenny ATTA:** **Yes, we can follow that up through the minister’s office.**

**Nick McGOWAN:** I am meaning Nicole Werner; she is the local member there.

**Answer:**

On Saturday 26 August 2023, a fire broke out at Heatherwood School impacting roughly 60–70% of the building. The site was released to the Department of Education the next day and isolated from the school community. The required asbestos removal and demolition of the Block A was completed on 29 August.

The school has been able to stay on-site and classes resumed on 30 August 2023. The department provided a food technology relocatable onsite to support the school which was completed on 2 October 2023.

The department is currently exploring options to rebuild Block A. The tendering for a consultant design team for the replacement of Building A is in progress and is envisaged the team will be commence the design of the facility by the start of Term 1 2024.

As part of the 2020–21 State Budget, Heatherwood School was allocated \$10 million to deliver the next stage of its masterplan which includes Block B. The builder who was awarded the contract entered into administration in May 2023. A letter of contract award was issued to the new contractor on Friday 17 November with the works expected to commence in December.



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**Question 13**

Portfolio:	Schools
Witness:	Jenny Atta
Committee member:	Nicholas McGowan
Page/s of transcript:	16

**Transcript:**

**Nick McGOWAN:** In terms of quantity, do you know how many teachers might be affected, or staff under the department’s remit?

**Jenny ATTA:** No, I do not have any numbers on that sort of scenario modelling about what that would look like.

**Nick McGOWAN:** **Would you know the quantity of teachers who might be on WorkCover for greater than 130 weeks?**

**Jenny ATTA:** Yes, we would have that data.

**Nick McGOWAN:** **Would you mind providing that to us?**

**Jenny ATTA:** **We will have a look at what we can provide.**

**Answer:**

The department has 413 claims with over 130 weeks paid/payable (these are historic claims that have previously been granted secondary entitlement). As the modernisation changes are not slated to change historic entitlement, these claims would not be impacted by the modernisation bill.

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**Responses to Questions on Notice**

**Question 14**

Portfolio:	Schools
Witness:	Jenny Atta
Committee member:	Danny O'Brien
Page/s of transcript:	6

**Transcript:**

**Danny O'BRIEN:** If you would not mind, a bit of detail on that would be useful. **During the reporting period did the VCAA undertake a review of any of the VCE exams for mistakes or errors, and was there an internal or an external review undertaken?**

**Jenny ATTA:** Mr O'Brien, the VCAA, as I am advised, had undertaken a review of some mathematics examinations after a range of issues had been raised with them. I do not have the detail of that with me, but there was a review that they undertook 12, 18 months ago.

**Danny O'BRIEN:** Sorry, you said you would come back to me with some detail?

**Jenny ATTA:** **I said I do not have the detail on that, but we can come back to you on the scope and timing and nature of that.**

**Danny O'BRIEN:** Is it publicly available?

**Jenny ATTA:** Is it publicly available? I do not believe so.

**David HOWES:** My understanding is it was a review of the mathematics exam. **They engaged a company to look at that, and one of the questions was 'Were there errors of mathematics in the exam?' My understanding – and I am happy to take this one on notice – is that they did not find there were errors of mathematics. There were some recommendations about how some language could be tightened.**

**Danny O'BRIEN:** **Any further information you can provide would be welcome. If you can provide a copy of the review, then we would welcome it as well.**

**Question on Notice:**

What was the scope, timing and nature of the VCAA review that was done 12-18 months ago? If possible, can the committee be provided with the report?

**Answer:**

In January 2023, Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu Ltd (Deloitte) was engaged to conduct an independent review of the 2022 Mathematics examination development process to provide feedback and recommendations to improve the effectiveness of the examination development process and the roles of the personnel involved in the examination development. The review is not publicly available.

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**Responses to Questions on Notice**

**Question 15**

Portfolio:	Schools
Witness:	David Howes
Committee member:	Danny O'Brien
Page/s of transcript:	6

**Transcript:**

**Danny O'BRIEN:** Given, though, as you said, there are many eyes involved in the development of the exam, particularly when you get towards the end, what about digital security? Because presumably it is not everyone literally looking at a hard copy. I assume they are whizzing around to experts via email and the like at times.

**David HOWES:** No, that would not be the case. I would need to come back to you with the detail of what the most recent practice is.

**Danny O'BRIEN:** They would be physically in a room working on the exam.

**David HOWES:** That has been the past practice. I would need to get back to you with –

**Danny O'BRIEN:** If you would not mind, a bit of detail on that would be useful.

**Answer:**

The VCAA examination development manual outlines required key security measures at each process stage.

During the examination development phase, strict security directions to maintain the confidentiality and security of the examination materials must be followed. These protocols are outlined in writing and discussed at both the Introductory Meeting and subsequent Panel Briefing Meetings.

Examination material cannot be stored on network or local computer drives and are transferred via a secure file sharing network. No email, mail, text, fax, or similar transmission of these materials is allowed. Hard copies are hand-delivered or sent via a VCAA-approved security courier, sealed and marked confidentially. After an exam is sent for mark-up, panel members must not retain electronic or paper copies.

All panel members must sign a confidentiality agreement, ensuring they do not disclose any information about the exam outside of the panel, except to the Examination Development Manager. Panel members are also obligated to report any breaches or potential breaches of security immediately.

Post-submission, the VCAA finalises examination branding and stores the examination securely. Proofs are provided in hardcopy for panel review in a secure VCAA office space, ensuring all copies are accounted for after reviews. The examination sitting also occurs in this secure environment.