

Tuesday May 30, 2006

ACTION ON LITERACY SKILLS HELPS STUDENTS REACH POTENTIAL

A new literacy action program is the centrepiece of a **\$52.5 million** investment over four years to continue improving literacy and numeracy skills, and keep more students at school.

The Minister for Education and Training, Lynne Kosky, said the 2006-07 State Budget would help meet the challenges of the future by ensuring every student learns to their full potential.

“Since we came to office in 1999 education has been our top priority, and while we have helped turn the system around we know there is still more to do,” she said.

“As part of our work to make Victoria the best place to live, work and raise a family, we are giving children the best possible start in life through a world-class education system.”

Ms Kosky said as part of *A Fairer Victoria*, **\$11.7 million** over three years would establish Literacy Improvement Teams to help target schools where the reading and writing skills of Years 3 to 8 students are falling behind.

“There will be 45 literacy specialists employed across Victoria to work with teachers in these targeted schools, ensuring students receive grounding in fundamental literacy skills,” she said.

“A panel of prominent literacy specialists will provide expert advice on programs to assist literacy outcomes at all schools. The program will also focus on improving outcomes for Koori students.”

A new **\$5.1 million** initiative will also see every Victorian student issued with an Academic Number.

Ms Kosky said around one million students at school and in training, up to the age of 24, would be issued with an academic number, similar to the system in place for senior secondary students.

“When students move from one school to another, or shift from primary to secondary school, the new Academic Number will ensure information on their educational progress travels with them,” Ms Kosky said.

“A student’s academic results can be tracked over time, from school to school, or school to training. We can then identify individual students who may be falling through the gaps, provide additional support and target programs to meet their individual needs.”

Ms Kosky said **\$24.1 million** over two years would be invested to continue the Schools for Innovation and Excellence program to improve literacy, numeracy, attendance and retention for students in Years 5 to 9.

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“Since 2003 this program has won international recognition for improving the participation and achievement of students,” Ms Kosky said.

“This initiative will continue the employment of up to 250 teachers who are delivering innovative programs for students in Years 5 to 9, particularly in maths and science.”

Ms Kosky said student outcomes would also be supported with an extra **\$11.6 million** to build leadership capacity in schools.

“Professional development training will build the skills of teachers, as well as prepare them for more senior roles and responsibilities as they move through their careers,” she said.