



The Hon James Merlino MP

Deputy Premier
Minister for Education

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COR 15269

Dr Jennifer Strauss AM
President, Graduate Women Victoria
2/12 Tollington Avenue
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Dear Ms Strauss

Thank you for your letter regarding the funding position for the final two years of the Gonski agreement and investment in schools.

I share your concerns about securing funding for the final two years of the Gonski Agreement. The Commonwealth Government has indicated it will not meet its commitment to the Gonski Agreement in 2018 and 2019, putting over \$1 billion in Commonwealth funding to Victorian schools at risk. This decision compromises the ability of schools to provide high-quality education to all students, particularly those in need.

Victoria's 2015-16 State Budget reconfirmed our commitment to the Gonski Agreement and fully delivered on our obligations under the National Education Reform Agreement, with full allocations for the 2015, 2016 and 2017 school years. Further, the findings of the Bracks Review will inform State budget decisions beyond 2017, consistent with Victoria's commitment to the Gonski Agreement.

I have raised these issues with Commonwealth Government Ministers through the national Education Council, and I am seeking to secure a fair and sustainable approach to funding all schools. I hope that the Commonwealth Government is willing to honour the funding agreements and partner with Victoria to develop funding arrangements post-2017.

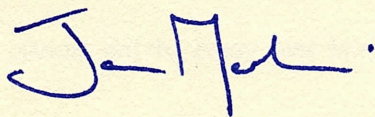
The Victorian Government is committed to Victoria becoming the Education State, through improving the educational outcomes of every Victorian child, regardless of their location or background. Just as you have expressed in your letter, we understand that in order to ensure that students receive a top quality education we need a high-quality workforce of inspired and talented teachers and school leaders.

I note your concern regarding reports of the exodus of teachers within the first five years. The attrition rate of ongoing teaching staff in the Victorian government school sector is quite low at 2.3 per cent in 2014 for staff aged less than 30 years. In addition, Department data indicates that the proportion of fixed term employment among early career teachers decreases significantly as they establish themselves in the profession and the separation rate of fixed-term employees in government schools is well below the average for the overall public sector workforce.

The terms and conditions of employment in the Government teaching service are regulated by an enterprise agreement which provides for working conditions consistent with public sector standards. Department policy provides for the local management of teacher work within reasonable and transparent state wide parameters that recognise the changing nature of work organisation in schools. Within these parameters, each school decides how best to deploy teachers to deliver quality education. There are also grievance mechanisms available to teachers should they consider the work required of them to be excessive or unreasonable.

If you would like further information, please contact Ms Caroline Cawthorn, Manager, Strategic Budget Management, Department of Education and Training, on 9637 2996 or by email: cawthorn.caroline.c@edumail.vic.gov.au

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'J. Merlino'.

21.3.16

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