

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION & TRAINING

2016-2020 STRATEGIC PLAN



CONTENTS

SECRETARY'S MESSAGE	3
STRATEGIC INTENT	4
OUR VISION	4
OUR OBJECTIVES	4
OUR VALUES	4
OUR OUTCOMES.....	5
DET OUTCOMES FRAMEWORK.....	5
EDUCATION STATE TARGETS.....	5
DET OUTCOME INDICATORS.....	8
CONTEXT: CHALLENGES AND RISKS	10
HOW WE WILL ACHIEVE OUR VISION.....	12
OUR APPROACHES	12
APPROACH 1: SERVICE AND FUNDING REFORM	12
APPROACH 2: WORKFORCE STRATEGIES AND PRACTICES	16
APPROACH 3: PARTNERSHIP AND INNOVATION.....	18
APPROACH 4: ORGANISATIONAL REFORM.....	21
OPERATING ENVIRONMENT	24
FINANCIAL OUTLOOK	25
ASSET OUTLOOK	26
WORKFORCE OUTLOOK	28

Melbourne July 2016 (updated December 2016)

©State of Victoria (Department of Education and Training) 2016

The copyright in this document is owned by the State of Victoria (Department of Education and Training), or in the case of some materials, by third parties (third party materials). No part may be reproduced by any process except in accordance with the provisions of the Copyright Act 1968, the National Education Access Licence for Schools (NEALS) (see below) or with permission.

An educational institution situated in Australia which is not conducted for profit, or a body responsible for administering such an institution may copy and communicate the materials, other than third party materials, for the educational purposes of the institution.

Authorised by the Department of Education and Training,

2 Treasury Place, East Melbourne, Victoria, 3002

SECRETARY'S MESSAGE

I am pleased to present the Department of Education and Training's Strategic Plan for 2016–2020. This plan highlights the significant work the Department has undertaken over the past 12 months and outlines how we will make the most of the opportunities ahead of us, as we continue to support the Government to make Victoria the Education State.

The Education State creates an exciting vision for the best future for Victoria. It is a public commitment to achieve educational excellence and opportunity in every community. This vision is to ensure every child – regardless of their background, postcode or circumstance – has access to safe, high-quality early childhood services; to a great school with great teachers in every classroom; and to world-class training that gets them ready to succeed in the workplaces of tomorrow.

Community support for the reforms has been strong and we are engaging in ongoing conversations with Victorians on how to build the Education State across early childhood, schools, Vocational Education and Training, and higher education. We are continuing to strengthen governance arrangements to sharpen the focus on outcomes and we've increased our efforts to make our education systems stronger and more connected.

The 2016–17 State Budget committed \$1.1 billion for school infrastructure and towards establishing the Victorian School Building Authority, which is now up and running and will ensure that schools are well-planned, tailored to local needs and that communities are engaged throughout the process. Quality infrastructure and state-of-the-art learning environments serve to enhance learning outcomes.

We are also making a strong contribution to the Government's broader economic and social policy reforms. This includes work to drive productivity and job creation through initiatives such as the Back to Work Plan and the Victorian Industry Participation Policy. We are contributing to whole of government efforts to provide enhanced support to vulnerable and at-risk children and families, through our work in responding to the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse and the Royal Commission into Family Violence.

The Department has also made significant changes to the way we go about our work. We have realigned our organisational structure to ensure decision-making is more integrated and to ensure increased support for implementation and service delivery. We have also delivered a new area-based operating model helping to focus reform locally, and to support our service to improve outcomes for learners. Across the organisation, process efficiency has been improved and significant efforts are underway to strengthen our leadership capability, clarify accountabilities and build a high-performance culture.

We are also focused on being a learning organisation where staff development is supported, where we share ideas and knowledge, and where we all make better use of evidence in decision-making and build on our experience.

The Department has responded strongly to the findings of the Independent Broad-based Anti-corruption Commission (IBAC) and evidence heard at its 2015–16 hearings. We have been working to improve our financial controls and cultural practices to ensure such behaviour will never occur again. We have a strong workplan to further our organisational reforms relating to finance, procurement and audit functions, to set expectations for conduct, culture and behaviours based on the core Victorian public sector values and to meet the high standards the community rightly holds of us.

This Strategic Plan brings together policy and organisational reform agendas to articulate the directions for the Department, setting out what we want to achieve and how we will do it. It provides guidance to our organisation on where our efforts should be placed and will inform the preparation of Group, Division and Region business plans. It also provides our partners and stakeholders with information about what we want to achieve and how we want to work with them. I look forward to working with all of you to deliver the strategies set out in this plan, and achieve the best possible outcomes for all Victorian learners.

Gill Callister

Secretary

STRATEGIC INTENT



We have a clear vision and strategy for what we want to achieve. Building a strategy based on clear objectives and a strong evidence base, and cognisant of our context, challenges and risks helps us plan, allocate resources and achieve our outcomes.

OUR VISION

The Victorian Government has committed to building an education system that produces excellence and reduces the impact of disadvantage. Education is more important than ever: skills, knowledge, creativity and adaptability will be central in our future economy and community. The Education State is founded on excellence in learning and development from the crucial first years of life, through school education to training and higher education, and the promotion of lifelong learning for adults.

This vision is captured in the Department's Statement of Strategic Intent (refer Figure 1):

Together we give every Victorian the best learning and development experience, making our state a smarter, fairer, more prosperous place.

This aspiration is for a future where:

- children and young people are confident, optimistic, healthy and resilient
- students reach their potential, regardless of background, place, circumstance or abilities
- Victorians develop knowledge, skills and attributes needed now and for the jobs of the future
- the Department's workforce is high-performing, empowered, valued and supported.

OUR OBJECTIVES

Our objectives in achieving this vision are to:

- ensure Victorians have equitable access to quality education and training
- work with providers and partners to build an integrated birth to adulthood education and development system
- support children, young people and adults with well-coordinated universal and targeted services close to where they live
- activate excellence, innovation and economic growth.

OUR VALUES

In pursuing these objectives, the Department is committed to the Victorian public sector values of:

- responsiveness
- integrity
- impartiality
- accountability
- respect
- leadership
- alignment with the Human Rights Charter.

The public sector values underpin the behaviours that the government and community rightly expect of all public sector employees. Acting consistently with the public sector values also strengthens the capacity of our organisation to operate effectively and achieve its objectives.

From 2016, the values will be a key part of executive and staff performance and development plans because how we behave and how we treat one another is just as important as the work we do.

OUR OUTCOMES

Realising our vision and objectives, and ensuring we consistently embody our values, will require committed and rigorous focus on the impact we are having on outcomes for Victorians.

We have identified four outcome areas in which we seek to achieve excellence:

Achievement	Engagement	Wellbeing
Raise standards of learning and development achieved by Victorians using education, training, development and child health services	Increase the number of Victorians actively participating in education, training, development and child health services	Increase the contribution education, training, development and child health services make to good health and quality of life for all Victorians, particularly children and young people
Productivity		
Increase the productivity of our services		

DET OUTCOMES FRAMEWORK

The Department's Outcomes Framework provides a comprehensive basis for understanding how Victorian learners, from birth to adulthood, are performing against these outcome areas. It includes an extensive, evidence-based suite of measures for monitoring progress at each of the early, interim and long term timeframes across early childhood, school years, higher education and training, and adulthood. The Framework is part of the Department's commitment to evidence-based decision-making to inform the future development of policy.

