

# SCHOOL EDUCATION

Services were provided through a range of school structures:

- primary schools for Years P–6
- secondary colleges in Years 7–12, 7–10, 9–12 and 11–12 configurations
- primary–secondary schools in Years P–8, P–10 and P–12 configurations
- specialist schools for students with disabilities
- English language schools and centres, the Victorian School of Languages and other settings for students with specific educational needs
- the Distance Education Centre of Victoria.

## FRAMEWORK

School education involves:

- policy development, regulation and management of the Victorian government school system
- delivery of a high-quality curriculum
- provision of programs and specialist services specifically designed to improve the quality of student learning and school management
- provision of leadership, teacher and SSO development programs to enhance workforce capacity
- funding and regulation of non-government schooling.

## OVERVIEW

Education in Victoria is compulsory for children aged from six to 15 years. Children must be at least five years of age by 30 April of the year in which they are enrolled in school. All children are required to attend school by the time they are six years old.

Typically, students spend the first seven years of school education in a primary school (P–6), while Years 7–12 are spent at secondary school.

The first five years of schooling (P–4) are referred to as the ‘early years’ and are chiefly concerned with developing in each child the

essential skills necessary for ongoing progress in education. Literacy and numeracy are widely recognised as foremost among these foundation skills.

The ‘middle years’ of schooling (Years 5–9) encompass the period when students generally make the transition from primary to secondary school. The middle years are now recognised as a fundamental stage of learning. Students growing from childhood to adolescence should not only consolidate competency in literacy and numeracy, but attain a greater breadth of knowledge and learning, including the capacity for creative and critical thinking.

Post-compulsory education includes the final years of schooling (Years 10–12). The priority is providing young people with effective and varied pathways, whether their preferred destination is further study, employment or a mixture of both. While the VCE remains the mainstream qualification for Years 11–12 students, the VCAL is also available to students.

## Curriculum and Standards Framework

Schools develop and implement programs based on the eight Key Learning Areas outlined in the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority’s (VCAA) Curriculum Standards Framework (CSF) and in accordance with targets and priorities for improved learning outcomes for students.

The CSF describes what students in Victorian schools should know and be able to do at progressive levels from Years P–10. It is organised in six levels:

Level 1 End of Prep Year

Level 2 End of Year 2

Level 3 End of Year 4

Level 4 End of Year 6

Level 5 End of Year 8

Level 6 End of Year 10

## BLUEPRINT FOR GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS

In November 2003, the Minister for Education and Training launched the Blueprint for Government Schools. This followed an extensive six-month research and consultation process with teachers, students and their parents. The Blueprint identifies the critical objective of government school education in which all students, irrespective of the school they attend, where they live or their social or economic status, are entitled to a high-quality school education and a genuine opportunity to succeed. The Blueprint is set within the context of a transparent and rigorous accountability framework that focuses on three main priority areas for reform and identifies seven 'Flagship' strategies. These strategies are in various stages of implementation.

### Recognising and responding to diverse student needs

- Flagship Strategy 1 – Student Learning
- Flagship Strategy 2 – Developing a New Resource Allocation Model

### Building the skills of the education workforce to enhance the teaching–learning relationship

- Flagship Strategy 3 – Building Leadership Capacity
- Flagship Strategy 4 – Creating and Supporting a Performance and Development Culture
- Flagship Strategy 5 – Teacher Professional Development

### Continuously improving schools

- Flagship Strategy 6 – School Improvement
- Flagship Strategy 7 – Leading Schools Fund

## STUDENT PROGRAMS

A range of programs involved in the delivery of education in schools and regions enable students to participate and succeed in a diverse and changing world. Support is offered within the three stages of schooling and as part of overall student wellbeing.

Early years initiatives focus on the literacy and numeracy skills of students through the development and dissemination of support frameworks and resources that encompass pedagogy, content and assessment.

Middle years initiatives centre on developing innovative curricula and improving attendance, retention and student outcomes in literacy. During 2003–04, programs included the Schools for Innovation and Excellence initiative, Access to Excellence and Restart.

