
Later years and youth transitions

The post-compulsory years of schooling typically consist of Years 10–12. Research shows that young people who are engaged with schooling until Year 12 have better long-term employment, economic and social outcomes. For this reason, the Government has committed to a target of 90 per cent of young people completing Year 12 or its equivalent by 2010. In order to achieve this target, post-compulsory education focuses on providing young people with effective and varied pathways. These pathways are designed to support students in attaining their first formal qualification and in making a successful transition from school to further education, training, employment or a combination of these.

Students in Victoria can choose between three formal qualifications from secondary school: the Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE), the Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL) or the International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma. Most young people complete one of these qualifications while at school, but a smaller number undertake senior secondary study in the TAFE and adult community education (ACE) sectors.

In 2007, in government and non-government schools:

- 148,367 students were enrolled in at least one unit of the VCE – an increase of 1539 students from 2006
- 47,362 students were eligible to complete their VCE and, of these, 97 per cent successfully completed the qualification – an increase of 1089 students from 2006
- 11,762 students were enrolled in the VCAL – an increase of 1154 students from 2006.

Expanding pathways and transitions

To encourage young people to stay in school and to enable them to complete a senior secondary certificate, post-compulsory pathways have been expanded and include a strong focus on vocational curriculum options.

Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning

The VCAL is a hands-on option for Years 11–12 students, offering practical work-related experience and learning. It is available in both government and non-government schools and also through TAFE and ACE providers. The Government allocated approximately \$12 million in 2007–08 to provide assistance to schools and other providers to coordinate the provision of VCAL. The investment has supported further growth in enrolments and the positive study and employment outcomes the program provides.

VET in Schools

Vocational Education and Training (VET) in Schools programs (including school-based apprenticeships and traineeships) comprise nationally recognised VET certificates that can be undertaken by senior secondary students as part of the VCE or VCAL. VET in Schools programs are designed to expand opportunities and pathways for senior secondary students and improve post-compulsory educational outcomes in line with the Government's goals and targets for education. They also contribute to addressing industry skill needs.

VET in Schools programs are typically delivered through partnerships between schools, industry and training providers, and increasingly provide opportunities for students to participate in workplace learning.

The number of students undertaking VET in Schools programs in government and non-government schools has increased from 36,504 in 2006 to 40,764 in 2007.

To support effective provision of VET in Schools programs and the VCAL, a Departmental Statement on Forward Directions for Vocational Learning in Schools was distributed to schools in December 2007.

The statement sets out the broader policy purposes of VET in Schools programs, which include:

- student engagement, participation and retention
- preparing students for general labour market transitions by developing the skills, knowledge and attributes that are required in the contemporary workplace
- meeting the skill needs of industry by developing in students the skills, knowledge and attributes to assist their transition into specific industries and higher level VET pathways.

In addition, the Department has commenced a regional planning process for these programs. By the end of 2007–08, all Departmental regions commenced the development of a regional VET in Schools plan and a VCAL plan. The plans are designed to maximise the positive outcomes for VET and VCAL students, including having enough flexibility to balance the choices and preferences of students with the demands of the labour market.

School-based apprenticeships and traineeships

School-based apprenticeship and traineeship pathways for senior school students continued to expand. In 2007, there were 6248 students

in government and non-government schools in apprenticeships or traineeships. These were undertaken as part of a program of studies that combined the VCE or the VCAL with a nationally accredited training certificate and employment.

Re-engagement programs

Re-engagement programs are approved programs based in the community that provide the VCAL to students who are unable or unwilling to undertake their qualifications in a school setting. In 2007, the Department introduced new funding arrangements for these programs that allow for funding eligible students who enrol late.

In 2008, the enrolment date was extended until 28 April 2008. This provided schools with an extended time period for engaging students and attracting the Student Resource Package funding to support these programs.

Forty schools across the state are running approved programs in 2008. This year more than 75 students qualified for the late enrolment funding.

Student support initiatives

In addition to expanding the pathways on offer to students in the post-compulsory years of schooling, the Department improved the support available to students as they navigate those pathways.

Managed Individual Pathways

In 2007–08, over \$14 million was distributed to Victoria's government schools under the Managed Individual Pathways initiative. This initiative ensures that all students aged 15 years and over in government schools are provided with individual pathway plans and associated support. These plans enable a successful transition through the post-compulsory years to further education, training or full-time employment. The program

continues to gain in strength, with over 200 Managed Individual Pathways coordinators participating in professional learning provided by the Department in Term 1, 2008.

Managed Individual Pathways plans can help young people to:

- start discussions with their teachers, family and friends about where they would like to go and what they would like to do in the future
- manage their expectations of their post-school lives
- make a smooth and directed transition from compulsory schooling to further education, training and employment
- develop skills to manage their pathways throughout their working lives
- develop their knowledge, understanding and experience of opportunities in education, training and employment.

