

Blueprint for Early Childhood Development and School Reform:

An Overview



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Ministerial foreword

The establishment of the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development provides an unprecedented opportunity to integrate early childhood services and schools across Victoria.

The linking of early childhood services and schools marks the beginning of a new era in the health, wellbeing, learning and development of all Victorian children and young people from birth through to adulthood.

We are excited to present a proposed five year reform agenda for early childhood services and schools that will drive improvement and integration and help us to deliver the best possible outcomes for all our children and young people.

Our proposed reform agenda is outlined in the accompanying discussion papers and we seek feedback from families, practitioners, education and early childhood stakeholders and the wider Victorian community to assist us in the development of a *Blueprint for Early Childhood Development and School Reform*.

We encourage you to have your say in shaping Victoria's future directions and supporting our children and young people to be the best they can.

We look forward to receiving your feedback, and working together to develop and deliver our reform agenda.

Yours sincerely



Bronwyn Pike MP

Minister for Education



Maxine Morand MP

Minister for Children and Early
Childhood Development



Opportunity for reform

The Victorian Government's decision to bring together early childhood services and school education in the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development signals a new opportunity to improve the health, wellbeing, learning and development of all Victorian children.

Linking early childhood services and school education recognises that children's development is a continuous process from birth to adulthood, and government services must reflect this to provide each child with the best opportunity. This initiative marks the beginning of a new era in the education and development of our children. We know that a child's learning starts from day one, and that a child's early experiences have a direct impact on their future prospects.

**The Honourable John Brumby,
Premier of Victoria**

2 August 2007

We are capitalising on this opportunity by setting a challenging reform agenda to guide integration and improvements in early childhood services and the school system over the next five years.

We recognise that the success of the reform agenda will be dependent on the degree to which families and communities, early childhood and school practitioners, and our other partners, help shape and inform the future directions.

We have developed two discussion papers to assist us to gather your input. These discussion papers outline the Government's proposed strategic directions and possible actions to ensure our education and early childhood service systems are best placed to meet the needs of children and their families into the future.

Public comment will inform the development of the *Blueprint for Early Childhood Development and School Reform* to be released later this year. The Blueprint will be a formal document which sets out the Government's strategic directions, actions and targets for education into the future.

We encourage you to share the journey, to reflect on the goals we have set ourselves, and to let us know your thoughts and aspirations. Together, we are committed to creating the best possible outcomes for Victorian children as they grow, develop and thrive from birth through to adulthood.



Our vision for all Victorian children and young people

Children deserve the best possible start in life. We know that giving children the best possible health, development and learning foundations will benefit individuals and families as well our community and economy.

Regardless of their background or circumstances, every Victorian child and young person should have the opportunity to engage in creative and intellectual pursuits and be the best they can in all aspects of learning and development.

The Government has a responsibility to put in place the structures and standards that support families and the community to help and encourage children and young people to thrive, learn, grow and develop. This includes providing additional support for children and families who need it most.

We are clear on what outcomes we want from the Government's actions in early childhood and school education. We want

- Improved educational, health and wellbeing outcomes for all young Victorians
- An accessible, high quality and coherent universal service system for early childhood and education, with targeted support for those who need it
- Enhanced public confidence in a world class school education system and high quality early childhood services and programs for all
- Reduced effects of disadvantage on children and young people's learning and development.

We propose to pursue these outcomes through a lifecycle approach to seamless learning and development which recognises

- The early childhood years (0-8) are the foundation stage for learning and development
- The middle years of development (8-16 years) are a critical educational and developmental period, playing a major role in determining whether children will achieve their full potential
- The youth transitions stage (16+ years) provides the bridge to adulthood.

The education and early childhood reforms are being developed with this lifecycle approach in mind. They capitalise on shared opportunities as well as recognising the need for actions specific to early childhood or school education (see Figure 1).

Figure 1.
Lifecycle approach: from birth to adulthood



Driving reform: a new approach to learning, wellbeing, health and development

The Government's reform efforts to date have provided a strong foundation for healthy and happy children and young people. The appendix to this paper carries full details of the major policy initiatives undertaken since 2003.

There is a lot to be proud of in the Victorian early childhood service system and in our schools. We must continue to recognise and celebrate our achievements.

But we must continue to set our sights ever higher.

There is increasing evidence of the need for a stronger and more consistent focus on wellbeing, learning, health and development across all of the places that children and young people spend their time. Safety, health and wellbeing are preconditions for effective learning and development and schools and children's services are key platforms for promoting health and wellbeing.

Research increasingly highlights the impact that early childhood experiences have on development in later life. For example, we now know that

- Quality relationships with adults in the early years significantly impact on a child's development
- Successful transitions throughout early childhood and school have a significant impact on success – for example quality early childhood programs can promote wellbeing and 'school readiness' for children – and that their impact can extend into and beyond the formal school years
- Early interventions are more effective and less costly than waiting until later in a child's development – gaps in school performance stay generally constant or increase after 8 years of age.