The Department's Regional Performance Framework (RPF) has been developed to support understanding, measuring and monitoring of performance of Education State initiatives in improving the outcomes of children and young people in Victoria. It will provide a consistent approach to understanding and monitoring whether new investment in regional resources and regional operation are delivering improved outcomes for children and young people.

DET Evaluation

The Department is committed to continuous improvement in delivery of our services, recognising the importance of effective and routine evaluation of our policies, programs and major initiatives. In 2016–17 we will continue to build an evaluation culture that seeks out information on performance and uses it to better manage and deliver on programs and services.

EDUCATION STATE TARGETS

In 2015, the Government set ambitious school education targets for significant improvement over ten years. These targets are drawn from the DET Outcomes Framework, focusing on excellence and equity, and our goal to equip all students with the personal and practical skills for success in life and work.

The targets relate to the success of our system as a whole, across all sectors and for all students (refer Figure 2). Over time, targets for the early childhood development and training and skills sectors will be developed, providing a more comprehensive picture of the level of outcomes sought as we work to become the Education State.

Figure 1: DET Statement of Strategic Intent



Figure 2: Education State Schools Targets

Goal	Ambition	Target
Learning for Life		
	More students excel in reading and mathematics	Over the next five years for Year 5, and the next 10 years for Year 9, 25 per cent more students will be reaching the highest levels of achievement in reading and mathematics.
	More students excel in scientific literacy	Over the next 10 years, there will be a 33 per cent increase in the proportion of 15 year olds reaching the highest levels of achievement in scientific literacy.
	More students excel in the arts	Over the next 10 years, more Victorian students will reach the highest levels of achievement in the arts.
	More students develop strong critical and creative thinking skills	Over the next 10 years, more students will reach the highest levels of achievement in critical and creative thinking.
Happy, healthy and resilient kids		
	More students will be resilient	Over the next 10 years, Victorian students reporting high resilience will grow by 20 per cent.
	More students will be physically active	Over the next 10 years, the proportion of students doing physical activity five times a week will increase by 20 per cent.
Breaking the link		
	Breaking the link	Over the next 10 years, Victoria will reduce the impact of disadvantage on achievement.
	More students stay in education for better pathways	Over the next 10 years, the proportion of students leaving education during Years 9 to 12 will halve.
Pride and confidence in our schools		
	Raise the levels of community pride and confidence in Victorian government schools	Measures to be developed by December 2016.

DET OUTCOME INDICATORS

The Department reports progress in the four DET outcome areas through a set of indicators published in the State Budget Papers, refer Figure 3.

Figure 3: Outcome Indicators in State Budget Papers

Outcome Area	Outcome Indicators
Achievement	Children developmentally 'on track' on the Australian Early Development Census ^(a) (AEDC) in the language and cognitive skills domains
	Proportion of early childhood services meeting or exceeding National Quality Standard Area 1 (NQSA1 - educational program and practice)
	Students meeting the expected standard in national and international literacy and numeracy assessment ^(b)
	Average score in Science (PISA 15 year-olds) in Victoria compared to global top performers ^(b)
	Percentage of positive responses to teacher collaboration within school from the staff satisfaction survey ^(c)
	Year 12 or equivalent vocational qualification completion rates of young people ^(c)
	VET course completions
	Certificate III or above completions
	Proportion of graduates with improved employment status after training
Engagement	Participation in kindergarten service in the year before school
	Participation in Maternal and Child Health services
	Proportion of ECEC services meeting or exceeding NQSA6 (collaborative partnerships with families and communities)
	Mean number of student absent days per Full Time Equivalent (FTE) per year ^(c)
	Mean number of unapproved student absence days per Full Time Equivalent (FTE) per year in secondary schools ^(c)
	Students with a positive opinion about their school providing a stimulating learning environment ^(c)
	Proportion of VET students satisfied with the teaching in their course
	VET enrolments by age and gender
	VET enrolments by administrative regions
	VET enrolments by skills shortage category courses
	VET enrolments by specialised category courses
	VET participation by learners facing barriers
	VET participation by unemployed learners
Wellbeing	Proportion of infants fully or partially breastfed at 3 months and 6 months
	Children developmentally 'on track' on the AEDC social competence and emotional maturity domains ^(a)
	Proportion of children who have no behavioural issues on entry into Prep
	Proportion of children who have no general development issues on entry into Prep

Outcome Area	Outcome Indicators
	Students feeling connected to their school ^(c)
	Students with a positive opinion about their school providing a safe and orderly environment for learning ^(c)
	Level of student satisfaction with VET
Productivity	\$ per kindergarten student per year (or ECIS or MCH)
	\$ per primary school student per year ^(a)
	\$ per secondary school student per year ^(a)
	\$ per VET student contact hour for training

(a) These indicators refer to government and non-government schools.

(b) This indicator refers to government schools for the national assessments and both government and non-government schools for the international assessments.

(c) These indicators refer to government schools.

Each year the Department reports progress against these outcome indicators in its [Annual Report](#)¹, available on the Department's website.

In addition to these outcome indicators, the [State Budget Papers](#)² provide detail on the Department's output performance measures. Further detail is available at the Department of Treasury and Finance website.

¹ <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/department/Pages/annualreports.aspx>

² <http://www.dtf.vic.gov.au/State-Budget/2016-17-State-Budget/Service-Delivery>



CONTEXT: CHALLENGES AND RISKS

Our dynamic economic and social context, the diversity of needs we must meet, and the scale and complexity of the service systems we deliver and regulate highlights the ambition, challenge and opportunity embedded in our vision. Understanding and responding to our challenges and risks, and ensuring that our approaches have a direct line of sight to our vision, will position us to achieve improved outcomes for Victorians.

Victoria's economy is shifting rapidly. There have been – and will continue to be – fundamental and game changing alterations that impact on the nature of work and the type of careers Victorians will have throughout their lives.

This movement, including from a traditional manufacturing base to knowledge and service-based industries, means the Victorian education and training system needs to change and adapt in order to remain relevant to the State's place in a globalised environment. These forces are shaping the market for jobs, and the industries and jobs that will dominate the existing and emerging economies in the years and decades to come.

Victoria's education system – the State's early childhood services, schools, TAFEs, training providers and universities – are key to the State's future success, with skills, knowledge, creativity and adaptability central to the economy and community of the future.

A strongly growing population places immediate and prolonged pressure on our systems to respond to increasing demand, both in established and new communities. Meanwhile, ongoing demographic change will continue reinforcing the imperative to maximise participation and the productivity of Victoria's workforce. This can be expected to be reflected across all educational stages and settings, from growing demand for early childhood services which both give children the best educational start, and are flexible to the changing workforce participation needs of families, through to an increased need and desire for lifelong learning. The changing nature of engagement with education and training services means we will need to better utilise communications technology and easy-to-access online information to ensure all Victorian learners are prepared for the modern, connected world.

