

Post-compulsory education and training

Post-compulsory education and training involves educating and training students of 15 years of age and older. The successful provision of post-compulsory education and training is important in improving transition to further education, training or employment for young people. It is also important in ensuring that people have access to opportunities to update their skills throughout their lives.

Programs and services are delivered to the Victorian community through a range of providers:

- government and non-government schools
- TAFE institutes and TAFE divisions within universities
- private providers of vocational education and training
- ACE organisations, including community-based adult education centres and neighbourhood houses
- adult education institutions – Adult Multicultural Education Services (AMES) and the CAE
- universities and private providers of higher education.

Overview

Department programs and initiatives such as VET in Schools, the VCE, the VCAL, the Youth Pathways program, the MIPs program, the On Track initiative and Local Learning and Employment Networks (LLENs) ensure that multiple education and training pathways and support are available to young people from school through to employment. Both the Department and a range of providers are responsible for these programs, which involve schools, TAFE institutes and the ACE sector in a variety of collaborative arrangements.

General education and skills training is provided through:

- courses in basic literacy and numeracy
- basic preparation for work
- entry or certificate-level training, including apprenticeships and traineeships
- advanced vocational training, including training for paraprofessionals.

The Department also supports and manages the provision of training and further education and adult community education, and provides higher education accreditation and monitoring services. The Department is responsible for overseeing the administration and coordination of programs for vocational education and training, adult community education and tertiary education in Victoria. The delivery of training and further education programs and services in Victoria is provided through:

- 560 government and non-government schools
- 19 TAFE institutes (including five universities with TAFE divisions)
- over 450 ACE organisations and two adult education institutions
- 1191 registered training organisations.

The regulation of TAFE institutes, registered training organisations and ACE organisations is managed through three independent statutory authorities: the VLESC, the VQA and the ACFE Board. The VLESC and the ACFE Board in particular have broad advisory, policy, regulatory and management functions.

The VLESC, the VQA and the ACFE Board report separately to Parliament. Their annual reports provide additional information relating to training and tertiary education services.

Later years

The later years output involves provision of education, training and other associated services designed to improve the quality of student learning of those in Years 10–12 in government and non-government schools. The priorities for the later years of schooling are the provision of effective and varied pathways for young people, and support to secure their first formal qualification and make a successful transition to further study, employment or a combination of both.

Qualifications and programs available to students at this stage of schooling are the VCE, VCAL and VET in Schools including school-based new apprenticeships and traineeships.

VET in Schools

VET in Schools programs provide VCE and VCAL students with a range of options in the senior secondary years of schooling. Both TAFE institutes and LLENs play a significant role in supporting these programs. There was significant growth in the participation in VET in Schools during 2004–05.

Highlights

- VET in Schools certificate enrolments, including school-based new apprenticeships, increased to 42,934 in 2004 across all sectors, with 25,985 enrolments in government schools. In 2004, 12,566 students attained a total of 13,211 VET in Schools certificates.
- With the growth of the VCAL and the introduction of block credit for VET VCE programs for students, the range of VET certificates students enrolled in grew to 253 in 2004.
- The number of secondary schools in all sectors providing VET in Schools programs increased by 7 per cent to 509 in 2004.
- In 2004, more than one-third of all VET in Schools activity was provided by TAFE institutes through partnership arrangements with schools.
- The number of students enrolled in a school-based new apprenticeship and traineeship increased from 1937 in 2003 to 3201 in 2004.

The success of this program is shown in the results from the On Track destination survey. Results for the 2004 VET in Schools cohort showed the following destinations of students who had included VET in Schools in their senior secondary program:

- 27 per cent to university
- 29 per cent to vocational education and training
- 14 per cent to apprenticeships/traineeships
- 25 per cent employed
- 5 per cent looking for employment.

VCE and VCAL

The VCE and VCAL are senior secondary certificates of education that provide students in Years 11 and 12 with pathways to further study and employment.

Highlights

- In 2004, 148,294 students were enrolled in at least one unit of the VCE (including 33,514 students at Year 10 or earlier) at 587 providers: 331 government, 89 Catholic and 125 Independent schools, 34 adult VCE providers and eight other providers.
- Nearly 50,000 students were eligible to complete their VCE in 2004. Of these students, 97 per cent successfully completed their VCE.
- In 2004, a total of 8125 students enrolled in the VCAL at 322 sites. Of those students eligible to complete a VCAL certificate, 60 per cent successfully completed their VCAL.

Cross-sectoral initiatives

Managed Individual Pathways

The Managed Individual Pathways (MIPs) program in government schools was successfully expanded in 2004 to include special schools. This program supports post-compulsory students to develop appropriate pathway plans towards further education and training or full-time employment.

Additional support is provided to students at risk of leaving school early. In 2004, approximately \$14.3 million was allocated to the MIPs initiative. MIPs plans were developed for 95 per cent of students in Years 10–12 in government schools.

The MIPs in Schools program was reviewed early in 2005. The outcomes of the review related to the development of a good practice framework, future program focus, funding, accountability and capacity building. The recommendations from the review will be implemented in 2005–06. The MIPs program in TAFE institutes and ACE organisations was also reviewed early in 2005 and recommendations from this review are being progressively implemented.