Support was provided for schools to plan and provide integrated pathways for post-compulsory students. The support focused on the development of diverse pathways including a mix of academic, vocational education and training options.

## Early years

Early years initiatives support continuous improvement in student achievement in literacy and numeracy in Years P–4.

### Highlights

- The Government target of an average of 21 students in P–2 classes was met in May 2002 and was maintained during 2003–04.
- Funding over four years was allocated from 2002 to assist in the provision of school-based coordination to support the implementation of Early Years Numeracy programs. This funding was distributed in 2003 through school global budgets.
- Implementation of Early Years Numeracy programs in regions was supported by school-based trainers.
- 95 per cent of government schools have a trained early years numeracy coordinator.
- Early Years Literacy programs contributed to improved achievement levels in reading for students in Years P–2.
- Early years literacy coordination and implementation of one-to-one intervention programs such as Reading Recovery for students in Year 1.

- The Reading Recovery program was delivered in 81 per cent of schools with Year 1 enrolments. Participating students represented 19.6 per cent of the total Year 1 cohort.
- Literacy and Numeracy Week was celebrated in September 2003. A number of school-based, regional and statewide activities were held and materials were provided to schools to support their initiatives. National and State awards profiled literacy and numeracy achievements.

## Middle years

Middle years programs aim to improve student learning in literacy and numeracy, and the retention and attendance rates of students in Years 5–9.

### Highlights

- In 2003–04, an additional 90 primary and secondary school clusters were funded under the Schools for Innovation and Excellence initiative. This initiative encourages innovation in curriculum development and teaching and learning in schools.
- The employment of 300 teachers in 118 secondary schools was funded by the Access to Excellence initiative. The initiative aims to improve students' literacy and numeracy skills and reduce absenteeism by keeping students engaged and stimulated while at school.
- 70 per cent of participating Year 7 students significantly improved their literacy ability as a result of the Restart initiative.
- Approximately 220 additional teachers in schools with students in Years 7–9 were funded under the Middle Years Reform program. These teachers specifically target literacy, attendance and the 'thinking' curriculum.
- The Middle Years Pedagogy Research and Development project involved approximately 500 schools in 68 clusters to assist teachers in reviewing and improving their classroom practices.
- The teacher resource Making a Difference: A Literacy Development Program for Middle Years Students, was distributed to all schools.

## Post-compulsory years

Initiatives in the post-compulsory years provide post-compulsory students with a range of pathways leading to further education, training or work, and improve student engagement, participation and completion.

## VET in Schools

There was a significant growth in the VET in Schools programs, which provide VCE and VCAL students with a range of options in the senior years of schooling.

TAFE institutes and Local Learning and Employment Networks (LLENs) play a significant role in supporting the programs.

### Highlights

- VET in Schools enrolments increased to 37,685 in 2003 across all sectors, with 22,710 enrolments in government schools. In 2003, 12,419 students completed a VET qualification.
- With the introduction of the VCAL, engagement in VET in Schools grew to 209 certificates in 2003.
- The number of secondary schools in all sectors providing programs increased from 19 in 1994 to 477 in 2003.
- The number of students enrolled in a school-based new apprenticeship increased from 899 in 2001 to 1935 in 2003.

The success of this program is best demonstrated through the results from the destination surveys conducted by the University of Melbourne.

In 2003, the entire 2002 Year 12 cohort of VCE students was followed up through the first On Track survey conducted for the Department by the University of Melbourne.

Results for the 2002 VET in Schools cohort indicate the following destinations:

- 19 per cent to university
- 25 per cent to Certificate IV or higher in TAFE institutes
- 10 per cent to Certificates I or II (some III) in the vocational education and training sector
- 12 per cent to apprenticeships/traineeships
- 28 per cent employed
- 7 per cent looking for work.

## VCE and VCAL performance

The VCE and the VCAL both provide pathways for students in Years 11 and 12. The VCAL was trialed in 2002 and now provides an alternative pathway for post-compulsory students.

### Highlights

- In 2003, 145,941 students were enrolled in at least one unit of the VCE (including 30,775 students at Year 10 or earlier) at 521 secondary schools (315 government, 87 Catholic and 119 independent) and with 33 adult VCE providers.

