

# *professional* PRACTICE

Welcome to Professional Practice  
The official newsletter of the Victorian Institute of Teaching

NEWSLETTER - SEPTEMBER 2013

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30 September is approaching. Have you completed your registration tasks?

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On behalf of all registered teachers, the Institute congratulates the following teachers who in the past term have received the following awards and scholarships.

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### **NEED FURTHER INFORMATION?**

If you have any questions regarding your registration please contact us:

1300 888 067

[vit@vit.vic.edu.au](mailto:vit@vit.vic.edu.au)

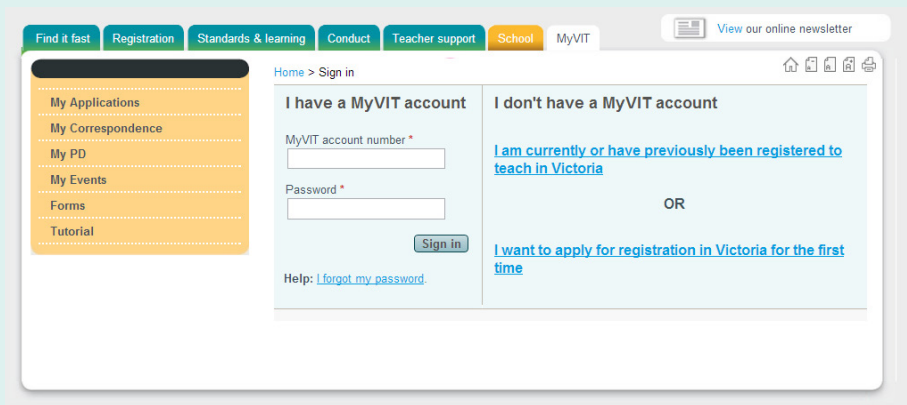
## 30 SEPTEMBER – A REGISTRATION REMINDER

**30 September is approaching. Have you completed your registration tasks?**

With Term 3 finished or about to finish for many teachers, it's time for a registration reminder: If you haven't completed your registration tasks, remember that the due date is 30 September – but it's a good idea to get your tasks done before then.

During August all teachers who have supplied us with current contact details will have received their annual invoice explaining their registration tasks, including their annual fee. Already many have gone online and completed these tasks, and we thank you for your prompt response.

For most teachers, completing registration tasks online is a quick and straightforward process. But some teachers will need to set up their MyVIT account, or might need to seek more information about their renewal or criminal record check. You can find the information you need by checking out the FAQs relevant to your query on the Institute website at [www.vit.vic.edu.au](http://www.vit.vic.edu.au) – however, this might take you a little extra time. For this reason, we recommend you go online and complete your registration tasks as soon as possible.

The screenshot shows the MyVIT login interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links: Find it fast, Registration, Standards & learning, Conduct, Teacher support, School, and MyVIT. A 'View our online newsletter' link is also present. Below the navigation bar, there is a sidebar menu with links: My Applications, My Correspondence, My PD, My Events, Forms, and Tutorial. The main content area is titled 'Home > Sign in' and contains two columns. The left column is for users who 'I have a MyVIT account' and includes fields for 'MyVIT account number \*' and 'Password \*', a 'Sign in' button, and a link for 'Help: I forgot my password'. The right column is for users who 'I don't have a MyVIT account' and includes two links: 'I am currently or have previously been registered to teach in Victoria' and 'I want to apply for registration in Victoria for the first time'. An 'OR' separator is placed between these two columns.

Also, as 30 September falls during the term break, it's a good idea for teachers planning a holiday to complete their registration tasks early.

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## WHAT IF I DIDN'T RECEIVE AN INVOICE?

It's possible that you may not have updated us with your current mailing address, and didn't receive an invoice. We are also sending an email reminder to teachers who have yet to complete their registration tasks with a PDF copy of their invoice attached. But you don't need an invoice to complete your registration tasks. You simply need to log in to MyVIT and you'll see your registration tasks clearly displayed, including your annual fee. You just need to click the appropriate button and complete your tasks.

## CAN I PAY WITHOUT GOING ONLINE?

No. Even if you are paying by cheque or money order, you need to log in to your MyVIT to click the payment button, as well as completing any other registration tasks you might have, such as the online renewal of registration form or updating your criminal record check.

