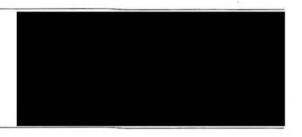IN THE MATTER OF THE ROYAL COMMISSION
INTO FAMILY VIOLENCE

SUPPLEMENTARY STATEMENT OF GILLIAN ANNE CALLISTER

Date of document: 13 October 2015
Filed on behalf of: State of Victoria
Prepared by:
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I, GILLIAN ANNE CALLISTER, Secretary, Department of Education and Training, Victoria, SAY AS FOLLOWS:

1.   On 10 August 2015, I gave evidence at the public hearing for Module 16 (Changing the Culture – Workplaces and the Community). I provided a written statement to the Royal Commission into Family Violence, dated 4 August 2015 (August Statement).

2.   My evidence to the Royal Commission addressed a number of matters, including:

    2.1   the role of the Department of Education and Training (Department) in supporting vulnerable children and young people, in particular students affected by family violence who may be 'out of school' or who require assistance and support to access education; and

    2.2   the Victorian curriculum and the Department's role in developing and promoting education programs designed to effect cultural change, in particular, the program known as 'Building Respectful Relationships'.

3.   This supplementary statement sets out information about new initiatives to support vulnerable students in Victorian government schools and the new Victorian curriculum, announced on 14 September 2015 as part of the Victorian Government's Education State reform agenda.

Supports for vulnerable students and Education State reforms

4.   Research shows that children and young people who have wellbeing or safety issues, including those contributed to or caused by abuse or family violence, are more likely to struggle academically and socially, and to become disengaged from the education system and other support services (see New South Wales

Department of Education and Training, 2011, https://www.det.nsw.edu.au/media/downloads/about-us/statistics-and-research/public-reviews-and-enquiries/school-counselling-services-review/models-of-effective-practice.pdf).

5.   Additionally, while no single cause or factor leads to family violence, factors such as social disadvantage and isolation are associated with an increased risk of perpetration of family violence, while vulnerabilities such as homelessness and poverty are associated with increased risks of victimisation (see *Violence Prevention, Intervention and Respectful Relationships Education in Victorian Secondary Schools Project*, VicHealth, 2009, **Attachment GC-13** to the August Statement; and Australian Institute of Criminology, 2009, http://www.aic.gov.au/publications/current%20series/rip/1-10/07.html).

6.   Supports for disengaged and vulnerable students are therefore extremely important in addressing the short and long-term consequences of family violence on children and young people, and in breaking cycles of violence.

7.   Since I gave evidence at the Module 16 public hearing, the Victorian Government has announced a significant set of reform initiatives associated with the Education State in schools, which will build the capacity of schools to deliver excellence in teaching and learning, professional leadership and better support for students to focus on learning. I attach a copy of *Education State: Schools* at **Attachment GC-19,** a document released on 14 September 2015, outlining the Government's investments, initiatives and reforms to support the first phase of the Education State reform agenda in schools.

8.   As part of the Education State reform, the Government has set new school targets, to drive the progress of students in both government and non-government schools.

9.   The targets aim to reduce student disengagement and the effect of disadvantage on student achievement. Initiatives such as the Navigator Services and LOOKOUT Education Support Centres (LOOKOUT Centres) , which I discuss below at paragraphs 23-34, demonstrate the Victorian Government's commitment to meeting the target of improving educational outcomes for Victoria's most vulnerable students.

10.   The targets will also measure students' resilience, their development of life skills such as critical and creative thinking and their participation in physical activity. Resilience refers to the capacity to cope with change and challenges, and the ability

to 'bounce back' during difficult times. These attributes are important for every child and young person, but particularly so for children who may be experiencing family violence. The Building Resilience in School Communities Grants Program, which I discussed at paragraph 138 of the August Statement, is one demonstration of the Government's commitment to achieve this target, as is the new Victorian Curriculum, which I discuss below.

Supports for vulnerable students – embedded in general approach

11. The investments, initiatives and reforms announced on 14 September 2015 reflect the Victorian Government's vision for Victoria as the Education State. Our vision seeks to ensure every child has the same opportunities and that emphasises not only student achievement, but also student engagement and wellbeing. This includes initiatives that are not specifically targeted at vulnerable students, but have been designed to strengthen the school system's overall focus on the 'whole child' with targeted support for students with particular needs. This approach aims to provide a systemic context that also enables support for vulnerable students.