- Nearly 47,600 students (approximately 95 per cent) of those who enrolled in a program that allowed them to complete the VCE were successful as at December 2003.
- In 2003, a total of 5137 students enrolled in the VCAL at 239 sites. Of those students eligible to complete a VCAL certificate, 56 per cent were successful.
- In 2004, 316 providers delivered the VCAL to 8066 students.

### Other initiatives

- Managed Individual Pathways (MIPs) plans were developed for 97.4 per cent of Years 10–12 students. Over \$14 million was allocated to schools in 2003 for this initiative.
- Professional development sessions outlining strategies to improve student engagement and participation in schools were delivered to school-based personnel.
- The *Education (Workplace Learning) Act 2003* was passed by the Victorian Parliament in November 2003 and came into operation on 1 January 2004. The Workplace Learning Act amended Part IVA of the *Education Act 1958* to make further provision for learning in the workplace and clarified duty of care and occupational health and safety issues. Regional briefings on the legislative requirements were provided to over 1000 participants comprising careers, VCAL and VET coordinators from government and non-government schools.
- Professional development programs on vocational learning in Years 7–10 were provided to 429 teachers in 143 schools. Programs focused on increasing engagement and retention of students.

## Student support

Student support offers a strengthened and systematic approach to student wellbeing that encompasses school and classroom-based approaches, student welfare support structures and links to community agencies.

### Student wellbeing

The Framework for Student Support Services in Victorian Government Schools continues to support the development of policies and resources towards student wellbeing based on research. Alternative programs are offered to students who experience significant difficulties with mainstream schooling or have specialised needs.

### Highlights

- Implementation of phase one of the Primary Welfare Officer initiative commenced, with 110 high-needs primary schools employing 65 FTE officers.
- The Department commenced, in conjunction with other education sectors, a Commonwealth-funded research project to identify best practices that can assist students with learning difficulties.

Issues of bullying behaviour and student management are addressed as part of a school's overall duty of care for the wellbeing and learning of all students. Since 2000, all schools have been required to have strategies to ensure that the learning environment is safe and supportive.

### Drug education

Drug education initiatives develop strategies to monitor, evaluate and further enhance the quality of drug education in schools. Schools are supported to develop and review their Individual School Drug Education strategy.

### Highlights

- Drug education initiatives addressed the key recommendations of the Auditor-General's report, *Drug Education in Government Schools*, published in March 2003.
- Statewide drug education programs were implemented, and monitoring and evaluation of drug education in schools was undertaken.
- Drug education evaluation and monitoring tools have been developed to support the evaluation and benchmarking of student outcomes in drug education. They are being trialed in 2004 and will be ready for schools to use in 2005.
- Work commenced on a Parent Engagement strategy in drug education.
- A discussion paper on drug education in the classroom was developed by the Youth Research Centre at the University of Melbourne to inform a review of drug education curriculum and resources in 2004–05.
- The Celebrating Safely resource was launched by the Minister for Education Services in August 2003. It provides strategies for young people in the post-compulsory years of schooling to celebrate safely and make informed choices.

## Students with disabilities

Additional resources to support students with disabilities are provided to schools through the Program for Students with Disabilities. Students with disabilities may attend a specialist school or a regular school or a combination of schools. A systemic approach is being used to design and develop programs and strategies to support students with special needs through targeted programs that strengthen the capacity of schools, families and regions to improve student outcomes. Following extensive consultation major reforms of the program commenced and will continue into the 2005 school year.

### *Number of students with disabilities in government schools, April 2003*

Regular schools	12,804.3 FTE students
Specialist schools	6,392.3 FTE students
Total students with disabilities	19,133.6 FTE students

## Key initiatives

A number of key initiatives are in place for Indigenous students, those from language backgrounds other than English, gifted students, and boys and girls at risk of not reaching their potential because of gender-related issues or attributes.

Other initiatives target specific areas of the curriculum such as the use of ICT to support learning, science, health and physical education, and the arts.

