

# Portfolio management services

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The Department supports and advises the Minister for Education and the Minister for Education Services, and helps with the management and administration of their portfolios. In particular, the Department provides support to the Ministers in the areas of international education, information and promotions, external and intergovernmental relations and the implementation of legislation.

## International education

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The International Division has responsibility for the international activities of the Department. It promotes and manages participation by Victorian government schools and educators in the international education marketplace, and promotes international engagement more generally.

The Division maintained responsibility for international education in schools, vocational education and training, and higher education for the full financial year.

The International Division manages a number of specific, high-quality international education programs and services. The Division promotes and administers the overseas fee-paying student program in Victorian government schools and conducts and facilitates student and staff exchanges, study tours and official delegations.

Increasingly the Division is engaging in offshore capacity-building initiatives that highlight the strength of Victoria's curriculum and innovative approaches to school education.

The underlying policy framework for the work of the Division continued to be the 2004 Ministerial Statement *Global Pathways: International Education for Victoria*, with its three strands of global learning, positioning Victoria and quality assurance.

## Highlights

- Under a Service Level Agreement with the State of Victoria, the Government of the Emirate of Sharjah is establishing the Victoria International School of Sharjah to a design by a Victorian architect. The model for the operation of the school, including curriculum, pedagogy, assessment and reporting, is based on Victorian government schools. The school will cater for 2600 students from kindergarten to Year 12 and is due to open on 2 September 2007.
- The Department, in collaboration with the Holmesglen Institute of TAFE, successfully tendered to assist the Kingdom of Bahrain to implement a new apprenticeship-based VET system in senior secondary schools in the Kingdom. This three-year initiative, worth \$6.5 million to Victoria, commenced in June 2007.
- The Department continued to coordinate the delivery of Victorian Government support for the reconstruction of the education and training system in Timor-Leste (East Timor).
- The Department successfully concluded new Memoranda of Cooperation with the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Minister of Education and Science of Spain.
- The International Division hosted 91 delegations comprising 717 participants. Delegations came from Bahrain, Bulgaria, the People's Republic of China, Colombia, Denmark, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Malaysia, the Middle East, New Zealand, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, South Africa, South Korea, the United Kingdom, the United States of America and Vietnam.

## International students

International students make a significant educational, cultural, social and economic contribution to Victoria. In 2006, there were over 107,000 international students from 162 countries enrolled with education and training providers in Victoria, compared to 94,000 in 2005. This was the first time that enrolments have passed the 100,000 mark in Victoria.

Sector	Number of enrolments	%
Higher education	53,801	50
Vocational education and training	23,644	22
English language courses	16,527	15
Schools	7,216	7
Non-award/Foundation	5,954	6
<b>Total</b>	<b>107,142</b>	<b>100</b>

### Highlights

- Victorian education and training providers delivered programs offshore to an estimated 34,000 students in their home countries.
- During 2006, there were more than 2720 international students from more than 50 countries enrolled in Victorian government schools.
- As part of its commitment to meeting legislative and quality obligations, in 2006–07 the International Division introduced a Quality Assurance Framework for its International Student program to guide the program in Victorian government schools.

## Cross-government activity

The International Division continues to strengthen linkages with other Victorian Government agencies and to develop whole-of-government strategies that effectively utilise government infrastructure overseas.

### Highlights

- In cooperation with the Department of Innovation, Industry and Regional Development, Education Service Managers

were employed in the Bangalore, Dubai, Shanghai and Tokyo Victorian Government Business Offices for a two-year period.

These officers promote Victoria as a preferred study destination and Victoria's capacity to deliver quality education provision offshore, support Victorian education institutions offshore and provide market intelligence to the Department.

- The International Division supported the Department of Premier and Cabinet's review of Victoria's international connections.
- The Division published:
  - the *Essential Services Guide* for international students, produced with the Department of Victorian Communities
  - the *Discover Melbourne Guide*, produced with the City of Melbourne.

## Programs

The Department implemented a number of programs to support international education in Victoria, including student, teacher and professional exchange programs.