12. On 14 September 2015, the Government announced significant additional investment in equity funding provided to schools.

13. Extra funding of $493.3 million will be provided over four years (and $148.8 million a year ongoing) for schools to support students with more barriers to success than their peers.

14. This funding, along with the existing funding targeting social disadvantage, is being distributed through a new funding model incorporating both individual factors of disadvantage and concentrated disadvantage within schools. Consistent with the recommendations of the Gonski Review, and supported by respected academic experts including Professor Stephen Lamb, the new funding model was developed following detailed analysis of Victorian data to better address an individual student's level of disadvantage based on both the occupation and education backgrounds of their parents. Under the new, more accurate formula, funding will be allocated for each disadvantaged student, with the level of funding per student significantly increasing in more disadvantaged schools—so that students from disadvantaged families who attend schools in more advantaged neighbourhoods will still receive extra funding.

15. I attach a copy of the Education State Social Disadvantage Funding Fact Sheet at **Attachment GC-20**.

16.   The changes also include a new loading, called Catch Up funding, for students who are falling behind for any reason not just social disadvantage. The Government is investing $72.3 million over four years and $21.8 million a year ongoing in Catch Up funding. Secondary schools will receive an additional $2000 Catch Up funding for each student who did not meet the national minimum NAPLAN standard for reading in Year 5, when the student enters secondary school. Schools will be given guidance and support to address the specific challenges facing their students, including preparing evidence-based classroom learning strategies and creating safe and supportive school environments.

17.   I attach a copy of the Education State Catch Up Funding Fact Sheet at **Attachment GC-21**.

18.   A new Framework for Improving Student Outcomes is being developed for use by schools. Its purpose is to help schools to drive improvements in student outcomes, with an explicit focus on student achievement, wellbeing and engagement outcomes—it is about the 'whole child'. The Framework includes, among other things:

    18.1   a model for school improvement that encourages schools to take an evidence-based, holistic approach to improving student outcomes and is structured around four state-wide priorities which, relevantly, include 'positive climate for learning' and 'community engagement in learning'; and

    18.2   six evidence-based improvement initiatives to focus schools' efforts across the system, such as 'empowering students and building school pride', 'setting expectations and promoting inclusion' and 'building communities'.

19.   I attach a copy of the Education State Framework for Improving Student Outcomes Fact Sheet at **Attachment GC-22**.

Supports for vulnerable students – targeted

20.   The Education State reforms recognise that all students need to be supported to reach their potential, within a positive learning environment that prioritises learning and promotes inclusion and engagement. Some students have additional needs and particular vulnerabilities, which must be addressed to support them to reach their potential.

21. To support the aim of ensuring that the Victorian school system is supporting students at risk of poor learning outcomes to reach their potential and stay in education for better life opportunities, two 'Breaking the link' targets have been developed:

    21.1   over the next ten years, the proportion of students who leave education early (between Years 9 and 12) will fall by 50%; and

    21.2   over the next ten years, Victoria will reduce the impact of disadvantage on achievement.

22. A number of initiatives support this target and Education State priorities to enhance the equity of Victoria's system, to ensure all students remain connected to school and engaged in their learning and to work in partnership with communities to improve education outcomes. The Navigator Services and LOOKOUT Centres are two examples of targeted supports for vulnerable students.

Navigator services

23. In my August Statement, at paragraphs 170-179, I outlined the Department's policies and procedures for monitoring student attendance, as well as for engaging and re-engaging students. As I noted at paragraph 170, it is well established that children and young people experiencing family violence may experience difficulties attending school.

24. In addition to the measures outlined in my August Statement, the Victorian Government has invested $8.6 million in the Navigator service, a two-year initiative that aims to increase the numbers of young people connected to school and engaged in learning.

25. Navigator is a service that will be delivered by schools and community agencies to provide outreach, follow-up, advocacy, and pathway planning support to young people aged 12 to 17 years who are not connected to schools at all, or who are at risk of disengaging. These young people who require intensive support to overcome barriers to learning and successfully re-engage with an education or training pathway.

26. The Navigator services will engage specialised support workers to maintain regular contact with disengaged young people, and help them, their families and local education providers to plan and support a return to school or a training program.