On Track

The On Track initiative continued in 2005. The initiative has funding of \$4.8 million over four years, and builds on the MIPs program. On Track follows up school leavers (both government and non-government) through a telephone survey, and offers them assistance and advice if they are not in education, training or full-time employment.

On Track has surveyed approximately 150,000 school leavers from 2002, 2003 and 2004. Information collected about destinations of post-Year 12 students has been published annually, in line with a commitment by the Minister for Education and Training to improve the quality of reporting to parents and the Victorian public on educational outcomes.

The project includes a four-year longitudinal survey which follows specific groups of those who completed Year 12 in 2003. The survey provides a more detailed picture of their transitions over the four years after they leave school.

In 2004, On Track incorporated the TAFE as First Choice survey by adding questions on why young people did not apply for a TAFE place, or if they did, why they did not take it up.

Youth Pathways program

The Youth Pathways program provides customised education and support to young people aged 15–19 years at a TAFE institute or ACE organisation who have not completed Year 12. It provides a pathway to further learning and/or employment.

In 2004, there were 3000 young people participating in the Youth Pathways program at a TAFE institute or ACE organisation. All participants were assisted as part of the MIPs program and participants' choices were tracked via a survey undertaken six months after exiting the program.

Tracking surveys demonstrate that participants undertaking the Youth Pathways program at a TAFE institute or ACE organisation in 2004 achieved very positive outcomes, with over half of the students continuing in education or training. Almost one-third secured employment, including 9.16 per cent who successfully obtained a new apprenticeship.

VCE and VCAL

TAFE institutes and ACE organisations deliver the VCE and the VCAL to post-compulsory learners. In 2004, there were 1200 students aged 15–19 years studying the VCE at a TAFE institute, and a further 1125 students participating in a VCAL program.

Over the past three years there has been a coordinated effort to increase opportunities for young people who have left school to achieve their VCE or VCAL.

In 2004, the Ministerial Statement *Future Directions in Adult Community Education in Victoria* identified the CAE as a centre of excellence for VCE for Adults. Through this arrangement, professional development was provided to VCE teachers in ACE organisations and TAFE institutes. The support needs of VCE students undertaking VCE through distance education were also identified.

A total of 14 ACE organisations, including AMES and the CAE, delivered the VCAL qualification. Numerous ACE organisations were also engaged in partnership arrangements with schools or other community organisations to deliver parts of the VCAL learning program.

Vocational education and training

In 2004, nearly 71,000 young people aged 15–19 years undertook vocational education and training in government-funded programs in TAFE institutes, ACE organisations and private

registered training organisations. These programs provide opportunities for early school leavers to continue in education and improve their career and employment options.

School-based apprenticeships and traineeships

Senior school students continued to combine apprenticeship and traineeship options with their studies. In 2004, 3200 school students undertook a part-time apprenticeship or traineeship as part of a program of studies that combined the VCE or VCAL with a nationally accredited training certificate and employment.

ACE and Schools Partnership Delivery program

The Minister for Education and Training endorsed guidelines and funding arrangements for the ACE and Schools Partnership Delivery program for 2004–05. These arrangements allow for a small number of students under 15 years of age to enrol at an ACE organisation to maintain the student's engagement in learning. A total of 28 Memoranda of Understanding were formalised to allow 45 students to undertake vocational education and training in an ACE organisation while maintaining their relationship with their school.

Local Learning and Employment Networks

Thirty-one LLENs across the state continue to link education and training providers, employers, unions, community and government agencies, and individuals. These links facilitate improved education, training and employment outcomes of young people, particularly those who might otherwise leave education without a qualification.

The contractual arrangements with LLENs for 2004 had additional quantitative performance measures to better assess the ongoing value of the partnerships and collaborative arrangements brokered by LLENs between stakeholders.

LLENs met the targets set in their contracts. They established 389 partnerships between stakeholders including partnerships between education and training providers and industry. LLENs influenced the education, training and

employment outcomes of 13,570 young people, many of whom were at risk of disengagement or already disengaged.

For further information regarding LLENs and issues related to good governance, refer to the VLESC annual report for 2004–05.

LLENs supported wider dissemination and use of On Track data in provision and curriculum planning through a series of stakeholder briefings held across Victoria.

Knowledge & Skills for the Innovation Economy

In June 2002, the Minister for Education and Training released the Ministerial Statement *Knowledge & Skills for the Innovation Economy*, a comprehensive plan addressing Victoria's future skills requirements. In 2004–05, implementation of the initiatives contained in the statement continued. These initiatives are outlined below.

A new approach to financing skills development

A key objective outlined in the Ministerial Statement is the improvement of the long-term financial sustainability of the VET system, in the context of increased demand for VET programs.

In response to this objective, the Department undertook a number of initiatives in 2004–05 including:

- the development of a model to inform the distribution of government-funded training between industries
- a costing project to ascertain the relative cost of providing VET courses.

Establishing priorities for vocational education and training

In December 2002, the VLESC approved a framework for assessing need and establishing priorities for vocational education and training in Victoria. The framework includes a comprehensive research program, consultation with stakeholders and processes for resource allocation.