Similarly, the challenges of increasing divergence in educational outcomes between learners from different backgrounds means it is more important than ever to give all Victorians, regardless of background or circumstance, the opportunity to shape and reshape their lives through education.

Our approaches, discussed in the next section, respond to these challenges and manage risks that may impact on achieving our goal of making Victoria a world leader in learning and development. High-level risks and broad areas of focus in response to these are outlined in Figure 4, and reflected across these approaches.

Figure 4: High-level risks and areas of focus in response

Risk	Area of focus
Failure to deliver the learning and development outcomes and targets of the Education State as a result of being unable to provide access to and participation in high-quality early childhood, school, higher education and training system services	Deliver on reform agendas to pursue excellence and equity through quality education and training services and infrastructure development
Failure to create an integrated education system that connects sectors and settings, and delivers lifelong involvement in learning for Victorians	Improve system connections and engagement and retention including through the National Quality Framework and new Vocational Education and Training (VET) funding model
Failure to deliver safe, equitable and inclusive early childhood, education and training services for vulnerable learners	Close the gaps for disadvantaged children and young people regardless of personal or social circumstance through system reform, including more targeted funding and data sharing to help identify those at risk of disengagement
Failure to maximise the capability of corporate departmental staff, educators, leaders and employers to deliver quality education outcomes	Deliver an education system that has strong strategies to promote professional development and leadership
Policy makers, educators, support staff and other service providers do not act with integrity, accountability and transparency	Undertake an organisational reform program including improved governance and processes, and leadership initiatives
Education system fails to effectively implement policy and strategy	Increase focus on effective change and program management
Failure to engage key stakeholders effectively	Build partnerships with stakeholders, communities and industry in a changing economy to ensure stakeholder engagement, including opportunities to contribute to the Education State agenda

HOW WE WILL ACHIEVE OUR VISION



Strategy is nothing without a strong plan for how we will get there. We have arranged our structure, processes and leadership to ensure we always have an eye to delivering the best possible early childhood, school education and training outcomes for Victorians. To get there we need to be an organisation with a high-performance culture and strong accountability arrangements. We need a deeply embedded learning culture at every level, including a focus on effective leadership.

OUR APPROACHES

The Department is taking four overarching approaches to achieving our vision:

1. Service and Funding Reform
2. Workforce Strategies and Practices
3. Partnership and Innovation
4. Organisational Reform.

Much work has already been undertaken across these areas. We are now looking forward to implementing some significant priorities for 2016–17, and opportunities over the next four years. The following pages describe our priority work.

APPROACH 1: SERVICE AND FUNDING REFORM

Service and funding reform is about designing systems that respond to the diverse and changing needs of Victorian learners. Delivering effective services and lifting outcomes will require work across the early childhood, schools, and training sectors.

SCHOOL EDUCATION

The Government's vision for the Education State is about giving every child and young person the opportunity to succeed in life, regardless of background, place or circumstance. This means building an education system that aims for excellence and reduces the impact of disadvantage. This agenda is backed by a set of system-wide targets that include a focus on learning for life; happy, healthy and resilient kids; breaking the link and; building pride and confidence in our schools (refer Figure 2 for further information).

To help deliver this aim, from 2016 new equity funding has been introduced for government schools to support students who need extra support. This major funding reform enables schools to better target student need, through the four priorities of our Framework for Improvement Student Outcomes (FISO) being excellence

SERVICE AND FUNDING REFORM

This approach will:

- Give additional, targeted support to Victorians who need it
- Connect settings and sectors to improve transitions and ensure continuity of learning
- Focus on mental and physical health and wellbeing as an integral part of learning and development
- Monitor and improve systems, including by setting standards
- Map demand for services and effectively target resources to community needs
- Use evidence to design and implement policy.

in teaching and learning, creating a positive climate for learning, professional leadership and community engagement in learning (discussed further in Approach 2).

By directing funding where there is greatest need and supporting principals to use it on initiatives that lift student outcomes (i.e. through the FISO), these schools will have funds to increase resources for areas such as the Program for Students with Disabilities (PSD) and English as an additional language (EAL). They can also use it for targeted curriculum areas such as science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM), languages and music.

Framework for Improving Student Outcomes

The FISO was introduced in 2016 to guide schools in using their additional school funding to get the best results for their schools and lift student achievement across the state. This includes a focus on teaching practice and professional leadership, drawing on knowledge exchange, data and evidence use, feedback and coaching and a culture of collaboration and trust.

Drawing on the best available evidence, schools are selecting improvement strategies from a suite of six initiatives to best match the needs of their students, families and communities, supported by access to expert guidance and coaching. Small schools are forming alliances and clusters to pool their resources for the benefit of their students.

In 2016–17 DET will continue to refine resources and support tools, including sharing examples of evidenced and promising practice, as well as evaluating the framework.

Other education reforms

Other education reforms focus on student engagement through the Navigator pilot and LOOKOUT Education Support Centre initiative (discussed further in Approach 3) and other initiatives to improve the quality and provision of VET programs in government secondary schools. We will also be working on reviewing our approach to health and wellbeing funding and services.

The Department has undertaken significant work on implementing the Government's Special Needs Plan, including a review of PSD. Our future work will focus on implementing the Government's response to this review in order to maximise the learning of all students with disabilities.

To improve local approaches to improving outcomes for Aboriginal Victorians, the Government has released *Marrung: Aboriginal Education Plan 2016–2026*. The aspirational vision of *Marrung* is to deliver the ambitious Education State targets and the plan underpins our strong commitment to close the gap in educational outcomes between Koorie and non-Koorie Victorians across early childhood, schools and further education.

Over the next four years, we will continue to improve our school system by building on our new equity funding reforms consistent with the Government's response to the Government School Funding Review released in September 2016.

The Government's response focuses on the following four important reform directions that were major themes in the Government School Funding Review and which build on the Education State schools reform agenda:

- working towards the shared goal of improving outcomes for all students. This goal unites students, schools and sectors and is guided by the Education State targets to focus our efforts across the system
- providing better information for all about school funding, performance and student outcomes used to encourage collaboration, drive school improvement and strengthen accountability
- targeting funding and resources to students in need in pursuit of both excellence and equity, allocating resources efficiently and effectively
- strengthening the school system by increasing support for schools, encouraging collaboration and increasing capability, accompanied by enhancing school accountability through stronger oversight.

EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT

Early childhood development is at the heart of the Victorian Government's vision for the Education State as the first years of life are crucial to lifelong learning, wellbeing and success.

Although Victoria is a leader in Australia in delivering high-quality early childhood services, more can be done to drive continuous improvement so Victorian services are of high quality by international standards.

The Education State early childhood development reform plan will set out the Government's vision to improve quality, participation and access to services to deliver better outcomes for children and their families, including:

- for all young children to be safe, cared for and thriving
- for all children to be engaged, confident and creative learners so that they are primed for success at school and in life
- for all children to have access to high-quality early learning experiences regardless of which early childhood education and care service they attend
- supporting all parents and carers to provide children with positive relationships and experiences for their wellbeing, learning and development
- as children have different starting points and different home environments, children will get the extra support they need, so that vulnerability and disadvantage do not determine their outcomes
- an early childhood system that is focused on the child and family as well as connected and driven by evidence and best practice.

