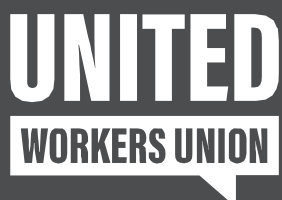


# **UNITED WORKERS' UNION**

## **Parliamentary Joint Standing Committee of Public Accounts**

Submission

Inquiry into the Tasmanian Government's continuing  
response to the COVID-19 pandemic



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10 August 2022

## Contents

About the United Workers' Union.....	3
Introduction .....	3
Summary of recommendations.....	3
Background .....	4
Staffing .....	4
'Touch-point' cleaning resourcing.....	7
Allocation and procurement of resources .....	7
Vaccination.....	8
Conclusion and recommendations.....	9
Attachment A – T14920 of 2022 Record of Outcome .....	12
Attachment B – Question to Hon Leonie Hiscutt MLC .....	13

## About the United Workers' Union

The United Workers' Union (**UWU**) is a powerful new union with 150,000 workers across the country from more than 45 industries and all walks of life, standing together to make a difference. Our work reaches millions of people every single day of their lives – we feed you, educate you, provide care for you, keep your communities safe and get you the goods you need. Without us, everything stops. Our public sector members across Australia provide quality services to the community every day. UWU represents a wide range of public sector workers across Australia, with our coverage varying across states. In Tasmania, we represent Education Facility Attendants (**EFAs**) in the Department of Education (**DoE**) and Correctional Officers in the Tasmanian Prison Service.

## Introduction

This submission details UWU's experiences of the implementation of the Government's 'Return to School Plan' for the return of school in 2022.

The work of EFAs during the height of the pandemic in 2020 and 2021 helped to effectively control the transmission of COVID-19 in Tasmanian schools. On the mainland of Australia, schools had been the source of significant outbreaks of the disease, but this was avoided in Tasmania. This was in no small part due to the hard work of EFAs in our schools, who are now rightly demanding that the Government reward their efforts. The pandemic has reinforced the essential nature of the work that EFAs perform.

On 15 December 2021, Tasmania's borders reopened and introduced COVID-19 into our community. The Government's preparation for the recommencement of the 2022 school year thus had to grapple with the reality of COVID-19 cases within our schools. How could it effectively manage outbreaks of the disease, whilst also maintaining adequate levels of staffing and supplies to keep schools open? There is no doubt that the Government placed a high degree of reliance on the efforts of EFAs to maintain the operation of the education system.

There are important lessons to be learned from the implementation of the Government's plan, which can strengthen and improve the work of EFAs in our schools, providing for a more effective management framework for EFAs that can improve employment processes and reduce costs.

## Summary of recommendations

The UWU calls on the Inquiry to support the implementation of these recommendations:

- 1. Implement a centralised employment structure for EFAs as had occurred during the COVID-19 Return to School Plan, providing for:**
  - **Direct EFA management and human resources staff for better managing resources, coordinating employment of EFAs, etc.**
  - **EFA coordinators at a local region level to direct the work of EFAs, coordinate procurement and resourcing, etc.**
- 2. That EFAs are recognised for the essential nature of the work they perform by offering increased wages to retain and attract new EFAs and remove barriers to entry.**
- 3. Review the level of EFA resourcing required in our schools since the COVID-19 pandemic, in consultation with UWU and our members, with a view to increasing the EFA workforce**

## Background

'Education Facility Attendant' is the collective name for the workers in Tasmanian public schools who clean and maintain school facilities. EFAs are flexible and can work in any cleaning, groundskeeping, kitchen assistant or maintenance roles where required.

EFAs are directly managed at the school-level by School Business Managers (**SBMs**). SBMs are responsible for employing EFAs, supervising the work of EFAs including providing instruction and guidance on practices, systems and processes, procuring resources (such as cleaning and grounds equipment), general management of EFA discipline and performance and overseeing facility maintenance, minor works and repairs. These duties are in addition to the many other functions required of SBMs in the management of school business.

