

# **BUDGET ESTIMATES 2021-2022**

## **Transcript Questions**

**Portfolio Committee No. 3 – Education**

**EDUCATION AND EARLY CHILDHOOD LEARNING**

Hearing: Friday 27 August 2021

## **QUESTION NO 1**

### **PAGE NO 3**

Ms HARRISSON: I refer the member to our previous answer. We have sought Health advice and followed the Health advice in relation to ventilation for our schools.

The Hon. COURTNEY HOUSSOS: Perhaps you could provide a copy of that advice on notice, if that is possible.

## **ANSWER**

A comprehensive guide on COVID-safe school operations including the below advice regarding ventilation is currently available to all Department of Education staff via the intranet and will soon be publicly available on the Department's website.

In addition to this advice, the Department of Education, through its Assessment Management Units and facilities management contractors, is conducting a review of 150,000 learning areas on school sites including more than 50,000 classrooms. The review will ensure that windows are openable, wall-mounted and ceiling fans are in good working condition and that mechanical ventilation systems such as air-conditioning units have been serviced and filters cleaned or replaced. This work will be completed prior to the staggered return to face-to-face learning from 25 October 2021 for students in areas under stay at home orders.

### **Advice on Ventilation**

Open or well-ventilated spaces reduce the risk of transmission of COVID-19 because infectious particles are more quickly diffused in the open air than in spaces with less ventilation. Outdoor settings may be used where practicable.

Take steps to improve ventilation in indoor settings:

- Open windows and doors where possible.
- Avoid directing fans towards people's faces, such as by aiming them continuously towards the ceiling or floor. Limit oscillation and turbulence of fans.
- Regularly inspect, maintain and clean heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) systems.
- Avoid using only recirculated air in HVAC systems and increase the outside air intake.
- Consider disabling ventilation controls with automated settings that reduce air supply based on temperature or occupancy.
- Ensure exhaust fans are operational if in place.

The guide is based on the NSW Government's advice and resources provided by the World Health Organisation and Safe Work Australia available at <https://www.nsw.gov.au/covid-19/getting-back-to-work-a-covid-safe-way/ventilation-guidance>

**QUESTION NO 2**  
**PAGE NO 3**

The Hon. COURTNEY HOUSSOS: Thanks, Mr Dizdar. Do you have a breakdown of those that have occurred in August?

Mr DIZDAR: We could provide that for you but, like I said, the data in front of me is from June to this morning.

**ANSWER**

65 NSW public schools were made non-operational for contact tracing and cleaning after a confirmed case of COVID-19 between 1 August 2021 and 31 August 2021.

List of schools:

Strathfield South Public School  
Pendle Hill Public School  
Lake Munmorah Public School  
Morisset High School  
Fowler Road School  
Armidale Secondary College  
Jesmond Public School  
Kingswood Public School  
Shortland Public School  
Bondi Beach Public School  
Fennell Bay Public School  
Dubbo West Public School  
Ryde Secondary College  
Luddenham Public School  
Wheeler Heights Public School  
Dubbo College South  
Orana Heights Public School  
Buninyong Public School  
Dubbo School of Distance Education  
Oxley Park Public School  
Berala Public School  
Coreen School  
Schofields Public School  
Dubbo College Delroy Campus  
Dubbo South Public School  
Mudgee High School  
Blacktown North Public School  
Mian School  
Jamisontown Public School  
Mount Lewis Infants School  
Blackett Public School  
The Meadows Public School  
Kings Langley Public School  
St Marys Public School

Ferncourt Public School  
Leichhardt Public School  
Sherwood Grange Public School  
Carlton Public School  
William Dean Public School  
The Hills School  
Yudi Gunyi School  
Strathfield South High School  
Lane Cove West Public School  
Kemps Creek Public School  
Chullora Public School  
St Clair High School  
Gorokan High School  
Lucas Gardens School  
Botany Public School  
Harrington Street Public School  
Dee Why Public School  
Lidcombe Public School  
Granville Public School  
Fernhill School  
Halinda School  
Doonside Public School  
NSW School of Languages  
Ryde Public School  
Colyton High School  
Moorefield Girls High School  
Haberfield Public School  
Yates Avenue Public School  
Fernhill School  
Ropes Crossing Public School  
Plunkett Street Public School

**QUESTION NO 3**  
**PAGE NO 4**

The Hon. COURTNEY HOUSSOS: Do you have a breakdown of how many of those are qualified teachers?

