

10<sup>th</sup> June 2025

## **An Open Letter on the Independent Review of the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority**

To the VCAA Review Panel,

We, the students of Victoria, are writing to share our collective views on the future of curriculum, assessment, and student engagement across senior secondary education. As the people most directly affected by the decisions made by the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (VCAA), we believe students must be partners in shaping the direction of this work.

The VCAA plays a critical role in determining what we learn, how we are assessed, and how our achievements are recognised. This review provides an important opportunity to ensure the VCAA's structures, processes and culture reflect the needs, strengths and diversity of the students it serves. This can only be meaningfully done with students at the centre.

This open letter has been written and submitted by students from across Victoria, with the support of the Victorian Student Representative Council (VicSRC), the peak body for school-aged students in Victoria. It reflects the lived experience and shared aspirations of the students who have signed below.

Across the state, students are raising consistent concerns, and offering constructive ideas, for how the VCAA can evolve to better meet the challenges of changing educational needs. The priorities below represent a shared call for reform, grounded in the day-to-day realities of students in classrooms and communities across Victoria.

### **1. Students must have a seat at the table.**

We call on the VCAA to establish a permanent, central student voice mechanism within its governance structures. Students bring valuable insight and lived experience into how curriculum and assessment are experienced in real time. Our involvement must be consistent, supported, and influential, not symbolic or sporadic.

### **2. Senior secondary certificates to reflect all students and pathways.**

Many students feel that the current VCE model doesn't reflect our diverse strengths or future pathways. It reinforces outdated hierarchies that place academic pathways above vocational ones, and this can lead to stigma, disengagement and inequality. We support reforms that ensure all pathways are equally valued and accessible, with flexibility to recognise students' diverse strengths and ambitions.

### **3. Move beyond high-stakes exams.**

The pressure created by traditional assessments is a major concern. We are calling for more diverse and meaningful assessment approaches, including project based tasks, formative feedback, and opportunities to demonstrate progress over time. We need a system that measures more than memorisation and stress tolerance. The VCAA should lead a shift toward assessment that supports both learning and wellbeing.

**4. Communicate with us, not at us.**

VCAA communications can often be confusing, difficult to access, or out of touch with how students engage with information. We want communication that is clear, timely, and co-designed with students to ensure it actually works for us. Families also need accurate and accessible information to support us effectively.

**5. When things go wrong, respond with care, clarity and accountability.**

Mistakes and miscommunications, especially during high-pressure periods, can cause real harm to students' wellbeing. When these errors occur, we expect the VCAA to respond quickly and with transparency, acknowledging mistakes, explaining them clearly, and outlining steps to rebuild trust. Respectful, student-centred communication in these moments is critical.

This review marks a critical moment for the VCAA to evolve, not just to improve internal systems, but to reimagine how it engages with and supports the students it serves. We are not asking to be consulted after decisions are made, we are asking to be included from the beginning.

Through this letter, we are standing together to call for a VCAA that works with students, listens to students, and values student voice at every level.

Signed,  
Victorian students

With support from the Victorian Student Representative Council  
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