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Attachments
1. Governance Protocols for SCSEEC Ministerial Authorities and Companies
2. SCSEEC Advisory and Support Structure
1. **Role of the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) Council System**

In February 2011, the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) agreed to pursue a streamlined agenda under five strategic themes that would shape its work, and the work of its Ministerial Councils, on national strategic priorities. The themes are:

(i) a long-term strategy for participation – addressing social and economic issues, such as skills development, education and early childhood development;

(ii) a national Economy driven by our competitive advantages – addressing issues such as the microeconomic reform agenda, further regulatory and competition reforms and infrastructure investment;

(iii) a sustainable and liveable Australia – addressing issues such as housing supply and affordability, sustainable population, climate change and energy efficiency measures;

(iv) a better health service and a more sustainable health system for Australia; and

(v) Closing the Gap for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians.

COAG also agreed to a new system of Ministerial Councils to support its work and facilitate consultation and cooperation between governments in specific policy areas. The Councils are intended to initiate, develop and monitor policy reform and take joint action to resolve issues that arise between governments.

2. **Role of SCSEEC**

The Standing Council on School Education and Early Childhood (SCSEEC) was launched on 18th January 2012 and is one of twelve Standing Councils established under the new COAG arrangements. It provides a forum through which strategic policy on school education and early childhood development can be coordinated at the national level, and through which information can be shared and resources used collaboratively towards the achievement of agreed objectives and priorities.

The COAG endorsed Terms of Reference for SCSEEC indicate that SCSEEC will pursue COAG strategic themes (i) and (v).

The areas of responsibility covered by the Council are:

- primary and secondary education;
- youth affairs and youth policy;
- cross-sectoral matters, including transitions and careers; and
- early childhood development, including early childhood education and care.

SCSEEC works closely with the Standing Council for Tertiary Education, Skills and Employment (SCOTSE), which has responsibility for tertiary education and apprenticeships. SCSEEC also ensures that other relevant Standing Councils are included in discussions and policy development where necessary, to reflect the broader remit of the Council for early childhood development and youth policy.

3. **Membership**

Membership of the Council comprises State, Territory, Australian Government and New Zealand Ministers with relevant portfolio responsibilities (in either school education, early childhood development, and/or youth affairs) as nominated by their respective First Ministers, with Papua New Guinea, Norfolk Island and East Timor being formally invited to be observers at SCSEEC meetings. In circumstances where one Minister is nominated to represent all portfolio areas covered by Council for his/her jurisdiction, that Minister will need to consult with other relevant Ministers in his/her jurisdiction on Council matters.
3.1 **Chairing**

The position of Chair of the Council rotates between the States and Territories and the Australian Government on an annual basis for a calendar year (see below for rotation cycle).

In any year, the position of Deputy Chair is held by the next year’s incoming Chair. The position of Chair is assumed by the Deputy Chair if and when the Chair is unable to attend meetings, or is temporarily absent.

The Chair is responsible for convening meetings, including setting dates and venues.

The cycle of rotation for the chairing of SCSEEC is as follows:

- 2012 Western Australia
- 2013 New South Wales
- 2014 Australian Capital Territory
- 2015 Queensland
- 2016 Northern Territory
- 2017 Tasmania
- 2018 South Australia
- 2019 Australian Government
- 2020 Victoria

4. **Advisory and Support Structures**

The Council is primarily supported by the Australian Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs Senior Officials Committee (AEEYSOC), which comprises senior officials with responsibility for school education, early childhood and youth affairs.

In addition to its senior officials committee, Council is supported by a number of working groups convened as needed for particular tasks. All working groups report to SCSEEC via AEEYSOC, have prescribed timeframes and reporting arrangements and are reviewed annually.

A number of ministerial authorities and companies have also been established to provide service delivery of national initiatives. The reporting arrangements for these companies are prescribed by their enacting legislation. *Decision-making and Governance Protocols for Standing Council Ministerial Authorities and Companies* outlines the protocols to guide the relationship between SCSEEC and ministerial authorities and companies (Attachment 1).

The Council is serviced by a small independent Secretariat, which is located in Melbourne and is funded by all member governments.