### Highlights

- The fourth International Education Week was held in March 2007 to celebrate the contribution that international education makes to Victoria's cultural diversity, and social and economic development. The Minister for Skills, Education Services and Employment hosted a welcoming function at the Melbourne Cricket Ground for approximately 600 students, teachers and key officials. Regional functions were held in Bendigo, Gippsland and Warrnambool.
- Over 500 overseas students studied at Victorian schools through the Overseas Student Exchange program and an equivalent number of Victorian students undertook exchanges to countries in Europe, the United States, South America, Canada and Asia.

- Approximately 270 government schools have formal and informal sister school arrangements with schools in overseas countries.
- The Department conducted student study tours for overseas students on a fee-for-service basis, placing them in Victorian government schools for periods of up to eight weeks.
- The Division hosted 148 participants from Hong Kong, South Korea and Thailand in six professional development programs for secondary and elementary teachers of English from overseas to support foreign governments' policies to improve teaching, learning and use of English.
- Eighteen Victorian teachers exchanged schools and homes for the school year with teachers from Canada, the United States of America, the United Kingdom and the Netherlands.
- Eighty teacher assistants participated in programs that bring from overseas native speakers of French, German, Italian and Japanese to assist in government schools with teaching and learning of language and culture. Negotiations with various governments are proceeding to expand these programs to include support for Indonesian and Chinese languages.
- The Visiting Journalist program was instigated in 2006. This program continues to bring journalists from various countries to Melbourne to witness firsthand how the international student program works and what Victorian education has to offer.

## Marketing and communications

The Study Melbourne brand was developed in 2005 as part of the Brand Victoria initiative linking international education with the marketing of Victoria's investment, tourism and skilled migration. In 2006–07, the International Division began rolling out the brand on all marketing, advertising and information material in India, China, Japan and the Middle East.

## Highlights

- 'Friends of Victoria' functions were held in Hong Kong, Shanghai and Tokyo as part of a communication strategy to leverage off the networks of Victorian alumni.
- The <studymelbourne.com.au> website was launched in December 2006.
- High-quality Study Melbourne marketing collateral was developed.
- A Study Melbourne DVD was translated into seven additional languages: Cantonese, Japanese, Korean, Portuguese, Thai, Spanish, and Vietnamese.

## Information and promotion

During 2006–07, the Department promoted school education, vocational education and training, and adult community education throughout Victoria in a variety of ways.

The Department continued to promote vocational education and training in conjunction with the Department of Innovation, Industry and Regional Development throughout the rest of the year.

## Victorian government schools promotion

The Department produced a number of publications for external audiences in 2006–07. Significant work undertaken in 2006–07 aligned all Departmental online communications into a single entry public website <www.education.vic.gov.au>. This resulted in improved access to information for the Victorian public and school communities. The Department's website averages over half a million visits every month.

*Education Times* continued to be a major communication link with government schools and all teachers. The newspaper is published fortnightly during each school term. It provides

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information about government education policies, news, innovations in education and training opportunities.

*DoE Mail Bulletin to Schools* continued to be a key communication tool between schools and the Department. Distributed weekly via email, the bulletin provides latest Department information on policy and staff issues, school management, professional learning, events and school activities.

A *Schools Communications Toolkit* was distributed to all government schools to help them to communicate better with their key stakeholders. The toolkit was produced in hardcopy and online at <[www.education.vic.gov.au/management/schooloperations/commstoolkit.htm](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/management/schooloperations/commstoolkit.htm)>.

The *Victorian Government Secondary Schools Guide* is designed to assist parents in choosing a secondary school for their child. It was distributed to parents of Year 5 students in government schools, newsagencies, local members of parliament, public libraries and Information Victoria.

The *Welcome to School* handbook was distributed to all parents of Prep students in government schools at the beginning of the school year. It was also distributed to the broader community through child-care centres, public libraries and Information Victoria and made available online in English, Chinese, Vietnamese and Arabic at <[www.education.vic.gov.au/about/publications/newsinfo/welcomeschool.htm](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/publications/newsinfo/welcomeschool.htm)>. The English version is also in audio format.

The Department's electronic newsletter for parents, *Parent Update*, provided information to parents and the broader education community about initiatives in Victorian government school education. In June 2007, the newsletter had 5686 subscribers.