Research also shows that providing a range of study options and pathways for young people is crucial to their successful transition from school to further education and employment.

There is also clear evidence demonstrating the positive impact of close links between schools and their local communities on both educational outcomes and community strength.

This evidence underpinned the Government's decision to create an integrated Department of Education and Early Childhood Development.

To achieve the reform we need over the next five years, we will concentrate on three areas: partnerships with parents and communities, system development and reform, and workforce reform (see Figure 2).

Figure 2.
Conceptual framework for early childhood and school reform



We have identified a series of proposed actions within each reform theme. Many of these will apply to both early childhood and school education. Through the following cross-sectoral actions, we will draw on existing linkages and foster new linkages between early childhood services and schools.

1. Partnerships with parents and communities

- Engage families of children of all ages, providing guidance on supporting learning and development
- Develop schools as children's and community hubs through better cross-sectoral planning, co-location of services and more community use of school facilities
- Develop local networks of early childhood services, schools and other service providers including local governments and the Department of Human Services.

2. System development and reform

- Build greater continuity in the approach to the learning and development of 0-8 year olds and improve transitions to school
- Improve coordination and consistency of approaches to supporting children and young people aged 0-18 with a disability
- Publish information on provider performance and broaden parental choice
- Collect, maintain and share information as young people move through the system, by extending information technology platforms and supports.

3. Workforce reform

- Improve coordination, professional development and use of non-teaching workforce/allied health workforces
- Develop forums and invest in joint professional learning between primary schools and early childhood services.

The two accompanying discussion papers outline the proposed actions specific to either early childhood development or school education.

Focus question

1. **What other opportunities might exist as a result of the creation of the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development?**



Improvement targets and progress measures

We want to make sure the Blueprint reforms make a real difference in outcomes for Victorian children and young people.

We will set ambitious and challenging targets in order to monitor progress and evaluate the success of the actions outlined in the Blueprint.

For the purpose of discussion, we have developed a list of possible indicators to measure our progress over the next five years and help focus our efforts. These indicators, which span from birth to adulthood, are

- Increase the proportion of infants fully breastfed in the first six months of life
- Increase the proportion of children attending Maternal and Child Health Service developmental checks, particularly at three and a half years
- Increase to at least 95 per cent in all local government areas, the proportion of children participating in four year old kindergarten
- Increase the proportion of children entering school with basic skills for life and learning*
- Reduce the proportion of children entering school with emotional and behavioural problems*
- Reduce by 10 per cent the number of children who have not met expected learning standards at Year 3
- Increase the availability of children's services that offer integrated education and care programs*

- Increase by 5 per cent the number of students performing well above expected levels in literacy and numeracy
- Reduce by 15 per cent the gap for Koorie students in reading, writing and numeracy
- Increase community confidence in public schooling*
- Increase the proportion of government schools that meet standards of curriculum provision*
- Increase the proportion of government school principals accredited as high performing*
- Increase the proportion of the early childhood education and care workforce with a recognised qualification*
- Further lift the Year 12 or equivalent completion rate.

* These are important measures and require new ways of collecting information. Numerical targets will be set for these measures as baseline data becomes available.

Focus questions

2. **Are the individual improvement targets realistic and sufficiently challenging?**
3. **As a set, are the improvement targets comprehensive and do they address the right outcomes?**
4. **Are there other improvement targets we should consider?**

Commonwealth–State partnership

Our reform agenda for early childhood development and school education is being developed and supported within the context of a new national agenda for children and young people.

Governments at every level believe there is no challenge more important than the future development of young Australians.

We are working closely with the Commonwealth Government to shape the new national directions, and this collaboration will help drive the success and momentum of the reform agenda in Victoria.

The national outcomes and targets signed off by the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) on 26 March 2008 provide an unprecedented opportunity to create a shared national vision and a collaborative national approach to improving outcomes for Australia's children (see Figure 3).

Figure 3.
Council of Australian Governments’
Participation and Productivity Agenda –
early childhood development and schooling

Early Childhood Development

Outcomes

- Children are born healthy¹
- Children acquire the basic skills for life and learning
- Children will benefit from better social inclusion and reduced disadvantage, especially Indigenous children
- All children have access to affordable, quality early childhood education in the year before formal schooling¹
- Quality early childhood education and care supports the workforce participation choices of parents with children in the years before formal schooling

Schooling

- All children are engaged in and benefiting from schooling
- Young people are meeting basic literacy and numeracy standards, and overall levels of literacy and numeracy achievement are improving
- Schooling promotes the social inclusion and reduces the educational disadvantage of children, especially Indigenous children
- Australian students excel by international standards
- Young people make a successful transition from school to work and further study

COAG Targets

- Universal access to early learning for all four year olds by 2013
- Halving the gap in mortality rates for Indigenous children under five years old within a decade¹
- In five years all Indigenous four year olds in remote Indigenous communities will have access to a quality early childhood education program¹

- Lift the Year 12 or equivalent attainment rate to 90 per cent by 2020
- Halve the gap for Indigenous students in reading, writing and numeracy within a decade

¹ The Productivity Agenda Working Group will work in partnership with Indigenous and Health COAG Working Groups.