The UWU has industrial agreements pertaining to the employment of EFAs with the Minister administering the *State Service Act 2000* which supplement the operation of the *Facility Attendants (Tasmanian State Service) Award*. These are the:

- *Education Facility Attendant Job Security Industrial Agreement 2019 (Job Security Agreement);* and the
- *Education Facility Attendants Salaries and Conditions of Employment Agreement 2019 No. 2*

There are presently about 1000 EFAs employed in schools across Tasmania.

## Staffing

### Plan

The Government's highest priority for the school reopening plan, as stated to UWU, was to keep schools operating, including ensuring face-to-face learning continued. For this to occur, the Government needed to ensure that EFAs were available at schools to maintain high levels of cleanliness (including specialised COVID-19 'touch-point' cleaning which is discussed later in this submission).

The Government's plan for ensuring adequate levels of staffing of EFAs during the reopening involved the use of an escalation matrix (see Figure 1) which provided for intensifying strategies to avoid understaffing and ultimately to avoid the closure of schools.

Levels 3 and 4 of the matrix were implemented by DoE at the human resources management level. At Level 3, the DoE implemented a centralised structure whereby specific human resources staff were assigned to regions of schools, over which they were responsible for sourcing relief staff for schools in that region that had understaffing issues.

If this level failed, Level 4 involved the DoE's Assistant Director of Industrial Relations and the Director of Legal Services and Workplace Relations, consulting UWU Lead Organiser Amy Brumby about the issue to try to determine a solution.

UWU is also aware that the DoE contacted recently retired EFAs to request that they return to work if called upon.

UWU also supplied DoE with a list of workers in our broader membership who could potentially be recruited at short notice to fill staff shortages, though it is not known if these persons were ever called upon.



## Escalation matrix – Education Facility Attendants



	Level 1 <span>Low</span>	Level 2 <span>Moderate</span>	Level 3 <span>Significant</span>	Level 4 <span>Critical</span>
ABSENCE LEVELS	Minimal staff absences	Moderate staff absences	Significant staff absences	Staffing levels critical threatening operations
IMPACT	Requires minor internal staffing adjustments or changes to accommodate EFA activities	Requires significant internal staffing adjustments or changes to accommodate EFA activities	Requires external support and additional staffing resources	Requires significant external support and staffing resources and / or advice
RESPONSIBILITY	Internal solution managed at school level	Internal solution managed at school level	System support required through Learning Services Regional HR team	System support required through Learning Services Regional HR team in conjunction with Director Operations
STRATEGIES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engage relief (if available)</li> <li>Appoint fixed term employees from the register (if available)</li> <li>Offer part time EFA additional hours</li> <li>Explore additional hours for other relevant staff in the school.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Undertake all strategies from level 1</li> <li>Utilise internal staff to undertake EFA duties – e.g. Kitchen assistant</li> <li>Offer overtime to existing full time EFAs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Undertake all strategies from level 2</li> <li>Contact your regional LSHR team for additional support</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Contact your regional LSHR team for additional support</li> </ul>
ESCALATION	School Principal	School Principal	Regional HR team	Regional HR Team in consultation Director Operations

Figure 1: Escalation matrix for EFAs

### Implementation

At the school-level, we received several reports from our members of the difficulties that SBMs were having in recruiting relief EFAs. It was identified by some of our members that the relief registers had not been kept up to date. This meant that for a SBM trying to source staff, the register itself became more of a hindrance rather than assisting in the process. This meant that SBMs often reverted to utilising the next level of escalation in the matrix, referring the issue to human resources staff.

However, the centralised structure that was put in place was, in our view, effective. There were only approximately 10 instances over the course of the first term of the school year where the Level 3 escalation was unable to find adequate staff and the issue was referred to the Assistant Director and the Director of Legal Services and Workplace Relations. On each of these occasions except one, Ms Brumby was consulted for assistance sourcing staff, and she was able to help source relief staff through consultation with our membership.

