

Review Response

**Business Process and Organisational
Review of the Victorian Institute of
Teaching's Professional Conduct Branch**



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Message from VIT's CEO

This review is an important moment for the Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT). It shows us where things are working well and where we need to make improvements. It's a chance to look closely at how we do things and continue to look for ways to protect children, support the professionalism of teachers and build trust with the public.

The recommendations in this report are about more than just systems—they're about people. We're focused on being a fair and open organisation that puts children's safety and quality teaching first. Our goal is to make sure every child in Victoria is taught by someone who is safe, skilled, and trusted.

Our Professional Conduct Branch helps protect children by assessing and investigating concerns about registered teachers who may pose a risk of harm. Where necessary, we take regulatory action in relation to teachers who do not meet the high standards expected of them. With a paramount focus on child safety, we are also committed to fair, timely, and proportionate processes – reducing preventable delays and supporting teachers and the community through clear, consistent decision-making.

This review also invites VIT to reflect on its role within the broader child safety ecosystem. We are committed to working collaboratively with other regulators, statutory bodies, and employers to strengthen information sharing and close gaps that could be used by people looking to cause harm. Working in partnership, we aim to play our part fully in a robust system that delivers the highest standards of safety for children across schools and early childhood settings.

We know there's work to do, but we're ready to take it on together. It is not possible to do everything at once, and we will prioritise the initiatives as part of our implementation plan. This plan will be informed by external advice and support, so that we are continuing to learn from others.

My thanks to the hardworking staff within VIT who are deeply committed to our purpose and to improving our ways of working. We will make progress by investing in our people and new technologies so that we make a sustainable difference. And by listening, learning, and improving, we'll build a stronger VIT that works better for everyone.



Martin Fletcher
Chief Executive Officer

Executive summary

In May 2025, VIT commissioned Andrew Brown Consulting to conduct a business process and organisational review of VIT's Professional Conduct Branch (the review).

The review was commissioned to advise VIT on strategies to prevent delay and take prompt action at every stage of the regulatory process to ensure timely, proportionate, and child-safe responses to teacher conduct matters.

The review provides a clear and practical roadmap to build on progress to date and to ensure that VIT's regulatory functions are focused, effective, and sustainable. These changes are designed to ensure that VIT is able to identify and focus on matters that present a higher risk to child safety.

The review acknowledges the demanding and high stakes nature of VIT's regulatory work and commends the commitment of staff to continuous improvement. The review notes that VIT has already taken steps to improve performance, including recruitment of additional staff, more specialised management of higher-risk cases and strengthened procedural guidance for staff. These changes have already seen a reduction in open matters and an improved rate of closure for cases.

However, more needs to be done. The review outlines strategies to streamline the triage, assessment and management of lower risk matters to allow VIT to focus resources on higher risk matters. It also recommends strategies to strengthen capacity to assess and manage these complex and high-risk matters.

The review is not about reducing effort or accepting risk of harm. It is about sharpening our focus on the most serious threats, responding swiftly to emerging risks, and strengthening child safety systems to better protect children and young people in schools and early childhood settings. To complement these reforms, the review recommends that VIT establish a temporary team targeting the reduction in existing older cases, while ensuring that any continuing risks are appropriately managed.

We accept all recommendations and are committed to implementing a comprehensive reform program that will improve the efficiency, fairness, and effectiveness of our regulatory processes and performance.

Our response sets out our vision for a modern, responsive, and trusted regulator, and our commitment to delivering meaningful, lasting change. It outlines a multi-phase implementation plan that includes structural reform, policy development, backlog reduction, and improved stakeholder engagement. We are also introducing a new performance monitoring framework and a dynamic risk assessment model.

In considering our response to this report, we also acknowledge the critical role of our stakeholders—students, families, schools, and regulatory partners—and the need to work collaboratively to deliver better outcomes for children and young people.

The review and our response provide the roadmap for VIT to build public trust, deliver strong outcomes for child safety and ensure our processes are fair, just and proportionate.

The review

Why we commissioned the review

The VIT commissioned this independent review to examine the effectiveness of our current professional conduct processes. We recognised the need to address growing concerns about delays in case resolution, the increasing complexity of regulatory matters, and the sustainability of our existing operating model.

The review was initiated to:

- Identify systemic inefficiencies and structural barriers to timely case resolution.
- Ensure our regulatory practices are proportionate, risk-based, and aligned with best practice.
- Strengthen our capacity to manage higher-risk and complex matters while ensuring a more proportionate approach to lower-risk cases.
- Support our commitment to continuous improvement and public confidence in our regulatory scheme.

What the review found

The review identified several key challenges and opportunities for reform.

Operational Challenges

- A large and ageing open caseload, with 41% of cases older than 12 months.
- Delays in finalising matters, with 79% taking more than 12 months and 25% taking more than 3 years.
- A high proportion of lower risk matters consuming significant resources, despite most resulting in no need for regulatory action.

Structural and Process Inefficiencies

- Current intake and triage processes lack clarity and efficiency.
- Preliminary Assessments are often delayed due to reliance on external investigations.
- The Professional Conduct Branch lacks functional specialisation, contributing to bottlenecks and inconsistent case progression.

Strategic recommendations

The report proposes a comprehensive reform agenda, including:

- Streamlining the management of lower risk matters to focus resources on areas of highest risk that are more likely to need regulatory action.
- A targeted backlog intervention project to reduce aged cases.
- Reviewing the design of the hearing process and greater use of agreement provisions.
- Development of a simplified and dynamic risk assessment tool.
- Improved performance monitoring and clearer accountability frameworks.

