

# CONSULTATION PAPER

## DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT (DEECD)

### MANAGEMENT POSITION ON THE REDESIGN OF THE ROLES OF THE KORIE SUPPORT WORKFORCE

#### PURPOSE

1. The purpose of this paper is to outline for consultation the Management Position of the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD) on the redesign of the roles of those employees collectively known as the Koorie support workforce.

#### BACKGROUND

2. *Wannik: Learning Together – Journey to Our Future*, is the Government's education strategy for Koorie students, launched by the Minister for Education in February 2008.
3. As part of the development of *Wannik*, a comprehensive review of Koorie education was undertaken by the Department. A key component of the review focused on the role of the Koorie support workforce within the context of the broader education workforce.
4. The review found that
  - the work of members of the dedicated Koorie support workforce is valued in schools, but may not be currently directed to areas of greatest need;
  - the most valued role of Koorie educators is one of linking schools with the parents and families of Koorie students;
  - the roles and functions the workers are ill-defined and inconsistent across regions;
  - the workforce is under-manned;
  - as a general rule, the workforce has received little in the way of professional development over time and as a result may be under-skilled for the future role expected of it;
  - many workers have low job security as they are employed on yearly contracts; and
  - many workers often have little connection with regional structures despite devolution to the regions in 2006.
5. The response to these issues is outlined in *Wannik*, and includes the following specific actions:
  - *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, including the co-ordination of developing education plans and pathway plans for Koorie students.*

- *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.*
- *develop a professional learning package that supports the specific induction and professional learning needs of Koorie workers*

6. The current Koorie support workforce includes 91 Koorie employees in schools and regional offices, comprising 56 Koorie Educators (KEs), 8 Home School Liaison Officers (HSLOs), 16 Koorie Education Development Officers (KEDOs) and 11 Koorie Early Childhood Field Officers (KECFOs).

7. Position classification details and employment status are as follows:

<b>Position</b>	<b>Class</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Fixed Term</b>	<b>Ongoing</b>
Koorie Educators	SSO 1	56	38	18
Koorie Home School Liaison Officers	VPSG 3	8	0	8
Koorie Education Development Officers	VPSG 3	15	0	15
	VPSG 4	1	0	1
Koorie Early Childhood Field Officers	VPSG 3	11	0	11
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>91</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>53</b>

## **PROPOSED MANAGEMENT POSITION**

### **New Structure:**

8. DEECD proposes to reshape the current structure of the Koorie support workforce, to ensure that it can best deliver on the Government's reform agenda for Koorie education.
9. Most workers will undertake a new Koorie Education Support Officer (KESO) role. It is proposed that the KESO positions:
- be positions identified for people of Indigenous cultural background;
  - be ranked at VPSG-4 level or equivalent;
  - be employed by regional offices, but located in schools of highest need at the discretion of regional management;
  - be employed on an ongoing basis;
  - focus specifically on school-family engagement activities (including supporting Koorie students into school, home visits, etc);
  - connect with other school education support workers, and with workers outside school education, particularly KECFOs, to assist families to engage in education (e.g. covering the spectrum of early childhood, school and post schooling); and
  - receive training and professional development specific to their roles.

10. In addition, there will also be nine Koorie Education Coordinator (KEC) positions (one per region). It is proposed that the KEC positions:
- be positions identified for people of Indigenous cultural background;
  - be ranked at VPSG-5 level or equivalent;
  - be employed by the regional offices;
  - be employed on an ongoing basis;
  - have a specific focus on integrating the work of KESOs into the broader regional approach to student well-being and support;
  - support KESOs within their school placements;
  - provide a strategic link between relevant DEECD employees and external agencies; and
  - receive training and professional development specific to their roles.
11. Within the early childhood area, the existing 11 Koorie Early Childhood Field Officer (KECFO) positions will be upgraded from VPSG-3 to VPSG-4, to ensure parity with the KESOs.

**Expansion of the Workforce:**

12. The workforce will be expanded by up to 27 positions over the next three years, as follows.

Position	Persons Additional to 2007/08 Base			
	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
Koorie Education Co-ordinators	9	9	9	9
Koorie Education Support Officers	6	12	18	18
Total Additional	15	21	27	27

**Implementation:**

13. It is proposed to establish the new structure as quickly as practicable.
14. As new positions, the KEC positions will be advertised immediately through the Department's normal recruitment processes as ongoing VPSG5 positions in the regions. All persons of Indigenous background will be eligible to apply.

**Re-classification**

15. For **existing school-based staff**, it is proposed that the following arrangements apply as part of moving to the new structure:
- Under the new structure, all existing school-based positions will be reshaped into the KESO role as Victorian Public Service positions to allow for resource flexibility through regional management structures in the allocation of the positions to priority areas and areas of need.
  - The current 56 Koorie Educator positions (38 fixed term and 18 ongoing) at SSO 1 level based in schools will initially be appointed to VPS positions (without advertisement) from their current school based employment mode to allow for greater management and resource flexibility across designated areas. Staff transferring from SSO to VPS

will be employed with conditions no less favourable than their previous employment mode and at an equivalent salary (or next highest salary point) and grade in the VPS Grade structure.

- Incumbent staff in the existing 38 fixed term positions that transfer from SSO to VPS will have their fixed term arrangements extended (without advertisement) for the duration of the implementation phase of this strategy.
  - The current 24 Home School Liaison Officers and KEDOs will be appointed to KESO positions at level.
16. Some existing staff will be able to demonstrate the necessary skills to operate as VPSG-4 KESOs immediately, and regional offices will be able to reclassify their positions as part of the translation to the KESO structure.
  17. A position that is reclassified with an increase in classification normally involves advertisement of the position and a merit based selection process unless the approval of the Secretary is gained for 'exemption for advertisement' in accordance with existing departmental policy. In this instance, the Secretary will exempt (from advertisement), and promote existing employees who can demonstrate that they can meet the key selection criteria for the job.
  18. For those staff who cannot immediately demonstrate the necessary skills to fulfil a role at VPSG-4 level, a fully funded professional development strategy will be developed in conjunction with training providers to provide a recognised qualification.
  19. All existing staff (including fixed term staff) who successfully complete the qualification will be eligible for reclassification (without advertisement) to an ongoing VPSG 4 position.
  20. To obtain the required skill set and then subsequent appointment to a VPSG 4 classification, employees will have four years in which to participate and complete the required professional development.
  21. The Department's current staffing procedures will be utilised in terms of redeployment and consideration of unplaced staff where these provisions are required or necessary as a result of staffing action that may eventuate from the proposed reshaping of the workforce.

### **Early Childhood**

22. In the **early childhood** area, the total numbers of KECFOs will remain the same, however their skill levels and remuneration will also be addressed as part of this proposal, bringing these workers into line with the Koorie Education Support Officers.
23. Some existing KECFO's will be able to demonstrate the skills necessary to fulfil a role at VPSG-4 level, and these workers will be re-classified without advertisement on demonstration of the required skills.
24. Professional development opportunities will be made available to the remaining KECFO's to allow them to improve their skills to VPSG-4 level.

### **TIMETABLE**

25. This paper is circulated for consultation on 11 March 2009. Interested parties wishing to comment on the position will be required to do so within the following timeframe:

<b>Step in Process</b>	<b>Working Days for Each Step</b>
Employer advises employees and other interested parties	11 March 2009
Initial response	5 days following receipt of written advice
Meeting convened (if requested)	5 days following request for meeting
Further employer response (if relevant)	5 days following meeting
Alternative proposal (if applicable)	10 days
Employer response to alternative proposal	10 days