It was disappointing that on the one occasion where Ms Brumby was not consulted about a shortage, the DoE resorted to engaging contract cleaners, in breach of the Job Security Agreement with UWU. This matter was filed by UWU in the Tasmanian Industrial Commission and was ultimately resolved by agreement with the DoE. A copy of the record of outcome in the matter is included in Attachment A.

Where the strategy did not work was in the work done to recruit additional staff (particularly relief staff) prior to the start of the school year. In our view, Ms Brumby should not have ended up in essentially the position of a recruitment officer for the DoE. There were several issues identified by our membership as being barriers to becoming an EFA, including issues with the recruitment process itself.

It was also clear to us that more resources needed to be available to the DoE to process newly hired employees for the start of the year. We received reports of EFAs who had commenced in term 1 and were unpaid for 6 weeks because of a lag in the processing of contracts. We were advised that teacher contracts had been given priority by the DoE for processing, a position we find unacceptable.

## Issues

After the breach of the Job Security Agreement occurred, UWU consulted with our membership about what the barriers to becoming an EFA were. Our membership stated that the main barriers were:

- The difficulty, time and expense of conducting Working With Vulnerable People (**WWVP**) checks. From the perspective of a relief employee who has no expectation of receiving work, the cost of the WWVP check was identified as a significant barrier to entry;
- Making the relief register more accessible on the jobs.tas.gov.au website, including additional advertising (a suggestion on accessibility given to us was the production of a video on how to apply); and
- Simplifying the selection process. It was stated that the use of written 'selection criteria' in the recruitment of EFAs presented a literacy barrier to some applicants due to education or because the applicant comes from a non-English speaking background.

Some other ideas raised by our members included:

- Employing a pool of permanently employed 'relief' staff allocated to a range of schools in an area to cover shortages where required, in a similar way to that of the DoE's pool of permanent teachers.
- Recognising prior experience of retired or returning EFAs in their starting salary to encourage these workers to fill the gaps.

It was also identified by UWU that the DoE could have been more proactive in altering shift times where necessary to fit in with the availability of relief or other EFAs who could work. For example, in the instance where contractors were engaged by the DoE, UWU members identified that they could have filled the shift had it been arranged to occur in the early morning.

The issues in the staffing strategy arose from the lack of support which is available to SBMs at the school-level in trying to recruit EFAs. SBMs are required to do this work but do not have any control over the advertisement process or the way that recruitment occurs. When this became too difficult to manage at a school-level in the first term, SBMs turned to the human resources staff to do this work for them. The advantage for those staff was having a broader overview of the resources available in the region to be deployed to cover the shortages and they could thereby help avoid schools competing against each other for relief staff.

The DoE also has as part of the industrial arrangements with UWU and our members, access to a register for part-time employees to take up additional shifts where this is possible within their ordinary hours of work. There is scope for this to be utilised further.

A final observation is in relation to the DoE's overuse of part-time employment arrangements. On several occasions, we have brought to the attention of the DoE the need to better utilise full-time employment rather than part-time employment for EFAs. This will also result in a net cost-saving to the Government by not having to pay a 10% loading which is payable to part-time employees. During the commencement of the school year, it is likely that with more full-time engaged staff the DoE would have had fewer staff resourcing issues.

## **‘Touch-point’ cleaning resourcing**

### **Plan**

From the outset of the pandemic, schools were provided access to additional cleaning staff for ‘touch-point’ cleaning. As stated in the Government’s submission to the Inquiry, \$4 million per year in additional cleaning costs in public schools was funded by the Tasmanian Department of Health through the 50:50 funding agreement in the National Partnership on COVID-19 Response with the Federal Government.

This effectively allowed for schools to employ additional EFAs to undertake COVID-19 ‘touch-point’ cleaning at no additional cost to them. This work would provide for continuous cleaning of high-touch areas in schools, such as door handles, handrails, tabletops, light switches, computers etc. It was expected based on the health advice that this would reduce the incidence of transmission of COVID-19 in schools.