This reform plan will guide the Department's development and delivery of early childhood development service and funding reforms over the next four years and beyond.

The reform plan will be informed by the outcomes from the comprehensive state-wide Education State early childhood consultation undertaken in 2015. In March 2016, the *Stakeholder and Community Engagement Key Findings Report* was released.

The consultation process found broad recognition amongst the early childhood sector and stakeholders of the importance of early childhood development, the benefits of early intervention, strong universal services, greater support for those who need it most, and supporting positive parenting and a high-quality early childhood workforce.

VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING REFORM

From January 2017, Victoria's training and TAFE system will be overhauled through *Skills First*. A new approach to training will be implemented, setting a high benchmark for training quality, and supporting the courses that are most likely to lead to employment.

Skills First builds on the Government's commitment to the training and TAFE system. It will ensure Victoria's training and TAFE system is better managed.

Skills First offers real training for real jobs, through:

- high-quality training that students and industry can trust, aligned to industry and workforce needs
- a real voice for industry in training
- funding for high needs learners who need additional support to engage with and succeed in education and training
- access to targeted, relevant training for students in regional areas.



Through *Skills First*, the Government will ensure industry has a clearer voice in which courses are funded and public money will be well spent.

The new funded course list will comprise courses with strong job outcomes, including apprenticeships and high-value traineeships and courses linked to government priorities that are of greatest value to the Victorian economy.

TAFEs are the engine room for Victorian jobs, delivering around 70 per cent of all apprenticeships and retraining Victorians with skills to help them transition to new jobs. Under *Skills First*, they will be recognised and supported in this critical role.

The Government will continue its significant investment in the training and TAFE system. *Skills First* will deliver a strong, stable, high quality training and TAFE system that gives all Victorians the opportunity to develop the skills they need – and the skills employers want – for jobs today and tomorrow.

Victorian Skills Commissioner

The Government appointed the inaugural Victorian Skills Commissioner in December 2015. The Commissioner plays a central role in engaging with Victorian industry to ascertain the skills and training priorities. This advice feeds into the operation of VET funding.



APPROACH 2: WORKFORCE STRATEGIES AND PRACTICES

The education workforce is at the heart of educational achievement. Without a highly skilled and engaged workforce, the system cannot deliver world class outcomes. It is critical that, across sectors, our educators and those who facilitate their work are given the support, resources and skills they need to succeed.

SCHOOL EDUCATION

Professional Leadership

Through the Bastow Institute of Educational Leadership, the Local Leaders, Expert Leaders and Future Leaders programs are providing support to our current school leaders, as well as building the capacity of future leaders.

Over the next four years we will focus our efforts on building school leadership by substantially increasing principal training and will consider the development of a formal principalship qualification.

Priorities for the next year will include training of new principals through the principal preparation program, delivery of the local and system leaders programs, and rolling out Communities of Practice across all State education networks to enable principals to work and learn together.

Excellence in Teaching and Learning

Acknowledging that improving the quality of teaching in every classroom is the single most important thing we can do to improve student outcomes, the Department has committed to a range of teaching and learning initiatives including:

- support for schools to implement the Victorian Curriculum, including provision of a comprehensive Secondary School Software Suite
- introduction of the STEM Catalysts Program
- training of primary maths and science specialists
- introduction of the Insight Assessment Platform for measuring and tracking students' progress
- introduction of Professional Learning Communities to build system-wide capacity of teachers and school leadership to drive improved student learning.

Over the next four years the Department will implement a range of initiatives to attract high-calibre teachers to improve initial teacher education and build leadership capacity and capability within the school workforce.

EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT

Recent national and state level reforms in the early childhood and development sector have increased staff qualification requirements, improved staff-to-child ratios and introduced universal access to 15 hours of early childhood education.

Quality of the workforce is a key determinant of outcomes for young children. While the Department is not the main employer of this workforce, the Department plays an important role in building capability and performance of our early childhood professionals.

WORKFORCE STRATEGIES AND PRACTICES

This approach will:

- Develop excellence in educational practice, targeted to individual learning and development needs
- Support students to learn independently and contribute to each other's learning
- Build creative and critical thinking through a world-class curriculum
- Build performance, develop capabilities and share expertise across all workforces
- Unify the education system through new pathways between schools and central and regional offices
- Build workforce capacity to support all children, young people and families, regardless of circumstances.

Recent national and state level reforms in the early childhood and development sector have increased staff qualification requirements, improved staff-to-child ratios and introduced universal access to 15 hours of early childhood education.

Quality of the workforce is a key determinant of outcomes for young children. While the Department is not the main employer of this workforce, the Department plays an important role in building capability and performance of our early childhood professionals.

In 2016–17, the Department will support the early childhood sector through the provision of scholarships to individuals to attain or upgrade approved qualifications to meet the requirements under the National Quality Framework.

In addition, early years educators will have access to the Respectful Relationships professional learning program. This learning focuses on building their capacity to model and instil respectful relationships in everything they do with children and their families and lays the foundations for children's long term positive relationships. The professional learning will be aligned with the Victorian Early Learning and Development Framework and National Quality Standards.

The Department will support the early childhood sector through professional development opportunities offered through Bastow and other targeted training (such as Protecting Children, the Intensive Kindergarten Support Program and the Bicultural Support Program). The Department will also commence training educators in the 'Let's Count' program that will benefit pre-schoolers and their families in building maths learning skills.

Over the next four years we will continue to focus on building the capability and supporting the quality of the early childhood development workforce to support all children, young people and families, regardless of circumstances through the Education State early childhood development reform plan.

VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING

The VET workforce comprises a broad range of industry-skilled and experienced trainers, teachers and practitioners who work across TAFE, private providers, Learn Local community providers and dual sector universities.

Quality teaching and training has been an expectation under the Victorian Training Guarantee. The TAFE sector is now positioned to lead on quality improvements and central to this is achieving workforce and practice reform, arguably the single greatest contribution to building an efficient TAFE sector that can deliver training that meets the needs of the economy.

Over the next four years the Department will support the TAFE sector to develop a stronger performance culture and improve its organisational capability. The Department will continue to support professional development of the VET workforce through the VET Development Centre and the Adult Community and Further Education (ACFE) Board for the development of the Learn Local workforce.

APPROACH 3: PARTNERSHIP AND INNOVATION

This approach recognises the central role that innovative approaches and partnerships play in problem solving to ensure our system delivers the best possible outcomes for Victoria.

WORKING WITH OUR STAKEHOLDERS

In making Victoria the Education State, engagement with all parts of the community has been and will continue to be critical to our success in policy design, program development and service delivery.

This means a continued commitment to engaging effectively with students, parents, carers, teachers and education providers across early childhood, schools, vocational training and higher education as well as peak bodies, local communities, the community sector, business, industry and other government agencies. The Department works collaboratively to build and maintain relationships with our stakeholders and values their diverse experience, knowledge and opinions.