27. The Navigator services will be tailored to the local community, and will help break the cycle of disadvantage that affects young people who disengage at a young age from education and training. Providers will track and monitor young people, report on outcomes, identify gaps in local services and support planning to address these gaps.

28. The Navigator services will be complemented by a range of existing services, including the Student Support Services program and Local Learning and Employment Networks (LLENs), which support young people at risk of disengaging with education, training and employment opportunities. The Victorian Government will provide $32 million over four years to support LLENs' work in this area

29. I attach a copy of the Education State Navigator Fact Sheet at **Attachment GC-23**.

LOOKOUT Centres

30. There are approximately 6,000 school-aged children and young people in Out of Home Care (OoHC) in Victoria. While the Department does not collect data around the drivers behind children entering into OoHC, it is reasonable to assume that a significant proportion will have been affected by family violence. As a result of their circumstances, these young Victorians face unique challenges in accessing education and training—they may change schools a number of times, have lower attendance rates and be less likely to engage with education than their peers. These children are under the legal guardianship of the State, and so it is particularly critical that extra steps are taken to make sure they do not fall through the cracks.

31. In my August Statement, at paragraphs 194-197, I provide an outline of the Out of Home Care Education Commitment, which is a partnering agreement between the Department, the Department of Health and Human Services, the Catholic Education Commission of Victoria and Independent Schools Victoria which outlines strategies to support the educational issues and social needs of children and young people in OoHC during the years they attend school.

32. To further support Victorian government schools to improve educational outcomes for children and young people in OoHC, the Department is establishing LOOKOUT Education Support Centres (LOOKOUT Centres) in each region throughout 2016-2017. The Victorian Government has committed $13.2 million over two years to establish the LOOKOUT Centres.

33. LOOKOUT Centres will employ education experts and support staff, including a campus principal, to advocate for and support vulnerable students in OoHC and

help them stay in education. LOOKOUT Centre staff will work in partnership with schools, carers and social workers to enrol young people, monitor and evaluate educational progress, set targets, and co-ordinate resources and activities to support the child's education at school and at home. It is intended that these measures will lead to improvements in school attendance, engagement and achievement.

34. I attach a copy of the Education State LOOKOUT Education Support Centres Fact Sheet at **Attachment GC-24**.

Disengaged Students Register

35. In 2016, the Department will also work with schools and community service agencies to develop and establish a Disengaged Students Register (Register).

36. The Register will be maintained by the Department and will provide more specific information to that collected from CASES21 (referred to at paragraphs 175-177 of my August Statement) to enable the Department to identify students with the greatest need, and track young people leaving schools who may need additional support. The Register will support the Navigator service and other tools used by the Department to identify students who may be affected by family violence, being one of the key drivers behind students being at risk of disengagement from their education.

Expanding health and wellbeing support under the regional model

37. Under Education State reforms, the Government is strengthening regional services and support for schools. These reforms bring together the findings of a state-wide consultation on the future of regional services held during April and May 2015, as well as Education State consultations.

38. The Government has invested $82.2 million in strengthening regional services. Under this initiative, 17 new 'areas' will be established within the Department's current four regions. This will provide more localised support to help meet the needs of different communities throughout Victoria, including in regional and rural areas.

39. As part of delivering Education State reforms, the Department will deploy approximately 150 additional staff into regions to strengthen our support to schools. Additional staff includes a new Health and Wellbeing Coordinator in each of the four regions to lead the implementation of health and wellbeing reforms. Key reforms include initiatives such as National Disability Insurance Scheme reform and the

Special Needs Plan, which outlines Government's commitments to better support children and young people with disabilities and special needs. Together with existing resources, the new Health and Wellbeing Coordinators will provide improved system level support to schools working with students with complex needs.

40. Each area will have a multi-disciplinary team dedicated to achieving better outcomes for Victorian children, learners and families. The new model will place Senior Education Improvement Leaders at the centre of the multi-disciplinary teams. Each Senior Education Improvement Leader will play a key role in supporting Victorian Government Schools to implement the Framework for Improving Student Outcomes, which I have outlined above at paragraph 13.

41. Two new Health and Wellbeing Support Officers will be placed in each of the four regions to work with and build the capacity of the multi-disciplinary teams. The Health and Wellbeing Support Officers will help the new teams to work with students with highly complex needs, including those who may be experiencing difficulties due to family violence.

