

# **Integrating Regional Structures and Delivering Regional Educational Services:**

## **Proposed Regional Operational Model**

Staff and the union/s have been previously advised that the Departmental Leadership Team has identified the integration of learning and development services for children and families as one of the Department's four key initiatives. Establishing a new regional operational model is a major step towards delivering on the new birth to adulthood agenda.

In late June, staff and the union/s were advised that, given the logistical challenges that were identified through consultation with regions, Regional Directors would assume responsibility for both school education and early childhood outcomes on 1 January 2009. The additional time up to January 2009 was required to ensure that the new regional arrangements are best configured to capture the integration opportunities that have been identified by staff and to meet our objectives of a highly effective organisation.

As part of the continuing implementation consultation process, a proposed regional operational model is now attached which outlines the core responsibilities and functions of regions within the new DEECD, including new accountabilities for regional management teams against the Department outcomes outlined in the DEECD Corporate Plan.

This paper is provided for your feedback. This paper will be discussed at the Staff Meeting on Wednesday morning. Kevin Mealing is coordinating responses and any final responses (including any alternative proposal) should be forwarded to Kevin **by 26 November 2008** for consideration by the Department.

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**Regional Director**

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## **Proposed Regional Operational Model**

This paper provides an overview of the proposed regional roles and accountabilities and the proposed organisational arrangements of regions under each of three Assistant Regional Directors (ARDs) that will come into effect from 1 January 2009. It also provides an overview of the work undertaken by regional offices and the proposed operational model that will enable regions to focus on the complex and challenging task of school improvement and supporting early years and youth services.

### **Background**

The establishment of the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD) in August 2007 required the transfer of early childhood functions and programs from the Department of Human Services (DHS) - including responsibilities for maternal and child health services, child care and kindergarten, licensing and regulation, school nursing, school focussed youth services, parenting programs, Koori early childhood programs and specialist children's services and early intervention services. These services were joined to education services provided to Victorian schools by the former Department of Education.

Integration is a key platform for the effective delivery of the priorities in the recently launched [Blueprint 2008 - Department of Education and Early Childhood Development](#) and the aim of ensuring the best possible outcomes for all children and young people in Victoria.

On 30 June 2008, the Departmental Leadership Team (DLT) endorsed an interim regional organisational structure that includes a Regional Director and three ARDs in each region. From 1 January 2009, Regional Directors will assume responsibility for both school education and early childhood outcomes. An Integration Branch has been established to ensure effective continuity of service for all regional and central services during the transition period and develop short term integration strategies that align with the organisational development framework.

A [Strengthening Student Support Services](#) discussion paper was also circulated to develop stronger links between student support services and early childhood services to create a more seamless service continuum. The organisational arrangements relating to student support services will sit within the organisational arrangements outlined in this paper.

## **Principles of the Proposed Regional Operational Model**

The following principles underpin the proposed regional operation model:

- Any changes to current arrangements for early childhood services will not disrupt service delivery functions, the licensing or regulation of services, or contract management or partnership arrangements.
- A senior management position with early years accountabilities (birth to 8) will be part of the proposed organisational structure.
- Existing strategic partnerships will be strengthened.
- Links between responsibilities for early years services, student wellbeing and support - including Student Support Services Officers (SSSOs) - and strategic partnerships will be maximised.
- New accountabilities for Regional Directors will be reflected in the existing business and strategic planning processes for regions and will focus on the health, development and learning needs of children thereby providing a framework for monitoring the performance of regions against agreed Office for Children and Early Childhood Development (OCECD) targets and outcomes.
- Office for Government School Education (OGSE) and OCECD regional staff should, where possible, be co-located facilitating a greater understanding of each others' work and promoting birth to 8, 8-16, and transition arrangements and pathways into higher education, training and employment.
- Change should be staged and informed by knowledge and understanding of new regional functions and accountabilities.

Corporate support will facilitate effective management with Regional Directors and enhance the development of a high quality regional workforce capable of delivering services to achieve government objectives and to effectively manage contractual and service development arrangements with Local Government and non-government providers. Strong engagement between the central offices and the work of the nine regional offices is fundamental to the delivery of these services.

A key outcome for the proposed regional operational model will be the development of clarity around the outcomes for which regions can be held accountable to provide organisational confidence regarding performance against agreed deliverables.

With the creation of the new department, it is essential that the complex and important work of regions and the changed nature of the role of regional offices is supported at the local level.

The early childhood business of regional offices is now characterised by the direct service delivery focus that is provided by Primary and Secondary school nurse programs, Specialist Children's services and Children's services teams. Additionally, Partnerships teams operating in regions provide service development and service agreement monitoring services to all externally funded agencies. This work is supported within

existing DHS regions by corporate finance teams who assist Children and Youth service teams to monitor and support the wide range of Funding and Service Agreements that facilitate the majority of the direct service provision in the early childhood and youth services sector.

### **Features of the Proposed Model for the Delivery of Educational and Early Childhood Services**

In the current context, Regional Office capacity is central to the long term agenda for integration of the health, learning and care services for children and young people.