4.1 **Role of AEEYSOC**

AEEYSOC comprises Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) for school education and early childhood and care; the Chairs of any standing committees established by the senior officials group (if not a CEO); and representatives from each of the senior officials’ groups supporting the Standing Council on Community, Housing and Disability Services (SCCHDS).

AEEYSOC is directly responsible to the Council for the execution of Council decisions.

Specifically, AEEYSOC:
• provides policy advice to SCSEEC;
• supervises and coordinates SCSEEC’s work across its advisory bodies and working groups;
• resolves operational and policy issues before progressing matters raised by ministerial authorities and companies to SCSEEC; and
• manages and coordinates jurisdictions’ funding contributions for nationally agreed projects and initiatives, through the SCSEEC Secretariat.

AEEYSOC’s Chairing (and Deputy Chairing) arrangements follow the SCSEEC chairing cycle.

4.2 Role of Ministerial Authorities and Companies
A number of ministerial authorities and companies have been established to provide service delivery of national initiatives, namely:

• Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA);
• Australian Institute of Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL);
• Education Services Australia (ESA); and
• Australian Children’s Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA).

ACARA is the independent authority whose role is to develop a national curriculum, a national assessment program and a national data collection and reporting program that supports 21st century learning for all Australian students.

AITSL is a public company limited by guarantee responsible for promoting excellence in teaching and school leadership through national professional standards; initiating high quality professional development, and working collaboratively across jurisdictions and engaging with key professional bodies.

ESA is a not-for-profit company owned by education ministers that supports the delivery of national priorities and initiatives in education by providing services to develop technologies, create, publish, disseminate and market curriculum and assessment materials for use in education. ESA also acts as required as the legal company for SCSEEC.

ACECQA is a statutory authority that provides national leadership in promoting quality and continuous improvement in early childhood education and care in Australia. It works with State and Territory Governments and the early childhood sector to regulate education and care services for young children and their families.

These agencies maintain their own respective operating procedures (see Attachment 2 of the Governance Protocols for SCSEEC Ministerial Authorities and Companies). However, SCSEEC sets their strategic directions and work priorities through Charters and/or Letters of Expectation approved by the Council, and in decisions made by Council.

4.3 Role of Working Groups
The Standing Council is responsible for establishing working groups as needed. In doing so it is important that proposed Working Groups add strategic value to the achievement of SCSEEC priorities.

AEEYSOC is responsible for the operation of all working groups, with reference to Council as needed. Working Groups are responsible for providing annual work plans to AEEYSOC for approval. Additionally, changes to a Working Group’s Terms of Reference should be approved by AEEYSOC.

A copy of the SCSEEC Advisory and Support Structure is at Attachment 2.
5. **Council Meeting Arrangements**

5.1 **Frequency of Meetings**

In accordance with COAG guidelines, it is at Council’s discretion as to how often and when meetings are held, and whether they are face-to-face or via other means. COAG considers that as a general rule, Councils would not require more than two face-to-face meetings a year. Other meetings of Council may utilise telepresence or teleconference facilities, as determined by the Chair. Council will decide annually the frequency of meetings for the coming year, based upon the work program.

It is the responsibility of the Chair and the Secretariat to ensure that meeting dates are set that enable a clear majority of Ministers to attend.

5.2 **Location of Meetings**

Taking into account ease of access and cost, the location of Council meetings is at the discretion of the Chair, and is generally restricted to the capital cities of Australia.

5.3 **Development and Circulation of Meeting Agendas**

Items for inclusion on a SCSEEC meeting agenda are nominated by Ministers, or by officials acting on behalf of Ministers, through the SCSEEC Secretariat. On behalf of the Chair, the SCSEEC Secretariat calls for agenda items; sets the date for the final submission of agenda items, and compiles and circulates draft agendas to Council members. Where additional items are proposed after the final submission date, approval of the Chair is required in order for the item to be included.

A paper is to be provided for each agenda item raised.