Cross-government collaboration

Collaboration across government continues to be essential to help deliver on our strategic directions and priorities as part of the Education State. Significant work is undertaken in partnership with Victorian Government central agency departments – the Department of Premier and Cabinet (DPC) and the Department of Treasury and Finance (DTF) – to progress whole-of-government reforms that benefit all Victorians, such as delivering a respectful relationships program across Victorian schools and early years services in response to the Royal Commission into Family Violence. The Department will also be working across government in 2016–17 to facilitate shared, coordinated efforts to support achievement of Education State school targets, and to align area-based partnerships and relevant reform agendas.

Our relationship with the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) is being strengthened to improve outcomes for Victoria's most vulnerable children and families and better connect services within communities. A key area of focus in 2016–17 is working with DHHS on a coordinated approach to the *Roadmap for Reform: strong families, safe children* to create services that meet the needs of vulnerable families and children, and to develop ways of working together better to share information – particularly at the local level.

This work with DHHS will include a new service for families who need the most support in their child's first years. The new service will draw on strong evidence, expanding and bringing together the best parts of existing early intervention programs Cradle to Kinder, right@home and Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies. This will support the forthcoming Education State early childhood development reform plan.

The Department also works closely with the Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources (DEDJTR) so that education and training provision is aligned with industry needs and to promote international education as a growing export industry. In 2016–17 the Department will work with DEDJTR on implementing the Government's International Education sector strategy.

We will also work with DEDJTR and other government departments to implement Regional Partnerships that will bring a whole-of-government lens to the complex issues facing regional communities.

PARTNERSHIP AND INNOVATION

This approach will:

- Work with providers, employers, not for profits, families, children and young people to develop new approaches and share best practice
- Strengthen learning, health and wellbeing through stronger place-based partnerships
- Strengthen career pathways for learners while meeting the needs of business and industry
- Prepare learners to be global citizens and provide them with the skills to succeed in a fast-changing world
- Partner with other agencies, Departments and levels of government to deliver outcomes.



The Department negotiates constructively with the Commonwealth Government to pursue Victoria's interests and lead policy development at intergovernmental forums. For example, the Department is working closely with the Commonwealth and other States and Territories to transition from the paper-based delivery of NAPLAN to online delivery, with phased implementation commencing from 2017.

During 2016–17 the Department will work with DPC and DTF to undertake school funding negotiations with the Commonwealth to secure funding certainty for Victorian schools from 2018.

The Department will also work alongside DPC and DTF to advocate for the renegotiation of the National Partnership Agreement on Skills Reform to secure funding beyond its expiry in June 2017 and suitable ongoing funding arrangements for the National Partnership Agreement on Universal Access to Early Childhood Education that expires in December 2017.

Cross-agency collaboration

Partnership agreements with peak bodies are also significant and represent key stakeholders who contribute to the Department's vision and objectives. These include the Municipal Association of Victoria on behalf of local government and the Victorian Council of Social Service representing the Victorian community sector.

The Department is also involved in the development of major strategic planning policies across government, working with local councils, the Metropolitan Planning Authority and other education providers. This supports our ability to participate in the planning of new communities and in planning for future early years, school, higher education and community service provision across Victoria. In addition, the newly created Victorian School Building Authority, established to manage and deliver on the investment in school infrastructure in Victoria will actively engage with the community and stakeholders to ensure school building projects are meeting community needs.

Cross-agency partnerships are a particular hallmark of the implementation of the Government's Tech Schools initiative, which will see ten high-tech centres of learning established across the state. The initiative involves multiple stakeholders, locations and a diverse range of education programs, with the local partnership for each Tech School including secondary schools, TAFE institutes, universities, local government and industry-body representatives. Collaboration between these partners will ensure that development and operation will be driven by local knowledge, insight and needs.

POSITIVE CLIMATE AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT IN LEARNING

We know that families are children's first educators and play a critical role in fostering their learning, health and wellbeing from birth and throughout their life. The Department will continue to work with families, carers and the community to increase awareness of the importance of the early years, and how they can give children the best start in life.

To support the engagement of those students at risk of leaving education we are implementing the Navigator pilot in eight areas across the state to support disengaged teenagers to return to school. The establishment of the LOOKOUT Education Support Centre initiative will support children in out-of-home care to get the best out of their education. To do this we work in close partnership with a range of organisations.

The Government works in partnership with training providers to encourage Victorians to participate in skills development. Well targeted training and support improves job prospects and careers development for those who participate.

TAFEs and Learn Locals and contracted community-based training organisations play a particularly important role in reaching out to those who may be reluctant to enrol in training. These providers also act as hubs to engage with the community.

Investment in TAFEs will ensure they can deliver strong outcomes that align with the State's economic and employment needs. The TAFE Rescue Fund provides \$200 million over four years in community service funding which supports the role TAFEs play in providing essential support for training and jobs, life skills that complement a student's formal learning and education, support services to students such as counselling services and libraries and extra support for the most disadvantaged in our community. The \$50 million TAFE Back to Work Fund will support TAFE institutes to deliver training that leads to jobs.

Vulnerable young people who leave school early often face multiple barriers to re-engaging in education and training and transitioning to the workforce or further training. The Reconnect Program will provide young early school leavers or long term unemployed youth with the wrap around supports they need to re-engage in education and training and into employment.

Over the next four years, we will continue to improve the connection of education and allied health services with other government and community services. We will also take action to support the Student Support Services workforce, help schools to build community support for learning by investigating ways to give students a stronger voice in their learning, and increase the engagement of parents and carers as partners in their children's education.

APPROACH 4: ORGANISATIONAL REFORM

This approach captures how we work, focussing on the highest standards of public sector conduct, including strong public sector leadership. Basing all of our activity and relationships on these standards and values (integrity, accountability, impartiality, respect, responsiveness, leadership and human rights) not only allows us to meet the expectations of government and Victorians, they give us the capacity to deliver on our vision.

We have clear expectations for the kind of organisation we want and need to be, reflecting three key themes:

- a high-performance culture with effective performance systems
- accountability at every level
- ongoing learning and improvement.

These themes, described in Figure 5, provide a framework for how we measure whether, as an organisation, we are heading in the right direction.

ORGANISATIONAL REFORM

This approach will:

- Promote public sector leadership and the highest standards of governance, integrity and conduct
- Build inclusive workplaces based on public sector values
- Ensure use of resources provides value for money and meets community expectations
- Establish shared responsibility and clear accountability for decisions
- Provide stronger, more direct and place-based support to schools, services and providers.

Figure 5: DET Organisational Reform Themes

Performance	Strong accountability	Learning culture
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• We will have a culture of delivering high performance, where everyone knows what they need to do and is focused on achieving the best education and learning outcomes for Victoria.• We will work together to meet our targets and measure our progress.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• We will be accountable to students, parents and families and the public. We will also be accountable as individuals for our decisions and our actions and we will treat all people with respect.• Our people will take the responsibility they have seriously, whether it's teaching young people or working to build the system that supports learning in Victoria.• At every level people will know what they are accountable for, and they will do what they say they're going to do.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Our mission is to support learning and we are a learning organisation. Our leaders will model the behaviours they ask of staff and we will continue to build our people's skills and invest in their development.• We will use evidence well, drawing on data and evidence to improve what we do.• We will share information and ideas with each other and with the organisations we work with to improve the education system in Victoria.