### Koorie education

Koorie education initiatives are designed to support improved educational outcomes for Koorie students and increase all students' knowledge and understanding of Indigenous cultures and issues.

#### Highlights

- Six Koorie home-school liaison officers commenced in 2003–04 to support targeted school communities and improve attendance.
- Fifteen school-based Koorie educators worked to improve the retention rates of Koorie students.
- The Koorie Literacy Link project and the Koorie Middle Years Link project used videoconferencing as a tool to improve the literacy skills of Koorie students in Years P–4 and Years 7–9.
- The Koorie Middle Years Numeracy Link project operated in eight school communities. The project uses videoconferencing as a tool to improve the numeracy skills of Koorie students in Years 5–6.

- Ten Koorie education workers graduated in the Certificate III in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education. A further 16 workers continued with their studies.

## English as a second language

English as a second language (ESL) initiatives improve provision and targeted support for new-arrival ESL students, including those in isolated settings, and provide ongoing support to these students for up to seven years.

### Highlights

- Intensive ESL programs were provided for 1747 newly arrived students in English language schools, centres and outposting programs. An additional 178 students were supported by the visiting outposting program.
- A further 103 students were supported through new arrivals programs in Geelong and Shepparton, and the isolated ESL Students program in regional Victoria.
- A video, support materials and professional development modules were developed to support ESL learners who had experienced disrupted schooling.
- Funding was allocated to 352 primary schools, 115 secondary schools and eight primary–secondary schools to provide ongoing support for ESL learners. In addition, the provision of 238 FTE multicultural education aides to schools was continued.
- A total of 8200 on-site and telephone interpreting assignments were provided in 65 languages and 386 documents were translated into 36 languages for government schools.

## Languages

High-quality languages education is provided for all students.

### Highlights

- 18 languages were taught in government schools, and 43 languages were provided by the Victorian School of Languages.
- Funding was provided for approximately 33,000 students learning over 50 languages in community-based after-hours ethnic schools.
- Network language plans to facilitate the coordinated delivery of languages at the local level were developed by all regions.
- Five additional Victorian School of Languages centres were established in regional Victoria.

## Strategic partnerships

Strategic partnership initiatives provide pathways that connect teaching and learning experiences to the wider community. These

partnerships assist with the development of positive learning outcomes by providing beyond-the-classroom learning experiences that foster a culture of lifelong learning in students.

### Highlights

- Grants were provided to 91 cultural and scientific organisations and professional teaching associations.
- Grants were provided to 38 schools through the Artists in Schools program.
- Six Strategic Partnership Program Networks continued to support a collaborative approach to program delivery and the sharing of best practice:
  - Council of Professional Teaching Associations of Victoria
  - Environmental Education
  - Performing Arts
  - Rural and Regional
  - Science and Society
  - Visual Arts, Design, and Media.

### Other initiatives

#### e-Learning

ICT initiatives facilitate the integration of ICT in teaching, learning and school management practices across all stages of schooling.

#### Highlights

- 30 ICT fellowships were provided to students.
- 2000 teachers participated in ICT professional development programs.
- The ICT Achievers program supported teachers to integrate multimedia into classroom practice.
- Kahootz, a three-dimensional authoring software program, was purchased for all schools.

#### Cultural and Linguistic Diversity and Citizenship

Cultural and Linguistic Diversity and Citizenship initiatives support schools to provide culturally inclusive programs, promote understanding and appreciation of Australia's social and political heritage, and encourage active citizenship and harmonious relationships in our culturally diverse, democratic community.

#### Schools Innovation in Teaching science, mathematics and technology

Schools Innovation in Teaching builds upon the earlier Science in Schools initiative to establish a whole-school approach to creating a culture of innovation and creativity in the teaching of science, mathematics and technology. Approximately 300 primary and

secondary schools are participating in the three-year program, which integrates school-based professional development, resource development and community partnerships.

#### Health, physical and sport education

Health, physical and sport education initiatives promote and support the teaching and learning of health, physical, sport and traffic safety education. A key focus was the promotion of the benefits of physical activity and healthy eating habits for students and the wider community.

