



Legislative Council Legal and Social Issues Committee

Inquiry: Inquiry into Public School Funding

Hearing date: 25 March 2026

Question taken on notice

Directed to: Department of Education

Received date: 20 April 2026

1. **The CHAIR, page 57**

Question Asked:

Andrea DEL MONACO: I will just be brief. The 2022 agreement included a reduction in the maximum face-to-face teaching time for teachers of 1.5 hours. That was the equivalent of 1900 additional teachers going into schools. When you look around the other states, that was a really significant reform aimed at supporting workload. We continue to hear what you heard, so in 2024 the minister commissioned a review of admin burden. That was independently led, so it was not sitting within the department.

The CHAIR: Are you able to provide a copy of that at all or not?

Andrea DEL MONACO: It is publicly available.

Tony BATES: Yes. It is on the web, so we can give the Secretariat links to the report.

Response:

[Independent Review into administrative and compliance activities in Victorian government schools | vic.gov.au](#)

2. **Anasina GRAY-BARBERIO, page 61**

Question Asked:

Are you able to provide to the committee any evidence of that modelling?

Tony BATES: I will have to –

Andrea DEL MONACO: What I can say is the change to the policy – so this is –

Anasina GRAY-BARBERIO: I will just ask if you can provide that, because I have got a few questions here I would love to ask you all. Is it possible to take it on notice if you can provide that to the committee?

Tony BATES: Yes, we will take it on notice, and maybe we can probably give the committee some indication of the spread of the carryover and the bank

balances we are seeing in those schools. I will say they are very, very significant.

Response:

The Credit Carryover Policy was announced in 2023, to be implemented in 2024, to encourage schools to spend today's funding on today's students by limiting the amount of credit underspend schools can carryover into future years.

Assessing 2025 data against the initial policy modelling, 22% of all schools were projected to exceed the policy thresholds. However, since then, the number of schools impacted by the policy has reduced to 9% (2% of which are specialist schools), indicating positive behaviour change demonstrated by increased investment in teaching and education support staff.

At the end of the 2024 school year, 475 schools had a bank balance exceeding \$1m, while at the end of the 2025 school year this was 440 schools.

3. **Anasina GRAY-BARBERIO, page 63**

Question Asked:

Can you provide evidence to the committee that schools experiencing underfunding or staffing shortages are not seeing a decline in NAPLAN results? Is it possible for you to provide some evidence, or do you collect evidence around that?

Tony BATES: We have NAPLAN results at school level. I can definitely give the committee the trajectory over the last number of years, remembering that there was a break in the series. The timing and nature of how the results are scaled by ACARA changed a few years ago. We can definitely provide the committee with evidence on the trajectory of Victorian NAPLAN results over the last number of years.

Anasina GRAY-BARBERIO: Including any decline, if there is any?

Tony BATES: Yes.

Response:

Since the introduction of the new NAPLAN in 2023, Victoria has consistently been a high performing jurisdiction. In 2025 Victoria had the highest NAPLAN mean score improvement of any jurisdiction compared to 2024 (see below **Table 1**). Victoria had the most students achieving strong or exceeding and the fewest needing additional support. In 2023, Victoria had the most first or second mean score rankings of any jurisdiction and

achieved this again in 2025, ranking first or second in 18 of 20 measures.

While achievement gaps remain, First Nations, regional, and socio-educationally disadvantaged students in Victorian schools achieved the strongest results in the 2025 NAPLAN compared to their peers in any other state or jurisdiction. Since 2023, there has been a substantial increase in the Year 5 mean score in Numeracy for Victorian First Nations students, and substantially more Victorian First Nations students were exceeding in Numeracy, Writing and Grammar and Punctuation in 2025 compared to 2023. However, gaps still exist for these student cohorts from as early as Year 3, which widen by Year 9.

The table below provides change over time for all years and domains from 2023 to 2025 in Victorian NAPLAN scores.