## I'VE GONE ONLINE, COMPLETED ALL THE FORMS AND PAID MY FEES. WILL I GET MY REGISTRATION CARD?

In the vast majority of cases, yes. However, there are a couple of exceptions. If you were one of the teachers contacted by us and asked to provide evidence that you have met your renewal requirements, you will need to wait for this process to be satisfactorily completed before you can receive your registration card. Also, if you were asked to update your criminal record check and completed the online form, did you send in your correctly certified proof of identity documents? If you haven't done so, your registration cannot be processed and you will not receive a card. This could have serious consequences for your registration. You'll find an article in this issue – [Don't forget your proof of identity documents](#) – which explains this in more detail.

## WHAT IF I DON'T COMPLETE MY REGISTRATION TASKS BY 30 SEPTEMBER?

If you haven't completed your online tasks by the due date, a \$30 late processing fee will apply. Also, if you have registration tasks to complete such as renewal or updating your criminal record check, you could run the risk of letting your registration become suspended or expired.

The majority of teachers should find completing their registration tasks a relatively easy process. If you complete this as soon as possible, you can be secure in the knowledge that your registration is organised for another year.

## WHAT THE GREEN CARD MEANS

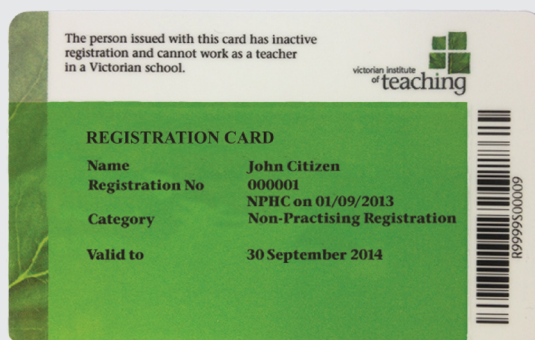
Find out more about non-practising registration and what is involved in returning to teaching from non-practising registration.

In the previous issue of Professional Practice, we looked at non-practising registration as an option for fully registered teachers unable to renew their registration. If you are granted non-practising registration, you'll receive a green registration card (pictured here). In this issue, we look more closely at how the process works and what is involved in returning to teaching from non-practising registration.

You can apply for non-practising registration at any time, depending upon your individual circumstances, and hold non-practising registration for as long as you want, provided you pay annual registration fees and maintain your National Police History Check. By law, you cannot teach in a Victorian primary, secondary or special school when you hold non-practising registration.

### IF I APPLY FOR NON-PRACTISING REGISTRATION, HOW LONG WILL IT TAKE TO GET MY NEW CARD?

The Institute registers over 119,000 teachers and every one of them has to complete tasks by 30 September 2013 to maintain their



registration. Consequently, this is a very busy time for the Institute. You should allow at least 15 working days for the processing of your application for non-practising registration. Please be aware that we are unable to 'fast track' applications.

Once all your requirements are completed and processed you will be mailed your green registration card, which indicates that you are not allowed to teach in a Victorian school. It will also indicate that holding this card exempts you from the Victorian Working With Children check. Your registration status will become non-practising at the expiry of your current registration on the 30 September 2013.

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## RETURNING TO TEACHING

Non-practising registration is often used by teachers who need to have some time away from the classroom, usually for personal and family reasons. When they are ready to return to teaching they need to change the status of their registration to allow them to undertake the duties of a teacher in a school.

When returning from non-practising to the duties of a teacher in a school, there are requirements you must undertake to confirm your currency of professional practice when your return to teaching.

## HOW DO I APPLY TO RETURN TO TEACHING?

To return to teaching you must notify the Institute using the [Returning to Teaching from Non-Practising Registration Notification Form](#). This is available from the Institute website [www.vit.vic.edu.au](http://www.vit.vic.edu.au) on the forms page. You can access this from the top right hand corner of the website.

When returning to teaching we require some evidence of your qualifications if you have not already provided these. In most cases a certified copy of your degree and/or diploma will suffice. We also ask you to advise of a date to return to teaching because this will assist us to respond in a timely manner if you have an employment contract. However, if the period prior to returning is very short you should warn your principal that you may not have your new card by the date you are required to commence teaching as processing could take 5-10 working days.

If you have maintained all requirements for suitability to be a teacher your registration status will be updated on the register of teachers, you will be allowed to return to the duties of a teacher in a school and a registration card will be issued that will be valid until the following 30 September.

## WHAT HAPPENS THEN?

During the first year of your returning to teaching, you will need to complete at least:

- 20 days teaching, equivalent practice or educational leadership; and
- 20 hours of standards-referenced professional development activities that update knowledge about content, practice and/or pedagogy.

You can complete some or all of the hours of professional development activities in the twelve months prior to returning to teaching.