#### School Sport Victoria

School Sport initiatives enable the Victorian Primary Schools' Sports Association and the Victorian Secondary Schools' Sports Association to run programs at the district, zone, state and national levels.

#### Gender

Gender initiatives help school communities to implement innovative and inclusive approaches to teaching and learning to ensure a student's gender does not exclude them from achieving their full potential. A resource titled *Seeing Red: Girls, Boys and Anger* was released to assist primary school teachers to educate students about anger and anger management.

#### Gifted student education

Gifted student education initiatives support school communities to identify and work effectively with gifted and high-potential students. Fifty Gifted Education Networks were funded to support school communities to provide curriculum advice, professional development, student programs and information sessions for the wider school community.

## STUDENT OUTCOMES

Improving student outcomes in government schools is central to the achievement of the Government's goals and targets. Priorities include the development of strategies to support school improvement and accountability, innovation initiatives, networked education provision within local communities, and statistical analysis.

### School improvement and accountability

Through an integrated system of planning, monitoring, reporting and review, school improvement and accountability is used to establish standards of student achievement and to provide accountability frameworks

for schools. The Department collects and disseminates performance information at school and system levels, and develops effective improvement strategies for schools.

The Blueprint for Government Schools has redefined a number of the key elements of the school improvement and accountability framework that schools and the Department use to lift student outcomes.

The Blueprint has required the Department to change and improve elements of the framework to:

- allow for greater flexibility given that schools have different levels of performance and face different challenges and opportunities
- minimise the administrative overheads the existing accountability arrangements create for school leadership teams and principals
- better target existing and additional resources for school improvement.

### Highlights

- Three different styles of triennial school reviews were undertaken under the framework. Schools with major performance challenges are participating in intensive reviews designed to identify priorities and opportunities for improvement.
- Development started on a single planning and accountability document to replace the current school charter, compacts and other planning and accountability processes and tools.
- Stakeholder opinion surveys (students, staff and parents) were redeveloped to improve the integrity of the data and strengthen the utility of the survey reports.
- The first round of funding was provided through the Targeted School Improvement program to schools identified as having significant performance challenges and opportunities.

## School councils

School councils play a key role in the effectiveness of government schools in Victoria by:

- engaging the local community in the life of the school
- setting the vision, strategic direction and identity of the school
- ensuring sound governance of the school
- reporting annually to the school community and the Department on the activities of the school.

## Support for families

Low-income families continued to receive support through the education maintenance allowance (EMA). The EMA is paid in two instalments each year. A parent or guardian must be eligible to receive a Centrelink pension, allowance or benefit within the meaning of the *State Concessions Act 1986*, a Veterans Affairs pensioner, or a foster parent on the first day of Term 1 and Term 3 respectively to be eligible for the allowance.

### Highlights

- In 2003, approximately 200,000 students received the EMA.
- In April 2004, the Minister for Education Services announced a \$78 million increase in the EMA. This increase meant that the payment to primary students went from \$127 to \$200 and the payment to secondary students from \$254 to \$400.

## SCHOOL FUNDING

In 2004, \$3.3 billion was allocated to government schools through school global budgets to meet teacher salaries and other operating costs in schools, and to fund initiatives that assist in meeting Government goals and targets.

The School Global Budget 2004 was developed following extensive consultations with stakeholders.

As in 2003, the 2004 model is underpinned by a common allocation for each entitlement teacher to fund leadership and teaching salaries, and a size supplement that recognises the differing management and leadership needs of schools as they grow larger. It also includes additional support, through salary profile factor funding, to assist schools that have high-cost salary profiles relating to teachers at the top of their incremental salary scale.

The 2004 School Global Budget allocated to 110 schools included funding for the Government's Primary Student Welfare initiative.

## FACILITIES AND INFRASTRUCTURE

### Asset investment

The 2003–04 State Budget committed \$125.1 million in new capital funding for school education.