Organisational Reform Program

The Department's Organisational Reform program is focused on these themes, and is critical to enable the Department to deliver the Education State agenda. It sits alongside the comprehensive work programs for the education system, including schools, early childhood and VET.

DET Operating Model

The Department has introduced a new way of working, both centrally and in the regions. The DET Operating Model describes at a high level the shift the department is making to how it works to support the vision of the Education State. To align our ways of working with the Operating Model, a comprehensive work program is being implemented focussed on improving governance, key business processes, information management, use of technology and most importantly supporting and developing our staff.

DET will further develop and embed elements of the Operating Model program, including additional work on culture change, improved processes, and governance and decision-making.

DET Regional Service Delivery Model

Alongside the new DET Operating Model, a new regional service delivery model, Learning Places, is being implemented. Learning Places is a model of place-based service delivery which focusses on improving the level of support the department provides to different parts of the education system and to local communities.

The Department has created 17 Areas within the existing four Regions and by the end of 2016 will have appointed approximately 150 additional staff to support this major investment in supporting schools at a local level. The Government is reinvesting in regions to achieve better outcomes for learners and their families.

The model has been designed to create a system where learners and families have the best possible support, so we will make it easier for learners and their families to access support and services where they live. The model is focused on place-based service delivery to allow localised, tailored and integrated decision-making, service and support.

Integrity Reform Program

Over the next year, DET will further develop and progress its Integrity Reform Program as part of the broader organisational reform agenda. The program addresses systemic issues raised during IBAC's Operations Ord and Dunham hearings and the findings and recommendations of the Operation Ord, tabled in April 2016, through a coordinated and dedicated focus on good governance, ethical leadership, effective systems and controls and staff development and support. Through a range of projects, the program is strengthening our oversight and accountability for public spending and improving our adherence to the public sector values; both of which are essential to upholding public trust. The Department's response to any recommendations in the forthcoming Operations Dunham report will also form part of our ongoing Integrity Reform work.

Investing in our People

The Department supports a capable and high-performing workforce with strong leadership, and a culture of integrity, accountability and respect. The "Investing in our People" strategy is currently under development and will contain five key areas that represent a clear focus for action: leadership capability; workforce capability; culture of integrity and respect, safe and inclusive workplaces and accountability for outcomes. These elements will work together to provide an holistic and balanced approach to ensuring our people are capable, able to perform at their best, and feel empowered, valued and supported.

Procurement and Financial Management

The Department is implementing procurement, funding and financial management reforms. The reforms will deliver a strengthened finance function and Financial Services Division structure, including enhanced analytics, strategy and capability; a school targeted funding framework and risk based assessment of all Department funding channels; a new school procurement framework including supporting training, support programs and data analytics; a new DET procurement operating model; and a new DET travel policy and guidelines.

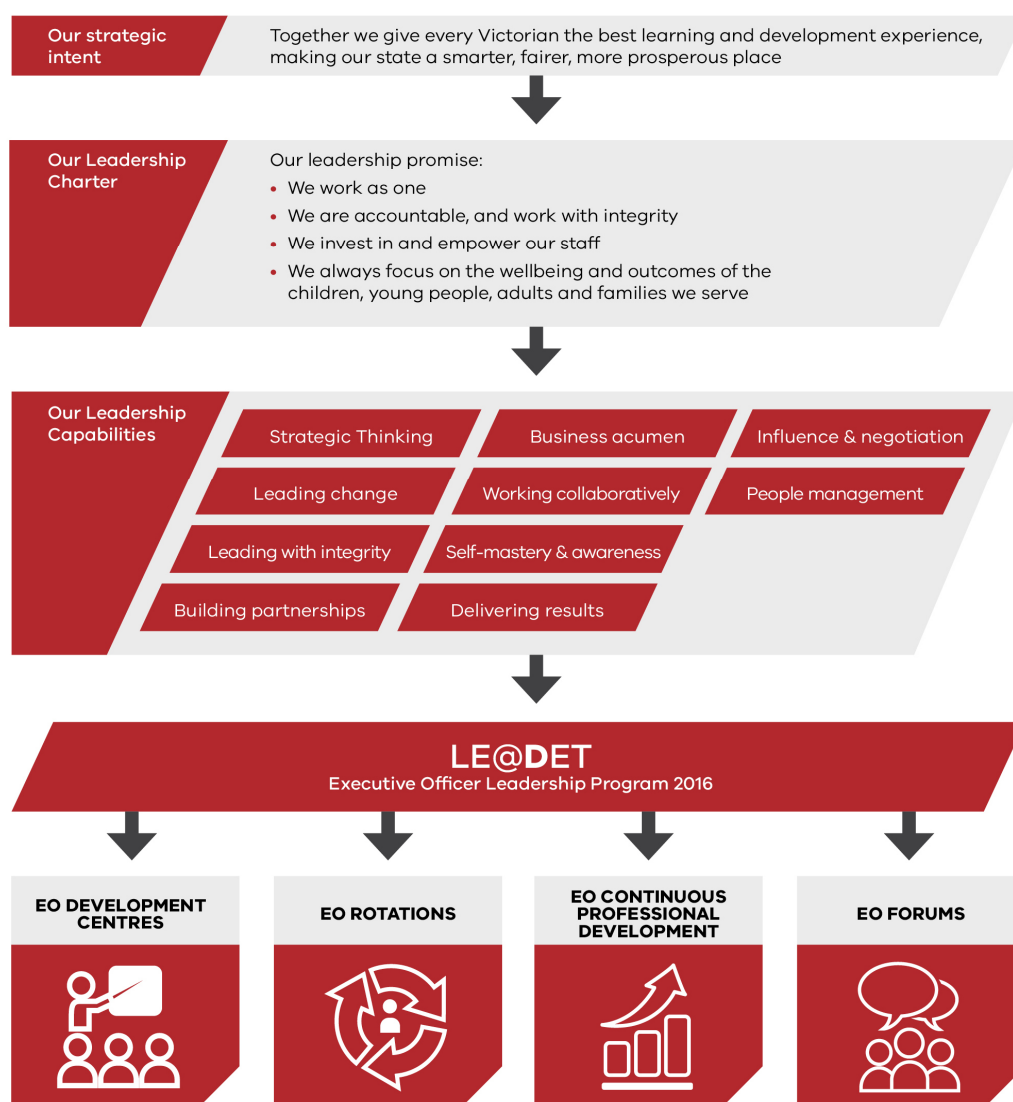
A Focus on Leadership

While building the systems and support our people need to achieve improved outcomes, the Department's leadership group also recognises the need to continually develop their skills and capacities to lead and facilitate this work effectively.

In 2016, the Department's leadership group committed to a new leadership charter that articulates the capabilities and expectations our senior leaders will demonstrate in order to realise the vision outlined in our Statement of Strategic Intent.

