**Becoming a peer reviewer**

**Queensland Department of Education**

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Queensland state school principals talk about their experiences as a reviewer in a school review.

Transcript

**Title slide** *Becoming a peer reviewer*

**John Collins (JC) Principal and Peer Reviewer** My name is John Collins. I’m the principal at Hilder Road State School and while I’m on this project, I’m a peer reviewer. I guess I saw it as an opportunity to engage in some really significant professional learning. And certainly, that’s been my experience having being part of this process. It’s been very, very powerful.

**Kate Macdonald (KM) Principal and Peer Reviewer** The training that I participated in took place in Cairns. So I was with a group of my peers from Cairns primary and secondary schools over a two-day period and we got to know the national review tool intimately, which was terrific. And we also practised the skills that we would be using in schools as peer reviewers.

**JC** I found that a valuable exercise but I knew in the end that I’d get most value out of being part of a review team. And certainly, there’s no question that particular goal has been well and truly met.

**Paul Pengally (PP) Principal and Internal Reviewer** The notion of a review is essentially a small team visits a site – whether it be for two, three or four days – to look at what’s happening well in a school. But just as importantly, some key highlights around things that can be improved so that will be of enormous benefit to that school as they’re moving into that strategic planning cycle.

**JC** My job as a peer reviewer is to look at the school in terms of the nine domains of the improvement tool and focus on three of those particular domains to get that deep understanding and then share that deeper understanding with my review colleagues. Through those professional conversations we can make some conclusions about where we believe the school is at and in due course make recommendations about what needs to be done to help the school improve going forward.

**KM** I thought it was a tremendous opportunity for schools to have an outside perspective. Someone to come in, visit the school and it provided information to the school on how we were doing things, how we had grown and what we had improved and it gave us that wonderful motivation, the feedback that we were reaping rewards for all of the very hard work that staff were putting into the school.

**PP** It gives you that opportunity just to take a breath and take stock and really look long and hard at the way you’re doing things and why you’re doing things. And having that team of fresh eyes come in, you do pick up some things that you might otherwise not have seen as significant. Certainly, the report that came from the team to our community is something that we have focused on quite a lot since then and we will continue to reference as we develop our strategic plan for the next four years, so it’s a very valuable process.

**JC** I think it’s great to have the opportunity to get into another school and find out about the fantastic processes and practices that are actually part and parcel of the school community.

**KM** I’m able to go back and talk to my staff about what I’ve seen and what I’ve learned but it’s given us food for thought about how we can improve different aspects of our work as well.

**JC** This is the best professional development that I’ve had certainly in a long time. It’s about moving a school from that good level to great. I think we can only do that as principals if we actually get to see those great processes and practices that happen in other schools.

**Image on screen** *QLD government crest logo*