In February 2005, the VLESC endorsed an Industry Shares Model to inform the allocation of publicly funded training between industries. The model aims to determine the most reasonable distribution of shares of Government-funded training effort between industries. It is based on three criteria that measure the relative levels of industry skills needs, return on investment and impact of government policy.

Training delivery in TAFE institutes continues to be directed to industry areas of high priority. A comparison of training delivery in 2003 and 2004 indicates that 1.6 per cent of training delivery in 2004 was reoriented from areas of low priority to areas of high priority.

Relative cost of VET course provision

Following a review of the costs of delivering vocational education and training programs in TAFE institutes, the Department consulted with institutes about a new approach to funding based on the relative costs of delivering programs in industry sectors. The Department tested this funding approach in 2005 for implementation through each institute's performance agreement in 2006.

Fees and charges for VET students

The Department conducted a review of vocational education and training fees and charges during 2004. This review informed the development of a new policy which increased equity of access for students and enhanced the flexibility of the VET system. Following an extensive consultation process, this new fees and charges policy was implemented on 1 January 2005. The policy was supported by the VLESC and the ACFE Board and resulted in:

- the removal of course-specific caps, in line with the principle that all concessions are now based on capacity to pay
- allowing all providers to levy ancillary and amenities fees, but requiring that students be provided with an itemised list of all fees prior to enrolment
- the extension of concessions to all eligible Health Care card holders.

Reinvigorating TAFE

Specialist Centres

The Ministerial Statement announced an initial allocation of \$5 million seed funding for Specialist Centres. These centres deliver specialist training to students in particular industry areas and support broader efforts to improve access to the generic and technical skills that particular industries need to compete effectively. Fifteen specialist centres have been established in areas such as manufacturing, hospitality, tourism, primary industry, sustainable building and environmental technology. In 2004–05, four new Specialist Centres were established in the areas of biotechnology, heritage trades, textiles and e-business.

Design initiative

The Department of Education & Training, in partnership with the Department of Innovation, Industry and Regional Development, is continuing to implement initiatives in response to the Government's Statement *The State of Design – Future Directions*, which outlines how Victoria will be positioned as an international centre for excellence in applied design. The initiatives the Department is undertaking include:

- design professional development for TAFE institutes and schools
- integration of design into the P–10 curriculum
- piloting of the design qualifications framework
- the Design Innovation Professional Development program pilot project for designers in schools
- supporting lab3000, a centre for excellence in digital design.

Transforming the TAFE workforce

In April 2005, the Minister announced the establishment of the TAFE Development Centre. The Centre is responsible for promoting the development and raising the professional standing of staff in TAFE institutes across Victoria.

The Centre's objectives are to:

- provide ongoing professional development opportunities for all staff

- develop and recognise high-quality teacher training and develop innovative approaches to ongoing teacher education
- support the growth of leadership and management capability
- promote the use of professional standards
- facilitate information exchange and collaboration within the TAFE sector, industry and the wider community.

Degrees in TAFE

Another key initiative of the Ministerial Statement was the decision to allow TAFE institutes to apply to the Higher Education Advisory Committee (on behalf of the Minister for Education and Training) to deliver degree qualifications and expand access of students to higher education qualifications. As at June 2005, four TAFE institutes offered a range of higher education degrees in Associate Degree and Bachelor programs.

Innovation Fund

The Innovation Fund was established to enable TAFE institutes to trial new initiatives in innovation and flexible delivery. In 2004, 59 initiatives to a value of \$5.3 million were completed across 14 TAFE institutes. In 2005, 43 initiatives to a value of \$6 million were endorsed for implementation across 14 TAFE institutes.

Training and further education

The State Training System

Delivered training

In 2004, TAFE institutes and ACE and private registered training organisations provided approximately 500,600 students with 111.2 million student contact hours of training and further education (excluding non-VET activity). This is a decrease of 0.7 per cent on the 2003 delivery. Of this total delivery, government-funded delivery accounted for over 80.4 million of the reported contact hours, a decrease of 0.5 per cent on 2003.

This decrease can be attributed to better targeting of training and the reorienting of resources to areas of innovation and specialisation. Training delivery remained in excess of delivery required by the Victorian system under the Australian National Training Authority (ANTA) agreement.

In 2004, TAFE institutes delivered 63.4 million government-funded student contact hours, with the remainder delivered by ACE and private registered training organisations.

Training packages and implementation advice

Victoria develops training package implementation guides for both state and national use. Training packages describe the skills and knowledge needed to obtain a qualification and work effectively in particular industries. A high-level review of training packages undertaken by ANTA led to an agreement to include employability skills in packages, and to simplify advice and guidance to users. In 2004–05, the Department facilitated the development of guides to support the implementation of 16 training packages. Curriculum Maintenance Managers provide advice on these national training packages and other state vocational education and training products.

Apprenticeships and traineeships

In 2004–05, the number of new entrants to apprenticeships and traineeships was 58,939, a decrease of approximately 21 per cent compared with the intake in 2003–04. The overall commencement total (including existing employees who are not eligible for apprenticeship/traineeship funding under this scheme) was 80,883. The decrease in commencements of new entrants reflects recruitment decisions of enterprises, and may also have been affected by changes in Commonwealth incentives to employers. The intake of new entrants into apprenticeships and traineeships in the previous financial year was very high.

