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Education Updates

Governments Focus on Vocational Education

The Australian Government is working with the states and territories to improve the vocational education system, establishing a Skills Council to investigate and report on potential reforms. [Click here to read more...](#)

Vocational Education Watchdog to Review VET in Schools

The Australian Skills Quality Authority has foreshadowed greater scrutiny of vocational education and training in schools. [Click here to read more...](#)

Union Votes to Support Student Climate Strike in September

The Victorian branch of the Australian Education Union has voted to support a student strike in support of action on climate change on Friday 20 September 2019. [Click here to read more...](#)

Dental Vans Start Visiting Schools

Smile Squad buses have started delivering free dental care to students in Victorian government schools – and the government has suggested that low-fee non-government schools could get a visit in the future. [Click here to read more...](#)

2020 Creative Learning Partnerships

Creative Victoria has invited all Victorian schools to apply to take part in a Creative Learning Partnerships in 2020. [Click here to read more...](#)

Moneysmart Grants

The Australian Securities and Investment Commission has invited primary school principals to apply for *Moneysmart* grants to help students understand how to manage their money. [Click here to read more...](#)

Please visit the Independent Schools Victoria website for seminars for [August 2019](#).

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Governments Focus on Vocational Education

The Australian Government is working with the states and territories to improve the vocational education system, establishing a Skills Council to investigate and report on potential reforms.

Government leaders at the latest Council of Australian Governments (COAG) meeting last week committed to a shared [Vision for Vocational Education and Training \(VET\)](#), saying that 'VET and higher education are equal and integral parts of Australia's post-secondary education system'.

Prime Minister [Scott Morrison said](#) that skills education wasn't just about the 'high technology' areas. He said a modern economy also needed Australians trained in 'the areas of human service delivery in this country. Whether it's aged care or caring for people with disabilities'.

The Victorian Premier, [Daniel Andrews, welcomed](#) the commitment to 'getting things done', saying it was one of the 'very best' COAG meetings he had been to in years. Mr Andrews said, 'we have to change the way TAFE and vocational education and non-university pathways are viewed. This is a first-class option, not anything less than that'.

The Skills Council will deliver its report by the end of the year.

Education Ministers at the [meeting of the Education Council](#) earlier in the month were also keen to get more from the VET system, agreeing to a review of senior secondary pathways to find ways to help students choose the best pathway into work, further education or training.

The Australian Minister for Education, [Dan Tehan, encouraged stakeholders](#) with an interest in 'senior secondary education and our future workforce' to take part.

'We must ensure that all pathways are equally valued, and that our young people can access a secondary education that can equally prepare them for work, VET or higher education', he said.

The review will be led by Western Sydney University Chancellor, Professor Peter Shergold, and will report to Education Council in June 2020.

- PM seeks states' support for VET overhaul. Geoff Chambers, *The Australian*, 7 August 2018
- Skills crisis at critical level: CEOs. Ewin Hannan and Sascha O'Sullivan, *The Australian*, 8 August 2019
- VET system letting us down, says Morrison. Phillip Coorey and Robert Bolton, *Australian Financial Review*, 8 August 2019

Vocational Education Watchdog to Review VET in Schools

A new report from the Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA) [has foreshadowed](#) greater scrutiny of vocational education and training (VET) in schools.

The report says that the number and proportion of students undertaking VET while enrolled in secondary school have increased significantly over the last two decades, though VET enrolments have levelled out at 'around 30 per cent' since 2008.

It says, however, that 'the closure of several providers with large numbers of VET in schools enrolments has highlighted key risks in relation to VET delivered in schools'.

ASQA says that it will consult other government agencies and state and territory governments on a scoping study to determine if further action is required.

ASQA Chief Commissioner and CEO, [Mr Mark Paterson, said](#) that in addition to its new focus on VET in schools, the organisation would continue to scrutinise international education and trainer and assessor capability.

- VET regulation that's clear as mud. Claire Field, *The Australian*, 7 August 2019

Union Votes to Support Student Climate Strike in September

The Victorian branch of the Australian Education Union (AEU) has voted to support a [student strike in support of action on climate change](#) on Friday 20 September 2019.

Thousands of students took part in similar strikes in 2018 and again in March this year, despite calls from the Australian Minister for Education, Dan Tehan, for them to stay at school.

Finance Minister Mathias Cormann said that after the strike in March, students were being 'used as pawns by professional adult activists as part of a cynical political strategy' (See [Weekly Briefing 7/2019](#)).

AEU Victorian branch councillor [Mary Merkenich wrote in the Green Left Weekly](#) that the union state council had voted unanimously to encourage AEU members to 'show solidarity' with students, by taking part in activities such as applying for 'approved leave' to attend the strike, 'posting selfies to social media' or passing a 'resolution of solidarity from your sub-branch'.

- Victorian teachers' union votes to support Climate Strike. *Green Left Weekly*, 5 August 2019

Dental Vans Start Visiting Schools

Smile Squad buses have started delivering free dental care to students in Victorian government schools – and the government has suggested that low-fee non-government schools could get a visit in the future.

Labor promised to provide free dental care for students in government schools ahead of the 2018 Victorian election (See [Weekly Briefing 32/2018](#)), but [Victorian Premier Daniel Andrews said at the weekend](#) that a review of the program in 2021 would consider extending the program to low-fee non-government schools.

Smile Squad vans will visit 22 schools this term, and the program will be progressively extended across the state. Students will receive free check-ups and treatment, including teeth cleaning, fluoride applications, fillings and other non-cosmetic treatments.

[Mr Andrew said that early prevention](#) was the key to ensuring good dental health, and that the program would also help 'parents save on hefty dental bills' by catching students' oral health issues as they emerge.

2020 Creative Learning Partnerships

Creative Victoria has invited all Victorian schools to apply to take part in a Creative Learning Partnership in 2020.

Creative Learning Partnerships give schools the opportunity to partner with professional artists or arts and cultural organisations on creative projects, providing 'diverse and challenging learning experiences' for both the school community and the artist. This residency program aims to help schools explore how the arts can enhance and advance education outcomes across the curriculum.

Grants of \$10,000 are available for creative partnerships with a professional artist, or \$35,000 for partnerships with an organisation. Projects must start after Tuesday 14 April 2020, but activity on the project can occur at any time in terms 2, 3 or 4.

Applications open 9.00 am, Monday 12 August 2019 and close Thursday 19 September 2019. For more information, including program guidelines, visit the [Creative Victoria website](#).

Moneysmart Grants

The Australian Securities and Investment Commission (ASIC) [has invited primary school principals](#) to apply for *Moneysmart* grants to help students understand how to manage their money.

ASIC has partnered with national principals associations to provide funding of up to \$5000.00 for projects that help young people improve their financial literacy. It is looking to fund new creative projects in primary schools that:

- teach students how to budget and plan
- integrate financial literacy across the whole school
- incorporate cross-sector collaboration
- increase parents' understanding of good money management
- includes the local community.

Applications close on Friday 18 October 2019. For more information, or to apply, visit the [Australian Government GrantConnect website](#).