Ms HARRISSON: For the Committee's benefit, there was a clear set of guidelines for the recruitment of those tutors and educators. Again, we would be able to provide that detail and breakdown on notice. If you wanted further advice on the monitoring, to your first question, Ms Owen can provide that.

The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM: Can I just clarify that you will provide that on notice?

Ms HARRISSON: Yes, I will provide the breakdown on notice.

**ANSWER**

As at 27 August 2021, the Department of Education has employed 7,336 educators to deliver the COVID Intensive Learning Support Program to the students who need a learning boost after the challenges of 2020.

During the hearing, an approximate breakdown of educators was provided. The Department confirms that of the educators employed, 73.7 per cent are qualified teachers and 26.3 per cent are university students, academics, Allied Health Professionals, and suitably trained Student Learning Support Officers.

**QUESTION NO 4**  
**PAGE NO 5**

The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM: Before we go to Ms Owen, can I just ask that the advice that has been circulated to schools be provided to the Committee?

Ms HARRISSON: I am very happy to provide that information on notice.

Ms OWEN: I think it would be worth showing on notice the specific details of how we have categorised which members of our workforce are captured by the public health order. As you are suggesting, there are a number of members of our workforce who work with early childhood in our preschools and with students with disabilities. We have given very clear advice to our schools on which members of staff that applies to, mostly for those who are providing direct support, direct tuition or direct supervision for those students. That will include, for example, classroom teachers in our support classes. It will include student learning support officers or SLSOs—as you identified—preschool teachers, teachers within our schools of special purpose [SSPs] and a number of specified other roles which I will provide to you on notice.

**ANSWER**

The below information was circulated to schools and made available for staff to access on the Department of Education's internal website in response to the *Public Health (COVID-19 Additional Restrictions for Delta Outbreak) Order (No 2) 2021*.

**Vaccination requirements for LGAs of concern**

The deadline for a first dose vaccination for authorised workers who need to leave an LGA of concern to work has been extended until 19 September 2021. In addition, from 9 September 2021 authorised workers not yet vaccinated will be required to carry evidence of a vaccination booking (for between 9 and 19 September) if they leave their LGA for work.

The following rules apply as a result of the Public Health Order for departmental employees and workers.

**Authorised Workers**

From 9 September Authorised workers who live in an LGA or suburb of concern and work outside their LGA are only permitted to attend work face-to-face if they have:

- evidence of one dose of COVID vaccine
- evidence of an appointment to be vaccinated between 9 and 19 September
- a medical certificate indicating a medical contraindication.

This does not apply if the person has not been in an area of concern in the previous 14 days.

From 20 September an authorised worker will only be able to leave their area of concern for work if they have had at least one dose of COVID-19 vaccination or evidence of a medical exemption. This requirement applies to anyone that lives in an LGA of concern and needs to travel to another LGA, regardless of whether it is an LGA of concern or not. Some examples:

- if you live in the Parramatta LGA, but work in the Cumberland LGA, you need to have a vaccination to go to work in the Cumberland LGA - even though these are both areas of concern.
- if you live in the Parramatta LGA, but work in the Hornsby LGA, you need to have a vaccination to go to work in the Hornsby LGA - because where you live is an area of concern.
- If you live AND work in the Parramatta LGA, you are not leaving your area of concern for work, therefore you do not need a vaccination by 19 September under the current PHO.

### **Early Childhood Education and Care Workers and Disability Support Workers**

Early childhood education and care workers and disability support workers who live in, or work in the LGAs of concern (including select suburbs from the Penrith LGA) must not enter premises for work unless they have:

- evidence of one dose of COVID vaccine
- evidence of an appointment to be vaccinated between 9 and 19 September
- a medical certificate indicating a medical contraindication.

### **Early childhood education and care workers include:**

For department schools and preschools, an early education and care worker is a person who works in a preschool or in an out of school hours care (OSHC) located on a NSW public school site. Further information for external providers is available on the [Early childhood education and care website](#).

