



## Minister for Education Services

The Hon. Jacinta Allan, MP

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Ms Elaine Crowle  
President  
Parents Victoria  
22 Markovich Lane  
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Dear Ms *Elaine* Crowle

Thank you for your letter of 14 August 2006 enclosing the Parents Victoria Complaints Procedures and Dispute Resolution in Victorian Government Schools Report.

The Bracks Government is committed to effective complaints handling procedures at all levels of operation within the Department for Education and Training. As you may be aware, the Department has recently completed a review of its complaint handling procedures in consultation with the office of the Victorian Ombudsman, using the Ombudsman Victoria's Good Practice Guide to Complaint Handling for Victorian Public Sector Agencies. The key findings and the proposed solutions contained within the Parent Victoria Report were considered as part of this review.

A comprehensive report was provided to the Ombudsman that set out the Department's commitment to a number of key initiatives to strengthen and promote its complaint handling processes at the school, regional and central levels. These include:

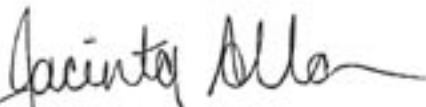
- The dissemination of a model parent complaint policy to schools.
- Further resources for parents on the Department's website about how to make a complaint.
- Additional items in the Annual Parent Opinion Survey about parent satisfaction levels with school based complaints handling.
- The strengthening of complaints handling at the Regional Office level.
- Guidelines on dispute resolution for all Department employees.
- The establishment of a unit with central responsibility for complaints handling processes within the Department.

I believe that these initiatives will address the recommendations in your report. I also believe, however, that the recommendation to establish a separate body to resolve complaints regarding the Department may lead to a duplication of resources, given the Ombudsman's office current role in investigating complaints relating to the Department and other public sector agencies.

The Department would be happy to meet with you to discuss these initiatives in more detail. I invite you to contact John Allman, General Manager, School System Reform Division on 9637 3179 to arrange a convenient time to meet.

Thank you for your contribution to this important matter.

Yours sincerely



Jacinta Allan, MP  
*Minister for Education Services*