

Principal Employment Review Advisory Group

TERMS OF REFERENCE

PURPOSE

The time-limited Advisory Group is established to provide feedback on the Department of Education's approach to implementing greater opportunities for principal ongoing employment¹ within the Northern Territory Government workforce.

BACKGROUND

Principals are classified under the NT Education Principal framework using the Mercer Job Evaluation System (JES) methodology and the last wholesale review of these roles was undertaken in 2010. Since that time there has been a change in the operating environment and context of the schools. It was agreed in the last Enterprise Agreement negotiations that the Department would undertake a review of the classification levels for Principals to determine the appropriate classification level.

During 2019, the Department of Education engaged external consultants, Mercer, to review the Principal JES Evaluations and Classification Framework, including:

- conducting a JES review of 155 Principal positions (including through one-on-one interviews, focus groups and surveys) with Principals to better understand the nature of their roles and the complexities of their environment
- reviewing the current classification levels for each Principal role
- reviewing current remuneration levels, relative to other jurisdictions where this data is relevant and available.

It has been requested that the principles underpinning the new model/framework should aspire to being the following:

- transparent
- simple and easy to understand
- stand the test of time
- fair and equitable
- credible
- comparable and competitive
- facilitate and encourage incumbents to seek promotional opportunities.

As part of the scope of the project, Mercer has been requested to:

- consider contextual complexity factors within the JES methodology
- provide advice on employment arrangements (contract vs. ongoing)
- provide a roadmap for implementation of review options.

Subsequent to commencing this work with Mercer, the Northern Territory Government has announced its Plan for Budget Repair which outlined a range of recommendations to return to balance/surplus over the medium term. These recommendations included a wage freeze for executives and parliamentarians (Recommendation 5.3.7).

The Minister for Education, the Hon Selena Uibo MLA, made a request to the Chief Executive of the Department of Education to establish a time-limited advisory group with key stakeholders to seek advice on implementation opportunities for principal ongoing employment.

¹ The term ongoing employment as opposed to permanency is utilised within this document to reflect more contemporary language utilised by the Office of the Commissioner of Public Employment. It should also be noted that ongoing employment would not necessarily mean an individual is attached to a school but rather the system.

The department acknowledges the risk in combining both the Mercer review on principal classifications and any initiative implementing ongoing employment arrangements for principals as it may result in the department being less responsive to any more urgent work required to reclassify principal levels.

The Mercer review will be a key source of information for consideration by the group.

DELIVERABLES

The advisory group will:

- consider jurisdictional analysis completed by Mercer
- consider the report completed by Mercer on Principal Classifications
- consider Department of Education work on the context in the NT
- consider all information from Mercer and the Advisory Group to form an understanding of the impact and to assist in developing an agreed approach and actions
- provide advice on the roadmap for implementation of review options.

MEMBERSHIP

The Advisory Group will consist of the following members:

- Chief Executive – Chair, Karen Weston
- Deputy Chief Executive - School Education, Leanne Nixon
- Senior Director Executive Projects, Leanne Cull
- Commissioner for Public Employment, Vicki Telfer
- Employee Relations Director, OCPE, Cheryl Winstanley
- President, Australian Education Union, Jarvis Ryan
- President, Northern Territory Principals' Association, Britany Roestenburg

From time to time, the Chief Executive may delegate the role of Chair to another Advisory Group member.

Members may send a proxy on their behalf should they be unable to attend the meeting in extenuating circumstances, however it is preferred that Members attend wherever possible.

Other experts or observers may be invited to attend meetings from time to time, with the agreement of the Advisory Group Members.

FREQUENCY OF MEETINGS

Meetings for this time-limited Advisory Group will be scheduled to coincide with the completion of Mercer's report finalisation. The Advisory Group have agreed to meet fortnightly.

SECRETARIAT

Secretariat support for the Advisory Group will be provided by the Principal Review Project Team, including:

- establishing meeting dates, times and venues; and
- distribution of agenda and papers, record keeping for minutes relating to Advisory Group meetings.