Table 1. NAPLAN mean score changes 2023 to 2025

Year level	Domain	2023	2024	2025	Change in mean score from 2024 to 2025	Change in mean score from 2023 to 2025
Year 3	Reading	416.0	417.7	417.0	-0.7	1.10
	Numeracy	417.7	413.4	418.1	4.7	0.4
	Writing	424.4	422.9	423.7	0.8	-0.7
	Spelling	409.9	407.9	414.9	7.0	5.0
	Grammar & Punctuation	419.2	417.4	422.5	5.1	3.3
Year 5	Reading	507.1	504.8	502.7	-2.1	-4.4
	Numeracy	494.3	497.3	502.7	5.4	8.4
	Writing	498.3	496.1	494.0	-2.1	-4.3
	Spelling	494.1	491.6	493.7	2.1	-0.4
	Grammar & Punctuation	503.0	504.1	507.1	3.0	4.1
Year 7	Reading	544.6	545.3	549.0	3.7	4.4
	Numeracy	544.0	545.5	555.0	9.5	11.0
	Writing	546.9	552.3	552.3	0.0	5.4
	Spelling	540.8	541.3	544.2	2.9	3.4
	Grammar & Punctuation	543.3	541.1	546.2	5.1	2.9
Year 9	Reading	571.7	573.2	576.5	3.3	4.8
	Numeracy	574.0	571.1	581.6	10.5	7.6
	Writing	578.7	584.7	587.1	2.4	8.4
	Spelling	570.1	568.5	571.8	3.3	1.7
	Grammar & Punctuation	563.6	558.4	566.2	7.8	2.6
Number of improvements					17	16
Number of declines					3	4

The NAPLAN mean score changes detailed in the table above are not considered significant and substantial by ACARA's *nature of the difference* measure.

4. **Anasina GRAY-BARBERIO, page 66**

Question Asked:

Tony BATES: Ms Gray-Barberio, I would probably say the vast majority of SRP funding is automatically eligible for every student in every school. There are a very small number of programs where it is on an application-based basis.

Anasina GRAY-BARBERIO: Could you give an example of what that program would be, where –

Andrea DEL MONACO: I cannot really think of one. Most of our funding, you take the characteristic –

Anasina GRAY-BARBERIO: I am happy for you to take it on notice.

Response:

The following SRP targeted programs rely on schools applying for funding as they relate to a specific program delivery:

Flexible Work for School Leaders initiative

The 2025 Flexible Work for School Leaders initiative is available in the 2024–25 and 2025–26 financial years. Up to 300 grants have been funded to support school leaders in a job-share or part-time arrangement. The funding will allow participating school leaders to have a cross-over day with their job-share partner or will support a new or increased part-time arrangement within a school's leadership team.

This initiative aims to reduce administrative burden on school leaders by providing additional leadership support and promoting work-life balance. Educational leaders eligible for funding include principals, assistant principals, leading teachers, and learning specialists.

Under this initiative, the Department of Education will provide funding of 0.2 FTE of a salary of a school leader in an eligible flexible work arrangement for up to 12 months.

Flexible Work for Classroom Teachers

The 2025 Flexible Work for Classroom Teachers initiative is available in the 2024–25 and 2025–26 financial years. Up to 300 grants have been funded to support classroom teachers in a job-share or part-time arrangement. The funding will allow eligible classroom teachers to have a cross-over day with their job-share partner or will support a new or increased part-time arrangement.

This initiative aims to reduce the administrative burden on school leaders and classroom teachers by providing additional support and promoting work-life balance.

Under this initiative, a grant of \$20,000 will be provided to support a classroom teacher in an eligible flexible work arrangement for up to 12 months.

Head Start

Head Start is a program that supports students in years 10-12 to participate in a school-based apprenticeship and traineeship (SBAT) program to develop skills, capabilities, and confidence that employers in growth industries need.

Head Start teams are based in 12 school-based hubs across Victoria and provide wrap-around support for SBAT students.

Each student completing an SBAT with Head Start receives:

- career planning advice from their school career practitioner to find the right pathway
- a plan for their pathway into a priority industry career, tailored to their specific needs and the needs of their employer
- one-on-one support from a Head Start coordinator to keep them on the right track
- quality-assured training through TAFEs and Skills First providers
- a secondary certificate such as the VCE, VCE Vocational Major or VPC
- completion or significant progress towards a qualification such as a Certificate III or IV
- payment of a fair training wage.