A significant leadership development program is underway which aims to build leadership capability in our executive team across ten key capabilities (refer Figure 6 below). A four-pronged program including the Executive Development Centre, forums, an executive rotation program and Continuous Professional Development Program will be delivered to every executive in the department, including the Executive Board and will provide focus in the development of individual performance plans.

Figure 6: Department Executive Officer Leadership Program 2016



OPERATING ENVIRONMENT



The Department is responsible for delivering and regulating state-wide learning and development services. Our services reach around one-third of all Victorians every year across the early childhood, school education and training and skills sectors.

Our services are outlined in Figure 7.

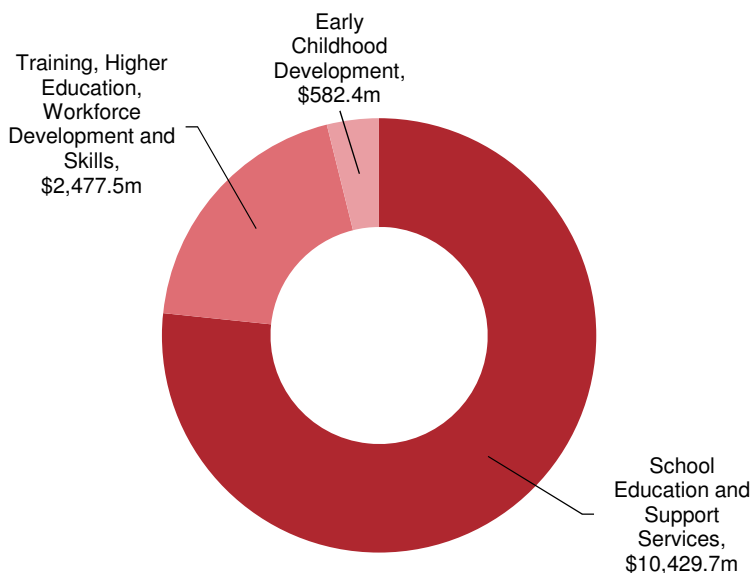
Figure 7: Department services

Early childhood development	School education	Training and skills
Birth to 8	5 to 18	15 to 65+
More than 400,000 children and families	More than 932,000 students	More than 377,000 in government subsidised vocational education and training and 340,000 university enrolments (domestic and international)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maternal and child health services • Early years learning and development including early childhood education and care services • Early childhood intervention services • Supported playgroups and parenting supports 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Primary education • Secondary education • Special education • Health and wellbeing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technical and Further Education (TAFEs) • Universities • Private registered training providers • Learn Locals
We have a diverse range of public, private and not-for-profit providers serving Victorians of all ages:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More than 4000 approved education and care services that provide long day care, kindergarten, outside school hours care, and family day care and approximately 420 licensed children's services that provide limited hour services such as occasional care • 652^(a) maternal and child health service locations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1524 government schools • 703 non-government schools (493 Catholic schools and 210 independent schools) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 12 TAFE institutes • 8 public universities (4 of which are dual-sector universities that also provide vocational education and training), 1 specialised university and campuses of the multi-state Australian Catholic University • 318 community owned and managed not for profit organisations registered with the Adult Community and Further Education Board as Learn Local organisations eligible to deliver pre-accredited training • 436 government contracted private registered training organisations

(a) as at June 2013

The Department's total output cost for 2016–17 is \$13.49 billion, as per the 2016–17 State Budget papers. A breakdown across the output categories is shown in Figure 8:

Figure 8: Department output cost breakdown 2016–17



Notes:

1. Estimated corporate costs of approximately \$280m are spread across each of the outputs above
2. School Education and Support Services' funding includes: (1) School Education – Primary, (2) School Education – Secondary, (3) Strategy, Review and Regulation, (4) Support Services Delivery and (5) Support for Students with Disabilities.

FINANCIAL OUTLOOK

The 2016–17 Budget delivers new output and asset funding of more than \$2 billion across all three portfolios over five years to implement the Government's election commitments, and move Victoria towards becoming the Education State.

Early Childhood Development

The 2016–17 Budget provided more than \$188 million for vital early childhood initiatives that offer intensive in-home support for families, cater for increased demand for early childhood services in Melbourne's growth areas and provide extra support to small rural kindergartens.

Key investments include:

- more than \$133 million to continue providing high-quality Maternal and Child Health (MCH) services (which includes more than \$2 million to help MCH centres communicate more effectively with parents, including culturally and linguistically diverse communities)
- more than \$32 million to develop a new intensive in-home early childhood support service for families experiencing significant challenges in their lives
- \$1.6 million to support work with Aboriginal communities to jointly design and deliver higher quality and more culturally responsive MCH services
- \$10 million to build early childhood facilities in Melbourne's growth areas, an improved approach to planning for our future needs
- \$4.4 million to support small kindergartens in rural areas which currently struggle to cover operational costs due to fluctuating enrolments.

School Education

A total of \$1.8 billion in output and asset funding has been allocated to school education in the 2016–17 Budget to implement the next phase of the Education State reform agenda.

Within this amount, \$645 million over five years has been allocated to initiatives which have been proven to improve the outcomes of Victoria's school students, including:

- \$43.8 million for the Doctors in Secondary Schools initiative, which will allow students at 100 government secondary schools to access the health care they need
- \$1.5 million to expand the Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden program to teach more kids about healthy eating
- \$21.8 million for Respectful Relationships education across Victorian schools and for professional learning for early childhood educators
- \$42.2 million to support refugees, asylum seekers and new arrivals through the English as an Additional Language services and support Community Language Schools that provide after-hours language education.

\$1.1 billion in asset funding has been allocated to the largest school infrastructure investment ever in Victoria. This consists of a \$726 million TEI for government school infrastructure plus funding for maintenance, establishment of ten Tech Schools, the Doctors in Schools initiative and asbestos removal.

Training, Higher Education, Workforce Development and Skills

The Higher Education and Skills output has been renamed to Training, Higher Education, Workforce Development and Skills. This recognises the continuum of vocational education and training and higher education in the role of supporting students and communities by working with industry and employers to help deliver skills, to grow jobs, and to meet the needs of the workforce and the economy. The 2016–17 Budget builds on the \$320 million investment in TAFE in last year's budget, which is continuing to flow to the sector. Funding in 2016–17 includes:

- \$14 million for the development and establishment of a new industry engagement framework led by the Victorian Skills Commissioner, which will provide a structured way for industry, unions and employers to examine emerging skills needs across the economy and identify new industry training priorities
- \$20 million Reconnect program will assist vulnerable young people who have left school early and those who are long-term unemployed to get back into training and work
- \$5 million provided for new Plumbing Industry Climate Action Centre facilities in Geelong and Narre Warren to deliver students and the existing workforce with specialised plumbing training

\$10 million for Monash University for Stage 2 of the redevelopment of its Alexander Theatre.

The Training, Higher Education, Workforce Development and Skills output also recognises the role skills development and workforce development can play to support growth industries and support people into jobs. The Department works across Government to support these outcomes.

ASSET OUTLOOK

DET delivers services to more than two million Victorians with diverse learning and development needs across the early childhood, school education and higher education and skills portfolios every year. To achieve the Government's vision for the Education State, Victorians need access to 21st century facilities which reflect contemporary knowledge about effective teaching and learning.