A comprehensive events and promotions program in 2006–07 included Back to School week, the Victorian School Sports Awards, the Premier's VCE Awards, Education Week,

Victorian Education Excellence Awards, Victorian School Design Awards, the Premier's Reading Challenge, Rubbish Free Lunch Challenge and Literacy and Numeracy Week.

The Department's Information and Referral Service provided 24-hour access to recorded information about common queries such as school term dates for Victoria and other states, contact details for the Department's regional offices, and special education and training dates and events. In addition, the service responded to telephone and email enquiries about a broad range of education matters. The service was used by parents, students, other community members and school staff.

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## Services to Ministers and policy

### External and inter-governmental relations

The Department supports Ministers and the Department's Executive in fulfilling their responsibilities across the portfolio through Ministerial and Executive support functions, inter-agency relations, legal services and privacy administration.

Services provided include the coordination of briefings, correspondence, Community Cabinet, Parliamentary services, Cabinet and legislation, archives and records management and Freedom of Information. These areas provide the interface between the Department and the Ministers on day-to-day matters and ensure that the Department's administrative support functions operate effectively.

The Department provides advice on portfolio policy and funding relationships with other Victorian Government departments, State jurisdictions and Commonwealth agencies.

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The Department supports the Minister for Education and the Minister for Skills, Education Services and Employment as members of the Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training, and Youth Affairs, and the Secretary as a member of the Australian Education Systems Officials Committee. It also coordinates the provision of advice to Commonwealth and State parliamentary enquiries and reviews on education and training policy.

## Yearly management cycle

The Department also provides corporate and business planning services. In 2006–07, major activities in the coordination of the Department's yearly management cycle included:

- developing Office strategic plans as well as Divisional and Regional business plans
- implementing a strategic framework to improve business planning across the Department
- developing the Department's budget submissions, culminating in the 2007–08 State Budget
- evaluating major activities and programs within the Department
- preparing presentations and briefings to the Public Accounts and Estimates Committee of the Victorian Parliament
- managing the preparation of half-yearly performance reports for the Expenditure Review Committee for the purpose of revenue certification
- managing the preparation of the portfolio annual reports for 2006–07
- supporting the operation of the statutory authorities.

## Legislation implementation

The *Education and Training Reform Act 2006*, which passed both Houses of Parliament and received Royal Assent in May 2006, updates and replaces 12 separate Acts and represents

an undertaking by the Victorian Government to ensure that Victoria has a robust and modern legislative framework for education and training.

In 2006, the Department created a Legislation Implementation Unit within the Office for Policy, Planning and Evaluation to manage the implementation of the new Act. In 2006–07, the major component of work arising from the Act related to the establishment of the Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority. The Authority has responsibility for ensuring that all schools, training providers and higher education providers (except established universities) meet minimum standards. It is also responsible for implementing a non-intrusive process for registering students being home schooled.

The Authority's Board was appointed in October 2006, in accordance with the *Interpretation of Legislation Act 1984*, to work with the Department in undertaking the work necessary to ensure that the new regulatory regime was operational in time for the Act to come into effect. This included the development of associated regulations.

Three sets of regulations were developed relating to the responsibilities of the Authority – the registration of schools, the registration of home schooling and the registration of education and training organisations. The Education Regulations 2000 were also remade and cover:

- government schools – admission of students, times of school operation, discipline, school councils, parent clubs and fundraising
- all schools – Education Maintenance Allowance, the transport of students and travelling allowances.

These regulations were subject to public consultation through a Regulatory Impact Statement process in early 2007 and they underwent a formal approval process involving

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a number of government bodies. The resultant consolidated Education and Training Reform Regulations 2007, which include regulations relating to teaching service appeals and the Victorian Institute of Teaching's elections, were made by Governor-in-Council on 26 June 2007. They came into effect on 1 July 2007 – the day the Act was proclaimed and came into operation.

The other main areas of the legislation which were addressed during 2006–07 included extension of the school leaving age to 16 years, streamlining of school council powers, school fees and charges policies, religious instruction in schools, and the right to free instruction to Year 12 in a school or to a guaranteed place in a TAFE institute or other public training provider to Year 12 or equivalent for students up to 20 years of age.