Each region will have 3 ARD positions, with distinct portfolios of School Improvement, Operations, and Early Childhood and Youth Services.

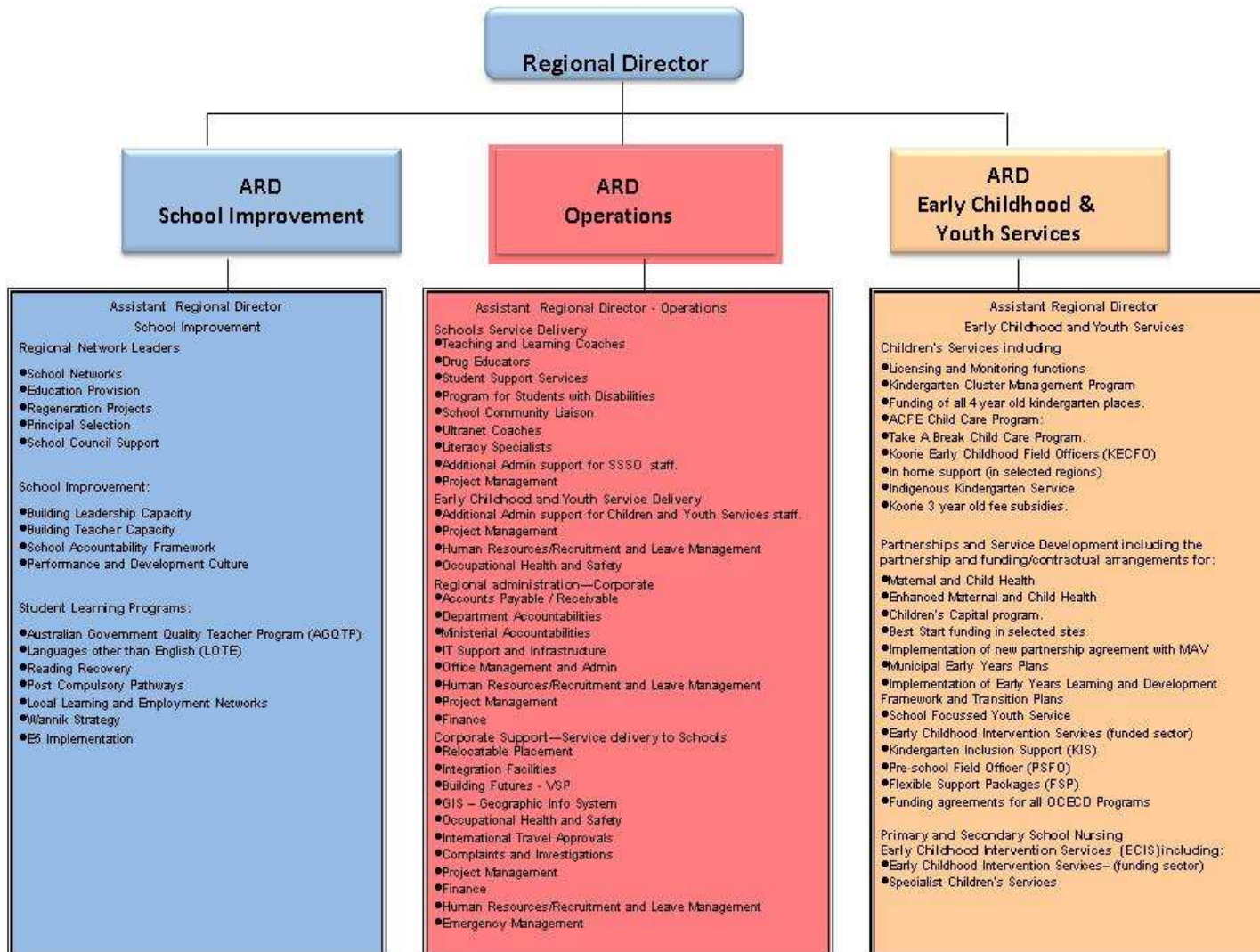
The functional responsibilities for each of the ARDs are detailed in Attachment 1.

Though there may be some variations in the structures of large metropolitan regions, particular attention is drawn to the fact that responsibility for OCECD accountabilities will rest with one ARD Early Childhood and Youth Services, in each region.

Outlined below are the features of the proposed model which demonstrate early childhood functions and responsibilities to be undertaken at the regional level.

The proposed model:

- Provides Regional Directors with high level advice and management support regarding new functions.
- Reflects the intent of Machinery of Government changes within regions.
- Provides a strong message about the importance of the early childhood sector within regions.
- Keeps early childhood staff formerly from within DHS in one discrete unit providing a secure and known environment in which to perform their work.
- In co-located regions, enables allied health workers from Student Support Services in schools to interact with allied health workers from the early childhood sector, creating opportunities for sharing knowledge and expertise in their chosen fields.



# PROPOSAL FOR CONSULTATION