Child safety – our paramount focus

The VIT's vision is to ensure that Victorian learners have the best teachers

Child safety and wellbeing are central to everything we do. We are also required to consider community expectations in our decision-making, especially when reviewing professional conduct concerns. We acknowledge the roadmap outlined in the recent review and affirm our commitment to focusing our resources on the most serious risks to children.

The VIT also recognises that we operate within a broader child safety system that includes employers, co-regulators, and statutory bodies such as the Commission for Children and Young People. We recognise our role in strengthening this system and working in partnership to promote positive outcomes for Victorian children and young people. We do this by:

- using our powers to investigate serious allegations of misconduct and ensuring registered teachers are safe, qualified and suitable to teach;
- sharing information across Victoria and nationally (both within education and other child related sectors) to prevent risks to children and identify individuals who pose a threat; and
- identifying emerging issues and working with co-regulators, police, employers, and other stakeholders to educate and raise awareness to prevent harm before it occurs.

We also want to acknowledge the impact that investigative processes can have on victim survivors, many of whom are children or young people. It takes a significant amount of courage and bravery to come forward to report concerns and open yourself to scrutiny including facing the prospect of having to give evidence in formal processes. As part of our ongoing review of processes, we are committed to developing trauma-informed approaches that provide safe and supportive pathways for victim survivors to raise concerns about teacher conduct and to be heard with dignity and respect.

We accept all recommendations in the report. However, we wish to clarify two important points:

Conduct Outside the Teaching Context

The VIT will continue to consider conduct that occurs outside of teaching settings when it is relevant to a person's suitability to work with children. While the report notes limitations in our jurisdiction—particularly where police have discharged matters—we prioritise the relevance of the conduct to child safety over the context in which it occurred.

We will also continue to review unsubstantiated findings of reportable conduct relating to registered teachers to satisfy ourselves that there are no residual risks following investigations by employers.

Matters Discharged by Police

We may pursue cases that have been discharged by police, recognising that some behaviours—while not meeting the high threshold for criminal prosecution—may still be concerning. Where we can establish, on the balance of probabilities, that the conduct occurred, we may take action. For example, boundary violations that do not meet the criminal definition of grooming may still breach the Victorian Teaching Profession Code of Conduct.

Recognising the impact on teachers

We acknowledge that being the subject of a regulatory process can be a deeply stressful and uncertain experience for teachers. The review has highlighted that many matters—particularly those assessed as lower risk—have taken too long to resolve, often without resulting in any regulatory action. We recognise that this delay can have a significant personal and professional impact on the individuals involved.

While our primary responsibility is to protect Victorian children and young people and uphold professional standards, we also need to ensure that our processes are fair, timely, and proportionate.

To this end, we are committed to:

- Reducing unnecessary delays and ensuring that lower-risk matters are resolved more quickly and clearly.
- Providing clear, respectful, and timely communication to teachers throughout the regulatory process.
- Ensuring procedural fairness and transparency in our decision-making.
- Supporting and informing teachers to better understand their rights, responsibilities, and the steps involved in our regulatory processes.

We acknowledge that as we work to implement these changes, there will be a period where the impact of our current ways of working will continue. We are committed to reducing this impact wherever possible, and to listening to feedback from the profession and the community to continuously improve how we engage with those we regulate.

These reforms are not just about improving efficiency—they are about building a regulatory culture that is respectful, balanced, and focused on delivering meaningful outcomes for the safety of children.

Our vision

The VIT's vision is to be a trusted, modern, and responsive regulator that upholds the highest standards of professional conduct in teaching.

We are committed to:

- **Protecting the safety and wellbeing of children and young people** by ensuring that only suitable individuals are registered to teach in Victoria
- **Supporting public confidence** in the teaching profession through transparent, fair, and timely regulatory processes
- **Empowering our staff** with the tools, structures, and support they need to deliver high-quality regulatory outcomes
- **Collaborating with stakeholders** to ensure our work is informed, proportionate, and aligned with the broader education and child safety landscape.

The reforms identified in this review are a critical step toward realising this vision. They will enable us to focus our efforts where they matter most—on the matters that pose the greatest risk and where our intervention can deliver the greatest public benefit.

Next steps

The VIT accepts all recommendations of the review and is committed to implementing them in full. Our reform program will be delivered in the following phases:



Timeline for change

The implementation of the review's recommendations will be delivered through a phased approach over the next 18–24 months. Work is already underway. This timeline is designed to ensure that reforms are introduced in a structured, sustainable, and consultative manner, while allowing for early wins and continuous improvement.

Short-Term (0–3 months)

- Establish governance structures including a Project Steering Committee and dedicated project resources.
- Develop and seek consultation on key intake and triage processes.
- Begin engagement with key stakeholders such as the Commission for Children and Young People.
- Review current processes and risk assessment framework.
- Launch the backlog intervention project and begin file audits.

Medium-Term (3–12 months)

- Develop and implement new risk assessment framework.
- Restructure current process maps and implement.
- Create and publish policies and procedures relevant to the new processes for case management.
- Reorganise workflows in the Professional Conduct Branch.
- Improve data capture and reporting.
- Begin redesign of the hearing process and develop agreement policy.
- Roll out performance monitoring dashboards and key performance indicators.

Long-Term (12–24 months)

- Build capacity for formal investigations and hearings.
- Conduct a full review of implementation progress and stakeholder feedback.
- Transition from project mode to business-as-usual operations with embedded reforms.

Progress will be monitored continuously, with regular reporting to the VIT Council, external stakeholders and to the public to ensure transparency and accountability.

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