### **Implementation**

The implementation of COVID-19 ‘touch-point’ cleaning was poor. There appeared to be inconsistent communication to schools about the availability of central funding for COVID-19 cleaning. UWU was advised by several of its members that COVID-19 cleaning was not available at their school, or that they had been advised by the school that funding was no longer available and that additional cleaners had not been re-engaged because of this. However, to UWU’s knowledge, funding for COVID-19 cleaning has remained available continuously since April 2020.

As a result, these additional cleaning tasks often fell to existing EFAs at the schools to perform, increasing their overall workload substantially.

There also appeared to be inconsistent levels of the use of additional COVID-19 cleaning resources. At the beginning of 2022, one Southern Tasmanian primary school with an enrolment of about 350 children was able to engage five COVID-19 cleaners for a total of 43 hours per week. But at the nearby high school with an enrolment of 650 children, no additional COVID-19 cleaning staff have been engaged for the duration of the pandemic.

### **Issues**

The poor implementation appears to stem from the DoE’s decision to allow schools to decide whether to utilise the additional cleaning resources (see Attachment B, a question answered by the Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council, Hon Leonie Hiscutt MLC, for further details). As a result, the implementation in schools has been patchy, and where it has not been utilised, existing EFAs have been relied upon to perform this additional work.

Given the central funding in partnership with the Federal Government, there was scope for schools to be more liberal in utilising these additional resources. However, issues associated with recruiting additional EFAs appears to have deterred schools from doing so.

## **Allocation and procurement of resources**

### **Plan**

The Government funded additional cleaning and sanitisation measures in schools, including hand sanitiser, air purifiers and window repairs for ventilation. According to the Government’s submissions, these costs were met directly within the DoE budget. Face masks and Rapid Antigen Tests were funded by the Tasmanian Department of Health through the 50:50 funding partnership with the Federal Government.

## **Implementation**

There does not appear to have been any issues with procurement of these resources. The DoE centrally procured these resources and distributed them to schools based on levels of enrolment.

However, on the ground our members reported that large amounts of resources were being delivered to schools without any inventory management occurring, in many cases unwanted by the school. As a result, there are cases of significant oversupply reported by our members. For example, in a secondary college in the North-West of Tasmania, there is presently 200L of unused hand sanitiser at the school which has now expired.

In relation to air purification systems, the DoE procured two types of air purifiers which were distributed to schools based on enrolment. The work of setting up the air purifiers generally fell to EFAs to perform. One of the types of air purifier had a servicing arrangement whereby the HEPA filters inside the purifiers would be cleaned or replaced weekly by the Company who had supplied them. In the other type, this work again fell to EFAs to perform.

Window repairs were undertaken by contractors to improve levels of ventilation within classrooms.

## **Issues**

What was apparent to our members during the pandemic and the school reopening is the high level of waste associated with the distribution of cleaning and sanitisation resources. While having extra resources available is preferable to not having enough, there is clearly room for improvement in the management of these resources. It seems that there was a lack of meaningful communication between individual schools and the DoE's resource procurement management. UWU suggests that efficiency could have been improved through the implementation of a basic ordering system at the school level, to be used by EFAs.

Additionally, our members reported that some schools procured their own stocks of hand sanitiser and other resources, presumably through their School Resource Packages. Again, the lack of communication is highlighted.

Some schools have in excess of 50 air purification systems which have filters that must be cleaned or replaced regularly. However, it does not appear that this has been factored into the workloads of EFAs in any meaningful way. Similarly, our members report that the use of windows for ventilation in classrooms has also created additional work for them, in having to close them after classes finish, as well as extra cleaning associated with dust, leaves, etc. blowing into classrooms.

