

# 2018 EDUCATION STATE IN SCHOOLS FORUM STATEMENT

31 JULY – 1 AUGUST 2018

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On 31 July and 1 August 2018, over 90 students, teachers, principals, parents, system leaders and partner organisations met from across Victoria for the third Education State in Schools Forum (Forum). The Forum was co-designed by the Guiding Coalition and the Department of Education and Training and brought together people with a deep and shared interest in the education of our children and young people.

The Guiding Coalition and partner organisations in attendance included the Australian Education Union, Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership, Australian Principals Federation, Country Education Partnership, Education State Student Advisory Group, Parents Victoria, Principals' Association of Specialist Schools Victoria, Rural Youth Ambassadors, School Governance Network, Social Ventures Australia, Victorian Student Representative Council, Victorian Aboriginal Education Association Inc., Victorian Association of State Secondary Principals, Victorian Council of Social Service and Victorian Principals Association.

## What actions are we taking today to achieve the Education State of tomorrow?

The Forum focused on the work we are already doing, and where we are going next.

We discussed and reflected on our progress in relation to:

- the Guiding Coalition's priorities for 2018 (as determined at the 2017 Forum)
- how to lead, sustain, spread and embed change
- the importance of leading from the middle
- how to best communicate and engage with our communities in describing the Education State.

The Forum took place over one and a half days, and included keynotes, panels, workshop streams, live case studies and the development of practical action plans – featuring the voices of a wide range of people who are already doing the work, and who care passionately about education.

A number of themes emerged during discussions at the Forum:

- The first was around the importance of working together. In order to work together to further education reform, partnerships are fundamental. Aunty Di Kerr, in her Welcome to Country for the Forum, reminded us of the need to have buddies, share stories and keep coming together to collaborate and problem solve.
- We also discussed the role of professional development and professional practice. Building capability is never complete, and there is great value associated with investing time and energy into this.
- As well as identifying what we want to sustain, spread and embed, the Forum provided us with space to reflect and gain clarity on challenges we want to solve together.
- We shared a number of valuable insights in relation to the importance of student voice and students being at the centre of all that we do. Students thrive when they have the chance to actively shape their education, and regardless of whether they hold leadership roles, they need to be authentically engaged. We also identified the importance of engaging with parents and the broader community about reforms.
- In addition, we recognised that reform takes time and we need time to deeply embed reforms across the system.
- We reflected on the leadership of reform, and discussed the importance of leading from the middle – which involves empowering the middle of our system to confidently lead reform, and recognising their agency and responsibility to make a difference. The middle includes principals, Senior Education Improvement Leaders, Area Directors, regions and stakeholder groups. A theme emerged that transformative leadership and practice will require us all to “lean in” to the work.

## Staying the course

Together, we have set strong foundations and are maturing as an education ecosystem. Our work is showing results and we have so much to be proud of. We know that we are headed in the right direction, so it is important that we stay the course – and continue to work together to keep building excellence in education for students who are in our classrooms today.