As at 30 June 2005, the number of apprentices and trainees overall was 134,498.

Apprenticeship and traineeship completions for 2004–05 increased to 30,617, an increase of nearly 1 per cent (excluding existing workers) on the previous financial year.

Apprenticeship/Traineeship Completion Bonus Scheme

The Apprenticeship/Traineeship Completion Bonus Scheme provides an incentive for employers to encourage apprentices and trainees to complete their training. The incentive payments available to employers were fully implemented during 2004–05.

During the financial year, employers of 11,252 apprentices and trainees qualified for Completion Bonus payments under the scheme. Employers of a further 2644 apprentices and trainees of not-for-profit group training organisations were eligible under the Group Training Employment Support Scheme.

The arrangements for recognised not-for-profit group training organisations were changed to reinstate payroll tax exemptions in lieu of access to Completion Bonus payments.

Apprenticeship/Traineeship Training program

The Apprenticeship/Traineeship Training program provides funding for registered training organisations to train apprentices and trainees. The program gives predominantly young people the opportunity to engage in employment while receiving formal training towards a nationally recognised qualification.

In 2004, 228 private registered training organisations offered over 23,000 apprenticeship and traineeship places. In 2005, 224 registered training organisations were funded for over 25,000 places, including Jobs for Young People placements in local government, which are administered by the Department for Victorian Communities. A further 1000 places were reserved for integrated school-based apprenticeships and traineeships.

Priority Education and Training program

The Priority Education and Training program funds private registered training organisations to provide training in industries and regions that have been identified as government priorities. This training is not apprenticeship- or traineeship-based training.

Through this program, over 1.9 million student contact hours of training were delivered in 2004.

Skill Up program

The Skill Up program is a rapid response program to retrain and support workers of all ages who are made redundant because of a major industry downturn or workplace closure, and so improve their employment prospects. Recipients are funded for an average of 80 hours training and are exempt from normal tuition fees. Training under the program is delivered by public and private providers in metropolitan Melbourne and regional Victoria.

As at June 2005, funding had been approved for over 1500 retrenched workers.

Fee-for-service activity

In addition to their government-funded delivery, TAFE institutes and ACE organisations delivered respectively 18.82 million and 1.75 million student contact hours of fee-for-service vocational and further education in 2004. TAFE institutes delivered a further 6.92 million student contact hours to full fee-paying overseas students. Over 2.1 million student contact hours in personal enrichment programs were also delivered to approximately 82,000 students.

Flexible learning

Victoria has a lead role in the implementation of the Australian Flexible Learning Framework for the National VET System 2005. The framework aims to develop Australia's flexible learning capacity and is designed to be responsive to the changing social, economic and policy environments in which it operates. The Flexible Learning Advisory Group oversees the implementation of the framework.

The Secretariat of the Flexible Learning Advisory Group sits within the Department of Education & Training.

The 2005 Australian Flexible Learning Framework supports the national strategy for VET and the need to broaden access to ICT throughout the education and training sectors. It also has a strong focus on outcomes and an increased focus on client needs and engagement. The 2005 framework extends the most successful aspects of the 2000–04 framework.

The framework also supports lifelong learning and effective, relevant and accessible vocational learning options for all Victorians. It ensures that Victorian TAFE and ACE personnel are in the best position to realise the potential of e-learning.

In the 2005 framework, Victoria has funded, and is responsible for, the development of the following projects:

- Quality e-learning Resources
- e-learning for target learner groups
- VET e-learning International
- State and Territory Coordination – State/Territory pro-rata allocation
- LearnScope – State/Territory pro-rata allocation.

Improving learner access

Providers across the State Training System continue to develop practices to provide training and employment opportunities for disadvantaged groups and people living in rural and remote areas.

Indigenous students

The Wurreker strategy was progressively implemented during 2004. Wurreker was developed to ensure that Koorie communities, through 29 Local Aboriginal Education Consultative Groups, are involved in decisions about the planning and delivery of training and that TAFE delivery and support services respect and value Koorie culture. In 2004, 3365 students identifying as Koorie were enrolled in government-funded VET programs.

Students with a disability

Under the implementation of Bridging Pathways, the national strategy for increasing opportunities in the VET sector for people with a disability, the Department conducted a review of provisions for students with a disability undertaking vocational education and training. A disability agenda for the VET sector in Victoria has been developed and will be implemented in 2005–06.

In 2004, the Department continued to assist TAFE institutes to support students with disabilities and meet TAFE institutes' statutory obligations under the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992*. In addition, each TAFE institute was provided with further funding for the development or redevelopment of a Disability Action Plan by the end of 2005. TAFE institutes received extensive information about the changes brought about by the introduction of the Education Standards under the Disability Discrimination Act.

The Department also supported the Centre of Excellence for Students who are deaf and hard of hearing by funding two projects: one to examine models of employing interpreters and another to examine models of delivery of Auslan and Auslan interpreter training to rural and regional areas using ICT.

