



Indigenous Education Strategies for Government Schools



VICTORIA

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Auditor-General

Indigenous Education Strategies for Government Schools

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The Hon. Bruce Atkinson MLC
President
Legislative Council
Parliament House
Melbourne

The Hon. Ken Smith MP
Speaker
Legislative Assembly
Parliament House
Melbourne

Dear Presiding Officers

Under the provisions of section 16AB of the *Audit Act 1994*, I transmit my performance report on *Indigenous Education Strategies for Government Schools*.

Yours faithfully



D D R PEARSON
Auditor-General

1 June 2011

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Audit summary

The disparity in key health, education and employment outcomes for Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians continues to be a major challenge. In Victoria, Koorie students generally have lower rates of literacy and numeracy, school attendance and school retention than their non-Indigenous peers.

Wannik: Learning Together – Journey to our Future (the Wannik strategy) was launched in February 2008 as the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development's (DEECD) strategy to overcome poor educational outcomes for Koorie students. The Wannik strategy was developed in close partnership with the Victorian Aboriginal Education Association Incorporated (VAEAI).

The strategy recognises that more action is required both within and beyond the education sector to address the disadvantage experienced by Koorie students. Its aim is to improve education outcomes for Koorie students by changing the culture and mindset of the government school system, implementing structural reforms, and making better use of mainstream efforts and programs.

The Wannik strategy was allocated \$30.8 million over five years.

The objective of the audit was to determine the effectiveness of DEECD's implementation of the Wannik strategy and whether it is improving educational outcomes for Koorie students. The audit examined whether:

- implementation and management of the strategy was underpinned by comprehensive and sound planning
- robust data collection and analysis processes were developed that allow assessment of the progress and effectiveness of the strategy
- implementation is tracking in line with DEECD's milestones and performance information is being used to fine tune or revise the strategy.

Conclusion

At the beginning of the fourth year DEECD cannot demonstrate whether the Wannik strategy is on track to improve education outcomes for Koorie students.

DEECD has been progressively implementing a range of priority actions but, because there are no targets and milestones, it is unclear whether progress is in line with DEECD's expectations. Also, it is not evident that risks to the strategy's implementation are being adequately managed.

Unless these issues are addressed, achieving the systemic reforms necessary to improve and sustain education outcomes for Koorie students is not likely.

Findings

Planning and implementation

The Wannik strategy had a solid planning base but this rigour was not sustained through the roll-out of the program, resulting in poor implementation.

Much of the strategy's initial planning work was not used. There are no comprehensive plans covering implementation milestones and time lines, stakeholder engagement and communications, and risk management. DEECD also has not demonstrated effective processes for estimating and monitoring spending on the Wannik strategy and its 38 actions.

There is no single line of accountability for the success of Wannik. Despite identifying the Wannik strategy as a departmental priority project, DEECD has implemented it using a business-as-usual approach, rather than through a project management approach. To adopt this approach so early in the implementation of the strategy risked losing a clear line of sight on whether the original actions have been implemented, whether the intended outcomes have been achieved, and so whether DEECD's investment has been well spent. This is what has occurred in this case.

Further, the Wannik Project Board has not fulfilled its intended role. It has not required, or signed-off, critical implementation documents such as annual implementation plans for the Wannik Unit and DEECD regional offices, risk logs, and Wannik performance reports. The Wannik Project Board does not have a reporting function.

Performance monitoring and reporting framework

There are no reporting mechanisms that provide a picture of the overall status of the Wannik strategy. There is insufficient information with which to identify and address any implementation problems, to review the ongoing relevance and priority of the 38 Wannik actions, or to make sure that adequate resources are available.

The Wannik strategy states what success will look like for students, parents, members of the community, principals and teachers. However, DEECD is more than two years late putting in place a monitoring and evaluation framework that allows it to reliably and objectively assess progress, and measure the strategy's success in achieving outcomes. The Wannik Project Board endorsed an evaluation framework in May 2011 but is yet to set a budget or time lines for its implementation.

Progress of priority actions

DEECD identified 12 priority actions for implementation in early 2009. These included major reforms deemed critical for the success of Wannik, along with other actions that could be implemented relatively quickly and simply to demonstrate early achievements for the community. Appendix A provides a summary of the status of all Wannik actions at April 2011.

DEECD reformed the Victorian College of Koorie Education by establishing four Koorie Pathways Schools that provide pathways into mainstream education, training or employment. As the schools have been open for only two years it is too early to assess their impact.

The Koorie education workforce is vital for engaging families in the education system and supporting students through their schooling. Reform and expansion of the Koorie education workforce was a major part of the Wannik strategy and is the foundation for many other actions. DEECD redesigned the roles of the Koorie education workforce and integrated them into its regional office structure. It increased the number of positions from 91 to 118, improved job security and raised the job classifications and salaries. This is expected to result in increased skills and professionalism within the workforce over time.

DEECD did not have a comprehensive workforce reform implementation plan and did not put in place appropriate systems to monitor progress of implementation. It therefore cannot demonstrate whether it has implemented the workforce reforms effectively. During the audit DEECD was unable to provide reliable data about critical factors such as the workforce profile, skills and capabilities, workforce turnover and the extent of professional development provided to staff during 2010. DEECD plans to evaluate the workforce reform as part of the overall evaluation of the Wannik strategy, and also through its internal audit function.

DEECD has continued to develop and roll-out a range of programs to support Koorie students. These include the Student Mapping Tool, individual education plans and literacy and numeracy support.

Risks to the successful implementation of the Wannik strategy

DEECD's failure to implement the Wannik strategy through a disciplined, project management approach puts at risk improved outcomes for Koorie students. DEECD cannot demonstrate if it is on track to achieve the cultural change and increased accountability for Koorie students that will underpin real improvement in educational outcomes. DEECD is currently unable to demonstrate that it is effectively managing the range of risks to the strategy's success.

DEECD recognises VAEAI as an equal partner in the delivery of the Wannik strategy, however, the service agreement has not been well managed. VAEAI has not fulfilled its service obligations and reporting requirements in the agreement, and DEECD has not held it to account for this.

The Koorie education workforce has inconsistent skills, and until it is properly trained it does not have the capacity to perform the required activities. DEECD is 12 months behind schedule in providing the planned professional learning to the Koorie education workforce and does not expect to have a statewide professional development plan until February 2012.

If parents do not understand and value the importance of education and feel confident participating in the school community then their children are less likely to attend school regularly and engage fully in learning. Although the Wannik strategy aims to renew the focus on parental engagement, DEECD has not yet delivered the designated actions and has not started measuring or monitoring Koorie parents' confidence and satisfaction with the government school system.

Creating a culturally inclusive education system is essential for student, parental and community engagement. DEECD does not have an effective plan either for delivering a culturally inclusive curriculum or its promised professional development for principals, teachers and school support staff. It also has not established monitoring and evaluation processes for these actions. Consequently, it is not yet able to identify whether cultural change is occurring within the government school system. Our regional and school visits revealed significant variations in how Koorie culture is included in the curriculum and in school practices.

As students need to attend school regularly to succeed, many of the Wannik actions are about raising student attendance and engagement in school. DEECD does not have reliable attendance data to assess how many Koorie students are regularly absent from school, their profiles and the reasons. DEECD has identified student attendance as a continued concern and intends to develop an evidence-based attendance strategy for Koorie students during 2011.

Recommendations

Number	Recommendation	Page
	That the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development:	
1.	strengthen accountability for the Wannik strategy by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • implementing project-based planning, monitoring, review and reporting for each Wannik action • improving risk management practices • establishing performance measures relevant to the Wannik objectives and intended outcomes, and obtaining the necessary data to measure progress and success 	17
2.	revise its communications and stakeholder engagement strategy and actively monitor and report against the communications objectives outlined in the strategy	17
3.	work with the Victorian Aboriginal Education Association Incorporated to revise the service level agreement to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • directly reflect the objectives and actions of the Wannik strategy, the <i>National Indigenous Reform Agreement (Closing the Gap)</i> targets and the <i>Victorian Indigenous Affairs Framework</i> • rigorously apply <i>The Guide to Victorian Indigenous Funding Agreements</i> in developing, monitoring and enforcing the agreement 	31
4.	develop and implement an ongoing workforce management plan for the Koorie education workforce, aimed at developing and retaining the required skills and capacities to improve the education outcomes of Koorie students	31
5.	act to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • hold all levels of the system appropriately accountable for improved Koorie education outcomes • deliver focused professional development to teachers, principals and support staff • verify that schools consistently implement culturally inclusive curriculum and practices • increase parental engagement, confidence and satisfaction with the government school system • evaluate the effectiveness of the Koorie Pathways Schools and other forms of dedicated education provision against the aims of the Wannik strategy and the schools' objectives • improve the use of learning tools such as individual education plans and the Student Mapping Tool 	31
6.	improve data on Koorie student absences, suspensions and expulsions, set baselines and target reduced student absences, suspensions and expulsions	31
7.	implement appropriate processes, measures and targets to monitor the level of confidence and satisfaction with the government school system among Koorie parents.	31

Submissions and comments received

In addition to progressive engagement during the course of the audit, in accordance with section 16(3) of the *Audit Act 1994* a copy of this report was provided to the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development with a request for submissions or comments.

Agency views have been considered in reaching our audit conclusions and are represented to the extent relevant and warranted in preparing this report. Their full section 16(3) submissions and comments, however, are included in Appendix B.

1 Background

1.1 Introduction

Wannik: Learning Together – Journey to our Future (Wannik strategy) was launched in February 2008 as the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development's (DEECD) education strategy for Koorie students. It was developed in close partnership with the Victorian Aboriginal Education Association Incorporated (VAEAI) as DEECD's response to its 2007 review of education provision for Indigenous students.