This requirement ensures that you are current in your practice to satisfy the expectations of the profession and the community. It should also encourage schools to support your return to teaching.

When you meet the requirements to return to teaching, you will return to annual renewal of registration.

## WHAT IF I CAN'T MEET THE REQUIREMENTS?

If you are unable to meet the requirements for your return to teaching in the time given, your registration will expire. In such circumstances, it's important that you contact the Institute prior to expiry to discuss your situation. Please note that you cannot request a return to non-practising registration.

## FURTHER INFORMATION

To find out more about non-practising registration or returning to teaching from non-practising registration, please go to the [registration](#) pages of the Institute website [www.vit.vic.edu.au](http://www.vit.vic.edu.au)



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## THE IMPORTANCE OF PROOF OF IDENTITY DOCUMENTS

### What are proof of identity documents and when will you need them?

If you are updating your criminal record check this year, here is some information on a very important part of the process – sending in your correctly certified proof of identity documents.

In the previous edition of Professional Practice, we outlined the full criminal record check process:

#### THE FOUR PART PROCESS OF UPDATING YOUR CRIMINAL RECORD CHECK:

1. Complete the online form
  2. Mail the required documents to the Institute
  3. Pay your fee (as outlined in your invoice)
  4. Obtain a satisfactory criminal record check
- Completing the online form is only the first part of the process. You also need to supply the Institute with proof of identity documentation.

#### WHAT DO I NEED TO DO AFTER COMPLETING THE ONLINE CONSENT FORM?

Once you have completed the online consent form you will be sent an email with a Confirmation page. You need to send this to us with your correctly certified proof of identity documents.

#### PROOF OF IDENTITY DOCUMENTS

You will need to provide documents that show your full name, date of birth, place of birth, signature, photograph and any change of name documentation. All documents must add up to

a minimum of 100 points. This is required even if you have supplied these documents on previous occasions.

See page 5 of [Consent for a Criminal Record Check for Teachers](#) for how to obtain 100 points of ID.

#### DON'T FORGET TO GET YOUR DOCUMENTS CERTIFIED

Sending your documents isn't enough. They must be correctly certified.

All of your documents need to be copied and each copy must be certified by an authorised person that the copies are true copies of the originals. Read [How to have a document certified and the list of authorised persons](#) for further information.

If you live interstate or overseas, your documents can be certified by a person authorised to do so in that state, territory or country.

This is to certify that this 2 page document  
(each page of which I have numbered and  
signed) is a true copy of the original 2 page  
document that I have sighted.  
John C. Citizen Date: 18.1.13  
John C Citizen  
JP In and for the State of VIC Reg No. 111111

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## SEND YOUR DOCUMENTS TO US

You will then need to send us the certified copies of your proof of identity documents. Otherwise you may wish to bring the documents to us. The Institute has the capacity to certify and copy your documents if required.

## WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

Once you completed the online consent form, paid the fee, and sent us your documents, the Institute provides the proof of identity information to Crimtrac, the Commonwealth agency which accesses all criminal data bases and will perform the check.

We recommend you provide your documentation to us as early as possible to allow up to 20 days for the complete processing of the external check.

Once every part of updating your criminal record check has been processed and completed, (and you have completed all other registration tasks) the Institute will send your new registration card to you.

## IF YOU ARE ALSO RENEWING YOUR REGISTRATION

To successfully renew your registration, you need to make sure all your registration tasks are complete. That includes payment of fees and, if required, updating your criminal record check. So even if you have done all the online tasks as requested on your invoice, you can't complete your renewal until your criminal record check has been successfully updated – which means sending in your correctly certified proof of identity documents and having your criminal record check conducted by CrimTrac. So it is vital that you get your proof of identity documents correctly certified and mailed to the Institute as soon as possible.

## WHAT HAPPENS IF I DON'T GET THIS DONE ON TIME?

If your criminal record check has not been successfully updated by the expiry date of your current registration, you run the risk of losing your registration as a teacher. The expiry date is 31 December 2013 – but remember that the process can take up to 20 days. The safest approach is to finalise all your registration tasks – complete the online forms and send your correctly certified proof of identity documents to the Institute - prior to 30 September 2013, which is the due date. If you pay after that date, a late processing fee applies.

For more information on the criminal record check process, please visit the Institute's website: [www.vit.vic.edu.au](http://www.vit.vic.edu.au) and go to [Registration](#).