Women

Work continued on specific initiatives to improve women's access to training and further education, including:

- provision of funding to the Equity Research Centre to provide advice on training needs and opportunities for women, particularly in emerging and non-traditional industries
- ongoing implementation of the Government's *Leading with Victoria's Women 2004–2007* report, which details strategies to be undertaken across and between departments
- trialing of MIPs for equity groups to provide individual pathway support into training or employment for students over 45 and not currently employed, sole parents who have not completed Year 12 or have been out of the workforce for longer than 12 months, and students from culturally or linguistically diverse backgrounds.

Parents

The Parents Returning to Work program provides grants of up to \$1000 to parents who have been out of the workforce for two or more years and are caring for children aged 12 years and under. In 2004–05, 2255 grants were issued to eligible parents to cover course fees, child-care or material costs while parents undertook training.

Review of TAFE governance

In 2003, the Department undertook a review of the governance practices of TAFE institute councils. While the review did not recommend any changes to current governance structures, it identified a need to enhance the governance practices within the existing framework.

In response to the recommendations the Department set up the Governance project, which aims to strengthen the governance culture and enhance the practices of members of TAFE governing bodies. Resources and a training program are being developed for these purposes.

Quality assurance

The Department works to ensure that vocational education and training in Victoria is delivered to a high standard. This includes registering and monitoring the performance of training organisations in accordance with the Australian Quality Training Framework (AQTF) Standards.

In 2004–05, the Department undertook the following functions on behalf of the VQA:

- registering training organisations to deliver nationally recognised training
- approving training organisations to provide courses to overseas students
- ongoing performance monitoring of training organisations
- annual reviews of Victoria's performance and delivery of services in accordance with the ANTA Performance Agreement.

The Department also provided a report on its registration and audit activity to each meeting of the VQA Board.

Risk assessment

The Department has developed a risk management strategy as part of its annual audit program that addresses the following key risk areas:

- the number and/or seriousness of verified complaints against registered training organisations
- apprenticeships and traineeships delivered by exclusive (full-time in a workplace) pathways
- priority interface areas as defined by a State or Territory that may include providers in receipt of government funds, unsatisfactory statistical returns and/or particular courses and qualifications.

During 2004–05, 227 registered training organisations were audited for compliance with the AQTF Standards. In addition, audits took place in:

- 109 organisations in receipt of government funding
- 42 providers of vocational education and training programs to overseas students
- 20 group training organisations.

Strategic industry audits

Strategic industry audits were introduced to identify compliance and quality issues in specific industry areas or training market sectors in order to provide a basis for systematic improvements in the quality of training delivery. The selection of industry areas includes those:

- with a recent strong growth in training
- of importance to the Victorian economy
- with a short history of participation in recognised training
- where concerns have been raised about the quality of training.

In 2004, a national strategic audit of training in the transport industry was conducted in collaboration with other States and Territories. This was the first national audit undertaken in a target industry. Two qualifications were audited: the TDT30102 Certificate III in Transport and Distribution (Warehousing and Storage) and the TDT30202 Certificate III in Transport and Distribution (Road Transport).

Seventeen registered training organisations operating in Victoria were audited. Of those, 12 were Victorian registered training organisations (10 private providers and two TAFE institutes). On behalf of Tasmania, Victoria also undertook two audits of interstate providers operating in Victoria. South Australia and the Australian Capital Territory undertook three audits of Victorian-registered training organisations operating in their jurisdictions.

The registered training organisations audited were found to have a small number of minor non-compliances with the AQTF Standards. The Department initiated a range of activities to implement the recommendations of the audits.

Group training organisations

In Victoria, 30 organisations have been approved as meeting the national standards for group training organisations and included on the National Register of Group Training Organisations. Group training organisations are largely non-profit and recruit and employ people in apprenticeships and traineeships. In 2004, 22 group training organisations successfully participated in the audit review program.

In 2004–05, the State and Commonwealth governments jointly funded 24 not-for-profit group training organisations through the Joint Group Training program. Payments were made for commencement, progression and completion milestones and increased payments were made to organisations catering for disadvantaged groups, vocations experiencing skills shortages and school-based new apprenticeships.

In November 2003, the ANTA Ministerial Council determined that, over a three-year period, 15 per cent of funding for group training organisations would be provided under open-market conditions. Following consultation with Group Training Australia (Victoria), the Group Training – Innovation Fund program was established in 2004.

The first round of funding under this program occurred in 2004–05 and has funded four projects undertaken by five group training organisations to target areas of skills shortages.

Capital resources

Asset management

The TAFE asset portfolio is made up of 1055 buildings worth approximately \$2.1 billion. The age of the asset portfolio ranges from new to over 100 years old. The average age of the building stock is approximately 22 years.

Asset management includes both the acquisition and the disposal of properties. This approach ensures that the overall use of TAFE institute building stock is maximised.

Asset investment

In 2004–05, major capital developments commenced at Bendigo Regional, East Gippsland, and Holmesglen TAFE institutes. Major refurbishment works were continued at the city campus of the Gordon Institute of TAFE and works continued at the Kangan Batman Institute of TAFE Automotive Centre of Excellence at Docklands.