### **Disability support workers include:**

- NDIS services
- ASTP services - drivers and Assisted Travel Support Officers
- Education and/or support of a student with disability in a School for Specific Purposes (SSP) or support class within a mainstream setting
- Education and/or support of a student with disability in a mainstream setting where the student is **dependent** on the worker for mobility, health care, personal care, or constant supervision to minimise harm. This includes:
  - School Learning Support Officers - SLSOs
  - school counselling staff
  - learning and support teachers
  - early intervention staff
  - itinerant support teachers
  - assistant principals (hearing or vision)
  - assistant principals learning and support
  - support teachers transition
  - classroom teachers

- o allied health professionals engaged through the allied health pre-qualification scheme
- o attendant carers engaged through third party providers.

### **Applying this advice**

Principals who are uncertain about the application of the above definition to a staff member should contact their Director, Educational Leadership.

Please note: workers includes department employees, contractors, third party providers, volunteers or university/tertiary students undertaking practical placements on school sites.

Schools in the local government areas (LGAs) of concern: Bayside, Blacktown, Burwood, Campbelltown, Canterbury-Bankstown, Cumberland, Fairfield, Georges River, Liverpool, Parramatta, Strathfield and select suburbs within the Penrith LGA, are operating under the following level of restriction:

- Level 4 plus: Minimal students and staff on site; learning from home, schools are open for families who need it
- While on school sites, masks or face coverings are required for all staff, and all students in Year 7 and above.

Staff who are not able to get their first dose of vaccination by 19 September will need to:

- Advise their manager or school principal that they will not be able to attend their place of work due to their vaccination status
- Advise when they will meet the requirement to have a first vaccination, i.e date of vaccination booking
- Discuss whether their duties can be carried out from home until their vaccination status is compliant or if this is not practical, access COVID-19 special leave while they await their first vaccination.

Staff who do not want to be vaccinated and do not have medical grounds for an exemption will need to:

- Advise their manager or school principal that they will not be able to attend their place of work due to their vaccination status
- Their manager or school principal will need to consider whether their duties can be carried out from home or whether they can access leave. The continuation of these arrangements will be subject to review.

### **Vaccination bookings**

Staff required to have their first dose of COVID-19 vaccination by 19 September 2021 must book their vaccination by the end of 8 September. Go to Priority COVID-19 vaccination for childcare and disability workers in LGA of concern to book the vaccination appointment.

Staff will need to bring the following documents to their appointment:



- proof of employment in the form of a recent payslip. Refer to the quick reference guide for assistance in downloading your payslip if going as an authorised worker or contact EdConnect on 1300 32 32 32.
- identification documents (including Photo ID, passport or equivalent, and Medicare card if you have one) for everyone receiving a priority COVID-19 vaccination including authorised workers.

### **Providing proof of vaccination**

If requested, staff must show their vaccination status to:

- A person authorised by the Secretary of the Department of Education
- The principal for the school where they work
- A police officer
- A person authorised under the Public Health Act 2010.

To support the health and safety of all students and staff on school sites, if staff are impacted by the public health order requirements, their school principal will be asking to show evidence of vaccination status before staff can commence work on a school site from 19 September.

### **Types of evidence**

- evidence of name and place of residence
- an online immunisation history statement, or
- a COVID-19 digital certificate from the Australian Immunisation Register, or
- a medical certificate from a medical practitioner in the form approved by the NSW Chief Health Officer.

### **Requirements for school principals**

Principals are required to support the health and safety of all students and staff on school sites by keeping a record that they have sighted the vaccination status of relevant staff. Staff rostered on to attend school on a particular date are required to comply with the public health order. Principals should:

- advise staff that they are making a record, indicating that they have sighted the workers positive vaccination status.
- advise staff that the record will only be retained while a PHO is in place requiring workers to be vaccinated before attending relevant work sites.
- sight the vaccination status of the worker when they first attend the school site from 19 September 2021 onwards.
- make a record that they have sighted the employees vaccination status that meets the public health order requirement.
- not take photocopies, scanned copies or photographs of the vaccination evidence.

**QUESTION NO 5**  
**PAGE NO 16**

The CHAIR: Can I just ask with this online learning mechanism if there has been an increase in the number of child protection reports overall by teachers and the department?