42. The 17 area teams and dedicated Senior Education Improvement Leaders will have a strong connection to schools. Coupled with other, additional school support resources, it is intended that these new measures will 'free up' principals to focus more on student learning outcomes, as well as more challenging wellbeing matters.

43. I attach a copy of the Education State Strengthening Regional Services and Support Fact Sheet at **Attachment GC-25**.

New Victorian Curriculum F-10

44. I refer to my August Statement, which sets out information about:

   44.1 the Victorian AusVELS curriculum, at paragraphs 108-119; and

   44.2 ongoing work on developing and enhancing the curriculum in Victoria to include specific references to safety in the home and respectful relationships, at paragraphs 120-123.

45. In September 2015, the Government announced a new curriculum for Victorian schools, the Victorian Curriculum F-10 (Victorian Curriculum), which Victorian government and Catholic schools are required to use. Independent schools may use the Victorian Curriculum as a model and resource for the effective implementation of the Australian Curriculum.

46. The Victorian Curriculum comprises 'learning areas' and 'capabilities'. 'Learning areas' are areas of knowledge that must be covered in the delivery of the curriculum, being the Arts, English, Health and Physical Education, the Humanities, Languages, Mathematics, Science and Technologies.

47. 'Capabilities' are skills that must be taught through, and as a complement to, the learning areas. The capabilities are required to be developed, practised, deployed and demonstrated by students in and through their learning across the curriculum. The prescribed capabilities that must be covered in the delivery of the curriculum are Critical and Creative Thinking, Ethical, Intercultural, and Personal and Social.

48. There are two areas of the curriculum that address underlying factors of family violence, being the Health and Physical Education (HPE) 'learning area' curriculum and the Personal and Social 'capability' (PSC) curriculum. These curriculum areas were developed with regard to research undertaken by VicHealth for the Department in 2009 through the *Violence Prevention, Intervention and Respectful Relationships Education in Victorian Secondary Schools Project* (see **Attachment GC-13** to the August Statement). In particular, the HPE and PSC curricula address gender stereotypes and norms, power imbalances and discrimination, and the use of violence or aggression to resolve conflict or express negative emotions, as outlined below.

Health and Physical Education

49. The new HPE 'learning area' curriculum includes a focus on developing knowledge, understandings and skills to promote respectful relationships and safety.

50. The following focus areas provide the context for teaching about respectful and safe relationships:

50.1 'Relationships and sexuality' focuses on establishing and managing respectful relationships. Students develop knowledge, understanding and skills in relation to strategies for respectfully relating to and interacting with others as well as strategies for dealing with relationships when there is an imbalance of power such as bullying, harassment, discrimination and violence (including discrimination based on race, gender and sexuality).

50.2 'Safety' addresses safety issues that students may encounter in their daily lives, including those in the home. Students develop knowledge, understanding and skills to make safe decisions and behave in ways that protect their own safety and that of others, including strategies for dealing

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with unsafe or uncomfortable situations, managing personal safety and safety in relationships and dating.

51. The HPE curriculum is organised by two strands: Personal, Social and Community Health (PSCH) and Movement and Physical Activity. Each strand contains content descriptions which are organised under three sub-strands. The following PSCH sub-strands contain themes relevant to preventing family violence:

51.1 Being healthy, safe and active:

(a) Development of personal identity, including gender and sexual identity; and

(b) Help seeking strategies, including protective behaviours.

51.2 Communicating and interacting for health and wellbeing:

(a) The development of social skills necessary for respectful relationships; and

(b) Exploring emotional responses and how these impact on relationships.

51.3 Contributing to healthy and active communities:

(a) Evaluation of factors that influence health and wellbeing within the community, including challenging attitudes and behaviours such as homophobia, sexism, prejudice, violence, discrimination and harassment.

52. I attach the following further information about the HPE curriculum:

52.1 Rationale and Aims at **Attachment GC-26**;

52.2 Structure at **Attachment GC-27**;

52.3 Learning in Health and Physical Education at **Attachment GC-28**; and

52.4 HPE curriculum charts for Students with Disability, Foundation-Level 4 and Levels 5-10, which include content descriptions and achievement standards, at **Attachment GC-29**.