In some secondary colleges where cleaning functions are contracted out, EFAs reported that their workloads increased significantly as they became responsible for the majority of the aspects of the COVID-19 response at those schools, as the cleaning contractors were not able to be directed to carry out that additional work.

## **Vaccination**

### **Plan**

The DoE implemented a COVID-19 vaccination policy, after consultation, that required all DoE staff to be vaccinated prior to 8 February 2022. The policy allowed for exemptions because of certain medical conditions.

## Implementation

There was a high uptake of vaccination among the EFA workforce. UWU is aware of only a handful of cases where EFAs were stood down as a result of failing to provide evidence of their vaccination status. There may also have been a few employees who did not have contracts renewed, or resigned as a result of the policy, but these numbers are not known to UWU.

Several DoE staff (including some EFAs) were stood down with pay for failing to comply with the DoE's policy. Ultimately however, these employees have not been terminated from employment and have instead remained stood down on full pay. It is understood that some employees, such as teacher assistants and support workers, were terminated from employment for failing to comply with the policy.

## Issues

The main issue arising from the vaccination policy is the differing manner in which the DoE has managed the cases of unvaccinated staff. The inconsistent application of the policy, which must presumably form a reasonable and lawful direction, has caused consternation among our membership. Members are angered that some staff have continued to receive full pay despite not performing work.

Recently, public sector unions learned that furloughed staff would be returning to work in term 3. The DoE has stated to UWU that they have formed the view that they cannot continue paying salaries to staff without receiving service from them in return. Several members have raised concerns with us about working alongside unvaccinated staff and whether this presents an increased risk of the transmission of COVID-19 to other staff and students.

The UWU expects the Government to consult with UWU members about the impact of the withdrawal of vaccine mandates, replacement measures, including by employment direction, and steps to manage the health and safety risk in schools. Furthermore, ongoing data should be provided about the impact of COVID in workplaces including, but not limited to, case numbers, absenteeism and any clusters.

## Conclusion and recommendations

There are lessons that can be learned from the implementation of the Government's COVID-19 'Return to School Plan' and we thank the Inquiry for the opportunity to put forward our views about this issue.

Based on what we have learned from the implementation of the plan, we put forward a set of recommendations about how the work of EFAs can be better managed in our schools to reduce costs, improve outcomes for the DoE and better support our EFAs.

The UWU calls on the Inquiry to support the implementation of these recommendations.

**Recommendation 1 – Implement a centralised employment structure for EFAs as had occurred during the COVID-19 Return to School Plan, providing for:**

- **Direct EFA management and human resources staff for better managing resources, coordinating employment of EFAs, etc.**
- **EFA coordinators at a local region level to direct the work of EFAs, coordinate procurement and resourcing, etc.**

The most significant lesson to be learned is in relation to the management of the employment of EFAs. Traditionally, SBMs are responsible at a local level for sourcing staff when there are vacancies, whether they are relief, permanent or fixed-term staff. Permanent and long fixed-term vacancies are advertised as a

position at the particular school and each vacancy goes through a selection panel process to decide the successful candidate. This means that schools can sometimes be competing for the same applicants.

During the school reopening in 2022, SBMs ended up to a large degree relying on the temporary centralised structure that was set up to find new EFAs. We believe that there was significant merit in this structure. It meant that the human resources staff member responsible for a region of schools had a broader overview of the staff that were available in that area and the levels of need of particular schools. This meant competition between schools for staff could be better managed.

It also must be recognised that SBMs have a lot of work to perform in their roles, before factoring in the work of directly managing EFAs. By centralising the management of EFAs, the workload on SBMs relating to EFAs could be reduced to purely the overseeing of facility maintenance, minor works and repairs.

There was a significant amount of resources wasted because of a lack of communication between individual schools and the DoE's resource procurement management. This can also be addressed in a centralised structure.

We envisage a structure whereby EFA coordinators are responsible for groups of schools in a local region, including for training, induction, procurement, direction, relief staffing etc. These EFA coordinators would then report to an upper facilities management structure supported by human resources staff specifically for EFAs.

