



# Victorian Principals Association

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## VPA Position Paper

### Student Resource Package Funding

#### Purpose

The Victorian Principals Association (VPA) seeks to ensure that adequate funding is apportioned to the Student Resource Packages (SRP) to deliver high quality education throughout Victorian government schools. In reference to the Auditor General's Report, the VPA calls on the government to recognise and address the funding shortfall in Victorian government schools.

#### Background to the VPA Position

The VPA position has been determined in the following context:

- Government data shows that the expenditure on Victorian primary school students is 14.4% lower than the national average and is the lowest in Australia.
- There is a lack of clarity around the SRP for schools to interpret and use it effectively.
- The budget, 84% of which is spent in salary, has been reduced to one line which is not transparent. This results in complications, particularly for new inexperienced principals.
- Schools that do not receive equity funding are put in a financial and moral position to raise such funds independently to support their students. This has also resulted in different schools having different funding models and parents shopping around based on this.
- Inadequate funding means that principals in small schools need to take on a teaching load, overburdening their workload.
- The lack of adequate government resourcing is driving a wedge between parents and schools and making it more difficult for schools to build positive relationships with their community.
- SRPs are generally insufficient to manage the complexity of school operations and more schools are descending into deficit.
- The funding model is based on a "unit cost" rate that is below the reality of a majority of staff profiles, resulting in a technical deficit before principals even start their budget processes.
- There is a perceived lack of transparency in current SRP allocations.
- Concerns over residual costs borne by the school when staff take leave. The impact is greater if this leave is taken at half pay.
- Concern over increasing examples of schools having to fund teachers taking carers' leave.
- School utilities cost increases of up to 30% in past two years, including electricity, gas and water.
- Funding for annual contracts is grossly insufficient.
- Level 4 PSD funding almost impossible to obtain for severely behaviour challenged students.
- Language disorder funding is inadequate.

- Combination of different funding rates into Year 1 and Year 2 rate, decreases SRP funding to schools e.g. a reduction of the funding rate for Year 2 students without consultation has caused a drop in SRP allocations for P-6 schools.
- Cleaning allowance funding is inadequate.
- Inadequate ICT funding to schools.
- Insufficient funding for school office administration staffing.
- Stages of schooling funding indexes are not based on need but reflect historic, EBA conditions, sustaining the inequity between primary and secondary funding levels.

### **VPA Position**

The VPA advocates for:

- Urgent review of the government's fluid financial model and this acted upon.
- Clear and transparent processes in reporting SRP funding formulas. Funding allocated to specific areas such as Languages or IT should be clearly identified rather than included in the overall per student allocation.
- An easy to use, accurate and single SRP report that includes all information rather than a number of different reports.
- A hyperlink to be made available to give budget scenarios with varying size schools, providing an indication of how budgets could be allocated, thus assisting recently appointed principals.
- Incorporation of full wage and superannuation increases in funding models.
- Full coverage for replacement of teachers on leave whether half or full pay.
- Additional funds needed for Sick and Carer Leave to cover the actual growing costs in schools.
- Utility funding to fully cover costs incurred by schools.
- Immediate funding to cover the costs of fire services maintenance and electrical tagging.
- Increase all funding to the national average of real in school dollar amounts per child.
- Review of cleaning rates to reflect real cleaning costs to schools.
- Planned phasing of equity of the primary funding model with secondary per capita funding.
- An increase in ICT funding for hardware, local technician salaries and greater TSSP time allocations.
- Fund-in rate to be at the genuine "average" of a "normal" staffing profile based on enrolments.
- Funding should be adequate to provide per capita Assistant Principal funding as well as funding to provide specialist teaching in P.E, Performance Arts, Visual Arts and Languages.