



State Budget 2008

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FROM THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION

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\$815.6 MILLION BOOST FOR EDUCATION AND EARLY CHILDHOOD

Victorian children will be better equipped to reach their full potential, with the Brumby Labor Government today announcing an **\$815.6 million** State Budget boost for schools, kindergartens and childcare.

Education Minister Bronwyn Pike and Children and Early Childhood Development Minister Maxine Morand said reforms to set a standard of excellence in the education system were the centrepiece of the 2008-09 State Budget education package.

“Education is the Brumby Labor Government’s number-one priority, and our government is taking action so all children get the best start in life no matter where they live,” Ms Pike said.

“We want to lift the performance of every school across the State, particularly those not performing at expected levels.

“We have released a *Blueprint for Early Childhood Development and School Reform* for public feedback. Consultation is well underway and this will be important in helping us shape the details of reform initiatives funded in today’s State Budget.”

Ms Pike said **\$71.4 million** would provide more targeted support to schools to help lift the performance of students and provide incentives for a high-achieving teacher workforce. The support package includes:

- Incentives for the best teachers and school leaders to work in those schools where they are needed most;
- Rewarding high-achieving principals with executive contracts;
- Partnering lower-performing schools with high-performing schools for coaching and support; and
- Professional development for school councils, principals and teachers in areas of identified need.

Ms Pike said the schools to receive assistance would be identified using performance indicators including academic data, student engagement and wellbeing indicators and parent surveys.

She said schools would be further supported with the employment of 67 School Improvement Leaders, who will be matched with individual schools to provide additional high level support and interventions, focusing on under-performing schools.

Additional support for schools would be delivered through an extra **\$22.1 million** over four years for the continuation of the successful Literacy Improvement Teams.

“Schools requiring extra assistance to lift the reading and writing skills of children will continue to receive support from the employment of 45 Literacy Specialists who are allocated to schools

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according to need, as well as 15 additional literacy specialists with a focus on Koorie students ” she said.

Thousands more students who require additional assistance will benefit from an investment of **\$33.2 million** over four years to provide an extra 70 Student Support Services Officers – such as guidance officers, social workers, speech pathologists and psychologists – and 10 Support Coordinators to work with schools across Victoria.

Other initiatives funded in the 2008-09 State Budget to lift the performance of schools include:

- **\$7.6 million** over four years to employ up to 75 outstanding graduates in Government schools, providing intensive teacher training, internships with leading employers and coaching opportunities. These teachers will be placed in hard-to-staff subject areas in secondary schools;
- **\$2.8 million** for grants to help students access specialist science centres, targeted maths and science programs and business and industry projects; and
- **\$2 million** to the Community Engagement Project – so that parents and communities better understand the leading-edge teaching practices in our classrooms.

A further **\$7.3 million** will be allocated in 2008-09 to improve Year 12 completion rates through more support for Vocational Education and Training in schools.

Ms Pike said the learning and teaching initiatives outlined in the Budget would complement the **\$592.3 million** investment to rebuild, renovate or extend 128 schools across Victoria under the second tranche of the Victorian Schools Plan.

Additional funds have been allocated to support previously announced initiatives, including: \$336.4 million to meet the additional demand for services under the Program for Students with Disabilities; **\$7 million** for additional computers in schools; and **\$20 million** for additional school maintenance.

Ms Pike said the Brumby Labor Government’s \$815.6 million investment built on the Government’s proud record. Since 1999, the Victorian Government has employed an additional 8000 teachers and staff in our Government schools.

“Our Government’s record investment is reaping dividends, with the latest data showing that Victoria’s Years 3, 5 and 7 students were at or above the national average in reading, writing and numeracy,” she said.

Ms Morand said the Brumby Labor Government’s education and early childhood package included a **\$49.9 million** package to boost early childhood services, which includes funding for Transition Statements to make sure children are school-ready; funding to monitor and support day care and out-school-hours care; and capital funding for kindergartens.

“The Brumby Labor Government understands that learning and development starts at birth and we are taking action to give young children the best possible start in life and to give Victorian parents more assurance about the quality of early childhood services,” Ms Morand said.