

## **Consultation Principles**

Parties in the 2004 Victorian Government Schools Agreement adopted the following comments made by Smith C. in CPSU, the Community and Public Sector Union v Vodafone Network Pty Ltd (Print PR911257) (VGSA 2004 Clause 12 (3))

*"Consultation is not perfunctory advice on what is about to happen. This is a common misconception. Consultation is providing the individual, or other relevant persons, with a bona fide opportunity to influence the decision maker. Consultation is not joint decision-making or even a negative or frustrating barrier to the prerogative of management to make decisions. Consultation allows the decision making process to be informed, particularly as it may effect the employment prospects of individuals." (PR911257)*

Effective consultation ensures that those being consulted are sufficiently informed in order to provide informed views / feedback. On this basis principals should provide information to their staff, using agreed consultative arrangements relevant to workforce planning decisions in the school. This could include the broad parameters in which planning decisions have been taken. Such information could include school strategic plan and goals, high level student resources package data, anticipated enrolments and staff movements.

## **School-Based Consultation**

1. The parties recognise that the principal has ultimate administrative and operational responsibility for decisions at the school level, provided that these decisions are made in accordance with the principles outlined below. Where the principal makes a decision that the union sub-branch does not support, the sub-branch can request that the principal provide reasons for his or her decision.
2. The aim of this protocol is to establish workplace consultative arrangements that ensure the principal's responsibility to make school-based decisions is carried out in a framework that enables staff to have input into the decisions that affect their working life.
3. The parties acknowledge that staff morale and employee job satisfaction is enhanced where the views of employees are taken into account before decisions are made.
4. The principal must put in place formal staff consultation structures, that ensure school staff and the union sub branch at the school have the choice and opportunity to be involved in the consultation process in the school.
5. The consultative arrangements are to be used about matters related to the long-term planning and operation of the school to ensure consultation with staff, including the development of workforce plans or the planning and organization of the program of instruction in the school, the composition of selection and other panels, organisation of work including the face to face teaching requirements, organisation of work of graduate teachers in their first twelve months of teaching, organisation of classes including class sizes
6. These arrangements must ensure that school staff have the choice and the opportunity through their representatives to be involved in the consultation process in the school.
7. The consultative arrangements must allow for the direct input of the union sub-branch, if one exists at the school level.
8. Resolution procedures to be followed in any disagreement by the union sub-branch with decisions made by the principal are contained in the VGSA 2004, Clause 12 (8) – (13)