

Education QoN
Public Accounts and Estimates Committee
Inquiry into the 2026-27 budget estimates hearings

Response to Question on Notice

Portfolio	Education
Witness	Andrea Del Monaco
Committee member	Richard Riordan
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Excerpt from transcript

Richard RIORDAN: Changing topic again, to teacher workforce shortages. In the Victorian Teacher Workforce Snapshot 2024 the government forecast Victoria will face a shortage of more than 2000 teachers by 2030, including a deficit of some 1675 secondary teachers and more than 400 primary teachers. How many vacancies are there for primary and secondary school teachers in Victoria currently?

Ben CARROLL: Thank you, Mr Riordan. Firstly, can I thank our school staff, who get up every day and do not just teach our kids but believe in them, uplift them and shape their futures. We are continuing to attract some of the brightest into our teaching workforce. Since 2019 the Allan Labor government has invested over \$1.9 billion. There are over 14,000 more registered teachers in Victoria in 2025–26 compared to what there were in 2020. More than 4700 school staff are employed in the Victorian public service.

Richard RIORDAN: Minister, how many vacancies are there?

Ben CARROLL: I will come to that. I just need to also talk about – the way you address the vacancies is what we have done with our enterprise bargaining agreement. But outside of that, there is about \$1.9 billion I think we have invested in paid placements and placement supports in addition to the work we are doing around the Victorian Academy of Teaching and Leadership. We are doing everything we can and opened up 19 new schools at the start of this year.

Richard RIORDAN: And the vacancy figure?

Ben CARROLL: There were no vacancies when I –

Richard RIORDAN: So there are no secondary vacancies and no primary vacancies at this time?

Ben CARROLL: We are always continuing to recruit. We are always seeing steady improvement in more people wanting to be teachers. You look at the university enrolments that are occurring for –

Richard RIORDAN: So your evidence is there are no secondary vacancies and no primary school vacancies?

Ben CARROLL: No. There will be some vacancies.

Richard RIORDAN: Do you have the figure?

Ben CARROLL: I do not have the exact figure on me at the moment.

Richard RIORDAN: Could you provide it on notice, perhaps?

Ben CARROLL: We could look at that. We are very proud of our teacher workforce. Andrea?

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Andrea DEL MONACO: Thanks for your question. I looked at the data last night. There is always a turnover of people applying for different jobs. Job postings: when we compare 2024, 2025, 2026, there is significant improvement year on year between those three years. Applications and the number of people applying for jobs have significantly improved.

Richard RIORDAN: Could you provide that to the –

Andrea DEL MONACO: At the moment they are ticks in terms of growth, but I can see what I can provide as supplementary information. And then in terms of the number of positions that get advertised, that is significantly down on previous years. And the number of unique applicants that we have is growing.

Richard RIORDAN: You do not just have a straight figure for those, do you?

Andrea DEL MONACO: No. We use multiple pieces of data to bring that information together, and they are all signalling an improvement from 2023, which was our most challenging period, and continued improvement right through to 2025. And indications are 2026 is continuing.

Richard RIORDAN: So you will supply on notice those actual figures?

Ben CARROLL: We will have a look at it, Mr Riordan. What we do know, what the figures probably can supply, is if we have a look at what is being advertised at the moment in terms of vacancies, that will then give you the figures that you are after.

Richard RIORDAN: Okay. In the time we have got, on this related issue about vacancies, it is about principals. How many acting principals and acting assistant principals are currently in the system? And the reason I ask that – I speak particularly of my own electorate – is I never have the same principal at the same school. They move like yo-yos. The principal is at this school and then is at this one and then that one – they are all over the place, and they are all acting. What is the current level of acting principals and assistant principals in the system today?

Ben CARROLL: I might pass to the Deputy Secretary Dr Howes to answer that.

David HOWES: I do not have that exact data as of today at hand, but one of the one of the interesting things that we are seeing, Mr Riordan, is the number of applications for principal roles for each vacancy is going up, and that does run –

Richard RIORDAN: That is good. I am glad people are applying, but I just want to know, because certainly delivering outcomes to schools, particularly in regional communities, when the same principal is not there for very long, is a real drawback for the school. What are those figures and can you supply them to the committee?

Ben CARROLL: Mr Riordan, there are less advertisements for education, staff and principals –

Richard RIORDAN: Do we know a figure?

Ben CARROLL: We will –

Richard RIORDAN: Provide that on notice?

