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| November 26, 2020

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| Tuesday’s [ministerial announcement](https://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/department/Pages/vcal-pathways-review.aspx) regarding the VCAL has unleashed a range of responses from the VALA membership.People have expressed their feelings of anger, frustration and hurt through many phone calls and emails over the past 48 hours. There have been swear words and tears, and all things in between.I hear you and I feel for both you and your students.As VCAL educators you work to make your programs succeed, often with the odds stacked against you. Your passion and determination for VCAL is palpable, as is your disappointment in the suggestion that the program is to be” axed” as reported in yesterday’s Age newspaper.It is the view of VALA, that the sensational headlines and discussion in the body of yesterday’s news article did not fully capture the tenet of the Firth Review.Key recommendations from Firth identified many golden nuggets in the VCAL, while also identifying its flaws and short comings.Firth recommends taking these golden nuggets and using them as the base from which to strengthen a vocational applied learning pathway under the banner of the VCE.The review recommends that course requirements of the reshaped VCE be “based largely on the existing VCAL strand structure to maintain an appropriate breadth of curriculum” ([Recommendation 1](https://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/department/Pages/vcal-pathways-review.aspx))The end game is to have one senior secondary certificate which integrates academic and vocational/applied learning streams seamlessly, allowing students to select subjects that truly reflect their needs, interests, and post-school destination in the one senior secondary qualification.The VCAL name may eventually be gone, (and for many, this may feel like a loss of identity) however, the underpinning applied learning pedagogy of the certificate will not only remain but be enhanced under the reform.VALA has been assured that education sectors who currently deliver the VCAL will be able to continue to deliver the new certificate.VCAA will commence the redesign of the VCE and VCAL next year. Stakeholder consultations will be sought by VCAA over the course of the year, providing you with ample opportunity for your input and feedback.We are also pleased to say VCAA has expressed the desire to work closely with VALA throughout this process. We regard this as a valuable opportunity for us to continue to advocate for best practice applied learning pedagogy in the post compulsory environment and look forward to the challenges the amalgamation of the two current senior certificates will provide.We are very much involved in this transition process and urge you to be optimistic, as new opportunities for yourselves and your students will emerge under the new qualification.With warmest regardsHelene Rooks |

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