5.4 **Meeting Agendas**

Agenda items should support the strategic priorities of Council. Consequently, the agenda will be arranged according to the following broad headings:

- Preliminary Items (covering Minutes, Council organisational matters)
- COAG Agreed Priorities:
  - (i) Early Childhood Development
  - (ii) Australian Curriculum
  - (iii) School Transparency and Accountability
  - (iv) Teaching and School Leadership
  - (v) School Resourcing
  - (vi) Equity in school education
  - (vii) Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians
- Other Business (covering other collaborative work, or issues that do not fall within the COAG agreed priorities).

5.5 **Meeting Papers**

Papers for SCSEEC meetings should be provided to the SCSEEC Secretariat at least three weeks (15 working days) prior to the meeting date. Papers that are not received for circulation three weeks prior to the meeting date are identified at the outset of the meeting, and the agreement of the meeting to consider these items is sought.
As a guide, papers should be confined to five pages or less, and be presented on the SCSEEC meeting paper template. Additional detailed information to papers should be contained within attachments or can be provided to briefing officers.

5.6 Alternative Resolutions
Alternative resolutions should be provided to the SCSEEC Secretariat on the approved template, prior to the meeting. Proposers will have the opportunity to indicate whether they wish the alternative resolution to be circulated immediately, or held by the Secretariat until the agenda item is considered. Strict confidentiality will apply to items held by the Secretariat.

5.7 Classification and Circulation of Documents
Consistent with the Handbook for COAG Councils, documents prepared for SCSEEC should be treated as confidential, unless otherwise agreed by the Council or senior officials, and only distributed on a strict need to know basis. The SCSEEC and AEEYSOC Chair/s may limit circulation of confidential papers.

The SCSEEC Secretariat will circulate information, including meeting papers and meeting arrangement notifications, to Council members and/or their nominated recipients. The number of nominated recipients on the SCSEEC Council distribution list should be kept to a minimum. The SCSEEC Secretariat will undertake a review of its email distribution list at least once a year.

6. Meeting Attendance and Speaking Rights
The SCSEEC Chair is responsible for making key decisions in relation to the structure and content of meetings, and for chairing meetings in accordance with SCSEEC protocols. The SCSEEC Secretariat will work with the host jurisdiction in arranging the meeting.

6.1 Meeting Attendance and Quorum
If a Council member, including the Chair, is unable to attend a meeting, they may nominate as proxy a parliamentary colleague or a senior official to attend on their behalf.

For the purposes of determining whether a SCSEEC meeting can proceed, a quorum will be taken to mean at least five Ministers from different jurisdictions present. New Zealand is not counted for the purposes of a SCSEEC quorum.

Members may invite a small number of senior officials to accompany them to SCSEEC meetings, as deemed necessary, recognising that large numbers of additional officers may be difficult to accommodate.

Members of the Council’s Ministerial Authorities and Companies (ACARA, AITSL, ESA and ACECQA) will be invited to attend Council meetings as observers for items that relate to the business of their organisation, and other items as determined by the Standing Council and/or the Council Chair (or their proxy).

Attendance of guests at Council meetings is at the invitation of a member Minister, with the approval of the Chair. Guests’ attendance at Council meetings is limited to specific items that relate to the business of their organisation.

6.2 Speaking Rights
At Council meetings, all members of SCSEEC or proxies (whether they be parliamentary colleagues or senior officials) have speaking rights and may move resolutions or alternate resolutions. While Council meetings are forums of Ministers, senior officials accompanying Ministers may speak, at their Minister’s request, with the approval of the Chair. This should be to clarify points raised and not to carry an argument.

Members of Council are to declare any perceived, potential or actual conflict of interest before any discussion has occurred relating to the agenda item.
7. Discussion and Resolution of Agenda Items

7.1 Procedure for Dealing with Individual Agenda Items

Unless otherwise agreed, the order of dealing with items will be as listed on the agenda. For each item, the Chair will:

1. Ask the proposer or originator of the paper to introduce the item.

2. Invite general discussion from other Ministers.

3. Give the proposer of the item the right of reply.

4. If alternative resolutions have been tabled or amendments moved, ask Council to consider (in order tabled) each amendment or alternative resolution.

5. Ask the proposer(s) of the amendments or alternative resolutions to explain their proposals and seek reactions generally from members.