The Wannik strategy recognises that greater commitment and action is required from within and outside the education sector to redress the disadvantage experienced by many Indigenous students. As the core education strategy under the *Victorian Indigenous Affairs Framework 2010–13*, it also addresses two of the six targets of the 2008 *National Indigenous Reform Agreement (Closing the Gap)*.

The Wannik strategy included a funding commitment of \$30.8 million over five years.

1.2 Indigenous student education outcomes

Indigenous students generally perform at lower levels than non-Indigenous students in literacy and numeracy, school engagement and attendance, and retention and completion.

1.2.1 The Indigenous student population

In August 2010 there were 9 859 students identifying as Indigenous in Victoria, about 1.2 per cent of the student population. While the number is not high, the number of students identifying as Indigenous has risen by 67 per cent since 2000.

Most Indigenous students (87 per cent) are enrolled in government schools, of which three-quarters have at least one Indigenous student. In 2010, 93 schools had 20 or more, accounting for 38.6 per cent of all Indigenous students in the government school sector, 150 schools had between 10 and 19, and 926 schools had fewer than 10.

1.2.2 Literacy and numeracy

Victorian Indigenous students do well in meeting national literacy and numeracy benchmarks compared with Indigenous students in other states. However, the percentage of Indigenous students failing to achieve the expected levels is higher than the percentage of other Victorian students, and this gap increases as students progress through school.

1.2.3 Engagement and attendance

Student engagement is measured through the annual Attitude to School Survey. Student engagement for Indigenous students is similar to non-Indigenous students in Years 5, 6 and 7, but is consistently lower from Year 8 onwards.

Indigenous students are absent from school at a much higher rate than the total student population. Their attendance rates are stable through the primary years but decline at secondary school. This is also where the gap in attendance between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students widens. By Year 9 Indigenous students are absent from school on average about one day a week.

1.2.4 School retention and completion

Indigenous students are more likely than non-Indigenous students to be early school leavers. The Year 10 to 12 retention rate for Indigenous students in government schools has been below 55 per cent for a number of years, compared with about 75 per cent for non-Indigenous students.

The number of Indigenous students undertaking Year 12 or equivalent studies has increased steadily over recent years. Indigenous students are more likely than non-Indigenous students to undertake the Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning.

1.3 The Wannik strategy

1.3.1 Background

In 2006–07, DEECD identified that its school reform agenda, the *Blueprint for Government Schools*, was not meeting the education needs of Indigenous students. DEECD then commissioned a review of education for Indigenous students. The review found that:

- there is insufficient focus on education outcomes for Koorie students and a failure to make the education system, at all levels, explicitly accountable for improvement in outcomes for Koorie students
- improving outcomes will require specific approaches that target the individual needs of Koorie students within the context of the Victorian Government's school education reform program
- low expectations of Koorie students negatively affect students' learning
- Victoria is well behind other states in recognising the cultural identity of our Koorie population within a curriculum framework
- engagement between school staff, parents and community is poor and undervalued
- the Koorie support workforce requires improved professional development and support, and the roles and responsibilities of these workers need to be realigned within a regional structure

- no conclusions can be drawn on dedicated education provision in the form of separate Aboriginal schools as a strategy to provide high-quality educational outcomes
- the Victorian College of Koorie Education has not provided acceptable education outcomes
- pre-school education is vital to address the gap between the school readiness of Koorie and other students
- issues from outside of school significantly impact on education outcomes.

DEECD partnered with VAEAI to develop and deliver the Wannik strategy in response to the review findings.

1.3.2 Objectives and outcomes

The aim of the Wannik strategy is to improve education outcomes for Indigenous students across the whole government school system.

The strategy aims to achieve this by:

- repositioning the education of Koorie students through strong leadership that creates a culture of high expectations and individualised learning for students
- underpinning this approach with explicit accountability mechanisms for improvement in education outcomes for Koorie students across all levels of the school system
- creating an environment that respects, recognises and celebrates cultural identity through practice and curriculum
- reinforcing the responsibility of all government schools to meet the needs of all students.

The Wannik strategy sets out what success will look like for students, parents, the community, principals and teachers.

1.3.3 Themes and actions

Implementation of the Wannik strategy is based around the following seven themes:

- reforming government school education of Koorie students
- supporting greater student engagement
- providing more literacy and numeracy support
- supporting and encouraging high-achieving students
- expanding and developing the Koorie education workforce
- renewing the focus on parental engagement
- sharing responsibility appropriately across government.

There are 38 actions across these seven themes (refer to Appendix A). DEECD identified 12 actions for early implementation. These included reforming the Victorian College of Koorie Education, expanding and redesigning the Koorie education workforce, developing individual education plans for every Koorie student, providing additional literacy and numeracy support to Koorie students who are lagging in achievement, and expanding participation in a range of existing programs.

1.4 Funding for Indigenous students

Around \$96.4 million in funding in the 2010 calendar year was provided for Indigenous students. Of this, \$71.6 million, or \$8 314 per student, was allocated to schools through the Student Resource Package.

The remaining \$24.8 million is Indigenous-specific funding allocated under the Wannik strategy. In the 2010–11 financial year the main funding items are:

- \$8.4 million for the Koorie education workforce
- \$7.6 million for Wannik literacy and numeracy initiatives
- \$4.0 million for Koorie Pathways Schools
- \$2.6 million for Wannik student engagement initiatives
- \$0.9 million for the Victorian Aboriginal Education Association Incorporated
- \$1.3 million for Wannik system reform.

1.5 Policy context

The Wannik strategy was developed during national negotiations on an Indigenous reform agenda. The strategy aligns with the *National Indigenous Reform Agreement (Closing the Gap)* and the *Victorian Indigenous Affairs Framework*.

1.5.1 The National Indigenous Reform Agreement (Closing the Gap)

In 2007 the Council of Australian Governments agreed to a partnership between all levels of government to work with Indigenous communities to close the disadvantage gap over the next decade.

The 2008 *National Indigenous Reform Agreement (Closing the Gap)* is a policy with six targets to redress the systemic and structural problems of many Indigenous people. Education targets include:

- halving the gap in reading, writing and numeracy results for Indigenous students by 2018
- halving the gap for Indigenous students in Year 12 attainment or equivalent rates by 2020. The Victorian target is for 79.9 per cent of students to complete Year 12 or equivalent by 2020.

The Indigenous Reform Agreement expects each jurisdiction to meet the needs of Indigenous and non-Indigenous students equally.

1.5.2 *The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Action Plan*

The national *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Action Plan* (2010–2014) outlines how each jurisdiction will work together to close the gap between the education outcomes of Indigenous students and their peers. The plan identifies national, systemic and local level actions in six priority areas: readiness for school; engagement and connections; attendance; literacy and numeracy; leadership, quality teaching and workforce development; and pathways to real post-school options.

The national plan is consistent with the Wannik strategy and will provide additional impetus to its implementation in Victoria's 116 government focus schools; that is, schools with 10 or more Indigenous primary students, and two secondary schools.

1.5.3 *The Victorian Indigenous Affairs Framework*

The *Victorian Indigenous Affairs Framework* was established in 2006 and is the policy base for whole-of-government reforms to improve the quality of life experienced by Indigenous Victorians and to reduce the life expectancy gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Victorians. Government leadership and Indigenous community leadership are identified as equally important for improving the wellbeing of Indigenous people.

Improving education outcomes is one of six strategic action areas in the *Victorian Indigenous Affairs Framework*. The goals are to:

- improve the school attendance rate
- improve literacy and numeracy among students in Years 3, 5, 7 and 9
- improve transition to Year 10
- increase completion of Year 12 or equivalent qualifications.

The Victorian targets under the *Victorian Indigenous Affairs Framework* are more aspirational than the national Closing the Gap targets.

1.6 Roles and responsibilities

The Wannik strategy's success is the joint responsibility of DEECD's Wannik Unit and the Wannik Project Board. Wannik is being implemented in equal partnership with VAEAI. The other agencies and groups involved include the Wannik Regional Reference Group, DEECD regional offices, the Koorie education support workforce and schools.

1.6.1 Victorian Aboriginal Education Association Incorporated

VAEAI has been an equal partner with DEECD in educating Koorie people under the 2001 agreement *Yalca: A Partnership in Education and Training for the New Millennium*. It places VAEAI at the centre of all discussions and negotiations with the Koorie community about education.

VAEAI engages the Koorie community through the 32 Local Aboriginal Education Consultative Groups.

The service agreement signed with DEECD in 2008 describes VAEAI's role and responsibilities. The agreement requires VAEAI to engage the Koorie community in education decision-making and to advocate on the community's behalf in advising the department on the Wannik strategy.

VAEAI co-chairs the Wannik Project Board, Wannik Regional Reference Group and Regional Wannik Implementation Committees.

1.6.2 Wannik Project Board

The Project Board is the overseeing body responsible for the successful implementation of the Wannik strategy and for achieving the desired education outcomes for Koorie students. The board has the standard terms of reference and operating protocols for DEECD projects. It supports the director of the Wannik Unit to make decisions, resolve issues and champion the Wannik strategy.

The Project Board is co-chaired by the deputy secretary of DEECD's Office of Policy, Research and Innovation and the president of VAEAI. It also has representatives from across DEECD central office, the Ministerial Taskforce on Aboriginal Affairs and the Wannik Unit.

1.6.3 Wannik Unit

DEECD's Wannik Unit is the main point of accountability for the implementation and outcomes of the Wannik strategy. The unit is responsible for steering the strategy through DEECD central and regional offices. It is also responsible for managing the service agreement with VAEAI.