Personal and Social Capability Curriculum

53. The PSC curriculum is focused on enabling students to understand themselves and others, and manage their relationships, lives, work and learning more effectively. It aims to enable students to:

    53.1 recognise, understand and evaluate the expression of emotions;

    53.2 demonstrate an awareness of their personal qualities and the factors that contribute to resilience;

    53.3 develop empathy for and understanding of others and recognise the importance of supporting diversity for a cohesive community;

    53.4 understand how relationships are developed and use interpersonal skills to establish and maintain respectful relationships; and

    53.5 work effectively in teams and develop strategies to manage challenging situations constructively.

54. The PSC curriculum is organised into two interrelated strands:

    54.1 The Self-Awareness and Management strand helps students develop the knowledge and skills to regulate, manage and monitor their emotions; a sense of their personal strengths; and self-knowledge and self-confidence. Students develop skills to work independently and to show initiative, to be conscientious, to delay gratification and to persevere in the face of setbacks and frustrations.

    54.2 The Social Awareness and Management strand involves students recognising others' feelings and knowing how and when to assist others. Students learn to show respect for and understand others' perspectives, emotional states and needs, to participate in positive, safe and respectful relationships, and to build their capacity to critique societal constructs and forms of discrimination. They learn to interact effectively and respectfully with a range of adults and peers; negotiate with others; work in teams, positively contribute to groups and collaboratively make decisions; develop leadership skills, and resolve conflict. Students develop the ability to initiate and manage successful personal relationships.

55. The PSC curriculum includes learning about 'Development of Resilience' and 'Relationships and Diversity' as themes across Foundation to Level 10. For

example, in Levels 5-6, students learn to 'describe the characteristics of respectful relationships and suggest ways that respectful relationships can be achieved', and in Levels 7-8, students learn to 'recognise the impact of personal boundaries, intimacy, distribution of power and social and cultural norms and mores on the ways relationships are expressed'.

56. I attach the following information about the PSC curriculum.

    56.1 Rationale and Aims at **Attachment GC-30**;

    56.2 Structure at **Attachment GC-31**;

    56.3 Learning PSC at **Attachment GC-32**; and

    56.4 PSC curriculum charts for Foundation-Level 6 and Levels 3-10, which include content descriptions and achievement standards, at **Attachment GC-33**.

Implementation

57. All Victorian government and Catholic schools will be required to implement the new curriculum, including the content on respectful relationships. However, as with the AusVELS, decisions about how the curriculum is delivered are made at a local school level. This acknowledges that a 'one-size-fits-all' approach is not effective in developing high quality teaching and learning programs in Victoria's diverse school system.

58. On 14 September 2015, the Victorian Government announced funding of $21.6 million over three years for a program to support schools and teachers implement and teach the new curriculum, including respectful relationships components.

59. The program will provide training for school leadership teams on the use of curriculum planning resources available through the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority curriculum planning portal.

60. Under the program, government school teachers will be given additional planning time to support the implementation of changes to the curriculum. In addition, expert teachers will provide 10 specialist programs that will cover professional learning strategies. One of the specialist programs will address health education and personal and social capability as well as respectful relationships.

61.   Catholic schools, which will mandatorily follow the Victorian Curriculum, and independent sector schools, which may elect to follow the Victorian Curriculum, will also have access to professional development program to assist them to adopt the Victorian Curriculum. The Department is now in the final stages of implementing an $18 million investment in a new online platform that will help teachers more effectively track students' progress against the new curriculum, including a new Health and Physical Education assessment tool.

62.   The Insight Online Assessment Platform (Insight) will host quality-assured online assessment tools for teachers, students and school administrators. Other benefits will include:

   62.1   streamlined assessment administration, marking and data analysis, with the capability to immediately produce student results for teachers;

   62.2   access to advice for teachers about advances in assessment research and practice;

   62.3   integrated assessment data that will help teachers tailor learning to the needs of their students and track student progress over time and across learning areas; and

   62.4   capturing assessment data in a form that can be shared online if students change schools, subject to privacy.

63.   From March 2016, the first phase of Insight will be trialled in selected Victorian schools.

64.   I attach a copy of the Education State Implementing the New Victorian Curriculum Fact Sheet at **Attachment GC-34** and a copy of the Education State Insight Assessment Platform Fact Sheet at **Attachment GC-35**.

Signed by **GILLIAN ANNE CALLISTER**   )

at Melbourne   )

this 13th day of October 2015   )

Before me

An Australian legal practitioner
within the meaning of the
Legal Profession Uniform Law (Victoria)