Ben CARROLL: No, we will go away and see what the vacancy rates are and see if we can have a look at that and see if that can help you with the answer you are looking for.

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Richard RIORDAN: And you can provide that?

The CHAIR: Thank you, Minister. Mr Riordan, your time is up. We are going to go to Mr Tak.

Answer:

Schools advertise roles to backfill for staff on short term leave, for known future staff movements, to support growing programs (example disability inclusion reforms) and to fill vacancies. As-at 11 May 2026, there were 544 active advertisements for teaching staff roles, of which 255 were in primary schools and 289 were in secondary schools. With over 60,000 teachers employed in Victorian government schools, current advertisements represent only around 1% of the workforce. Over the last three years, job advertisements have steadily reduced whilst application rates have increased.

Teaching staff metric	2024	2025	2026	% Improvement 2024 to 2026
Active job advertisements ¹	877	668	544	38%
Job advertisement rate ²	43.8	37.4	31.5	28%
Application rate ³	3.4	3.9	6.3	85%
Application rate - Principal roles ³	3.6	3.9	5.2	44%

Notes

1. As-at May of indicated year.
2. Total advertisements over 12 months to end-April of indicated year, per 100 teachers employed.
3. Applications received per advertised role, on average over 12 months to end-April of indicated year.

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Portfolio	Education
Witness	Joanne Wandel
Committee member	Jade Benham
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Excerpt from transcript

Jade BENHAM: Thank you, Chair. Morning, Minister. Morning, officials. I want to talk about the VSBA this morning. Minister, could you provide the number of schools currently identified as being in poor or very poor condition under the department's asset condition assessments?

Ben CARROLL: Sure, Ms Benham. I do have the Chief Executive Officer of the VSBA here with me today, and I might get her to supplement my answer. But I want to say at the outset: not since free education was introduced in 1872 has there been a school building program on the scale that is happening right here in Victoria. We are not only modernising and building more schools, we are doing everything we can to get them completed ahead of schedule and on time. When we came to government, we did inherit an infrastructure capital works program for our schools that was a disaster – an absolute disaster – with only 14.1 per cent of school capital works being delivered on time. Under the Victorian School Building Authority – credit to the CEO and the team she leads – 91.9 per cent of projects are now delivered on time. That improvement, between two financial years, is 264 days. So we are upgrading schools on a scale that has never been seen before. Of the 1600 government schools, Ms Benham, that you raised, catering for some 665,000 students, since 2015 \$6.8 billion has been allocated to 2400 upgrades at 1250 government schools, and I know, as someone who represents a regional area, metropolitan schools have received 57 per cent of these upgrades at nearly 720 schools, totalling \$4.9 billion – that is 72 per cent; regional schools have received 43 per cent of these upgrades at over 530 schools for a cost of nearly \$1.9 billion.

Jade BENHAM: Well, can I just ask about that, Minister. There are still regional schools – and I know there is one example in Mildura West, who have had two master plans completed and only one building of that master plan completed, and some buildings are being held together by chipboard. So can I ask how regional schools and how funding might be prioritised and not funnelled through to where it was originally planned? Two master plans are, I would think, plenty of planning still not delivered.

Ben CARROLL: Ms Benham, we have delivered some \$65 million into schools in the electorate of Mildura across 29 public schools, including \$14 million at the Mildura Specialist School. We are really proud of the investment, in this budget, of \$500,000 at Cardross Primary School through the Capital Works Fund. We have always said we have got more work to do, but I might ask Ms Wandel if she wants to supplement my answer.

Joanne WANDEL: Thank you, Minister. And thanks, Ms Benham, for your question. The minister was talking about the rolling facilities evaluation process, which is the five-year assessment cycle that the Victorian School Building Authority undertakes to assess the condition of all schools. In answer to your question, it is a very difficult question to answer, because as soon as that condition assessment report is approved by the school, the Victorian School Building

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Authority then attends to remediating any defects that are identified within that report, and those defects are identified within six to 12 months of that report.

Jade BENHAM: So how would a school get away with having some learning buildings held together by chipboard because of termite damage over the course of nearly 10 years?

Joanne WANDEL: The planned maintenance – what I would first say is that delivering new schools and upgrading existing ones is obviously a key priority, but these works do need to be staged. I am aware that you are talking about Mildura West, and we have had conversations with the principal there –

Jade BENHAM: I know.