6. Seek a reaction from the proposer of the original recommendations, who may:
   a. support amending the original recommendations, which would mean the amended recommendations could be put to the meeting for decision;
   b. not support amending the original recommendations, in which case the Chair asks the meeting to decide whether the original recommendations should be amended and put to the meeting for decision.

If accepted by the meeting, amended recommendations become the resolution.

If the meeting does not agree to amend the original recommendations, the Chair proceeds with the original recommendations.

7. If necessary, suspend discussion of an item and request that a small writing group of senior officials be given the original recommendations and any amendments or alternative resolutions, to prepare a compromise alternative resolution for consideration by the meeting. If the writing group’s compromise recommendations are accepted, this becomes the resolution.

8. After all amendments or alternative resolutions have been dealt with, if none have been accepted, put the original recommendations to the meeting for decision.

7.2 Tabling of Alternative Resolutions

There are four methods for the tabling of alternative resolutions at Council meetings:

(i) Prior to the meeting date.

(ii) On the day of the meeting, but prior to the commencement of the relevant item*.

(iii) At the commencement of the relevant item.

(iv) During the discussion of the item.

* If an alternative resolution is received for immediate tabling during discussion of another item, it will be distributed at an appropriate point in the meeting, at the discretion of the Secretariat.

The order alternative resolutions are considered relates to the order in which they are tabled.
7.3 **SCSEEC Decision-making**

SCSEEC will make decisions on the basis of consensus wherever possible, unless specific voting rules are included in relevant governing instruments. Where necessary, the principle of one vote per jurisdiction will apply. Any dissenting views are noted in the minutes. Either the member or their proxy can make decisions on behalf of a jurisdiction.

New Zealand abstains from decision-making on matters that could intrude on the central functions of the development and coordination of policy, problem solving and joint action by jurisdictions under the Australian federation.

7.4 **Records of Meetings**

The SCSEEC Secretariat is responsible for the production and distribution of draft minutes to Council members within five working days of the meeting.

Comments and suggested amendments to the draft minutes are then provided to the Secretariat. Members of Ministerial Authorities and Companies (ACARA, AITSL, ESA and ACECQA) will be provided the opportunity to give feedback on Standing Council minutes regarding agenda items related to their organisations’ business only.

On receipt of comments and suggested amendments, the Secretariat, on behalf of the Chair, revises the draft minutes as appropriate, and forwards the final draft minutes to Council members, showing in tracked changes all proposed amendments and indicating the proposer.

The final draft minutes are considered and ratified by Council at the next major meeting.

Copies of the ratified minutes are also forwarded to the COAG Secretariat after each meeting.

8. **Meeting Communiqués**

Meeting communiqués should be jointly agreed by all member jurisdictions. When a communiqué is proposed, a draft will be prepared by the Secretariat. With the agreement of the Chair, the draft is provided to all members as soon as possible in the lead-up to the Council meeting. During the course of the meeting, the communiqué is amended to reflect decisions made. At the conclusion of the meeting, the Chair releases the communiqué publicly. At any point prior to the public release of the communiqué, draft versions are considered to be confidential.

A copy of the communiqué is also forwarded to the COAG Secretariat after each meeting.

9. **Out-of-Session Processes**

The Out-of-Session (OOS) process is used when work needs to be progressed outside Council meetings, so that jurisdictions and other bodies (proposers) do not have to wait for the next meeting to have their issue considered, particularly if the issue is urgent.

Out-of-Session papers are handled in accordance with the following protocols:

1. The response time is limited to 15 working days for all non-urgent items.
2. For urgent items, a 10 working day (or less) response time limit applies, depending on the urgency of the item.
3. Once the due date is reached, the item will be officially closed and responses received sent to the proposer so they can action the item; any late responses will be forwarded to the proposer to consider at their discretion.
4. If a majority of responses has not been received by the due date, the SCSEEC Secretariat will liaise with the jurisdictions yet to respond, and when a majority is received, responses will be forwarded to the proposer and the item closed.

5. Once all responses are received or the item is closed, the secretariat provides the proposer of the item with the responses. If any dissenting views or comments have been received the proposer is asked to contact those jurisdictions with a view to achieving consensus. Once consensus is achieved, the proposer notifies the secretariat of the final decision.