State funding allocated to capital infrastructure funding, including the replacement of TAFE teaching equipment, enables TAFE institutes to keep pace with new and emerging technology changes. Teaching equipment is aligned to industry standards, which ensures that students are well prepared for the workplace. During 2004–05, funding was directed to the University of Ballarat for the construction of a new Building and Construction Training Centre. This will create an outstanding regional centre in Victoria that will facilitate the promotion, identity and delivery of training opportunities for building-related trades.

Work is proceeding on a high-speed fibre optic link between Bairnsdale and Lakes Entrance. This link will connect the Bairnsdale and ForestTech campuses of the East Gippsland Institute of TAFE to the Bullock Island Campus shared by East Gippsland and RMIT.

Five TAFE institutes are involved in a cooperative project to improve voice communications and replace obsolete telephony equipment. The institutes involved are the Northern Melbourne Institute of TAFE, Wodonga Institute of TAFE, Gordon Institute of TAFE, Bendigo Regional Institute of TAFE and Goulburn Ovens Institute of TAFE.

Asset disposal

A number of assets have been found surplus to requirements and disposed of, including:

- part of a former RMIT campus at 24–26 Orr Street, Carlton
- former Sunraysia Institute of TAFE building at 226 Beveridge Street, Swan Hill.

TAFE capital works projects

Completed projects

The following projects were funded by the Victorian Government and completed in 2004–05:

- the refurbishment of the Berwick campus for the Electronics and Nursing programs at the Chisholm Institute of TAFE
- the refurbishment of buildings at the Gordon Institute of TAFE city campus
- the establishment of the Australian College of Wine at Aradale and Yarra Glen for the Northern Melbourne Institute of TAFE.

The following projects were funded by ANTA and completed in 2004–05:

- the construction of a new teaching and administration building for the Driver Education Centre of Australia at Altona North
- the construction of the science and technology facility at Werribee for Victoria University.

Projects under construction

The following project was funded by the Victorian Government and was under construction in 2004–05:

- the Automotive Centre of Excellence at Docklands for the Kangan Batman Institute of TAFE.

The following projects were funded by ANTA and were being undertaken in 2004–05:

- the replacement of the Cleeland Street buildings at the Dandenong campus of the Chisholm Institute of TAFE
- the construction of the Business Development Centre at the Frankston campus of the Chisholm Institute of TAFE
- the refurbishment of the Moorabbin campus of the Holmesglen Institute of TAFE

- the construction of a wine industry training centre at the Bendigo Regional Institute of TAFE
- the construction of a new Automotive and Building Studies facility and refurbishment of the Hospitality faculty building at the East Gippsland Institute of TAFE
- horticulture redevelopment at the Holmesglen Institute of TAFE
- the connection of an optical fibre between the Bairnsdale, ForestTech and Lakes Entrance campuses of the East Gippsland Institute of TAFE.

National policy and funding arrangements

ANTA was an Australian Government statutory authority, established in 1992, to provide a national focus for vocational education and training. In October 2004, the Prime Minister announced that ANTA would be abolished from 1 July 2005 with the responsibilities and functions of ANTA transferred to the Commonwealth Department of Education, Science and Training. A new Ministerial Council on Vocational Education will be formed to lead the new national training system.

ANTA Agreement

The ANTA Agreement reinforced the commitment of all Australian governments to a strong, national, industry-led VET system and established funding, planning, reporting and accountability arrangements.

As part of the reforms to the national VET system, a new inter-governmental agreement for vocational education and training will replace the current ANTA Agreement. The Commonwealth Department of Education, Science and Training and State and Territory governments recommenced negotiations in the first half of 2005 for the new Commonwealth–State Agreement for Skilling Australia's Workforce 2005–08. The 2001–03 ANTA Agreement was rolled over in 2004.

The rollover arrangement was continued for 2005 in order to maintain the funding, planning and accountability arrangements of the national system, while the new agreement is negotiated.

National VET strategy 2004–10

Under the ANTA legislation, the ANTA Board was required to develop a national strategic plan for the VET system within the framework of national goals, objectives and priorities established by the ANTA Ministerial Council. The national strategy, *Shaping our Future*, was to apply until 2010. Under proposed Commonwealth legislation and a new inter-governmental agreement, the strategy will be reviewed by the new Ministerial Council to determine the content of a national strategy under the new national training arrangements.

Adult community education

ACE organisations provide lifelong learning opportunities for Victorian adults. Characterised by a flexible learning environment, the sector contributes to the educational, social, economic and cultural development of individuals and Victorian communities.

ACE organisations, Learning Towns and adult education institutions (AMES and the CAE), provide adult community education through the following programs:

- adult literacy and numeracy programs (incorporating ESL)
- vocational education programs for learners who require specific skills to re-enter the workforce
- employment skills programs, which equip learners with the essential skills required to effectively participate in the workforce
- the VCE and VCAL for adults as a pathway to returning to school, education and training or employment
- enrichment programs, which meet personal development and special interests.

The Government funds ACFE program delivery through the ACFE Board. This funding is administered by the Department. Enrichment programs are funded on a fee-for-service basis.