What would be the advantages of such a structure?

On the employment of EFAs, rather than individual schools advertising positions, bulk hires of EFAs in groups of local regions could occur quarterly, with those employed then deployed to the schools where they are required. The centralised structure could provide consistent training and induction processes to each of the newly hired EFAs. The relief-register for EFAs would be maintained by this structure, making it more effective.

Additionally, a permanently employed pool of relief staff could be maintained, to be deployed to schools where there are absences.

Resource procurement would also be centralised and coordinated by the EFA coordinators within their local region, providing for consistency in the level of resourcing at schools.

Such a structure would foster greater communication between EFAs at the school-level and management. EFA coordinators would ideally be drawn from the EFA workforce directly, providing a pathway for EFAs for career advancement. This would also provide a greater understanding at the management level of the industrial arrangements for EFAs and a better understanding of the impacts that the introduction of technology or other changes can have on their workloads.

We would also envisage EFA coordinators being responsible for discipline and performance management in a supervisory capacity, with more significant issues raised to the EFA human resources level.

**Recommendation 2 – That EFAs are recognised for the essential nature of the work they perform by offering increased wages to retain and attract new EFAs and remove barriers to entry**

The work performed by EFAs is essential to the school community and the COVID pandemic has reinforced this. These workers have been extremely flexible for the Government; without directly-employed EFAs in our schools, the Government would have been significantly hamstrung by the cleaning contracts they otherwise would have had in place. Instead, they have been able to deploy this workforce to keep our



school communities safe. Regrettably, there are barriers to attracting new workers into the EFA workforce which need to be addressed.

Firstly, the Government should raise the wages of EFAs to recognise and reward the essential work EFAs perform and also to attract new workers into the workforce.

Second, the requirement to provide written selection criteria for EFA applications should be removed. In our view there is little value to be gained from this requirement and it simply presents a literacy barrier to prospective EFAs.

Third, improve advertising and implementation of the EFA relief register.

Finally, fully subsidise the cost of the WWVP check. This is a significant barrier to entry for new relief EFAs.

**Recommendation 3 – Review the level of EFA resourcing required in our schools since the COVID-19 pandemic, in consultation with UWU and our members, with a view to increasing the EFA workforce**

Productivity as conventionally defined is a measure of the quantity of output relative to the quantity of inputs. For EFAs, the increase in workload is evident in the ongoing measures deployed in schools to fight COVID-19 and the flow on effects of those measures. This means that there are a significant number of additional inputs (tasks and functions expected to be performed by EFAs) required to bring about the same output (the cleanliness, upkeep and safety of our school communities). The increase in productivity required to maintain this output has come from the hard work of our members over the last 2 years. The pandemic has shown how essential they are to keeping our school community safe.

The higher level of productivity delivered by EFAs supports our argument for a wage increase for those workers. But work, health and safety concerns also need to be considered. In surveying our members in late 2020, from 200 respondents, 60% of the EFA workforce reported that their mental health had been negatively impacted because of work-related matters. 8% of respondents reported having had suicidal ideations.

The stress on the workforce represents a potentially significant cost to the Government in workplace mental health (and physical) injuries. Therefore, we recommend that the Government considers taking proactive action. As well as the other recommendations we have made, we also recommend that the DoE undertakes a review of the level of EFA resourcing required in our schools, in consultation with UWU and our members, with a view to increasing the EFA workforce.

Part of this review should consider the use, or overuse, of part-time positions in schools and where opportunities exist to increase those appointments to full-time positions. This would also present a partial cost-saving to the Government which could be utilised to increase the number of EFAs.