Funding is allocated to schools based on a model that takes into account school enrolments, as well as an additional component to support students at risk of disengaging or not making a successful transition, as indicated by the school's Student Family Occupation Index. Guaranteed minimum funding levels for small and large schools are also in place, as are special funding allocations for students at special schools.

The Managed Individual Pathways Mapping Tool allows schools to easily identify students who have characteristics that are known to increase the risk of early school leaving and to track, monitor and evaluate interventions used to reduce these risks. The Mapping Tool was made available to all schools in 2007, accompanied by significant and ongoing professional development and training. The Mapping Tool draws down relevant data from the Department's CASES21 student database and presents it in an accessible spreadsheet format. The software and the Mapping Tool are available to Victorian government schools free of charge.

Careers and transition resources

To assist careers coordinators and teachers in working with all students, guidelines have been developed for using the online learning and teaching careers and transition resources with targeted groups. These include:

- Koorie young people
- culturally and linguistically diverse and ESL young people
- young people with disabilities
- rural and remote young people
- young people not in education, employment or training.

Statewide professional development on using the resources was conducted in 2007, with ongoing professional development provided as required. Training in myfuture, Real Game series, Managed Individual Pathways, the At Risk Mapping Tool and linking careers to the Victorian Essential Learning Standards (VELS) and the School Accountability and Improvement Framework is ongoing.

Professional learning for teachers

The Department implemented a number of professional development initiatives for careers coordinators and teachers in government schools to enhance their capacity to provide quality, up-to-date and accurate careers information and assistance to students.

The programs commenced in 2007 and, by the end of 2008, 80 careers coordinators in government schools will have participated in one of the programs.

Career Education Scholarship program

The Career Education Scholarship program provides funding to careers teachers in government schools to undertake the RMIT Graduate Certificate in Career Education. This graduate certificate is a one-year, part-time program designed to develop competencies in career education for teachers, or individuals working in the wider

community who are responsible for providing information, guidance and counselling about careers and work-related issues. Recipients of the scholarship also have to undertake a professional careers placement, a one-day VET familiarisation program and a mentoring program.

Industry Placements program

The Industry Placements program provides a unique opportunity for selected careers teachers to spend three weeks with an employer or group training provider, exploring industry pathways. Each teacher uses the insights gained to develop a school–industry link project to benefit young people. Some schools have used the experience to establish the foundations for ongoing school–industry partnerships.

Cross-sectoral initiatives

The Department plays a key role in providing assistance to young people, particularly those at risk of early leaving or those who are disengaged. A key means for provision of this assistance is through working with students and providers in the school, vocational education and training providers, the ACE sector and other agencies. In particular, the Department provides cross-sectoral policy leadership and the management of cross-sectoral programs. The objective of the cross-sectoral initiatives is to assist young people to achieve sustainable education, training or employment outcomes.

Youth Transition Support initiative

The Youth Transition Support initiative commenced in January 2007 and provides funding for 24 youth transition workers across 12 Local Learning and Employment Network (LLEN) areas. These areas were selected on the basis of relatively low Year 12 completion rates, high rates of youth unemployment

and high numbers of young people not in education, training or full-time employment.

Transition support workers provide personalised assistance to young people aged 15–19 who are not in education or training, not working full-time and do not have Year 12 or an equivalent qualification. The objective is to help disengaged young people achieve a sustainable education, training or employment outcome.

The 12 LLEN areas funded for the Youth Transition Support initiative are Baw Baw Latrobe, Brimbank Melton, Frankston Mornington Peninsula, Goldfields, Goulburn Murray, Highlands, Hume Whittlesea, Inner Northern, Maribyrnong and Moonee Valley, Smart Geelong, South Eastern, and WynBay.

During 2007, transition support workers assisted a total of 1180 young people. Support for 859 (72.8 per cent) of these young people continued into 2008, with 399 of them in study or work. A further 77 young people (6.5 per cent) maintained an education, training or employment placement for six months.

A formative evaluation was conducted in 2007. The evaluation recognised that the initiative meets a targeted need. Findings were used to modify program guidelines and operations to improve outcomes, effective from 1 January 2008.

Local Learning and Employment Networks

LLENs have a crucial role to play in continuing progress towards the Government's Year 12 or equivalent completion target.

The LLENs initiative supports cooperation between different providers and agencies, and acts to strengthen the capacity of stakeholders to support young people's transition through school to further education, training or full-time employment.