Mr DIZDAR: Chair, what I—

Ms HARRISSON: Yes. Can I just confirm what I think I heard was if we could provide advice on the rate of child protection or number of child protection reports the department has made during online learning? Is that correct?

The CHAIR: That is right.

Ms HARRISSON: We can certainly provide those details on notice.

**ANSWER**

From Monday 21 June to Friday 10 September 2021, there have been 5,671 child protection reports made to the Department of Education's Child Wellbeing Unit. This represents a 28 per cent decrease in reports compared to the same period last year.

**QUESTION NO 6**  
**PAGE NO 18-19**

The Hon. COURTNEY HOUSSOS: Just to be clear, irrespective of whether the 70 per cent vaccination rate is within the LGA, that will not be the applicable thing that will cause students not to return; it will be the community transmissions.

Ms HARRISSON: As I indicated we are continuing to work with Health on the specific definitions. We would expect a number of communities to be way above 70 per cent by the time we get to 25 October and I am happy to provide further detail of that on notice.

**ANSWER**

The return of students to on-site activities continues to be based on the latest NSW Health advice and differentiated advice will be provided for schools based on location. The three school sectors, the Department of Education, Catholic Schools NSW and the Association of Independent Schools of NSW continue to work with NSW Health on these guidelines.

Some NSW schools return to face-to-face learning either through a 'staged return' or 'full return' from 25 October 2021, depending on NSW Health conditions in their area. Some regional areas of NSW no longer impacted by stay at home restrictions returned to on-site learning fulltime from 13 September 2021.

**QUESTION NO 7**  
**PAGE NO 22**

The Hon. COURTNEY HOUSSOS: He is having some difficulties connecting so I might come back to him. Ms Harrisson, this CDC definition of 50 cases per 100,000 head of population, how often is that and over what period?

Ms HARRISSON: I will need to confirm that with NSW Health as it will be their measure of community transmission that we rely upon.

**ANSWER**

The Department of Education is led by the advice of NSW Health and have put in place COVID safe measures for the return to face-to-face schooling.

Any request for information on community transmission measures should be raised with NSW Health.

**QUESTION NO 8**  
**PAGE NO 24**

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Will you provide on notice the advice given to staff this week about those restructures and changes?

Mr WITHEY: We are currently engaged in a consultation process about some of those changes. That process will kick off on Monday. The conversations this week have taken place with the public service senior executive cohort within the operations group and people group and I am very happy to provide some of those details on notice.

**ANSWER**

The Department of Education is currently undertaking a Transformation of Support Services Program, which aims to ensure the Department is able to provide high quality, responsive and cohesive support services to schools.

To support the delivery of this program, a realignment of some functions in the People and Operations Groups will occur, resulting in changes to some staff's reporting lines and line management arrangements. Non-Executive staff will not see any changes to their role, and non-Executive staff will not need to reapply for their jobs.

Once functional accountabilities are finalised, Public Service Senior Executive (PSSE) staff in Operations Group will undertake a placement process to assign people to re-scoped executive roles. This follows the wider realignment of Executive roles across the Department in 2020, in which Operations Group PSSE were out of scope.

The realignment consultation period commenced on Monday, 30 August 2021 with an announcement to all staff in the two divisions. The information that was shared included:

- The proposed timelines for the realignment process, including announcement to staff, consultation and determination anticipated dates;
- The draft functional models for both Operations Group and People Group, as well as their underpinning design principles;
- The proposed assessment and placement process and timeline for impacted PSSE in the Operations Group;
- Leadership support material; and
- Information on how to provide feedback, and what support mechanisms are available.

**QUESTION NO 9**  
**PAGE NO 25**

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Do you have details on the numbers for the whole of this crisis? I think Mr Dizdar gave numbers coming from 1 March last year in relation to schools. Do you have those numbers?

Ms OWEN: No, I will have to take that one on notice.

**ANSWER**

From 1 June 2021 to 31 August 2021, 366 early childhood education centres were closed for reasons relating to COVID-19 impacts. Of these, 182 were due to a confirmed positive COVID-19 case.

From 1 March 2020 to 31 August 2021 the Department of Education received 785 notifications of early childhood education service closures for reasons relating to COVID-19 impacts. Of these, 240 were due to a confirmed positive COVID-19 case.