This funding was directed to:

- \$10.1 million for Facilities of Excellence, which provide state-of-the-art facilities and equipment to support specialisation in Victorian schools, particularly in the arts, music, science and technology, languages and sport
- \$5.5 million for education precincts
- \$38 million for six new schools or stages thereof
- \$5.1 million for replacement schools
- \$51.8 million for modernisation and improvement of existing school sites
- \$12.1 million for reinstatement of facilities at four schools damaged or destroyed by fire.
- \$2 million for planning and development of new projects.
- \$0.5 million for the Community Facilities Fund.

## Emergency and security management

The School Alarm Installation program continued very successfully during 2003–04, with a further 60 schools having new or replacement alarm systems installed. The Emergency and Security Management Unit currently monitors in excess of 5000 alarm systems through its Communications Centre.

Six serious school fires occurred during 2003–04. An expert group was established to provide advice to the Department on fire preparedness in schools in partnership with the Metropolitan Fire and Emergency Services Board, the Victoria Police, the Victorian Managed Insurance Authority, the Coroner's Office and the Victoria University of Technology. The purpose of the group is to develop strategies for reducing the risk of fire and minimising damage in both existing and new school buildings.

The Emergency and Security Management Unit continued to provide advice and support services to schools during and after critical incidents as well as coordinating the provision of counselling services where required.

Over 600 senior school staff across the State participated in the Emergency Management Planning Workshop programs delivered by the Unit.

## Student transport

The free school bus service, administered by the Department of Infrastructure on behalf of the Department of Education & Training, carries approximately 73,000 students daily.

The new rates of payment for the Conveyance Allowance introduced at the beginning of 2003 meant that almost 41,000 government and non-government school students received conveyance allowances in Semester 1, 2004. These allowances are paid to eligible students to assist with travel costs where access to a free school bus service is not available, or for travel to the nearest free school bus or public transport service.

The Department also provides transport for students attending specialist schools. In 2003–04, approximately 6000 students were transported by bus and taxis to these schools at a cost of almost \$28 million.

## School regions

Nine regional directors are accountable for supporting and building the capacity of schools to deliver high-quality educational services and better student outcomes.

Regions are responsible for:

- planning, implementing and evaluating educational initiatives
- overseeing the successful function of government primary, secondary and specialist schools for a designated part of the State
- implementing policies, plans and procedures
- providing advice to the Department on key issues facing the operation of schools and student outcomes
- leading or participating in initiatives with other departments or agencies to achieve Government goals for school improvement, student outcomes and innovation
- supporting schools in the development of their charters and compacts and providing strategic intervention when schools require assistance to achieve set targets and standards
- fostering increased community involvement and school–community partnerships, links with other education and government organisations, and collaborative networks, including LLENs.

## Metropolitan regions

### *Western Metropolitan Region*

Rob Blachford  
Regional Director  
407 Royal Parade  
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PO Box 57  
Carlton South Victoria 3053  
Telephone: (03) 9291 6500  
Facsimile: (03) 9291 6555

### *Northern Metropolitan Region*

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582 Heidelberg Road  
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Facsimile: (03) 9488 9400

### *Eastern Metropolitan Region*

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### *Southern Metropolitan Region*

Jan Lake  
Regional Director  
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## Non-metropolitan regions

### *Barwon South Western Region*

Glenda Strong  
Regional Director  
Vines Road  
PO Box 420  
North Geelong Victoria 3125  
Telephone: (03) 5272 8300  
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### *Central Highlands Wimmera Region*

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Regional Director  
1220 Sturt Street  
Ballarat Victoria 3350  
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Facsimile: (03) 5333 2135

### *Loddon Campaspe Mallee Region*

Greg Gibbs  
Regional Director  
37–43 Havlin Street East  
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Bendigo Victoria 3550  
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### *Goulburn North Eastern Region*

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### *Gippsland Region*

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## NON-GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS

The Department contributes to the achievement of the Government's goals and targets for education by providing funding and other support to non-government schools in Victoria.

The Department provided over \$300 million in financial assistance to non-government schools in 2003–04, through untied recurrent funding and specific purpose grants.

Non-government schools educate over 286,700 students statewide or 34.6 per cent of all Victorian school students, with 63 per cent of these students attending Catholic systemic schools and 37 per cent attending Independent schools. As of February 2004, there were 483 registered Catholic schools and 216 registered Independent schools.