## Attachment A – T14920 of 2022 Record of Outcome

### TASMANIAN INDUSTRIAL COMMISSION

#### Industrial Relations Act 1984

s29(1) application for hearing of an industrial dispute

#### United Workers' Union

(T14920 of 2022)

and

#### Minister administering the State Service Act 2000/Department of Education

HOBART, 21 APRIL 2022

DEPUTY PRESIDENT N M ELLIS

#### Record of Outcome

[1] On 6 April 2022, United Workers' Union (UWU) (the Applicant) made an application, pursuant to s29(1) of the *Industrial Relations Act 1984* (Tas), for a hearing before a Commissioner in respect of an industrial dispute with the Minister administering the State Service Act 2000/Department of Education (the Respondent).

[2] A conciliation conference was held on 13 April 2022 via Teams.

[3] The following outcome was agreed by the parties:

- a. The parties will draft and agree on a form of words which will be relied on for communications which includes the agreement to uphold Clause 9 of the Agreement and the DOE commitment to not use contract cleaners. This will be undertaken in the week commencing 2 May 2022;
- b. Mr Watson agreed to consult with Ms Brumby prior to any difficulty to fill a roster shortage;
- c. The parties agreed that all strategies should be implemented to safely staff the schools and that the schools should not be closed due to the inability to fill the shift;
- d. Further, in the extreme event of not being able to fill the shift, Mr Watson will consult with UWU prior to the decision to engage any short term contractor, with the aim of seeking consent by the UWU; and
- e. A consultation committee will be established to meet in the week commencing 2 May 2022 to discuss recruitment and staffing strategies raised by the UWU.

[4] At the conclusion of the conference the Applicant agreed to discontinue the application.

[5] Accordingly, I close the file.





## QUESTION WITHOUT NOTICE

### Legislative Council

ASKED BY: Hon Josh Willie MLC

ANSWERED BY: Hon Leonie Hiscutt MLC, Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council

#### QUESTION:

**My question is to the Honourable Leader**

1. Have all schools accessed the COVID cleaning budget? If not, why aren't schools being directed to implement COVID cleaning instead of individual schools being left to make the decision?
2. Is each school COVID safe plan available for parents to view?
3. Has TAFE provided COVID cleaning resources across all of its campuses?

#### ANSWER PART I.

- The Tasmanian Government supported schools, students and families through a range of financial measures as we collectively responded to the impacts of COVID-19.
- In response to the COVID-19 health crisis, all relief (including additional Educational Facility Attendant (EFA) relief required for cleaning in schools) was funded centrally by the Department from 1 April 2020.
- At the time, the Department of Education communicated clearly to schools that cleaning was an important part of the response to managing the COVID-19 risk and the expectation was that this would occur.

- As additional cleaning due to COVID-19 was paid centrally by the department, it is the expectation that schools would make use of this funding where needed.
- This central funding included additional contract cleaning costs where contract cleaning was supported by the school or Senior Secondary Colleges.
- All schools have access to the additional relief cleaning budget through the Department's relief system for additional cleaning required due to COVID-19.
- Currently, 87 per cent of schools have received central funding for relief of EFA staff.
- Schools have been advised that they will continue to be able to utilise additional cleaning support as required (as per the current arrangements and costing processes) for the beginning of Term 1, 2021 and that the continuation of the arrangement will be reviewed at that time.
- As at 30 June 2020, the Tasmanian Government had invested an additional \$2 million in procuring additional school cleaning supplies, PPE and additional cleaners.
- Schools were able to cost approved cleaning costs directly to the Department and have been reimbursed accordingly.
- Sanitizer and soap was directly provided to schools over the course a few months based on enrolments.

## ANSWER PART 2.

- All schools are required to have a COVID-19 Safe Plan and anyone who wishes to view a school plan may do so.

**ANSWER PART 3.**

- Yes. TasTAFE implemented COVID-19 cleaning processes at the commencement of the pandemic and continues to practice in accordance with these processes.
- Additional resources were not required as TasTAFE has sufficient resources to implement its enhanced COVID-19 cleaning processes.

APPROVED/NOT APPROVED



Hon Jeremy Rockliff MP  
**Deputy Premier**  
**Minister for Education and Training**

Date: