

P&C Federation reform

Questions and Answers

Q1. Why did the Minister make the decision to change the P&C Federation Act?

Internal tensions within the P&C Federation have been destructive and ongoing. Although the Roden Report of 2012 provided the Federation with a blueprint for positive change, the organisation has not been able to act on recommended reforms and end its internal dysfunction. As a result two people now purport to be President and are planning two separate 2014 Annual Conferences.

The P&C Associations Incorporation Act (1976) does not provide the Minister with the power to intervene or change the organisation's unwieldy governance structure. Amendments to the Act will ensure the organisation returns to a representative body that delivers what parents need.

The Minister and Department of Education and Communities have been asked to respond to more than 100 representations from school P&C Associations, Local Members and Federation members since July 2013. These representations are asking for a timely intervention to break the current deadlock that has led to the Federation ceasing service delivery to affiliates.

The new governance model has the support of primary and secondary school principals groups and the Teachers Federation.

Q2. Will these changes affect the operation of school P&C Associations?

No. School P&Cs will continue business as usual, though they will be asked to participate in the election of a new state-wide governing body. The Minister acknowledges the valuable role school P&C Associations fulfil in schools across the state.

Q3. When will these changes take effect?

Once the Act is proclaimed, the changes will take immediate effect. An Administrator, appointed by the Minister, will take charge of the organisation, its staff, and its assets and commence the process of electing a new, representative governing body under the supervision of the NSW Electoral Commission.

It is expected that the Board of Management will be in place during Term 4, 2014.

Q4. Will these changes affect the P&C district councils that are currently operating?

No. District councils can choose to continue to operate as they currently do now.

Q5. Will school P&C Association's insurance cover be affected by these changes?

The P&C Federation offers affiliates and like bodies (approved by Federation) a number of insurance policies including public liability, which are renewed in August each year.

It is anticipated that these arrangements will not be affected by these changes, although public liability insurance cover will be increased to ensure adequate coverage.

Q6. Will the \$380,000 Grant in aid funding be restored to the P&C Federation?

The Minister withdrew the Federation's 2013-14 Grant in aid funding of \$380,000 because the organisation did not reform as asked.

The Minister will reinstate the funding when the organisation returns to being a well-functioning, representative body that supports school P&C Associations.

Q7. How will changes to the P&C Federation be communicated to school P&C Associations and principals?

The Department of Education and Communities is communicating directly with every public school with a P&C Association. Principals will be asked to speak with the President of their P&C Association to explain how, while local P&Cs will continue to operate as usual, there will be changes to the governance of the Federation. Further information will be provided to all principals.

Q8. What will be the role of the Administrator?

The Administrator will be appointed by the Minister and will oversee all Federation of P&C operations including staff, finances and service to school P&C Associations.

The Administrator's role will conclude when the Federation has an elected Board of Management and Executive Committee in place.

Q9. What will happen to the staff employed by the P&C Federation?

The changes will not directly affect Federation employees. The Administrator will play the role of the employer until the new executive is in place.

Q10. What will the new governance model look like?

There will be 16 Federation Electoral Areas across the state, varying in size.

Each electorate will elect one councillor, forming the Board of Management, as well as two delegates to attend the Annual General Meeting.

The Board of Management will elect an Executive Committee which will then select from its own ranks the President and Office Bearers.

Q11. How will a new state executive be elected?

The NSW Electoral Commission will conduct the inaugural election of 16 councillors and 32 delegates from 16 electorates. Elections will occur every two years from that point on.

Q12. Will school P&C Associations need to be affiliated with the newly formed P&C Federation? Will this be compulsory?

The new legislation will not change the current arrangements.

Q13. Who will participate in the state-wide elections?

A parent or carer of a student currently enrolled in a school in the electorate and who is a member of the P&C association at the school is eligible to participate in the election, and can nominate to be a delegate or councillor.

A citizen member has an active interest in a government school and is a member of a school P&C Association. Citizen members cannot nominate or vote for delegates or councillors, but their ongoing commitment to their local school community is acknowledged and recognised.

Each school's P&C Association will vote for one councillor and two delegates to represent their electorate.

Q14. What will the role of the Minister in the P&C Federation be in the short and longer term?

The legislation will allow the Minister to have oversight of the establishment of the new Federation and will withdraw involvement after a three year period, once the Federation has returned to being a well-functioning representative body.

Once established the new body will be self-governing and independent.

Figure 1: P&C Federation Governance Structure