The Minister for Education and Training has legislative responsibility for the education of all primary and secondary school students in Victoria.

## Highlights

- The Department commenced development work on a new funding model for non-government schools. A Consultative Working Committee was established by the Department with representatives from the Catholic Education Commission of Victoria and the Association of Independent Schools of Victoria.
- In 2003–04, \$262 million was allocated to Victorian non-government schools on a per capita basis through the State Grant to assist schools in meeting recurrent operating costs.
- In the 2003–04 State Budget, the Government outlined an additional commitment of \$62 million over four years to assist needy schools in meeting their operational costs.
- The Internet initiative provides \$8 million over four years towards the cost of Internet access in non-government schools connected to the VicONE network and will assist participating schools to implement multimedia teaching and learning programs for students, re-engineer and streamline administrative processes, and share information with other schools.
- Funding to non-government schools in 2003–04 included \$20 million in ongoing supplementary funding for needy schools, \$5.2 million in support services to assist students with disabilities and impairments, \$1.2 million to schools for suicide prevention initiatives, \$6.4 million for the EMA, \$1 million in interest subsidies, \$16.8 million in conveyance, and \$4.7 million in rail ticket subsidies through the Department of Infrastructure.

## Registered Schools Board

The *Education Act 1958* (the Act) requires the Registered Schools Board to:

- register and, where appropriate, revise the registration of schools
- conduct a registration review every six years to assess compliance with the Act
- endorse schools as suitable to accept full fee-paying students from overseas.

## Registration of non-government schools

During 2003–04, the Registered Schools Board approved the registration, or revision of registration, of schools in the following categories.

New primary schools	2
New secondary schools	1
New primary and secondary schools	1
New special schools	1
Primary schools added to existing secondary schools	0
Additional secondary year levels	32
Additional campuses	2
School amalgamations (two schools to form one school)	2
Relocations	1
School closures	8
Campus closures	3

All schools complete an 'approval to open' period of at least six months prior to opening. Before being granted approval to open, schools must be able to demonstrate that curriculum, policies, facilities and organisation are of a satisfactory standard and that teachers are registered. New schools must also meet probity requirements and demonstrate that they are financially viable. Within 14 days of opening, a school must apply to the Board for registration.

## Teacher registration

Responsibility for registration of teachers in non-government schools was transferred to the Victorian Institute of Teaching on 1 January 2003. The Registered Schools Board completed two inquiries into teacher conduct that had commenced but had not been completed at the time of the transfer.

## Monitoring of schools

### Annual returns

As a requirement of the Act, the Registered Schools Board maintains a database of school details that are collected on census day in February. Schools submit their returns electronically.

### Registration reviews

In order for non-government schools to maintain registration under the Act, the Registered Schools Board must be satisfied that the school continues to meet the requirements for registration. Registration review material is updated annually in accordance with changes in legislation and regulations relevant to non-government schools.

During 2003–04, 100 schools undertook registration reviews.

### **Full fee-paying overseas students**

In Victoria, the Registered Schools Board is responsible for the endorsement of registered schools to accept full fee-paying overseas students in line with the Act.

During 2003–04, there were 134 registered schools endorsed to accept 3678 full fee-paying overseas students, compared with the 3569 students attending endorsed schools during the previous reporting period. Six schools were newly endorsed, 23 re-endorsed and eight did not seek re-endorsement or cancelled their endorsement. There were two cancellations of endorsement by the Board.

### **Membership**

The Board, which meets monthly, consists of eight members, four from the government sector, including the nominee of the Secretary of the Department as chair, and four members from the non-government sector, appointed by the Governor-in-Council.

Membership of the Registered Schools Board as at 30 June 2004 was as follows:

#### **Department of Education & Training**

Lesley Foster (acting Chair)

Maria Kelly

Vacant position

Vacant position

#### **Catholic Education Commission of Victoria**

Tony O'Meara

Pauline Audley

#### **Association of Independent Schools of Victoria**

Michelle Green

Geoff Ryan

### **Review of the Registered Schools Board**

In 2003–04, the Minister for Education and Training commissioned a review of the Registered Schools Board.