**QUESTION NO 10**  
**PAGE NO 27-28**

The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM: They are required to do it for their work, they have an adverse reaction—it might be a mild one; they might be unable to work for a couple of days—who do they lodge a workers compensation claim with in that circumstance?

Ms HARRISSON: I would ask Ms Cachia to respond. I would just flag that we are in an evolving area and that we will, of course, be referring claims in the public system through to icare. Ms Cachia can provide some further information.

Ms CACHIA: Ms Houssos, I have confirmation that casuals were part of that vaccination survey, if that is of assistance. Mr D'Adam, in relation to your question, when a casual teacher is asked to get vaccinated under a public health order it would follow that if there is an adverse reaction to that that they would be able to avail themselves of a compensation scheme. That is my understanding. As the secretary noted, this is new terrain and I think we would need to take on notice the decisions that arise as a consequence of that. But that would generally be broadly in line with the expectation that follows from a mandatory vaccination.

The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM: I appreciate that, but obviously there is a time frame here and so there will be casual teachers who are meeting that advice in a very short period if they are going to go out and seek vaccination and could be facing this situation tomorrow perhaps.

Ms HARRISSON: Mr D'Adam, we certainly appreciate that and we are working very closely with Health and you also understand with other professions, having had mandated vaccinations; this is not only an issue in Education. I would also note that the number of people who have an adverse reaction to either vaccination is very low at this time. So I hope that this small level of uncertainty is not enough to put anyone off getting vaccinated at this time. It is in their interests, it is in their family's interest and it is in the students' who they want to work with interests that they access a vaccination. I hear your question. We will certainly take it on notice and come back with any detail as soon as we are able.

**ANSWER**

The Department of Education's Fund Manager, Allianz Australia Limited, is responsible for assessing all workers compensation claims and determining liability for claims in accordance with the workers compensation legislation. Each claim will be assessed on its own merits.

The Department has a dedicated Incident Report and Support Hotline available to all staff members to notify of a workplace injury or illness. In the case of a COVID-19 related illness, staff calling the Hotline will be provided with assistance and support, including advice regarding workers compensation and connection with a dedicated injury management case officer, if needed, to support recovery at work.

**QUESTION NO 11**  
**PAGE NO 32**

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: How much are they being paid?

Ms CACHIA: I will have to check and take it on notice for now, but I will come back and indicate the exact figure in a moment.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: How many PwC staff are working? Do any of them have education experience? In which case, how many of them have education experience?

Ms HARRISSON: Mr Shoebridge, I think Ms Cachia will take those elements on notice. I would like to say that leading our school workforce directorate in the department is Mark Barakat, who is an experienced educator, former primary principal. Throughout the department and throughout that—

**ANSWER**

PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) are supporting the co-design process for the mid-career programs. The PwC team bring significant expertise in co-design, commissioning and education including working with schools and Initial Teacher Education providers.

PwC were engaged at a cost of \$213,344, exclusive of GST, which includes expertise being provided by a team of eight. Of the eight, four have significant experience in the education sector and four have significant experience in co-design and commissioning.



**QUESTION NO 12**  
**PAGE NO 32**

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Thanks, Mr Withey. The question you may not be able to answer now is how many current projects are there where consultants are engaged? If you do take it on notice, what is the contract value?

Mr WITHEY: I will have to take that on notice.

**ANSWER**

The Department of Education's consultancy expenditure is published in its annual report.

Details on consultancy engagements for the 2021 calendar year will be reviewed as part of the processes that support publication of the Department's 2021 Annual Report. This will be released in May 2022.

In the intervening period, the Department will continue to disclose all goods and services contracts with the private sector, where the value exceeds \$150,000 (including GST) – in line with requirements under the *Government Information (Public Access Act 2009)*. This detail is published at [www.tenders.nsw.gov.au](http://www.tenders.nsw.gov.au), and covers all contract types, including those that meet the definition of a consultancy engagement for annual reporting purposes.

**QUESTION NO 13**  
**PAGE NO 33**

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Remembering the question was about where they are in terms of getting to the 40-hour reduction and where they are on the target and a number.