Participation

Nearly 12.6 million student contact hours across 447,882 module enrolments were delivered in ACE organisations and adult education institutions in 2004. Over 7 million student contact hours were funded by the Victorian Government. Program funding was also received from the Commonwealth Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs and delivered by AMES.

Participants ranged in age from early school leavers and were from diverse educational, cultural and linguistic backgrounds. More women than men participated.

In 2004, nearly 9200 students aged 15–19 were enrolled in ACE, representing a 5 per cent increase on the previous year. On average, there was an increase in the number of hours delivered to each student. In 2004, 1.6 million contact hours were delivered, an increase of 10 per cent on the total training hours delivered in 2003.

All reported participation is for the 2004 calendar year unless otherwise indicated.

Ministerial Statement on adult community education

Following the launch of the Ministerial Statement, *Future Directions in Adult Community Education in Victoria* in June 2004, the Department has worked to support the ACFE Board in implementing the initiatives in the Statement. The three-year policy framework identified strategies in four key priority areas:

- broadening the role of adult community education
- recognising specific groups of learners
- enhancing the sustainability of ACE provision
- investing in ACE.

Broadening the role of adult community education

Learning Towns

In response to the Ministerial Statement, the work of ten Learning Towns in rural and regional Victoria has been refocused. Learning Towns are working together with ACFE Regional Councils to improve community building through the implementation of Measuring Impact – A Project Evaluation Tool with Community Learning Partnerships. They are also delivering a variety of learning projects in their communities.

Community Learning Partnerships

The Community Learning Partnerships is another key initiative outlined in the Ministerial Statement. Funding has been allocated in 2005 to establish 18 Community Learning Partnerships across the state.

These partnerships focus on outcomes for learners and communities by creating relationships with local stakeholders and using a variety of resources. These relationships will strengthen communities, build social capital and enhance the sustainability of communities.

Community Building Hubs

Community Building Hubs aim to build the governance capacity of community-based organisations, and to establish ACE organisations as focal points or 'hubs' for community groups seeking training and support on issues such as governance, strategic planning, risk management, working with volunteers and financial management.

A network of over 100 Community Building Hubs has now been established. These hubs have worked with over 900 diverse community groups on issues affecting their governance and operation.

Recognising specific groups of learners

Disability

A new disability strategy is being implemented across adult community education that addresses the participation needs of people with disabilities. Built into this strategy are new measures for professional development, stronger partnerships

with TAFE institutes and disability organisations, resource and service requirements and the identification of relevant education and training that leads to further study and employment for learners with a disability.

Wurreker

A new Wurreker strategy was released in 2005. The strategy will inform the development of the future directions of Wurreker in adult community education, align current and future strategies to the framework that Wurreker provides and enable the development of collaborative policy and planning frameworks for the provision of adult community education for Koorie people and communities.

Youth

A Youth strategy, Young Learners in ACE, was released in 2005 and aims to improve the learning outcomes of 15–19-year-olds in adult community education. It encourages partnership arrangements between ACE organisations, schools and TAFE institutes so that young learners can retain engagement with school or access pathways to employment or further education and training.

Other learner groups

Programs available across the ACE sector that also target specific groups of learners include training for offenders on community-based work orders, volunteer training for the 2006 Commonwealth Games and a Gambling Intervention program.

Enhancing the sustainability of ACE provision

Building sustainable community businesses

An investigation was conducted into ACE organisations' understanding and use of community business and management practices, community entrepreneurship, and organisational arrangements. The investigation led to the development of a framework that provides direction and information in sustainable business practices for ACE organisations. This is accompanied by case studies, and self-assessment and support tools.

Workforce planning

An ACE Workforce Planning project used a profile of current practices to assess the impact of ACE provision on sustainability and to inform the development of a guide for workforce planning. This guide provides practical tools and processes which will better support community business models and sustainable provision.

Curriculum strategy

A curriculum strategy has been designed to provide curriculum arrangements that assist the ACFE Board, its partners and stakeholders in meeting the goals of the Ministerial Statement. It provides an integrated approach to accredited and non-accredited delivery in the ACE sector that promotes pathways and options for learners with outcomes for learners in ACE as the clear and central focus.

Investing in ACE

Three-year funding agreement

Three-year (2005–07) funding and service agreements with ACE organisations were implemented in 2005 for the first time. Replacing one-year agreements, the new arrangements provide increased certainty of funding to ACE organisations and enhance their flexibility in meeting local community needs.

Increasing access through information and communications technology

To improve access to ICT, funding for laptop computers and data projectors has been provided to ACE organisations located in remote Victoria or in areas of significant population growth in Melbourne.

Fee concessions reimbursement

Additional funding has been allocated to organisations for the reimbursement of fee concessions for delivery of Government-purchased education and training to learners under concession arrangements,

ACE capital funding program

The Government committed funds to support renovations, extensions and refurbishments in community-based adult education organisations.

This program is in its final stages, with 14 projects completed in 2004–05. The program has attracted an additional contribution of \$16 million from the community.