6. Matters unable to be resolved through an OOS process are referred to a Council meeting for resolution.

7. For jurisdictions’ information, once an item has been closed, a summary of responses is circulated to the key contacts in each jurisdiction.

8. A list of decisions made out of session will be provided at each Council meeting for noting in the meeting record.

Officially closing the item once the due date has been reached, or once a majority of responses has been received as soon as possible after the due date, means that OOS items are not left open indefinitely, and proposers can move forward with most responses, but still consider late responses which do not agree with the recommendations, or provide further comment or advice, at their discretion.

As a general rule items for information or for noting should be progressed OOS. Such items do not require a formal response – that is, they are automatically “No response required” items, unless the proposer specifically asks for responses to be provided for the record.

10. Communication

10.1 Consultation with Stakeholders and the Public
Meeting communiqués are the primary form of communication with SCSEEC stakeholders and the public regarding SCSEEC-related business. However, SCSEEC may undertake public or targeted stakeholder consultations as part of its decision-making processes. Only those documents agreed for public release can be provided for consultation purposes. Under no circumstances are Council meeting papers or minutes to be provided for this purpose.

When SCSEEC is considering proposals that may have a regulatory impact, the Secretariat will ensure appropriate liaison between the originators of the proposals and the Office of Best Practice Regulation. The Secretariat will also ensure that advice is provided to SCSEEC about any consultations, and/or preparation of a Regulatory Impact Statement, as required.

The status of any documents released for public consultation should be made clear.

10.2 Communication with SCSEEC and the SCSEEC Chair
All communication with SCSEEC should be directed to the Secretariat, marked to the attention of the SCSEEC Secretary. The SCSEEC Secretary also manages all communication with the SCSEEC Chair.

10.3 Communication with other COAG Standing Councils
The SCSEEC Chair, or the SCSEEC Secretary on behalf of the Chair, is responsible for communication with other Standing Councils in respect to Council-related business.

10.4 SCSEEC Website
Current information will be regularly posted on the SCSEEC website about:

• the scope and priority work for the Standing Council;
• membership;
• chairing arrangements;
• contact details;
• publications and communiqués.

Any information for broad public access will be by nature unclassified, and linkage to (and from) the COAG website provided.

10.5 Publications
There are two main categories of reports produced under the auspices of SCSEEC:

1. Reports officially endorsed by a SCSEEC resolution and hence, carrying the full authority of the Council (for example, ATSI Education Action Plan Annual Report) and

2. Other reports not specifically endorsed by SCSEEC but approved by AEEYSOC as suitable for circulation as a contribution to public information or some other similar purpose. Such documents may acknowledge the auspices of the relevant working group or agency, but this wording should not imply full SCSEEC endorsement.

Reports officially endorsed by SCSEEC are normally officially launched or released by the SCSEEC Chair, on behalf of Council. Advance copies of such reports are provided to all SCSEEC members, through the Secretariat, in order to facilitate media briefings.

Other reports are not normally launched at the ministerial level, as they do not carry the full authority of SCSEEC. However, permission may be sought from the SCSEEC Chair in particular circumstances where an individual Minister may wish to launch a report, with appropriate acknowledgement of the status of the report and distribution to other Ministers.

10.6 Media
The SCSEEC Chair is responsible for making public announcements on behalf of the Standing Council in relation to Council business and decisions. Ministerial authorities and companies will notify the SCSEEC Secretariat of significant or potentially newsworthy public announcements relating to SCSEEC business. The Chair may then decide whether to make a statement on behalf of Council. The Secretariat will then notify SCSEEC members of the intention to issue a media release.

Media releases approved by the Chair are circulated to SCSEEC members ahead of distribution to media outlets and publication on the SCSEEC website. Where practicable, the SCSEEC Secretariat will provide members with a copy of any media release 5 days prior to the distribution date.

10.7 Freedom of Information
If a Council member receives a request for a document to be made public — either through a Freedom of Information (FOI) request, a request from a Royal Commission or some other avenue — COAG operational processes require that: “all members of the Council should be consulted regarding release of the document”. The SCSEEC Secretariat will put in place processes to ensure this occurs.