Active Schools

Active Schools Grants: \$30,000 will be awarded to 100 primary, secondary, primary/secondary, language and specialist schools in 2026 following a competitive grant process open each year to eligible schools in communities experiencing socioeconomic disadvantage.

Eligibility to apply is based on SFOE index and whether a school has previously received Active Schools Grant funding. Applications are assessed against the Active school's framework.

Aspiring Koorie Teachers Now Program

The Aspiring Koorie Teachers (AKT) Now program is an employment-based training initiative to increase Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples' employment with 'host' Victorian government schools. The program is part of the Victorian Government's Workforce Attraction and Retention Strategy. AKT Now aims to increase the number of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander staff working in Victorian government schools ('AKT Now employees') by combining paid employment with structured education pathways.

Schools may not apply directly for AKT Now funding. Instead, approved host schools are determined through an expression of interest process and subsequent review by the Koorie Outcomes Division. Approved host schools will appoint AKT Now employees through usual merit-based processes. Vacancies will be advertised through the School Jobs VIC portal. Eligibility for AKT Now employment is for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples who:

- are employed by a host school through a merit-based recruitment process
- are employed by the school to meet existing vacancy and/or staff resourcing needs
- are a resident of Victoria (or eligible border community)
- are enrolled in either a Certificate IV in School-Based Education Support or the later years of an Initial Teacher Education course
- are undertaking a minimum of 50% equivalent full-time study load (as per program requirements)
- hold a current Working with Children Check

5. **The CHAIR, pages 67**

Question Asked:

The school breakfast club – what has been the uptake on that? Do you have any numbers around that?

Tony BATES: The last time I looked, I think we were over a thousand schools.

The CHAIR: I am happy for you to take it on notice, if you like.

Tony BATES: Yes, we can come back on that one.

Response:

The 2024-25 State Budget provided \$21.1 million to expand the School Breakfast Clubs Program, building on the \$141.2 million invested since 2016, making it available to every Victorian government school that opts in by

June 2026.

As of February 2026, the School Breakfast Clubs Program is being delivered in 1,356 Victorian government schools.

[In September 2025](#), the program reached the milestone of delivering 60 million meals to students across the state.

6. **The CHAIR, pages 67-68**

Question Asked:

We had a school come through before and say that they were not part of that program. I just wondered how wide uptake in the program is or is not?

Scott WIDMER: It is over 1300 government schools now, I think since 2016 it has delivered over 60 million meals.

The CHAIR: The reason why I want to know that information is because I particularly want to know the spread of where the schools are, whether they are regional, metro – which part? If you are happy to take that on notice, I would love to know some more information about that.

Tony BATES: We will. Chair, I might just say there is an open invitation for every government school to join the school breakfast club.

Response:

The 2024-25 State Budget provided \$21.1 million to expand the School Breakfast Clubs Program, building on the \$141.2 million invested since 2016, making it available to every Victorian government school that opts in by June 2026.

As of the end of Term 1, the School Breakfast Clubs Program is being delivered in 1,356 Victorian government schools (see **Attachment 1**). 56% of the participating schools are in rural and regional Victoria, and 44% in metropolitan areas.

Schools can join the program by contacting Foodbank Victoria, the program delivery partner, via schoolbreakfastclub@foodbankvictoria.org.au or by submitting an [expression of interest form](#).

7. **Michael GALEA, page 69**

Question Asked:

Non-government school capital contributions from the federal government, obviously there is a disparity because Victoria is investing significantly more compared to other states in state schools. Do we know what percentage of federal funding on non-government schools goes to Victoria?

Tony BATES: We do. I do not have that with me today because I was really prepping on government school funding, but we do have that and can provide that to the committee if that is helpful.

Response:

The Commonwealth Department of Education provides capital funding to non-government primary and secondary schools through its Capital Grants Program.

In 2026, 19.7% of funding provided through the program went to Victorian non-government schools. A full list of projects supported by the program can be found at www.education.gov.au/other-commonwealth-funding-schools/capital-grants-non-government-schools