Higher education

During 2004–05, there were eight public universities, one private university (Melbourne University Private) and two campuses of the Australian Catholic University established and operating in Victoria. Some of these institutions are multi-campus, with campuses located in both metropolitan and regional areas. Others are dual-sector institutions with large TAFE divisions. In June 2005, the University of Melbourne Council decided to cease the operations of Melbourne University Private from 2006.

The Commonwealth Government funds Victoria's public universities. The State Government, through legislation and the Minister's requirements, approves the establishment of universities and ensures their accountability. It also ensures that institutions are equipped to meet Victoria's diverse educational, economic, social and cultural needs.

In addition to its regulatory role, the State Government provides some targeted funding and engages in strategic partnerships with universities to encourage the provision of high-quality teaching, research, innovation and research infrastructure across the state. This includes ensuring that, while universities increasingly operate in international markets and global networks, they also remain relevant to their local communities.

Ministerial Statement on higher education

The Ministerial Statement *Future Directions for Victorian Higher Education*, released in October 2002, sets out the Government's strategies for positioning universities to meet the changing knowledge and skills demands of the community and industry. The Higher Education

– Opportunities for Victoria, 2005 and Beyond project commenced in 2004–05, to build on the Ministerial Statement. The project will identify and deliver advice on opportunities and mechanisms for Victoria to further influence universities to support the State Government’s economic and social objectives.

To address the requirement in the Ministerial Statement to promote community engagement, the Department commissioned a major study on the links between Victorian universities and their communities in 2004–05.

The Ministerial Statement also called for a long-term strategy to enhance access to higher education for all Victorians. The Ministerial Higher Education Round Table, which promotes the Government’s strategic engagement with universities, commissioned two reviews into access to higher education by Victorians living in outer urban and regional centres. In 2004–05, the Minister accepted a series of recommendations arising from the reviews to improve access to higher education in these areas.

An inter-departmental Higher Education Coordination Committee meets regularly to improve coordination of government activity in the higher education sector.

Participation and access

In 2004, the total undergraduate student enrolments in Victorian public universities, including domestic fee-paying and international students, was 169,740. This was up from 167,907 in 2003. Postgraduate enrolments increased from 68,915 in 2003 to 72,015 in 2004.

The Government supports clear targets to increase the participation of under-represented groups and seeks to maximise opportunities for access to universities. The recommendations adopted as a result of regional and outer-urban higher education working parties will provide valuable support for the development of strategies to maximise provision in these under-represented areas.

International students

Victoria continues to attract an increasing number of overseas students. In 2004, 66,829 international students were enrolled in Victorian universities, an increase of 10.5 per cent from the previous year. International students now make up 24.2 per cent of the student population in universities (an increase of 22.6 per cent in 2003). Of the total number of 228,555 international students studying in Australia in 2004, 29.2 per cent were studying in Victoria.

Liaison with the Commonwealth

The Department is committed to representing and promoting the interests of Victorian universities and other higher education providers at the national level. The Victorian Government continues to lobby the Commonwealth Government to fund an adequate number of higher education places in Victoria in accordance with the state’s need, particularly in regional areas.

The Department has been seeking new partnership arrangements with the Commonwealth, including consultative planning related to the range and location of programs offered, and allocated university place numbers.

Regulation

The Department’s role in higher education includes developing and implementing legislation for Victorian universities and other higher education providers. The Department monitors the governance and compliance of each university and coordinates the preparation and tabling of each university’s annual report in the Victorian Parliament.

Accreditation

Publicly funded universities offer most of the higher education programs in Victoria. However, private providers can be authorised to conduct programs accredited under the *Tertiary Education Act 1993*. Private providers of higher education courses require accreditation of their courses

to ensure standards are comparable with those of public universities. Approval is subject to a rigorous review conducted by expert panels that make recommendations to the Minister for Education and Training through the Higher Education Advisory Committee.

In 2004:

- three new private providers, and two TAFE institutes, were authorised to deliver higher education courses and had eight courses accredited; there are now four TAFE institutes authorised to deliver higher education in Victoria
- three established private providers were reaccredited and reauthorised to deliver higher education courses
- seven interstate universities were endorsed to offer higher education courses in Victoria
- 49 private providers were approved to operate in Victoria
- nine new private provider courses were endorsed for delivery to overseas students
- 150 new public university courses and 1708 amended public university courses were endorsed for registration on the Commonwealth Register of Institutions and Courses for Overseas Students.

University governance

As part of the Commonwealth Government's policy statement, *Our Universities: Backing Australia's Future*, a component of funding to universities is contingent on adoption of a set of governance arrangements referred to as the National Governance Protocols. Commonwealth legislation enables the Commonwealth Minister with responsibility for education, science and training to make additional grants in 2005 to universities which the Minister believes are endeavouring to implement the protocols within acceptable timelines. Implementation requires legislative change.

Accountability for ensuring the effective governance of public universities rests with the State Government, which is responsible for university establishing Acts. Following extensive consultations with the eight public universities in Victoria, the State Government introduced the Higher Education Acts (Amendment) Bill, which amends the Acts establishing Victorian universities. This legislation will enable Victorian universities to comply with new National Governance Protocols and be eligible to receive additional funding under the Commonwealth *Higher Education Support Act 2003*.