11. SCSEEC Key Relationships and Reporting Requirements
11.1 Council of Australian Governments (COAG)
SCSEEC was established by the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) and operates within the Terms of Reference approved by COAG. SCSEEC’s Terms of Reference and its Work Plan are linked to COAG’s reform agenda and take account of COAG decisions relevant to SCSEEC. SCSEEC will provide COAG with its:
The SCSEEC Secretariat will maintain effective links with the Commonwealth-State Relations Secretariat (CSRS) in the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet, and will provide:

- the list of SCSEEC meeting dates, once agreed
- final agendas for upcoming SCSEEC meetings
- the communiqué and minutes from each meeting.

11.2 Liaison with other Standing Councils

The Council will work closely with the Standing Council on Tertiary Education, Skills and Employment (SCOTESE), which has responsibility for tertiary education and apprenticeships.

The Council will also ensure that other relevant Standing Councils are included in discussions and policy development where necessary, to reflect the broader remit of the Council for early childhood development and youth policy.

Under the new COAG Standing Council arrangements, the Ministerial Council for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs no longer exists. SCSEEC has determined to involve Ministers with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander responsibilities in matters that are before Council through consultation with relevant ministerial colleagues, and if necessary, through attendance of relevant Ministers at Council meetings for specific items.

12. Review and Evaluation Processes

The Council will undertake a review, approximately every three years, of its:

- structure, including Chairing and Secretariat arrangements;
- number of meetings;
- costs;
- objectives and performance;
- implementation of decisions;
- relationship with other Councils and COAG;
- areas of possible overlap, including recommendations with timelines for addressing any issues in the report; and
- advisory and working groups to ensure they are limited to those that are essential. Those established or retained should be clearly focused and given fixed timeframes to achieve their objectives.
The outcomes of the review are to be provided to the Commonwealth-State Relations Secretariat (SCRS) at the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet (PM&C) by no later than the next 31st July. The outcomes of the review will remain confidential.
Decision Making and Governance Protocols for Standing Council on School Education and Early Childhood (SCSEEC) Ministerial Authorities and Companies

Preamble

This document outlines protocols to guide the relationship between the Standing Council on School Education and Early Childhood (SCSEEC) and:

- the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA)
- the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL)
- Education Services Australia (ESA) and
- the Australian Children’s Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA)

The protocols also guide the relationship of ACARA, AITSL, ESA and ACECQA to the:

- Australian Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs Senior Officials Committee (AEEYSOC)
- Commonwealth Minister for Education and
- key education stakeholders.

The protocols aim to:

- provide guidance to SCSEEC and ACARA, AITSL, ESA and ACECQA, and to support all parties with clear decision-making and governance arrangements to maintain stability through future changes and challenges.
- establish consistent planning and reporting arrangements for ACARA, AITSL, ESA and ACECQA.
- outline specific processes for managing communication and decision-making between SCSEEC and ACARA, AITSL, ESA and ACECQA.

The protocols acknowledge the differing reporting requirements of ACARA, AITSL, ESA and ACECQA mandated by the legislation under which they are constituted. The protocols also recognise that the individual organisations will themselves have their own operating procedures.

The protocols must be read in conjunction with Appendix A, which outlines the governance and legislative arrangements for ACARA, AITSL, ESA and ACECQA, including reporting obligations to the Commonwealth Minister for Education.
Protocols between the Standing Council and ACARA, AITSL, ESA and ACECQA

Relationship to the Chair of the Standing Council

1. ACARA, AITSL, ESA and ACECQA will brief the SCSEEC Chair, as required by the Chair, in advance of Council meetings, where they have papers on the agenda.

2. The SCSEEC Chair is responsible for making public announcements on behalf of the Standing Council in relation to SCSEEC business and decisions.

3. ACARA, AITSL, ESA and ACECQA will notify the SCSEEC Secretariat, who will liaise with the SCSEEC Chair’s office, of significant public announcements relating to SCSEEC business. The SCSEEC Secretariat will then notify Council members.