The Wannik Unit is directly responsible for two of the system reforms under Wannik: the reform of the Koorie education workforce and the reconfiguration of the Victorian College of Koorie Education. It also administers many of the smaller initiatives such as grant-based projects in other organisations.

The Wannik Unit reports on the progress of the Wannik strategy to the Wannik Project Board.

1.6.4 Wannik Regional Reference Group

The Wannik Regional Reference Group informs the Wannik Project Board and the Wannik Unit on progress in the regions and schools.

The Regional Reference Group is co-chaired by the director of the Wannik Unit and the general manager of VAEAI. It is made up of Wannik Unit staff, senior regional staff, community representatives and the regional Koorie education coordinators.

1.6.5 Regions

DEECD's regional offices implement the Wannik strategy in their region. All but one region have a Regional Wannik Implementation Committee. Under the Wannik strategy, the Koorie education workforce has been expanded and integrated into the regional offices.

All government schools and school staff are responsible for implementing the Wannik strategy. Members of the Koorie education workforce assist schools to engage Koorie students and families and to advise teachers and other staff on culturally inclusive education.

1.7 Audit objective and method

1.7.1 Objective and criteria

The objective of the audit was to determine the effectiveness of DEECD's implementation of the Wannik strategy and whether it is improving student educational outcomes. To address this objective, the audit examined whether:

- implementation and management of the strategy was underpinned by comprehensive and sound planning
- robust data collection and analysis processes were developed by DEECD to allow it to reliably assess the progress and effectiveness of the strategy
- implementation of the strategy is tracking in line with DEECD's milestones and performance information is being used to fine tune or revise the strategy.

The better practice guide, *Implementation of Programme and Policy Initiatives*, produced jointly by the Australian National Audit Office and Federal Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet was used to develop evaluation criteria for the audit objectives.

1.7.2 Audit scope and method

The audit examined the policy, programs and activities of DEECD central office. It also covered the four DEECD regions of Northern Metropolitan, Southern Metropolitan, Hume and Loddon Mallee. These have the highest numbers of Indigenous students and together account for 58 per cent of Indigenous students. Two primary schools and two secondary schools within each region were also visited.

The audit was conducted in accordance with Australian Auditing and Assurance Standards.

1.7.3 Audit cost

The total cost of the audit was \$410 000.

2 Wannik strategy planning and implementation

At a glance

Background

To achieve the Wannik strategy goals, the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD) needs to plan and manage the strategy effectively so the actions are implemented as intended on time, within budget and are of acceptable quality. It also needs to monitor and evaluate progress and report on it accurately.

Conclusion

Although there was effective, comprehensive planning for the strategy early on, much of this work was not adopted for implementation. DEECD is also not monitoring the impact of the strategy effectively. This puts at risk achieving the reforms identified to improve and sustain Koorie student outcomes.

Findings

- There are no comprehensive plans covering implementation milestones and time lines, stakeholder engagement and communications, and risk management.
- DEECD has not developed relevant and appropriate performance indicators and targets which would allow it to report on the outcomes of the Wannik strategy.

Recommendations

That DEECD strengthen the accountability for the Wannik strategy, improve stakeholder engagement and communications, and improve monitoring, evaluation and reporting on the strategy.

2.1 Introduction

The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD) allocates \$24.8 million annually to implement the Wannik strategy.

To achieve the Wannik strategy goals, DEECD needs to plan and manage its actions so they are implemented on time, within budget and are of acceptable quality.

To find out if the strategy is working effectively, DEECD needs to monitor and evaluate progress and report on it accurately. This maintains accountability for achieving policy and program goals and helps determine how best to allocate resources. In addition, it can help staff adopt good practice, and can improve future policy design, implementation and decision-making.

This chapter examines whether the Wannik strategy was well planned, and whether DEECD is monitoring and evaluating the strategy effectively.

2.2 Conclusion

There was a sound evidence base for the development of the Wannik strategy and DEECD's early planning for its implementation was comprehensive. But much of this effective initial work was not then used for implementation. This was a lost opportunity to apply the discipline and rigour the project required in its critical formative stages of implementing an ambitious and complex strategy.

Implementation of the Wannik strategy has not had sound project, stakeholder engagement and communications, or risk management plans, at either the central or regional offices.

Although the Wannik strategy sets out clearly its intended outcomes for students, parents, the community, principals and teachers, DEECD does not have a monitoring, evaluation and reporting framework that allows it to reliably and objectively assess its progress or to measure the strategy impact. Further, DEECD does not report on progress of the Wannik strategy towards its objectives or on what outcomes to date can be attributed to the strategy.

Collectively, these factors put at risk achievement of the systemic reforms needed to improve and sustain education outcomes for Koorie students.

2.3 Planning processes

Policy initiatives are more likely to succeed when there is early and systematic consideration of how best to put them into practice.

2.3.1 Evidence base for the Wannik strategy

DEECD's 2007 review of Indigenous education in government schools was a sound foundation for developing the Wannik strategy. The review analysed student outcomes data, programs and strategies, and consulted with relevant stakeholders. It found that the education sector needed greater commitment to improving the education outcomes of Koorie students.

Based on the review findings, the Wannik strategy detailed 38 actions for Indigenous education, from major structural reforms to initiatives targeted at supporting individual students. The Koorie community and other stakeholders support the strategy.

2.3.2 The early planning phase

Soon after the launch of the Wannik strategy, DEECD commissioned consultants to help it plan implementation. The result was a project charter, detailed project plans, a stakeholder engagement and communications strategy and a risk management plan. This work cost almost \$173 000.

These documents included most of the components expected within a sound project implementation plan. However, they omitted specific budgets for the strategy and its 38 actions, and did not establish robust monitoring, reporting and evaluation frameworks.

The Wannik Unit has not used these plans to guide its implementation of the Wannik strategy. Neither has it updated the project plans to reflect changes in the national policy environment, departmental priorities and the practicalities of day-to-day implementation. It has not used the risk management plan, or the stakeholder engagement and communications strategy.

2.3.3 Ongoing planning

The ongoing planning and implementation of the Wannik strategy is not well documented, and throughout the audit DEECD was unable to provide reliable evidence supporting its actions and decisions in implementing the strategy.

DEECD has no comprehensive project implementation plan or set of documents for the Wannik strategy detailing:

- clear goals to be achieved
- current priorities
- specific actions
- roles and responsibilities
- relevant and appropriate performance indicators and targets
- budget allocations
- time lines and milestones
- risk management strategies
- communications plan
- monitoring, reporting and review processes.

Instead, DEECD has chosen to implement the Wannik strategy by using a business-as-usual approach, rather than through a disciplined project management approach often used to achieve major system reforms.

It is acknowledged that the original 38 actions in the Wannik strategy are expected to be integrated into day-to-day management processes over time. However, to adopt this approach so early in the implementation of the strategy risked losing a clear line of sight on whether the original actions have been implemented, whether the intended outcomes have been achieved, and so whether DEECD's investment has been well spent. This is what has occurred in this case.

2.3.4 Regional planning

The Wannik strategy seeks to achieve systemic reform throughout government schools, including greater emphasis on accountability at school and regional levels, strong leadership and better engagement with Koorie parents and the community.

The Wannik Regional Reference Group is the main vehicle for communication between DEECD central and regional offices and between regional offices and schools. There are also Regional Wannik Implementation Committees in eight of the nine DEECD regions.

The Wannik Project Board has asked the DEECD regions to develop a regional implementation plan. However, DEECD regional offices vary in their levels of commitment to and leadership of the strategy, and are inconsistent in developing the plans. Early in the fourth year, only two of the nine regional plans have been endorsed by the regional director and the Koorie community.

The Wannik Project Board has recognised the weakness in the regions' strategic planning. In late 2010, central office distributed a template for use by the regions. However, this template does not include all the significant elements needed for an effective plan, such as setting out roles and responsibilities, time lines, budgets, communication, risk management and monitoring and evaluation.

2.3.5 Governance arrangements

Strong governance arrangements identify a single line of accountability for program implementation. This may be a senior responsible officer or a steering committee. The responsible officer or group is accountable for the budget and resources and monitoring and reporting of risks, program quality and time lines. Documented governance arrangements should clarify the purpose, powers and relationships between all those involved. This is particularly important where responsibility is spread across the department, as occurs in Koorie education. Success also depends on strong and visible leadership.

DEECD's governance arrangements include appropriate terms of reference and operating protocols for the Wannik Project Board and Regional Reference Group. Together, these two steering committees include cross-departmental, regional and Koorie community representation.

The terms of reference for the Wannik Project Board describe it as the body accountable for fully realising the strategy's outcomes. It is responsible for removing obstacles and maintaining focus on the scope and outcomes of the strategy.

In practice, however, the Wannik Project Board has not fulfilled its intended role. It has not required, or signed-off, critical implementation documents such as annual implementation plans for the Wannik Unit and DEECD regional offices, risk logs, and Wannik performance reports. It also did not endorse an evaluation framework until May 2011. The Wannik Project Board does not make budget and resourcing decisions and does not have a reporting function.

At the regional level, project documentation does not clearly distinguish the purpose, powers and relationships between the Regional Reference Group, Regional Wannik Implementation Committees, regional directors and the Office of Government School Education.

2.3.6 Budgeting

The Wannik strategy was launched before it had a budget. Shortly after the launch, \$30.8 million was allocated over five years as part of the 2008–09 Budget. This was made up of new funding and reallocation from previous Indigenous education programs. Since then, additional funding has come from internal and external sources.