Joanne WANDEL: and we are aware that there would be a preference to demolish the existing building and to deliver a new one. But the Victorian school buildings policy is that demolition of existing buildings is only an outcome when those facilities are set outside the scheduled area, so they are no longer required. In this instance, those learning areas are required, so more than \$600,000 has been invested through a planned maintenance program project to improve upgrades to that main building. We also invested I believe \$1.152 million in the 2024–25 financial year as part of an emergency maintenance program, working with the school to address electrical rewiring and termite damage to that building.

Jade BENHAM: Would it not be more cost-efficient and effective to just complete the master plan?

Joanne WANDEL: As I said, these upgrades at existing schools do need to be staged, and some of the factors that are taken into account are the disruption to the school. Obviously we are working within a live operating environment. I am looking at enrolment numbers, looking at capacity. The planned maintenance program is exactly there to identify and remedy defects within schools. As the minister said, we have 1600 schools across the state – 35,000 buildings – and the planned maintenance program is an appropriate program to remedy defects within schools.

Jade BENHAM: So out of those 1600 schools, can you tell me how many have been identified as being in poor or very poor condition?

Joanne WANDEL: As I said, the rolling facilities evaluation is a five-year assessment cycle.

Jade BENHAM: As of today.

Joanne WANDEL: We undertake approximately 300 condition assessments on an annual basis. As soon as defects are identified, the planned maintenance program works to remedy those defects. So a school may have a particular score at a point in time, but as soon as those works are undertaken that score becomes irrelevant.

Jade BENHAM: So as of today, how many schools are in poor or very poor condition?

Joanne WANDEL: It is a fluid question. We would be conducting rolling facilities evaluations at schools today. All of those assessments would result in a condition assessment score that we then move forward to remedy.

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Jade BENHAM: But we know that there is an answer to this. Let us take, for example, last week then – you would have the data there of condition scores.

Joanne WANDEL: But as we are continually doing maintenance, the condition scores are remedied.

Jade BENHAM: Okay. Are you able to provide a list for the end of May – what day are we on? No, it will not be the end of May – for the end of April on what the assessments were?

Ben CARROLL: Ms Benham, in this budget \$551.6 million over five years is going – including \$130 million to ongoing essential maintenance.

Jade BENHAM: That is not the question, though. I am after –

Ben CARROLL: This means, though, from 2027 this is –

Jade BENHAM: Minister, with respect, I am after an idea on the number of schools. I am not worried about the investment. I am worried about the number of school buildings and schools that are in poor or very poor condition.

Ben CARROLL: When we receive our condition reports, the Department of Education works with the schools to identify any defects.

Jade BENHAM: I get that. Yes.

Ben CARROLL: We actually through our make-safe program every day and every week are working with schools to ensure they are the best conditions for the students and the teaching staff.

Jade BENHAM: Excellent. So as of today what is the number?

Ben CARROLL: We have got an investment happening every day, so the number always changes.

Jade BENHAM: No. What is the number of schools today that are in very poor or poor condition?

Ben CARROLL: Our schools are unrecognisable from the ones we inherited. It is a sixfold increase compared –

Jade BENHAM: Are you able to provide the list? It is such a simple question, Minister, for education – a very simple question: a list of schools in poor or very poor condition.

Ben CARROLL: We will take that on notice.

Jade BENHAM: Great. Thank you so much.

Ben CARROLL: Thank you.

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Answer:

- The Rolling Facilities Evaluation (RFE) program assesses the condition of all Victorian government schools (more than 1,600 schools) on a rolling 5-year basis, with approximately 20% (around 300 schools) of schools undergoing evaluation each year.
- The first round was completed in late 2022, with all schools assessed. The second cycle commenced in May 2023 and will run to the end of 2027. As at 15 May 2026, 1,025 schools have been assessed in the second cycle of the RFE program.
- A RFE assessment is conducted by expert contracted assessors to produce a Condition Assessment Report (CAR), detailing identified maintenance tasks, a prioritisation rating, estimated rectification costs and an overall condition score for each school.
- The Department of Education then works with schools to address priority maintenance tasks to improve school condition.
- For this reason, condition scores produced through the RFE process provide only a limited snapshot of a school's condition at a single point in time. They represent just one assessment factor within a comprehensive asset management system that identifies maintenance tasks and prioritises funding and maintenance activities to ensure that schools remain safe and in good condition.
- Any high-priority maintenance tasks that are identified through the RFE process are rectified through the Planned Maintenance Program (PMP).
- As these works are completed, the original condition scores for schools can quickly become outdated.
- Condition scores therefore summarise findings at the time of the initial assessment and are not updated until the next RFE cycle.