Setting directions and priorities

4. SCSEEC sets the strategic directions and work priorities of ACARA, AITSL, ESA and ACECQA through written Charters and/or Letters of Expectation approved by SCSEEC, and in decisions made by the Council. The specific nature of these arrangements is outlined in Appendix A.

5. AITSL, ESA and ACECQA will be provided with a Letter of Expectation on a two yearly basis. ACARA’s strategic directions are currently provided through their Charter, with more specific advice on work priorities provided through a Letter of Expectation every two years.

Standing Council business

6. ACARA, AITSL, ESA and ACECQA will:

   • liaise with the SCSEEC Secretariat to coordinate all interaction with the Council and its members with respect to Council business.

   • provide papers to the SCSEEC Secretariat at least three weeks prior to each meeting (as per SCSEEC requirements for all papers), noting that urgent business may be handled either through out-of-session circulation of papers or extraordinary meetings convened at the discretion of the SCSEEC Chair.

   • receive SCSEEC papers and minutes (draft and final) relating to their items, and ensure they are kept confidential and only circulated within ACARA, AITSL, ESA and ACECQA on a strict need to know basis.

7. ACARA’s, AITSL’s, ESA’s and ACECQA’s CEO/Chair (or their delegate) will be:

   • invited to attend all SCSEEC meetings as an observer for items that relate to the business of the organisation and other items as determined by SCSEEC and/or the SCSEEC Chair (or their delegate).

   • provided the opportunity to give feedback on SCSEEC minutes regarding agenda items related to ACARA, AITSL, ESA and ACECQA business only.

   • invited to attend relevant working groups as required and determined by SCSEEC.

Planning and reporting to the Standing Council

8. ACARA, AITSL, ESA and ACECQA will:

   • prepare a 4 to 5 year strategic plan and budget, where appropriate, to assist in ensuring that they continue to meet the strategic needs of the Standing Council.

   • provide SCSEEC, where appropriate, with annual forward work plans on a financial year basis. These plans will set out, as appropriate, the key deliverables, budget and timelines for addressing the strategic directions and work priorities set out in their Charters and/or Letters of Expectation. The forward work plans will include reasonable timelines, incorporate appropriate lead-time and scheduling of realistic consultation arrangements to ensure SCSEEC can support the work of ACARA, AITSL, ESA and ACECQA.
• ACARA, AITSL, ESA and ACECQA will provide progress reports against their Charter and/or Letter of Expectation and their work plans (where appropriate) twice a year to correspond with the scheduled meetings of SCSEEC, unless otherwise determined by the SCSEEC Chair (or their delegate).

• in addition to the progress reports, ACARA, AITSL, ESA and ACECQA will communicate significant changes to budgets, forward work plans and/or timelines in a timely manner, and engage SCSEEC regarding these changes.

9. Under existing arrangements, ACARA, AITSL and ESA will submit annual reports to SCSEEC each financial year outlining their activities and how these relate to their Charter/Letter of Expectation.

10. Under existing arrangements, ACECQA will submit an annual report to SCSEEC within four months of the end of financial year. This report must be tabled in the Parliament of a participating jurisdiction under the Education and Care Services National Law, a role currently fulfilled by South Australia.

11. Where a paper or report is provided at an upcoming AEEYSOC/SCSEEC meeting for noting, consideration will be given to the relevant body not attending, unless the jurisdictions flag an issue for discussion. AEEYSOC may determine that papers should be discussed at a working group prior to consideration by AEEYSOC.

Protocols between AEEYSOC and ACARA, AITSL, ESA and ACECQA

12. ACARA, AITSL, ESA and ACECQA and AEEYSOC will work collaboratively as required in the delivery of their work.

13. Papers proposed by ACARA, AITSL, ESA and ACECQA for consideration by SCSEEC will be initially forwarded to AEEYSOC for advice, endorsement and/or discussion as appropriate, unless otherwise agreed by the AEEYSOC Chair (or their delegate).

14. AEEYSOC will work with ACARA, AITSL, ESA and ACECQA to resolve operational and policy issues before progressing matters to SCSEEC.

15. ACARA, AITSL, ESA and ACECQA will provide AEEYSOC members, via the SCSEEC Secretariat, with copies of all reports, papers and other communications sent to SCSEEC.