DEECD has not demonstrated effective processes for estimating and monitoring spending on the Wannik strategy and its 38 actions. There is no single unit responsible for the Wannik budget and there are no financial statements that show how funding has been allocated or spent against the strategy and its actions.

2.3.7 Risk management

There is a lack of accountability for the quality of risk management. Neither the Wannik Unit nor the Wannik Project Board has applied DEECD's risk management guidelines to identify, document, assess and treat risks to the successful implementation of the Wannik strategy.

Although the early plan designed by consultants had a risk management plan listing 26 risks, DEECD did not use it to monitor or manage project risk. The most significant risks it identified are in:

- appropriate and necessary resource allocation
- financial and management reporting
- integrating the Wannik strategy into other areas of the department and regions
- the effectiveness of the service agreement with the Victorian Aboriginal Education Association Incorporated
- reform of the Koorie education workforce
- engagement and communication with internal and external stakeholders
- the ability to create a culturally inclusive curriculum
- alignment with other state and federal initiatives.

DEECD's System Policy Division Risk Register for 2010–11 identifies the single risk that 'Indigenous education outcomes detailed in the Wannik strategy may not be met'. The register rates this risk as unlikely but there is no description or analysis of the causes or consequences of the risk, existing controls or risk treatment strategies. Therefore, there is no basis for this assessment.

2.3.8 Stakeholder engagement and communications

The success of the Wannik strategy depends on a change of culture and mindset in the government school system, and embedding targeted programs into mainstream activities.

The early planning phase noted it was important to have a stakeholder engagement and communications strategy, and the System Policy Division included it as an output in its business plans in 2008–09 and 2009–10. However, DEECD did not implement a stakeholder engagement and communications plan and some communications activities have not occurred as intended. DEECD also has not monitored its communications activities and therefore cannot be sure that it is communicating the strategy effectively.

2.4 Performance monitoring and reporting framework

Effective monitoring and review supports ongoing assessment of progress and risks, and informs decisions about whether an initiative is still achievable, or whether elements need to be reviewed. Evaluation can also help identify how far the implementation approach contributed to meeting policy objectives.

2.4.1 Performance indicators and targets

The Wannik strategy sets out outcomes for students, parents, members of the community, principals and teachers. In summary:

- Koorie students can expect to be valued within the classroom by teachers and peers, receive individual support, and engage with their culture in day-to-day school work and activities.
- Parents can expect to feel welcomed and respected within the school community and have confidence that their children are receiving the best education possible.
- Community members can expect to be involved in developing a school and community partnership agreement, have their culture celebrated and respected by the broader school community, and see Koorie students' results improve on all education measures.
- School principals can expect to be supported to develop a culturally inclusive school, involved in partnership agreements with the community, and supported to run programs that have been shown to meet the specific needs of Koorie students.
- Teachers can expect to be supported to gain a greater understanding of Koorie culture, and provided with professional learning opportunities for delivering a culturally inclusive curriculum and assisting Koorie students to achieve their potential.

No expected outcomes were specified for members of the Koorie education workforce.

DEECD has not developed relevant and appropriate performance indicators and targets directly related to the Wannik strategy outcomes described above. It did not obtain and establish baseline data against which to measure progress, and has not monitored or reported against the strategy outcomes for students, parents, members of the community, principals and teachers.

Under the *Victorian Indigenous Affairs Framework*, DEECD has Indigenous-specific education indicators and targets to be met by 2013. However, education outcomes alone cannot be used to measure the effectiveness of the strategy because it is not possible to directly attribute actions implemented under Wannik to student achievement. There are many factors influencing a student's capacity to learn, and many government programs beyond the 38 actions of the Wannik strategy.

2.4.2 Completeness and accuracy of performance data

DEECD collects a range of data on the education outcomes of Koorie students, including results from national literacy and numeracy tests, attendance data, retention of Koorie students within the school system, completion rates, Victorian Certificate of Education results and teacher judgments.

There are a range of limitations to this data, including:

- difficulty identifying Koorie students and making sure they are in the data sets
- challenges measuring outcomes confidently given the small number of Koorie students especially at local or regional level
- the lack of consistent, long-term Koorie student data sets.

DEECD is aware of these limitations and seeks to continuously improve the completeness, accuracy and reliability of data, and reporting on Koorie students and their education outcomes.

Following introduction of the Wannik strategy, DEECD improved its performance data by strengthening ways to identify Koorie students, adding questions about Wannik implementation on DEECD's annual schools' census, reporting Koorie student attitudes to school separately, and reporting more local and regional data.

However, there remain major gaps and limitations in data collected to measure the Wannik strategy's success. DEECD does not collect any data on the suspension and expulsion of Koorie students, it cannot determine how many Koorie students are missing school regularly, does not know Koorie parents' satisfaction with the government school system, and there are weaknesses in the Indigenous data collection through the supplementary school census. For example, some questions are poorly framed and there are no questions about parental engagement, teacher professional development or whether the school has culturally inclusive practices and curriculum.

2.4.3 Monitoring and reporting

Management reporting on the progress of the Wannik strategy is primarily through Wannik Project Board meetings. However, the 'state of play' reports do not provide a clear picture of performance against departmental targets, program objectives or other points of reference, and there is insufficient information for sound decision making about the scope, timing or resourcing of the Wannik strategy.

DEECD advised that management reporting also occurs through its Resources Committee, Departmental Management Committee and Departmental Leadership Team. Reports to the Resources Committee and Departmental Leadership Team consist of a brief entry about the most recent activities, while performance reporting to the Departmental Management Committee stopped in 2009. Therefore, none of these reporting mechanisms provide a picture of the overall project status.

As no time lines and milestones or other baselines were established for the strategy, DEECD is not able to assess whether the strategy is being implemented as intended, or if it is achieving the desired results.

In the absence of reliable and comprehensive reporting there is insufficient information with which to identify and address any implementation problems; review the ongoing relevance and priority of the 38 Wannik actions; or make sure that adequate resources are available.

2.4.4 Program evaluation

DEECD did not meet its goal of having a measurement and evaluation framework for the Wannik strategy in place by March 2009. The Wannik Project Board endorsed an evaluation framework in May 2011 but is yet to set a budget or time lines for its implementation.

DEECD advised that the evaluation will consider:

- how Wannik was implemented
- how effective Wannik has been in progressing outcomes for Koorie students
- how and to what extent Wannik has been embedded as core business across the school system.

DEECD also advised that the evaluation will consider major reform elements and specific Wannik initiatives, as well as place-based evaluations to assess the impact of the Wannik strategy in areas with high numbers of Indigenous students.

Given DEECD's business-as-usual approach, which has led to the absence of project-specific performance data and separate monitoring of the strategy to date, it is unclear how DEECD will be able to carry out this evaluation effectively.

Recommendations

That the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development:

1. strengthen accountability for the Wannik strategy by:
 - implementing project-based planning, monitoring, review and reporting for each Wannik action
 - improving risk management practices
 - establishing performance measures relevant to the Wannik objectives and intended outcomes, and obtaining the necessary data to measure progress and success
 2. revise its communications and stakeholder engagement strategy and actively monitor and report against the communications objectives outlined in the strategy.
-

3 Progress of implementation

At a glance

Background

During 2008 the Wannik Project Board identified 12 of the 38 Wannik actions as priorities for implementation in early 2009. These ranged from major structural reforms to the expansion of existing initiatives.

Conclusion

Without specified milestones and targets, it is not possible to assess whether the implementation of Wannik is in line with the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development's (DEECD) expectations. Also, it is not evident that risks to the strategy's success are being managed.

Findings

- DEECD has completed the reform to the Victorian College of Koorie Education through the establishment of four Koorie Pathways Schools, however, it is too early to assess their impact.
- DEECD has expanded and redesigned the Koorie education support workforce, but is 12 months behind schedule in delivering professional development.
- There is a lack of accountability and transparency in the implementation of the 38 Wannik actions and DEECD cannot demonstrate if it is on track to achieve cultural change and increased accountability for Koorie students.
- The service agreement between DEECD and the Victorian Aboriginal Education Association Incorporated (VAEAI) does not adequately reflect the Wannik strategy objectives and has not been effectively managed.

Recommendations

That the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development:

- work with VAEAI to revise the service agreement
- develop and implement a workforce management plan for the Koorie education workforce
- revise and improve the delivery of the Wannik strategy.

3.1 Introduction

Wannik is an ambitious and complex strategy that seeks to reposition Indigenous education in government schools. It has three interrelated components:

- changing the culture and mindset of the government school system, particularly school leadership on matters such as teacher expectations of Koorie students, engagement with parents and community, and the knowledge and understanding of Koorie culture
- structural reforms to the model of education, the design of the Koorie education workforce and the frameworks for evaluating success and holding all levels of the system accountable for student progress
- better use of mainstream efforts and programs so the entire mainstream system works in the interests of all students.

Sustained, long-term improvement in Koorie student outcomes relies on achieving all three components. The Wannik strategy outlines 38 actions to do this, which vary greatly in complexity and duration.

This chapter provides an overview of progress in implementing Wannik priority actions and some of the risks to achieving sustained improvements in Koorie student outcomes.

3.2 Conclusion

At the beginning of the fourth year, DEECD cannot demonstrate whether the Wannik strategy is on track to improve education outcomes for Indigenous students. It is also not evident that risks to the strategy's success are being effectively managed.

To a large extent, the success of the Wannik strategy depends on a workforce that was not in place at the outset. Although the workforce has been redesigned and expanded, it is a long way from having the necessary professional skills and capabilities.

DEECD cannot demonstrate whether it is on track to achieve cultural change and increased accountability for Koorie student outcomes. This creates the risk that improved practices will not be embedded into schools and there will be no sustainable improvement in outcomes for Koorie students.

3.3 Wannik priority actions

During 2008 the Wannik Project Board identified 12 priority actions for implementation in early 2009 (refer to Appendix A). These included major reforms that were seen as critical for the success of Wannik, as well as other actions that could be implemented relatively quickly and simply in order to demonstrate early achievements for the community.

The following sections comment on progress of some of these early actions, namely:

- reconfiguration of the Victorian College of Koorie education
- reform of the Koorie education workforce
- full implementation of the Student Mapping Tool for Koorie students
- development of individual education plans for all Koorie students
- literacy and numeracy programs
- increased participation in What Works and Dare to Lead.

3.3.1 Reconfiguration of the Victorian College of Koorie Education

The Victorian College of Koorie Education was established in January 2006, following the merger of four Koorie Open Door Education facilities in Mildura, Swan Hill, Morwell and Glenroy. These facilities had been set up to be centres of excellence for Koorie students and it was envisaged that they would become best practice models providing culturally inclusive curriculum and achieving high educational outcomes.

Although the Victorian College of Koorie Education received \$5 million annually, its education outcomes were among the worst in Victoria and enrolments across the four campuses dropped from 184 students in February 2008 to 135 in February 2009.

Under the Wannik strategy, the Victorian College of Koorie Education was reconfigured into four new Koorie Pathways Schools that opened in April 2009. Registered as specialist settings, these schools are intended to reconnect disengaged Koorie students aged 12 to 16 with mainstream education or training.

Koorie Pathways Schools receive a combined total of about \$3.9 million annually, or 16 per cent of Indigenous-specific education funding. They are funded for a notional enrolment of 120 students across the four schools, representing 1.2 per cent of all Koorie students in Victoria. These schools receive average funding of \$32 000 per student, compared with average funding of \$8 300 for all students in other government schools. Student enrolments were 98 in August 2009, 64 in February 2010, and 66 in February 2011.

The measure of success is the number of students who move from the schools into mainstream education, training or employment. However, as Koorie Pathways Schools have only been open for two years, it is too early to assess their impact.

3.3.2 Reform of the Koorie education workforce

The Koorie education workforce is vital for engaging families in the education system and supporting students through their schooling. Reform and expansion of the Koorie education workforce was a major component of the Wannik strategy and is the foundation for many other actions.

The workforce reform was a significant undertaking with many challenges. The workforce was geographically dispersed and professionally isolated, with cultural considerations being important during reform. Expanding the workforce was ambitious when there is a limited pool of qualified Koorie workers.

Redesign of the workforce structure

DEECD's 2007 review of Indigenous education found that the workforce was under-staffed, under-trained and not allocated based on need. Roles were inconsistent and ill-defined and Koorie education workers experienced job insecurity, low pay and insufficient training and development.

DEECD developed a new Koorie education workforce structure during 2009, following consultation with staff, unions and the Victorian Aboriginal Education Association Incorporated (VAEAI). The number of positions was increased from 91 to 118, job security was improved and the position classifications and salaries increased. There are now nine Koorie education coordinators and 109 Koorie education support officers (KESO). Existing staff were given the opportunity to move to the KESO role and they have until the end of 2012 to meet the requirements of the new position.

As at December 2010 there were 39 KESOs employed at the highest level, with regions reporting another 33 as being very likely to meet the required level by December 2012. Regions report nine KESOs as very unlikely to meet the requirements of the new position, while it was too early to judge for other workers.

Implementation of the workforce structure

Given the complexities of the reform process and its critical importance to the success of Wannik, we expected DEECD to have a comprehensive workforce reform implementation plan. However, there was no implementation plan and DEECD cannot demonstrate whether it has implemented the workforce reforms effectively.

Senior management and Koorie education staff in four regions described aspects of the workforce reform as poorly planned, poorly communicated and culturally insensitive. Other aspects were described as being too slow, especially the development of performance plans and the delivery of training and development. They reported that these factors led to considerable stress, confusion, low morale and turnover among staff. Along with regional office staff, school principals, teachers and the Koorie community, members of the workforce were still unclear about their roles and responsibilities.

Some regions are having difficulty attracting and retaining members of the Koorie education workforce, while others have not integrated the workforce into the regional office, making barriers for workers trying to fulfil their new roles. Some staff in each of four regions visited identified that discrimination within the Koorie community and between the Koorie and non-Koorie workforce was affecting their ability to fulfil their new roles.

Monitoring and evaluation

DEECD did not put in place appropriate systems to monitor progress on implementing the workforce reforms. During the audit it was unable to provide reliable data about critical factors such as the workforce profile, skills and capabilities, workforce turnover and the extent of professional development provided to staff during 2010.

DEECD plans to evaluate the workforce reform as part of the overall evaluation of the Wannik strategy which is currently being developed, and also through its internal audit function.

3.3.3 Student Mapping Tool

The Wannik strategy requires the full implementation of the 'students at risk' mapping tool in schools with Koorie students, with the aim of enhancing school understanding and use of learning and engagement data. Schools can use the tool to map student results and the programs provided for each student.

The Student Mapping Tool is also compulsory for all schools under the Vulnerable Youth Framework, which is a cross-departmental approach to supporting vulnerable youth.

DEECD prioritised the Student Mapping Tool for all schools from the start of 2009. DEECD's annual school census shows 41.7 per cent of schools with Koorie students were using it in 2010, up from 22.5 per cent in 2008, but still well short of universal use.

In 2010, 61.8 per cent of schools with more than 10 Koorie students used the Student Mapping Tool, compared with 37.0 per cent of schools with between one and 10 Koorie students.

DEECD has no further information on school use of the tool or its effectiveness. It advised that its Youth Transitions Division will survey the use of the tool and it will use the results in professional development sessions during 2011.

3.3.4 Individual education plans

The Wannik strategy requires all government schools to develop an individual education plan for every Koorie student. The national *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Action Plan* also requires Victoria's 116 focus schools which have 10 or more Koorie students to develop personalised learning strategies in consultation with families.

Individual education plans are to be developed in partnership with the student, their parent or carer and, where necessary, a Koorie education worker. To be effective, education plans need to be practicable and useful for teachers and owned by the student and their families.

The number of Koorie students with plans has steadily risen since the launch of the Wannik strategy. In 2010, 83.2 per cent of Koorie students had an individual education plan, up from 62.2 per cent in 2008.

Although the increasing take-up of individual education plans is positive, statewide roll-out through a template and guidelines for developing education plans occurred 18 months later than DEECD intended. DEECD also reports that the quality of individual education plans is variable and that adequate quality assurance measures have been difficult to put in place due to the dispersed nature of the population.

Regions and schools that we visited also raised questions about their quality and effectiveness. Some of the issues raised include:

- lack of resources and support for developing individual education plans
- not all students being involved in the development of their individual education plan
- resistance among teachers who consider the process to be time-consuming and difficult, or lack of awareness among teachers that their students have an individual education plan
- lack of engagement or involvement by parents and carers
- plans that focus on behavioural issues rather than learning outcomes and future pathways
- plans not being monitored, reviewed and updated regularly.

DEECD has taken steps to improve the process for developing individual education plans by making the Northern Metropolitan Region's online system available to all regions from 2011, made possible by transferring \$160 000, or \$50 per student, from the Wannik tutorial programs. DEECD will continue to monitor the take-up of individual education plans and intends to evaluate their effectiveness during 2011.

A related Wannik action implemented by DEECD is the expansion of the Managed Individual Pathways initiative into Years 8 and 9 for Koorie students.

3.3.5 Literacy and numeracy support for students

DEECD's approach to improved literacy and numeracy for Indigenous students involves a combination of improving teacher practice and providing direct assistance to students who are performing below the expected level.

Tutorial programs

Based on a review of existing tutorial programs, DEECD has established two new tutorial assistance programs for Koorie students. These programs will receive \$22.6 million over four years.

The Wannik Tutorial Assistance Program is for students in Years 2 to 10 who are below the expected levels in English or mathematics. Around 45 per cent of Koorie students receive assistance under this program. The Senior Tutorial Assistance Program is open to all Koorie students in Years 11 and 12.

Schools and regions visited stated it was difficult to implement effective tutorial programs due to:

- small student numbers affecting the ability to attract and retain qualified tutors
- timetabling challenges
- resistance from students or families
- resistance or lack of understanding from teachers who may not allow tutors into the classroom or who expect tutors to discipline students or to work with other students in the class
- administrative difficulties.

DEECD has put systems in place to monitor program expenditure and student results which will form the basis of a review of the tutorial programs during 2011.

Literacy coaches

During 2009 to 2011 DEECD employed 45 specialist literacy coaches and 15 Koorie literacy coaches to work with school leadership teams and in classrooms to help teachers improve their literacy teaching. A March 2011 evaluation of the coaching initiatives found that the average growth in achievement of Koorie students was similar to that of all other students.

Funding for the coaching initiatives will not continue beyond December 2011.

3.3.6 Dare to Lead and What Works

DEECD aims to increase and encourage participation in the national Dare to Lead and What Works programs. Under Dare to Lead, clusters of schools are led by experienced school principals who help to identify the professional development needs of their colleagues. The What Works program assists schools to plan and take action to improve education outcomes for Indigenous students.

Participation in Dare to Lead and What Works has increased slightly since the launch of the Wannik strategy. The proportion of Victorian schools with Indigenous students who have participated in Dare to Lead increased from 29 per cent in 2008 to 30.5 per cent in 2010 while participation in What Works increased from 9.4 per cent in 2008 to 11.5 per cent in 2010. Of schools with more than 10 Koorie students 60.2 per cent have participated in Dare to Lead and 32 per cent have participated in What Works. However, it is unclear over what time frame schools have participated in these programs.

DEECD did not set any targets for participation in the Dare to Lead and What Works programs and has not evaluated the extent to which these programs are meeting the goals of the Wannik strategy.

3.4 Risks to achieving improved outcomes for Koorie students

The audit identified a number of significant risks to long-term, sustained improvements in Koorie education outcomes which are not being managed effectively. These include:

- management of the service agreement with VAEAI
- capacity in the Koorie education workforce
- accountability for implementing Wannik
- engagement with parents
- cultural inclusiveness
- student attendance and non-attendance.

3.4.1 Management of the service agreement with VAEAI

DEECD recognises VAEAI as an equal partner in the delivery of the Wannik strategy. Relying on an external agency requires clearly defined roles and responsibilities, and being assured the agency has sufficient capacity to provide the services specified. This is usually articulated through a service level agreement (SLA).

The 2008 SLA funded VAEAI at \$950 000 per annum over the three years to December 2010, and was extended for six months.

The SLA was not developed or managed in line with the government's 2007 *Guide to Victorian Indigenous Funding Agreements*. The SLA does not set out clear deliverables, milestones, performance measures, data collection and reporting requirements which adequately reflect the objectives and actions of the Wannik strategy, the *Victorian Indigenous Affairs Framework* and the *National Indigenous Reform Agreement (Closing the Gap)* targets.

It is also not evident that DEECD has assured itself about VAEAI's capacity to fulfil its obligations under the SLA.

The requirement in the SLA for VAEAI to prepare an annual operational plan on education, does not of itself establish the necessary accountability for VAEAI to deliver services that align to Wannik's annual priorities. In addition, VAEAI has not fulfilled its service obligations and reporting requirements as set out in the SLA, and DEECD has not held it to account for this. For example, there was no agreed annual operational plan for 2010 and VAEAI has not fulfilled financial reporting requirements. VAEAI's website had no reference to the Wannik strategy until 2011 and other information on the website is out of date.

DEECD's 2009 internal audit of the SLA highlighted similar issues, including the overall conclusion that the SLA is not effective in meeting DEECD's objectives as articulated in the Wannik strategy, and the risk that value for money may not be obtained.

3.4.2 Capacity in the Koorie education workforce

The Koorie education workforce has variable skills, from workers with basic administration skills to those with teaching and other qualifications. Before the reforms, many employees had not received professional development for many years, nor were they involved in performance development and assessment. Until staff are properly trained they do not have the capacity to perform required activities.

The Wannik strategy recognised the need to expand and develop the Koorie education workforce over time, with the aim of having a fully competent workforce in place by the end of 2012. DEECD undertook to provide a learning package for the induction and professional learning needs of Koorie support workers, mentoring and coaching, short-term industry placements and Vocational Education and Training familiarisation. DEECD also identified the possible need to train people outside the workforce to develop a pool of skilled workers for KESO positions.

Although the new workforce structure was in place by October 2009, DEECD was slow to implement performance and development plans for workers in the new roles. As at December 2010, only 58 of the 96 KESOs statewide had a signed performance and development plan. Most of the employees without signed plans are located in regions where the workforce has not yet been fully integrated into the regional office structure.

Provision of professional learning has also been significantly delayed. In the four regions visited, senior management and Koorie education workers said this delay has had a significant impact on workforce reform and the other actions in the Wannik strategy. They also stated that the delay will prevent some KESOs from meeting the requirements of the new position by 2012.

DEECD issued a tender for delivery of a tailored professional learning package in November 2009. DEECD advised this tender was unsuccessful because the tender document was unclear and unfocused and because DEECD did not have a sufficient understanding of the reformed workforce and how the new positions would operate in practice. A revised tender was issued in September 2010 and the \$1 million contract is expected to result in a statewide professional development plan by February 2012.

3.4.3 Accountability for implementing Wannik

The Wannik strategy aims to increase the accountability of principals, teachers and departmental officers for improved education outcomes for Koorie students. If staff are not held accountable, they are less likely to be committed to implementing the strategy.

Eight out of nine regions have identified 'meeting diverse needs, including Wannik' as one of their highest priorities. DEECD has designed processes for regions to develop Wannik regional implementation plans. Additionally, the inclusion of Koorie-specific targets in schools' annual plans and principals' performance plans has increased since the introduction of Wannik. Importantly, schools with more than 10 Koorie students are more likely to have Koorie-specific targets.

Despite these actions, DEECD senior management in the four regions visited indicated that the level of implementation of the Wannik strategy in schools and networks varies. School principals and leading teachers in the 16 schools visited demonstrated a varying level of cultural awareness and understanding about the content and rationale for the Wannik strategy.

These findings are consistent with a DEECD evaluation of the regional networks in 2010. It reported that only half the regions had some schools that had implemented the Wannik strategy and improved accountability and tracking of at-risk students.

3.4.4 Engagement with parents

The Wannik strategy aims to renew the focus on parental engagement. If parents do not understand and value the importance of education and feel confident participating in the school community then students may not attend school regularly and engage in their learning. It is critical for parents to be engaged during the secondary school years as this is the time when students are most likely to disengage.

The Wannik strategy outlines three specific actions aimed at renewing the focus on parental engagement. Additionally, engaging parents is the key role of the reformed Koorie education workforce, and school principals have a responsibility to work to remove barriers to Koorie parents' engagement in schools.

DEECD identified school-community partnerships as a Wannik action for early implementation, however, it reports that only seven Victorian schools had school-community partnership agreements by 2011. Although DEECD advised that it will provide partnership models to 116 focus schools in 2011, only two of these are secondary schools. DEECD is also yet to develop plans to improve the literacy and numeracy of Koorie parents.

DEECD has not started measuring or monitoring Koorie parents' confidence and satisfaction with the government school system, despite this being in the service agreement with VAEAI.

3.4.5 Cultural inclusiveness

A culturally inclusive education system respects, recognises and celebrates cultural identity in practice and in the curriculum. The 2007 review of Indigenous education found that Victoria was well behind other states in recognising the cultural identity of the Indigenous population in the curriculum.

Culturally inclusive curriculum and practices

The Wannik strategy states that DEECD will work with VAEAI and the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority to develop a culturally inclusive curriculum within the Victorian Essential Learning Standards. It also states that there will be celebration of Koorie culture and identity in all schools for all students.

Our regional and school visits revealed a wide variation in how Koorie culture is included in the curriculum and school practices, from substantive inclusion to symbolic, to none.

DEECD advised that a significant part of the development of a culturally inclusive curriculum is now being progressed through the development of a new national curriculum by the Australian Curriculum and Reporting Authority, which is due for implementation by the end of 2013. In relying on national policy, however, DEECD risks delaying introducing a culturally inclusive curriculum in schools, bypassing local community involvement, and precluding local and regional Indigenous perspectives. Even with a national curriculum teachers will need local Indigenous perspectives and knowledge.

DEECD has not yet established monitoring and evaluation processes for the Wannik actions relating to a culturally inclusive curriculum and acknowledgement and celebration of Koorie culture and heritage. This means it is not well placed to identify whether cultural change is occurring within the government school system.

Professional development for principals, teachers and support staff

The Wannik strategy states that school leaders and teachers will be given substantial professional development to better meet the needs of Koorie students. Four actions to deliver professional development for principals, teachers and support staff were to be implemented in consultation or partnership with VAEAI:

- requiring school principals responsible for Koorie students to undertake professional development in order to develop a culturally inclusive school
- cultural awareness training for teachers and support staff delivered in partnership with the Koorie community
- a professional learning package for pre-service and current teachers in the history and contemporary culture of the Koorie community
- a professional learning package for teachers that reflects the professional teaching standards informed by high expectations for Koorie learners.

The four actions were not set out in the service agreement with clear milestones, outcomes and time frames attached. Instead, DEECD uses an ad hoc approach relying largely on programs already in the marketplace. DEECD has measured neither the uptake and effectiveness of professional development and cultural awareness training, nor the involvement of Koorie parents and community in creating a culturally inclusive school environment.

3.4.6 Student attendance and non-attendance

Students need to attend school regularly to succeed. However, Indigenous students attend school on average far less than non-Indigenous students and DEECD has identified student absence as an area of ongoing concern.

Regional offices, VAEAI representatives and school leaders reported that student attendance data is not useful because it is averaged. DEECD central office does not have sufficient data to assess how many Koorie students are regularly absent from school, their profiles and the reasons. This means it does not have sufficient knowledge to develop effective attendance strategies and does not know to what extent poor attendance impacts on Koorie student education outcomes. DEECD also does not collect data on suspended or expelled Koorie students or the circumstances.

DEECD advised that it has sought to improve Koorie students' attendance through updated student engagement guidelines. Additionally, nine Victorian secondary schools introduced Clontarf football or Wannik dance academies in 2010, catering for around 200 Koorie students. These programs have shown a positive impact on student attendance.

DEECD advised that student attendance will continue to be a major focus during 2011. It will work with school principals and regional officers to develop an evidence-based attendance strategy for Koorie students. It will also establish processes to enable schools and the system to evaluate and monitor the success of attendance strategies.

Recommendations

That the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development:

3. work with the Victorian Aboriginal Education Association Incorporated to revise the service level agreement to:
 - directly reflect the objectives and actions of the Wannik strategy, the *National Indigenous Reform Agreement (Closing the Gap)* targets and the *Victorian Indigenous Affairs Framework*
 - rigorously apply *The Guide to Victorian Indigenous Funding Agreements* in developing, monitoring and enforcing the agreement
 4. develop and implement an ongoing workforce management plan for the Koorie education workforce, aimed at developing and retaining the required skills and capacities to improve the education outcomes of Koorie students
 5. act to:
 - hold all levels of the system appropriately accountable for improved Koorie education outcomes
 - deliver focused professional development to teachers, principals and support staff
 - verify that schools consistently implement culturally inclusive curriculum and practices
 - increase parental engagement, confidence and satisfaction with the government school system
 - evaluate the effectiveness of the Koorie Pathways Schools and other forms of dedicated education provision against the aims of the Wannik strategy and the schools' objectives
 - improve the use of learning tools such as individual education plans and the Student Mapping Tool
 6. improve data on Koorie student absences, suspensions and expulsions, set baselines and target reduced student absences, suspensions and expulsions
 7. implement appropriate processes, measures and targets to monitor the level of confidence and satisfaction with the government school system among Koorie parents.
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Appendix A.

Status of the Wannik actions

Figure A1
Status of the 38 Wannik actions – April 2011

Wannik action	Status
Reform the government school system's education of Koorie students	
Work within the existing accountability framework to ensure principals, teachers and departmental officers are directly responsible for the achievement of improved targets for each Koorie student and for Koorie students overall.	<p>Ongoing implementation</p> <p>Work to date has focused on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Putting tools in place to allow schools to adequately support students and meet associated accountability requirements, e.g., the redesigned workforce; tutorial assistance. • Making sure that all regions have an up-to-date Wannik implementation plan. • Inclusion of measures and targets in performance plans: in 2010, 42 per cent of schools had Koorie-specific targets in their annual implementation plans and 30 per cent of principals had targets in their performance plans.
Require school principals with Koorie students enrolled at their school to undertake professional development in order to develop a culturally inclusive school.	<p>In progress</p> <p>The development of professional learning opportunities will be based on the recommendations outlined in a position paper prepared by the Victorian Aboriginal Education Association Incorporated (VAEAI).</p> <p>Every principal of a focus school will within two years be required to participate in a leadership program to assist them to lead improvement in the learning outcomes of Koorie students.</p> <p>School principals are encouraged to participate in a range of professional development activities, including: Dare to Lead program; What Works program; Annual Wannik Principals Conference.</p>
Develop in partnership with VAEAI cultural awareness training for teachers and support staff in Victorian schools.	<p>In progress</p> <p>This is included as a requirement in the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development's (DEECD) service agreement with VAEAI. VAEAI has developed a position paper.</p>
Increase and encourage participation by Victorian schools in the national What Works program.	<p>Ongoing implementation</p> <p>11.5 per cent of schools with Koorie students have participated in What Works, including 32 per cent of schools with 10 or more Koorie students.</p>

Figure A1
Status of the 38 Wannik actions – April 2011 – *continued*

Wannik action	Status
Reform the government school system's education of Koorie students – <i>continued</i>	
Increase and encourage participation by Victorian schools and regions in the Dare to Lead program.	<p>Ongoing implementation</p> <p>30.5 per cent of schools with Koorie students have participated in Dare to Lead, including 60.2 per cent of schools with 10 or more Koorie students.</p> <p>DEECD has entered into an agreement with Dare to Lead to provide additional services into Victorian schools.</p>
Require full implementation of the Student Mapping Tool to enhance school understanding and use of learning and engagement data.	<p>Ongoing implementation</p> <p>41.7 per cent of schools with Koorie students reported that they were using the Student Mapping Tool in 2010, up from 30.2 per cent in 2009 and 22.5 per cent in 2008.</p> <p>DEECD intends to undertake an evaluation of the effectiveness of the Student Mapping Tool in 2011.</p>
Develop a professional learning package in partnership with universities and VAEAI that supports pre-service and in-service training for teachers in the history and contemporary culture of Victoria's Koorie community.	<p>In progress</p> <p>This is included as a requirement in DEECD's service agreement with VAEAI. VAEAI has produced a position paper.</p>
Develop and implement a professional learning package for teachers that reflects the professional teaching standards informed by high expectations for Koorie learners.	<p>In progress</p> <p>This is included as a requirement in DEECD's service agreement with VAEAI. VAEAI has produced a position paper.</p>
In conjunction with VAEAI, work with the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority to develop a culturally inclusive curriculum within the Victorian Essential Learning Standards.	<p>In progress</p> <p>VAEAI has produced a position paper.</p> <p>DEECD is relying on development of a new national curriculum due in 2013.</p>
Work with the Victorian College of Koorie Education school council and community on the findings from the review of culturally inclusive education.	<p>Implemented</p> <p>Four new Koorie Pathways Schools opened in 2009.</p>
Develop and implement a strategy to ensure that suspensions and expulsions for Koorie students are used as a last resort.	<p>Ongoing implementation</p> <p>As part of changes to DEECD's student wellbeing guidelines schools are required to identify appropriate supports for Koorie students. However, DEECD does not collect any data about the number of Koorie students suspended or expelled.</p>

Figure A1
Status of the 38 Wannik actions – April 2011 – *continued*

Wannik action	Status
Support greater student engagement	
Require government schools to develop an individual education plan for each Koorie student.	<p>Ongoing implementation</p> <p>The proportion of Koorie students with an individual education plan has risen from 62.2 per cent in 2008 to 83.2 per cent in 2010. DEECD has issued guidelines for developing individual education plans and made an online system available to regions from 2011.</p> <p>DEECD intends to evaluate the effectiveness of individual education plans during 2011.</p>
Expand the Managed Individual Pathways initiative into Years 8 and 9 for Koorie students at risk of disengaging from school.	<p>Implemented</p> <p>DEECD provides \$200 per student for schools to provide pathways plans to Year 8 and 9 Koorie students.</p>
Maintain flexible funding arrangements to support regions and schools to build on programs already delivering improvements in attendance and engagement.	<p>Ongoing implementation</p> <p>Various projects in regions have been supported including: literacy programs, development of an online individual education plan system, Clontarf Football Academies and Wannik Dance Academies.</p>
Expand the Koorie-specific version of the It's Not OK to Be Away attendance strategy.	<p>Ongoing implementation</p> <p>DEECD developed new student engagement guidelines which cover attendance, however, attendance for Koorie students remains significantly lower than for non-Koorie students. Each region will have a project covering attendance during 2011 and DEECD intends to issue a new attendance strategy.</p>
Develop ready-for-school or pre-school Koorie programs in all areas where there are high numbers of Koorie families.	<p>Ongoing implementation</p> <p>The reformed Koorie education workforce has placed an increased focus in this area.</p>
Develop Youth Transition Support Initiatives in locations where there is a high concentration of disengaged Koorie young people.	<p>Implemented</p> <p>Three youth transition support officers were funded in Shepparton, Morwell and Darebin during 2009 and 2010. They have been replaced by Youth Connect under the National Partnership on Youth Attainment and Transitions. Under this initiative, thirteen sites state wide must focus on Koorie students at risk.</p>
Develop innovative learning tools and programs through the use of technology that builds community and student engagement.	<p>Ongoing implementation</p> <p>Examples of resources developed include Fuse and Embedding Indigenous Perspectives in the Curriculum.</p>

Figure A1
Status of the 38 Wannik actions – April 2011 – continued

Wannik action	Status
Provide more literacy and numeracy support	
Provide accelerated literacy and numeracy support to Koorie students who are behind expected levels of achievement.	<p>Implemented</p> <p>DEECD has established two tutorial assistance programs for Koorie students: the Wannik Tutorial Assistance Program and the Senior Tutorial Assistance Program.</p> <p>Regions are also implementing a range of literacy and numeracy programs.</p>
Employ additional literacy specialists to work in schools with high numbers of Koorie students, building on the already successful Literacy Improvement Teams Initiative.	
	<p>Implemented</p> <p>15 of DEECD's 60 literacy coaches are dedicated Koorie literacy coaches.</p>
Provide seeding grants to all regions to innovate and share effective practice in literacy and numeracy.	<p>Ongoing implementation</p> <p>Regions are implementing a range of literacy and numeracy programs in addition to the Wannik tutorial programs and Koorie literacy coaches.</p>
Develop literacy programs that recognise the importance of 'code switching' between Koorie English and Standard Australian English.	<p>In progress</p> <p>This is included as a requirement in DEECD's service agreement with VAEAI. Code switching was also included in the professional development provided to Koorie literacy coaches.</p>
Support and encouragement for high-achieving students	
Provide scholarships for high-performing Koorie students to assist them with the costs of continued study.	<p>Implemented</p> <p>There are 20 Wannik Education Scholarships available annually, valued at \$2 500 per year for two years.</p>
Allocate places for high-achieving Koorie students in Victoria's selective entry government schools.	<p>Ongoing implementation</p> <p>A new enrolment policy was developed, including an equity provision covering Koorie students.</p> <p>DEECD will also assist the selective entry school network to look at a long-term strategy to encourage Koorie student enrolments.</p>
Provide mentoring programs to support students with the pressures of higher level study.	<p>Ongoing implementation</p> <p>A range of new and existing programs include a mentoring component.</p>
Implement a residential leadership and cultural identity program modelled on the Alpine School program targeting Koorie students from Year 9 onwards.	<p>Implemented</p> <p>DEECD provides scholarships to cover the costs of Koorie students attending existing programs at the three campuses of the School for Student Leadership (Dinner Plain, Snowy River and Gnurad Gundidj). Nineteen students from 10 schools attended in 2009 and 11 students from nine schools attended in 2010.</p> <p>DEECD also held a four-day residential leadership forum for 33 students in Years 9 to 12 in 2010.</p>