## FORMAL HEARINGS

### Findings of a recent Institute formal hearing, with some key lessons.

A teacher was alleged to have engaged in inappropriate contact with two students via telephone, text and Facebook. This included inappropriate comments, sending several photographs and asking for photographs to be sent in return, sending a copy of internal communication with the Assistant Principal to a student and communicating frequently after school hours and in some instances very late at night.

In giving evidence, the Principal said in nine years at the school the teacher had been an excellent classroom teacher and Year Level Coordinator (as well as Subject Coordinator) but there were concerns regarding being too friendly with students.

On the balance of probabilities the Panel found the allegations largely substantiated in that the teacher failed to treat both students with courtesy and dignity.

The substantiated allegations demonstrate clear and significant breaches of Principle 1.2 of the Code of Conduct and as such constitute misconduct. That the teacher claimed their actions were motivated by an intention to support two vulnerable students also brings into question the teacher's understanding of Principle 1.3 of the Code of Conduct, namely whether they worked within the limits of their professional expertise.

The Panel found a higher standard of care and responsibility to students is required to be displayed by a teacher with a senior pastoral care responsibility. Therefore the Panel concluded that the substantiated allegations amounted to serious misconduct within the context of section 2.4.46 of the Act.

As the teacher was not currently registered with the Institute, having resigned in 2010, there was no basis to cancel or suspend the teacher's registration. However, had the teacher been currently registered, the Panel would have imposed conditions on the teacher's registration. As guidance for the teacher, should they seek to reapply for teacher registration in the future, the likely conditions would have required the teacher to receive counselling from a registered psychologist. Some of the aims of this counselling would include:

- development of coping strategies to better handle any future challenging personal or professional circumstances
- differentiating between the personal and professional roles of a teacher
- developing a comprehensive understanding of the Institute's Code of Ethics and Code of Conduct, and where the teacher's conduct fell short of what is required



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## KEY LESSONS

Today's multi-faceted, instantly accessible modes of communication, such as texting and Facebook, outline the need to be very clear about the professional boundaries of a teacher's relationship with students. Principal 1.5 of the Code of Conduct states: "Teachers can be friendly with students, but their relationship is always professional and, as such, should never be on a personal footing." Further information can be found on the Institute website, including discussion of the question:

[What sort of communication should you have with students outside of school?](#)

This hearing also demonstrates that an investigation can be conducted after a teacher has resigned and advised the Institute that they no longer wish to be registered. If a teacher is facing allegations, resigning from their job or letting their registration lapse would not necessarily preclude an investigation occurring.

Findings of formal hearings are published on the Institute website at [www.vit.vic.edu.au](http://www.vit.vic.edu.au)

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## CONGRATULATIONS TO ...

Registered teachers across Victoria are involved in a broad range of projects and practices that build knowledge and strengthen the practice of the teaching profession.

Every year awards and scholarships are granted to teachers and principals whose professional work has been recognised by their peers and who have been nominated for an award.

On behalf of all registered teachers, the Institute congratulates the following teachers who in the past term have received the following awards and scholarships:

### SCHOOLS FIRST IMPACT AWARDS 2013

These [national awards](#) are for those school–community partnerships that can demonstrate improved student outcomes as a result of their partnership.

*Local Impact Award State Finalists:* Alvie St (Moe) PS, Trafalgar HS, Warrnambool East PS

*National Impact Theme winners:* Noble Park ELS (Embracing Diversity), EdSpace SS (Entrepreneurial Spirit), Lara PS (Living sustainably)

### SCHOOLS FIRST SEED FUNDING AWARDS 2013

These [national awards](#) are for those schools that are either in the process of setting up a school–community partnership or in the early stages of the partnership and are seeking funding to help the partnership develop further.

*State Seed Funding Award State Finalists:* Alvie CS, Ballarat GS, Berwick SC, Charles La Trobe College (Olympic Village Campus), Grey Street PS Traralgon, Harkaway PS, Lyndhurst PS, Mansfield PS, Matthew Flinders Girls SC, Montague CEC, Mount Clear College Port Fairy CS, Quarry Hill PS, Robinvale P–12 College, Rowville SC, St Charles Borromeo PS, St Dominic's PS, Tallangatta SC, Wattle Park PS, Werribee SC

### VICTORIAN TRAINING AWARDS 2013

These [awards](#) recognise the outstanding achievement and innovation in teachers and training providers.

### TEACHER OF THE YEAR AWARD

*Finalist:* Angie Zerella (Mullum PS)

### VET IN SCHOOLS EXCELLENCE AWARD

*Finalists:* Australian College of Dramatic Arts, Highlands LLEN VETis Cluster, Noble Park SC