16. ACARA’s, AITSL’s, ESA’s and ACECQA’s CEO/Chair (or their delegate) will:

• be invited to attend all AEEYSOC meetings as an observer for items that relate to the business of the organisation and other items as determined by AEEYSOC and/or the AEEYSOC Chair.

• receive AEEYSOC papers and minutes (draft and final) relating to their items, and ensure they are kept confidential and only circulated within ACARA, AITSL, ESA and ACECQA on a strict need to know basis.

• be provided the opportunity to give feedback on AEEYSOC minutes regarding agenda items related to ACARA, AITSL, ESA and ACECQA business only.

• attend relevant working groups as required and determined by AEEYSOC.

17. ACARA, AITSL, ESA and ACECQA will communicate relevant decisions from their Board and committee meetings to AEEYSOC members, and provide details of, and regular updates about changes to, their working group membership to AEEYSOC as appropriate.

18. Under existing arrangements, ESA will invite AEEYSOC to nominate a member to attend Board and any relevant committee meetings.

19. Under existing arrangements, ACARA will invite AEEYSOC to nominate a member to attend Board and any relevant committee meetings as an observer.

20. Under existing arrangements, AITSL will invite AEEYSOC to nominate two members to attend Board meetings and any relevant committee meetings.

21. ACARA and ACECQA will liaise with jurisdictions on a bilateral basis in establishing budget payment schedules to ensure appropriate cash flows.
Protocols between the Commonwealth Minister for Education, the Standing Council and ACARA, AITSL, ESA and ACECQA

22. Where appropriate, the Commonwealth Minister will table any reports or documents received, as a result of Commonwealth legislative requirements, at subsequent SCSEE meetings in order to ensure open and transparent information flow with all Ministers.

Protocols between Commonwealth and State and Territory (jurisdiction) Early Childhood and Education Authorities (Authorities) and ACARA, AITSL, ESA and ACECQA

23. Jurisdiction Authorities will provide ACARA, AITSL, ESA and ACECQA with appropriate contact officers, including content area experts and CEOs/Secretaries of Departments as agreed. The contact officers identified will also be made available to jurisdiction Authorities.

24. ACARA, AITSL, ESA and ACECQA will make requests for data or work from jurisdiction Authorities in writing, including relevant timeframes, via the appropriate contact officer.

25. ACARA, AITSL, ESA and ACECQA and jurisdiction Authorities will negotiate additional processes and protocols for requests for information, advice and assistance, which will be confirmed in writing with all relevant parties.

26. As a general rule, SCSEE would expect ACARA, AITSL, ESA and ACECQA to provide jurisdictions with access to data and collaborate with the ABS, as appropriate. The type and level of data expected to be provided by the companies and authorities will be determined from time to time by AEEYSOC or an appropriate working group.

27. ACARA, AITSL, ESA and ACECQA will request nomination of jurisdictional representatives for working groups.

28. Jurisdictions will establish internal processes to ensure that jurisdictional representatives on ACARA, AITSL, ESA and ACECQA working groups (et al) have the authority and appropriate information to represent their jurisdictional position in these forums.

29. ACARA, AITSL, ESA and ACECQA will communicate forward planning for working groups (et al) to jurisdiction Authorities through the jurisdictional representative. The provision of work plans with agreed timelines, incorporating appropriate lead time and scheduling of realistic consultation arrangements will assist jurisdiction Authorities to support the work of ACARA, AITSL, ESA and ACECQA working groups.

30. ACARA, AITSL, ESA and ACECQA will consult and liaise with jurisdiction Authorities when communicating directly with schools and/or other appropriate providers in their jurisdiction(s).

Development of protocols with key stakeholders

31. ACARA, AITSL, ESA and ACECQA will develop protocols to ensure effective engagement and consultation with:

- the non-government schooling sector, including the National Catholic Education Commission (NCEC) and the Independent Schools Council of Australia (ISCA).
- Curriculum, Assessment and Certification Authorities.
- other key stakeholders such as professional bodies, experts, relevant sectors and services and the community.

Review of protocols

32. The protocols will be reviewed on an annual basis. This will be led by the SCSEE Secretariat.