Figure A1
Status of the 38 Wannik actions – April 2011 – continued

Wannik action	Status
Expand and develop the Koorie support workforce	
Employ more Koorie support staff and integrate the Koorie support workforce with regional support staff and functions linked to the Department's broader early childhood and school improvement strategy.	Implemented The number of positions in the Koorie education workforce increased from 91 to 118. The workforce has been integrated into regional offices and there is integration of schools and early childhood workers.
Redesign the roles and responsibilities of the Koorie support workforce to ensure high level support for individual Koorie students and families, with a particular focus on school-family engagement.	Implemented The Koorie education workforce was redesigned to include two new roles: nine Koorie Education Coordinators (one per region) at the Victorian Public Service 5 level and 109 Koorie Education Support Officers at the Education Support Officer 2.4 level.
Provide internships and scholarships to increase the number of Koorie teachers.	Implemented This action was initially implemented through the existing Career Change Program. In 2011 DEECD launched the Koorie Teaching Scholarships program. Seven four-year scholarships valued at up to \$70 000 have been offered for new entrants to a Victorian accredited teaching degree and 15 scholarships valued up to \$10 000 have been offered for completion of a current teaching study commitment.
Develop a professional learning package that supports the specific induction and professional learning needs of Koorie workers.	In progress An initial tender process was unsuccessful. A revised tender was issued in late 2010 and is expected to be signed in April 2011.
Include Koorie-focused scholarships, mentoring and coaching, short-term industry placements and VET familiarisation.	Not yet implemented
Renew the focus on parental engagement	
Develop school community partnership agreements in schools with Koorie students.	In progress There are currently seven partnership agreements. DEECD intends to provide partnership models to 116 focus schools in 2011.
Investigate and develop initiatives that improve the literacy and numeracy of Koorie parents, to enable them to support their children through school.	Not yet implemented
In conjunction with VAEAI, work with Koorie parents and community to build their confidence in the school system.	Ongoing implementation A range of Wannik actions will contribute to this, especially the new Koorie education workforce, however, DEECD has not yet commenced monitoring or measuring the level of confidence and satisfaction with the government school system among Koorie parents.

Figure A1
Status of the 38 Wannik actions – April 2011 – continued

Wannik action	Status
Share responsibility appropriately across government	
Identify the issues from outside the school gate that significantly impact on student education outcomes and participation.	Ongoing implementation The State of Victoria's Children 2009 report details a range of issues. There are a range of state and national forums for continuing this action.
Continue to develop programs that assist and support Koorie youth who have been placed on, or are at risk of being placed on, Youth Justice supervised orders.	In progress This is predominantly the responsibility of the Department of Justice and the Department of Human Services. DEECD has jointly funded programs such as Frontline.
Maintain support for Koorie organisations that are Adult Community Education providers and registered training organisations, with appropriate evaluation to ensure programs are effective.	In progress This is predominantly the responsibility of the Department of Planning and Community Development.
Undertake further work with other agencies to identify school-aged Koorie students who are not attending school and support them to engage in the education environment.	No evidence received during the audit

Note: Actions in bold were identified by the Wannik Project Board as priority action areas which could be implemented or well underway by the beginning of 2009.

Source: Victorian Auditor-General's Office, based on information provided by the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development.



Appendix B.

Audit Act 1994 section 16— submissions and comments

Introduction

In accordance with section 16(3) of the *Audit Act 1994* a copy of this report was provided to the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development with a request for submissions or comments.

The submissions and comments provided are not subject to audit nor the evidentiary standards required to reach an audit conclusion. Responsibility for the accuracy, fairness and balance of those comments rests solely with the agency head.

Submissions and comments received

RESPONSE provided by the Acting Secretary, Department of Education and Early Childhood Development



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BRI 1379

Mr Des Pearson
Auditor-General
Victorian Auditor-General's Office
Level 24, 35 Collins Street
MELBOURNE 3000

24 MAY 2011

Dear Mr Pearson

Thank you for providing the opportunity to comment on the proposed report on the performance audit of Indigenous Education Strategies for Government Schools.

In general, the Department accepts the recommendations contained in the report, and notes that they have either been implemented already, or are in train to be implemented as part of the Department's standard practices and processes. A table outlining the Department's response to each of the recommendations is attached.

The audit has occurred three years into the implementation of what you rightly describe as an ambitious and complex strategy. It is part of a process that governments nationally have viewed as requiring a commitment across generations if we are to see real and sustainable improvement in outcomes for Indigenous people.

The Wannik Strategy is the first of its type in Victoria, and aims to provide a comprehensive and coherent approach to improving educational outcomes for Indigenous students. I am pleased to say that Victoria is making significant strides towards meeting the wide array of state and national outcomes targets. In particular, the latest data show that we are continuing to close the gap in literacy and numeracy performance, that the number of students being retained to the later years of schooling is at record levels, and that our engagement and attendance programs are having a very real impact for individuals.

Your report is focused primarily on just six of an initial twelve actions that were selected for attention in an early phase of implementation. I have noted, however, the references throughout your report to the numerous actions that DEECD has implemented over the last three years. These actions have included key structural reforms such as the expansion and redesign of the Koorie Education Workforce – a critical component of the overall strategy and one that is unique within Australia. They also include the development of specific programs to assist Indigenous young people to improve their performance and to achieve excellence.



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RESPONSE provided by the Acting Secretary, Department of Education and Early Childhood Development – continued

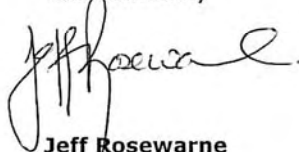
As evidenced by Appendix A to your report, almost all of the Wannik actions have either been implemented or are being met through the operation of ongoing programs. In addition, some key programs have been developed subsequent to the release of the Wannik Strategy, such as the successful Clontarf Football Academies and the Wannik Dance Academies.

The core of the Wannik Strategy is to support the mainstream education system to work better for Indigenous students. It requires that the education of Indigenous students become everyone's business, not just the responsibility of a dedicated few. It is for this reason that the Department has adopted a mainstreaming approach, with responsibility and accountability applied appropriately at different levels across the system.

I appreciate that this has been an audit into a very complex and sensitive area of government policy, and thank you again for providing the opportunity to comment on the report.

The Department's contact is Mr James Kelly, General Manager, Portfolio Governance and Improvement Division, telephone 9637 3158, should you wish to discuss the response and any related matters further.

Yours Sincerely



Jeff Rosewarne
Acting Secretary

RESPONSE provided by the Acting Secretary, Department of Education and Early Childhood Development – continued

ATTACHMENT 3

**VAGO Audit
Indigenous Education Strategies for Government Schools May 2011**

DEECD Management Response:

The Department welcomes the opportunity to comment on the audit report and accepts the recommendations. The Department's specific management response for each recommendation is outlined below.

Number	Recommendations
1	<p>That the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development strengthen accountability for the Wannik strategy by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • implementing project-based planning, monitoring, review and reporting for each Wannik action • improving risk management practice • establishing performance measures relevant to the Wannik objectives and intended outcomes, and obtaining the necessary data to measure progress and success <p>DEECD Response: Recommendation is supported</p> <p>Comments: The department will implement a project based approach to those remaining Wannik actions where this is not in place and improve its risk management practices. The department will measure progress and success against relevant performance measures.</p>
2	<p>revise its communications and stakeholder engagement strategy and actively monitor and report against the communications objectives outlined in the strategy</p> <p>DEECD Response: Recommendation is supported</p>
3	<p>work with the Victorian Aboriginal Education Association Incorporated to revisit the service level agreement to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • directly reflect the objectives and actions of the Wannik strategy, Closing the Gap targets and <i>Victorian Indigenous Affairs Framework</i> • rigorously apply the Guide for Victorian Indigenous Funding Agreement in developing, monitoring and enforcing the agreement <p>DEECD Response: Recommendation is supported</p> <p>Comments: The department will work with the Victorian Aboriginal Education Association Incorporated to implement this recommendation.</p>
4	<p>develop and implement an ongoing workforce management plan for the Koorie education workforce, aimed to developing and retaining the required skills and capacities to improve the education outcomes of Koorie students</p> <p>DEECD Response: Recommendation is supported</p> <p>Comments: The department will implement two major professional learning packages for the Koorie Education Workforce and regions will use these as the basis for developing and implementing workforce plans.</p>
5	<p>act to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • hold all levels of the system appropriately accountable for improved Koorie education outcomes • deliver focused professional development to teachers, principals and support staff • verify that schools consistently implement culturally inclusive curriculum and practices

RESPONSE provided by the Acting Secretary, Department of Education and Early Childhood Development – continued

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • increase parental engagement, confidence and satisfaction with the government school system • evaluate the effectiveness of the Koorie Pathways Schools and other forms of dedicated education provision against the aims of the Wannik strategy and the schools' objectives • improve the use of learning tools such as individual education plans and the Student Mapping Tool <p>DEECD Response: Recommendation is supported</p>
6	<p>improve data on Koorie student absences, suspensions and expulsions, set baselines and target reduced student absences, suspensions and expulsions</p> <p>DEECD Response: Recommendation is supported</p>
7	<p>implement appropriate processes, measures and targets to monitor the level of confidence and satisfaction with the government school system among Koorie parents</p> <p>DEECD Response: Recommendation is supported</p>



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Managing Drug and Alcohol Prevention and Treatment Services (2010–11:24)	March 2011

Report title	Date tabled
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Facilitating Renewable Energy Development (2010–11:27)	April 2011
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Managing Student Safety (2010–11:29)	May 2011
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