Ms HARRISSON: I would note the 40-hour target is your number, based on figures that I do not have in front of me. I think Mr Withey mentioned that and pointed to that.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: No.

Ms HARRISSON: We are very happy to provide on notice further details of our plans and progress in relation to that target.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Ms Harrison, 40 hours is the department's figure. You are not aware of that?

Mr WITHEY: The previous conversation related to your description of that target in minutes. That was the number I was—

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Mr Withey, you and I are not disagreeing the 40 hours is the department's target. You and I agree on that at least, don't we?

Mr WITHEY: In terms of progress towards that target, we recognise, as I said, that we have got more to do in that space. Your question about what the purpose of a target was if we are not going to report against that is, I think, unfair. We are clearly going to report against that. That is why we have created that target to report against it. We have got more to do to work in the teacher space. I do not have a number for you today, Mr Shoebridge. I think we are probably about a quarter of the way there. But we are happy to come back with some more detail on that on notice.

**ANSWER**

In 2020 the School Success Model was launched with a renewed commitment to reducing administrative burden for schools, including system targets to reduce low-value administrative tasks for principals and teachers by 20 per cent by the end of 2022. This equates to a reduction of 40 hours of low-value administrative tasks per teacher per year.

As outlined in the Department's 2020 Annual Report, the reducing admin burden program has, to date, saved an estimated one million hours across the system. This is equivalent to 105 hours per principal, 10 hours per teacher and 25 hours per school administration staff each year.

A significant program of work is currently underway in this area, as outlined in the recently released Quality Time Action Plan, which is open for consultation. The majority of these initiatives will be launched during 2022 and achievement against the target will be reported in the Department's 2021 Annual Report following verification of time savings with schools.

**QUESTION NO 14**  
**PAGE NO 35**

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: How many hours a week are they working?

The ACTING CHAIR: I will allow that last question.

Ms HARRISSON: As I said in my previous answer, we do not have specific data on the hours per week worked by a teacher at this time. I am happy to take on notice providing any further information that we do have in the department on that issue. But at the moment our teachers are not required to clock in and out in relation to their employment.

**ANSWER**

As a profession, the work of a teacher is not confined to the hours of the school day. Consistent with their professional obligations the Department of Education requires teachers to be on duty at school for periods of time that fall outside the start and finish times of school.

The legal basis for this is contained in Determination 3 – Hours of Duty, made under the *Teaching Service Act 1980* and published in the Education Gazette, February 1971. Determination 3 states:

*“Teachers are required to be on duty at their school half an hour before school work begins in the morning and may be required to be present, if thought necessary by the teacher in charge of the school, for half an hour after the dismissal of school in the afternoon. Where special circumstances arise which in the interests of the school, that necessitate attendance beyond these hours, the attendance of the staff may be required”.*

**QUESTION NO 15**  
**PAGE NO 35**

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Mr Martin, I would like to go back to the issue about how the obvious disadvantage for those students in western and south-western Sydney, especially for the HSC, is going to be taken into account. Is that going to be taken into account if the lockdown continues in a form of scaling advantage? How will it be taken into account?

Mr MARTIN: The specifics of the moderation and the scaling I will provide on notice because I am not a psychometrician.

**ANSWER**

This has been a challenging year for HSC students. Since Term 4 2020, principals have been able to decide on the number, type and weighting of school-based assessments, giving them the flexibility to take into consideration the impact of COVID on their students. Already students have achieved 50 per cent of their final HSC mark through school assessments.

The NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) has developed a COVID-19 Special Consideration Program which applies to all performance and language oral exams and most major projects. Teachers will mark their own students' work in these exam components and, in doing so, will take into consideration any impact of COVID-19 on a student's preparation for or development of the exam component. These teacher-provided marks will be moderated against the written exams. During the moderation process, the rank achieved by the student in the exam component marked by the teacher will be maintained; this recognises those students who perform better in the practical component than the written component.

The 2021 HSC written exams will commence on 9 November 2021. This later start date has provided all students with further time to prepare for their written exams.

The illness and misadventure process is available to students who are unable to attend an HSC exam due to COVID-19 restrictions. It is also available to those students who have been unable to access teaching and learning for an extended period due to COVID-19. NESA is considering how the Special Consideration Program may apply to the HSC written exams.