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18 March 2019

Dr Annelise Balsamo  
VATE Council  
Victorian Association for the Teaching of English  
1/134-136 Cambridge Street  
COLLINGWOOD VIC 3066

Dear Dr Balsamo

Thank you for your letter of 20 February 2019 concerning the 2018 Literature examination, specifically the question set for the text by W.E.H. Stanner.

Thank you for the feedback in relation to the overall quality and accessibility of the examination provided in your letter.

I sincerely apologise that you have had to write a second time, following no written response to your first email. Thank you for your courteous and patient follow-up.

I have given careful consideration to the issues you raise and fully understand and appreciate the points you make.

It will continue to be the case that the texts set for examination are the texts prescribed in the relevant annual text list. In the case of the Stanner text, the Introduction is not included in what is prescribed, but does of course provide a very useful perspective.

It is the view of the Chief Assessor that the wording of the question would not have been an obstacle to students being able to demonstrate their knowledge of the prescribed text. The 2017 Literature examination report advised that students should interrogate each topic, ensure they address the focus of the topic but not feel limited in the scope of their response by the topic. On this basis, the Chief Assessor is confident that no student would have been disadvantaged by the wording of the topic.

I also asked for an additional statistical analysis of the results of the 2018 Literature examination to be completed. On the basis of this analysis, there is no evidence that the wording of the Stanner question created a disadvantage.

Nevertheless, I acknowledge that, in analogous circumstances, there may be an increased risk of student confusion or distraction. This risk will be drawn to the attention of the examination development panel responsible for the setting of future Literature examinations.

Thank you for the constructive way in which you have raised this issue, and my apologies again that you have had to pursue this matter rather than receiving a more timely response.

I reiterate my thanks and appreciation to the Victorian Association for the Teaching of English for the outstanding work you do in supporting the implementation of the VCE Literature study, and would welcome further discussion with you about any aspect of the study design or its implementation.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D. Howes', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

**Dr David Howes**  
Chief Executive Officer