The core role of the LLENs is the creation and further development of sustainable

relationships and partnerships between local education providers, industry and the community to develop initiatives that improve the education, training and employment outcomes of young people. There is a particular focus on those students considered most at risk of leaving school early.

Over the course of 2007, the statewide network of 31 LLENs brokered 112 partnerships that involved 2138 organisational stakeholders, comprising schools, TAFE and ACE providers, industry and community organisations. By working with stakeholders to develop broader education and training programs and pathways and to support young people to take up these options, LLENs reported positive contributions to the outcomes of over 38,000 young people. This number included 5089 young people who were re-engaged with education or training.

At the end of 2007, the Minister for Education announced that LLENs would be re-funded at the end of their current contracts for a further three-year period, covering 2009–11.

Regional Youth Commitments

A Regional Youth Commitment is a framework negotiated within and between all local and regional stakeholders to link and coordinate pathway and transition support arrangements for 15–19-year-olds. It also ensures that there is continuous support for a young person to remain in or re-enter education and training and attain, as a minimum, Year 12 or equivalent qualifications.

Regional Youth Commitments arose as a result of work initiated in 2005 by the Grampians Region of the Department. Regional Youth Commitments have now been established or are being established in eight of the nine regions in Victoria.

A formative evaluation of Regional Youth Commitments was conducted in the first half of 2008. Findings from this evaluation will be used to assess progress to date and

to improve future success and sustainability of the Regional Youth Commitments in each region.

On Track

The On Track survey tracks the destinations of Year 12 or equivalent completers and early leavers from all providers six months after they leave school. The publication of On Track data contributes to a better understanding by parents, students and schools of the destinations of young people after their final year and celebrates the broad range of outcomes that all providers create for students. At the time of survey, assistance and advice is offered to those students not in education, training or full-time employment.

The 2008 On Track survey for Year 12 or equivalent completers found that, for young people who completed Year 12 in 2007, 72 per cent of students were in education or training. Of those not in education or training, 25 per cent were employed full- or part-time or had deferred further study, and 3 per cent were looking for work.

Key findings were the increase in the percentage of Year 12 or equivalent completers who had taken up an apprenticeship or traineeship at the time of the survey (9.8 per cent compared with 8.1 per cent in 2007). There was a continued increase in the percentage of students from all schools deferring university places (11 per cent compared to 8 per cent in 2007).

Commonwealth–State partnerships

Both the Commonwealth and the Victorian governments provide programs and initiatives that support young people aged 16 and over to attain their first formal qualifications and to make the transition to further education, training and/or employment.

In order to achieve better outcomes for young people, the Department works in collaboration with, or supports, the Commonwealth Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations on a number of projects. Significant current projects are concerned with the future of Australian Technical Colleges and the new Trade Training Centres initiative.

Australian Technical Colleges

The Australian Technical Colleges were established by the previous Commonwealth Government in all states and territories to facilitate students seeking to undertake school-based apprenticeships as part of their Year 12 certificates. Victoria has six Australian Technical Colleges. Three were established as part of government schools and three are part of non-government schools.

The current Commonwealth Government has announced it will discontinue the Australian Technical College program as of 31 December 2009.

The Department is currently working in conjunction with the Commonwealth and local school communities to incorporate the trade training services provided by the Australian Technical Colleges within the Victorian education and training system. This will assist the Victorian Government's planning and provision of trade training services and complement the significant investment in vocational education being made throughout Victoria.

Trade Training Centres

Trade Training Centres are a Commonwealth Government initiative. A total of \$2.5 billion has been allocated over the next ten years to develop Trade Training Centres in schools. Funds can be used to purchase equipment and carry out minor facility upgrades or to fund major capital investment.

The Trade Training Centres initiative has two objectives:

- seeking to improve Year 12 or equivalent completion rates
- helping to address skill shortages in traditional trades and emerging industry areas.

The initiative guidelines encourage:

- Certificate III qualifications in skill shortage areas
- the formation of partnerships between schools (government and non-government) and TAFE providers, registered training organisations and industry.

The Trade Training Centres initiative is managed by the Commonwealth in partnership with the states and territories through a partnership arrangement.

Through the partnership arrangement, a Victorian Trade Training Centres Support Unit has been established to provide advice and support to regions and schools in developing applications.

In 2008, the Trade Training Centres initiative was broken into two phases:

- phase one – schools were invited to submit either a full application for funding or an expression of interest to submit a full application in phase two (phase one had a submission deadline of 9 May 2008)
- phase two – has a submission deadline of 17 October 2008.

On 9 May 2008, Victorian government schools submitted \$8.82 million worth of applications for Trade Training Centres funding with the Commonwealth. More than \$112 million worth of expressions of interest were also submitted. This includes contributions from non-government schools that are in partnership with government schools.