



Victorian Principals Association

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VPA Position Paper

Interstate and Overseas Travel for Leaders

Purpose

The Victorian Principals Association (VPA) is concerned that the current and any future travel restrictions put in place by the Education Department will negatively impact on both Victoria's reputation and the opportunities for school leaders to develop expertise through overseas and interstate experiences.

Background to the VPA Position

The VPA position has been determined in the following context:

- Damage will occur to Victoria's standing and reputation in the international education community if principals and teachers are unable to travel.
- Opportunities for international networking will be destroyed by such complex travel restrictions.
- A reduction in learning opportunities for staff and students will occur with such a stringent travel restriction exemption process.
- In particular, restrictions on Interstate travel appear to reflect an antiquated view of State and Territory boundaries as representative of alien countries. Travel to Tasmania, for example, can be shorter in distance and time than travel within Victoria.
- Current International and Domestic travel guidelines are already very comprehensive and the existing process of documentation was comprehensive.
- Delegation of authority has been suspended without consultation i.e. the authority to approve staff leave.
- Placing heightened travel restrictions on the principal class is contributing to the development of mistrust.
- Recent applicants have been rejected for travel when they clearly met the exemption guidelines.
- It is unwarranted to punish all principals to compensate for the mistakes of a very small number of people.
- With the nature of autonomy Victorian schools need to do independent research which on many occasions is more effective if a number of staff from one school attend and bring back the learning for the rest.
- The majority of principals reported back to colleagues and networks sharing their learning.

VPA Position

The VPA advocates for:

- A rebuilding of the professional trust shown to leaders that they are working with their school communities to research the best learning opportunities for their students.
- Requests to be treated individually and approval for international and domestic travel to be determined by educational merit.

- One of the major criteria to be **Educational Value** rather than Economic Value if we are to build the Education State.
- Fostering international relationships and looking beyond our shores to expand educational knowledge as an essential part of becoming the Education State with high performing leaders.
- Promoting reciprocal visits from overseas and interstate organisations to share best practice in education.
- Restrictions in Interstate travel should be relaxed forthwith in recognition of the partnership arrangements that exist within a Nation, rather than just a State.
- Respecting and nurturing long standing relationships with overseas and interstate organisations.
- Promoting of international mindedness in our multicultural society so that our students have enhanced opportunities.