In response to population growth and the need to upgrade facilities, the Government has allocated over \$1.1 billion in the 2016–17 Budget to assets and the infrastructure operating budget across all three portfolios.

Early Childhood Development

There is growing demand for early childhood services and infrastructure brought about by population growth and by the need to ensure disadvantaged and vulnerable families are supported to access kindergarten, including children in rural communities.

The 2016–17 Budget provided \$10 million to build early childhood facilities in Melbourne's growth areas, and an improved approach to planning for our future needs. This builds upon the \$50 million provided in last year's budget for building and upgrading kinders and children's centres across the state.



The move towards more structured asset management process includes supporting improved alignment in the planning for and co-location of new schools and early childhood facilities.

School Education

The 2016–17 Budget includes \$1.1 billion to plan, acquire land for, and build 23 new government schools and upgrade 147 schools across the state including upgrades at 20 specialist schools.

This figure also includes \$200 million over four years to maintain schools across the state, and dedicated funding for 12 new government schools to be built or completed in Melbourne's fastest growing areas such as Bayside, Whittlesea, Cardinia, Wyndham, Stonnington, Port Phillip and Melton. Innovative architectural design such as vertical schools will be a key feature in meeting the needs of inner-city communities, including \$44 million for a new primary school at Ferrars St in Port Phillip and \$42 million for a new high school in Richmond.

In addition, a \$102 million investment has been made to buy land for 11 new government schools in growing communities including Hume, Geelong, Melton, Casey, Dandenong, Whittlesea, Wyndham and Yarra.

The 2016–17 Budget also allocated significant funding to improve the existing 1,524 government schools across the State, including:

- \$375 million to upgrade 147 schools across the state including funding for 60 projects in rural and regional Victoria and 20 specialist schools
- \$63.6 million to buy approximately 230 relocatable classrooms to ease the pressure on Victorian schools
- \$200 million in operating costs for maintenance funding to keep schools in good condition
- \$28 million to increase the removal of asbestos in schools, informed by the asbestos audit. This includes:
 - \$10 million to replace 80 relocatable classrooms (40 buildings) that contain high amounts of asbestos and are scheduled for demolition
 - \$18 million for asbestos removal in permanent buildings and school grounds
- \$50 million to deliver community assets on school sites to enhance the role of the school within the community.

The 2016–17 Budget includes \$92 million to establish 10 Tech Schools at six TAFEs and four universities across Victoria along with \$24 million over four years and \$8.4 million ongoing in operating funding once constructed. This builds on the \$730 million committed for school infrastructure in the 2015–16 Budget.

A new Victorian School Building Authority has been established to manage and deliver on the investment in school infrastructure in Victoria. The Authority brings together the Department's existing expertise in project management with the latest ideas in school design. These, along with a dedicated community consultation team, will deliver the right schools for local communities.

The Authority will emphasise community and stakeholder engagement to ensure school building projects are meeting community needs.

The 2016–17 Budget provided \$895 million total estimated investment (TEI) package of capital works for schools.

	2015–16 (\$m)	2016–17 (\$m)	2017–18 (\$m)	2018–19 (\$m)	2019–20 (\$m)	TEI (\$m)
School Education (2016–17 Budget TEI)	33.7	337.4	380.7	139.5	3.8	895.0

Including the 2016–17 budget initiatives, the total expenditure to be undertaken from 2016–17 on departmental capital projects is approximately \$2.5 billion.

Higher Education and Skills

In the Higher Education and Skills portfolio the 2016–17 Budget allocated \$10 million over two years to Monash University for Stage 2 of the redevelopment of its Alexander Theatre.

To support the TAFE sector, the Government established the \$320 million TAFE Rescue Fund to repair TAFE finances and rebuild the TAFE sector. Funds invested under the TAFE Rescue Fund contribute directly to improving the capital position of TAFE Institutes. \$100 million of the TAFE Rescue Fund was allocated for asset funding, and has been used to re-open closed TAFE campuses and upgrade TAFE buildings, workshops and labs. To date, \$70.8 million of the \$100 million has been committed to projects, with allocation of the remaining \$29.2 million of funding to be determined by the Minister.

WORKFORCE OUTLOOK

The Department's central structure includes seven groups:

1. People and Executive Services Group
2. Infrastructure and Finance Services Group
3. Policy Reform Group
4. Strategy and Performance Group
5. Early Childhood and School Education Group
6. Higher Education and Skills Group
7. Regional Services Group.

The Department's structure includes the Victorian School Building Authority, established in May 2016 to oversee and strengthen delivery of the Government's school infrastructure program.

The Department also comprises two other major authorities – the Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority and the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority.

Early Childhood Development

To ensure the quality of the early childhood education and care service, providers are required to comply with the National Quality Framework (NQF). The NQF aims to raise quality and drive continuous improvement and consistency in education and care services, with a focus on outcomes for children. This includes requirements for minimum workforce qualification levels and skills, and increased minimum educator to child ratios from 2016. Further changes from 2020 will require a second early childhood teacher to be in attendance at long day care and kindergarten services.

Population growth and increasing demand for MCH services, together with the composition and age of the MCH workforce, will require an increasing focus on recruitment and retention of MCH nurses. DET continues to support of the MCH workforce through the MCH Scholarship Program, specific professional development opportunities, conferences and the sector leadership provided by the Principal MCH Nurse Advisor.

The supply and quality of the early childhood education and care workforce, including the qualifications, skills and professionalism required to support a quality system, will be a critical focus area for the Department. The Department will continue to work closely with the sector to support improved workforce quality in the context of a growing population.

School Education

The Department is reviewing the workforce impact of population growth, advances in technology, expectations of parents and the community, and changes in the economy on the operating environments of schools.

The Department continues to improve Victoria's ability to attract, identify and develop a diverse range of candidates with the right skills and attributes to make great leaders within the teaching community. The Department continues to focus on attracting nurses with the skills to identify and support children with health and wellbeing related learning difficulties through the School Nursing Program. This is supported by direct focus on improving and building a learning culture, for educators and strengthening leadership across the school workforce.

The approach also recognises the importance of child's health and wellbeing to their capacity to learn and thrive. The allied health workforce working within our schools, in particular nurses and Student Support Service staff are valuable support to respond to the health and wellbeing needs and to ensure student remain engaged in education and provide specialist skills and expertise that can support teachers building their capability.

Higher Education and Skills

The Government response to the Review of Quality Assurance in Victoria's VET System outlined a number of actions aimed at lifting the quality and integrity of trainer and assessor qualifications. In response, the Department has:

- established a list of providers approved to deliver trainer and assessor qualifications within the government funded system, released on 1 July 2016
- introduced into the 2016 VET funding contracts a requirement for providers to establish and maintain a register of their trainers and assessors, including their qualifications in training and assessment and relevant industry experience. Providers are required to be providing this information to the Department on request.

The Department has also conducted research into the capabilities required of high-quality VET teachers to improve student outcomes. This will support longer term initiatives designed to ensure good training practices characterises vocational education in Victoria, led by public providers.