The review is a key component in the Government's education reform agenda and ensures that Victoria has a modern regulatory framework for non-government schools.

Professor Jim Falk from the Victoria University of Technology conducted the review in his capacity as chair of a Steering Committee broadly representative of the non-government school sector.

The Committee consulted widely with organisations, schools, parents and communities with a stake in Victoria's non-government schools. Nine forums were held in metropolitan and regional Victoria. The Committee met with eight key stakeholder organisations and 58 written submissions were received.

The Steering Committee's report, containing recommendations for improving the regulatory framework governing non-government schools, has been referred to the Department's Legislative Review project.

## **VICTORIAN SCHOOLS INNOVATION COMMISSION**

The Victorian Schools Innovation Commission was established in 2001 by the State Government to act as an independent not-for-profit educational think tank. Chaired by The Hon. Dr Barry Jones with Viv White as Chief Executive Officer, the Commission works collaboratively with schools, government, corporate, philanthropic and community organisations at a local, national and international level:

- to research, develop, trial and support innovative practices in Victorian government schools
- to provide advice to the Minister for Education and Training on educational reform
- to communicate and promote knowledge and ideas about innovation and creativity in public education
- to raise funds and other resources for Victorian government schools.

The Commission's motto – create, relate, innovate – reflects its core work of promoting innovative public education for the 21st century.

### **Highlights**

- Approximately \$900,000 was raised in collaboration with representatives of the philanthropic and corporate sectors to advance the Commission's research and development work in Victorian government schools.
- The Survey Report of Innovative Projects in Victorian Government Schools, an important component of the Beyond The Pilot project, was published and provided an insight into innovative projects being conducted in government schools and the way in which schools deal with common barriers to innovation.

- Research was conducted as part of the Beyond The Pilot project to investigate how government, philanthropic and corporate sector policies can support innovations in education.
- The Creativity and Cultural Education pilot commenced in 2003. It aims to identify how curriculum, pedagogy, assessment, school organisation and community can be harnessed to ensure the creative capacity of all children is fully developed.
- Initiatives exploring how Victorian government schools can share innovations.
- The three-year Educational Support for Young People with Refugee Experiences project, a partnership between community, education and government sectors, was scoped in 2003. It seeks to develop policy and program guidelines to foster sensitive and supportive educational environments for this cohort of students.
- The Landmark Blueprint: Building Sustainable Schools project is focused on designing and constructing a school in which students, staff and community can be taught about sustainability. It is also intended to provide a blueprint for the construction of schools in the future. Started in 2003, the project is a joint initiative with the Department and the Building Commission.
- Support was provided to the Department's Innovation and Excellence in the Middle Years initiative through professional learning activities, ranging from Research and Innovation Circles to workshops and seminars, for both the teaching profession and Department representatives.

For more information about the Commission's projects see <[www.vsic.org.au](http://www.vsic.org.au)>.

## Commission members

As at 30 June 2004, the Board of the Victorian Schools Innovation Commission comprised:

The Hon. Dr Barry Jones (Chair)

Ellen Koshland  
President, Education Foundation (Deputy Chair)

Alister Maitland  
Chair, Folkestone Ltd (Deputy Chair)

Dahle Suggett  
Deputy Secretary, Office of Learning and Teaching, Department of Education & Training

Philip Bullock  
CEO and Managing Director, IBM Australia/  
New Zealand

Julian Burnside QC

Sharan Burrow  
President, Australian Council of Trade Unions

Tricia Caswell  
Chief Executive Officer, Victorian Association of  
Forest Industries

John Clarke  
Writer and performer

Susan Halliday  
Chair, Victorian Institute of Teaching

Peter Laver  
Chair, Victorian Learning and Employment Skills  
Commission

Professor David Stokes  
Former Dean, Faculty of Science and Technology,  
Deakin University

Rachael Thomas  
Teacher, Footscray City Primary School

Michael White  
CEO, Victorian Curriculum and Assessment  
Authority