How to contribute to the Blueprint

Public consultation process

We have raised a number of focus questions through this discussion paper, and would encourage you to respond with your thoughts.

Your ideas are a valuable part of the future development of our early childhood and school education services and systems.

Electronic versions of the discussion papers can be downloaded from the Blueprint website at <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/blueprint>

Additional information on the consultation process, including information on how to make a submission, can also be accessed from this site.

Written submissions close Friday 16 May 2008. All submissions will be treated as public documents.



Appendix

Major Victorian policy initiatives since 2003

Blueprint for Government Schools (November 2003)

A comprehensive reform package designed to address the concentration of poor outcomes in some schools and regions, high variations of student outcomes between classes within schools, and variations in student outcomes between schools with similar student populations.

Victorian Child and Adolescent Outcomes Framework (October 2006)

Covering the whole of childhood from birth through to adulthood (0-18 years), the framework described 35 key outcomes that matter for Victoria's children and young people – their safety, health, development, learning and wellbeing – and the characteristics of their families, communities and the wider service system and society that make a difference to children and young people. The framework underpins outcomes reporting and monitoring across government of how children are faring.

Victoria's plan to improve literacy and numeracy outcomes (National Reform Agenda, April 2007)

Outlined the actions required over the next ten years to improve literacy and numeracy, focusing on quality teaching and quality teachers, building a culture of improvement in schools and directing resources to where they can most make a difference.

Victoria's plan to improve outcomes in early childhood (National Reform Agenda, April 2007)

Set out a ten year vision to improve the supports available to families with young children with a focus on better antenatal services; strengthening the health, development and learning of all children; enhancing the provision of early childhood education and care services; and improving the early years workforce.

Future of Schooling in Australia (September 2007)

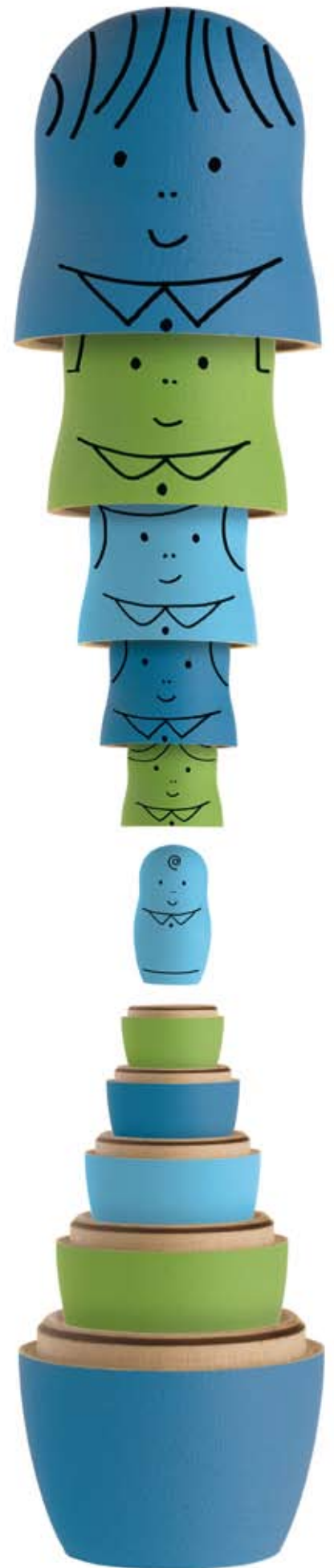
Produced through the Council for the Australian Federation, this reform package critically assessed Australia's performance relative to international competitors, proposed a national framework for schooling and recognised the importance of early intervention and a rigorous curriculum.

Council of Australian Governments' Productivity Agenda Outcomes Framework (February 2008)

Produced through the Council of Australian Governments' Productivity Agenda Working Group, the proposed Outcomes Framework will provide an agreed set of outcomes, indicative progress measures, targets and policy directions framed around early childhood, schooling, and skills and workforce development.

Blueprint for Early Childhood Development and School Reform:

School Reform
Discussion Paper



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Blueprint for Early Childhood Development and School Reform:

School Reform
Discussion Paper

Contents

Ministerial foreword	3
Executive summary	4
Introduction	6
Key achievements in school education	7
Objectives: what we aspire to achieve	9
1. System development and reform – creating a culture of excellence	10
2. Workforce reform – the best people doing the right things	13
3. Partnerships with parents and communities – partnerships for learning	15
The future	17
How to contribute your views	17

Ministerial foreword

Since 1999 the Victorian Government has consistently identified education as its number one priority. This has been backed up by a record investment in our school system – including the employment of over 8,000 additional teachers and other staff in schools, and the largest ever investment in improving school buildings through the *Victorian Schools Plan*.

Our school system in Victoria is something of which we can all be proud. By international standards our children and young people achieve well above average, and our education system is viewed as highly performing.

But we can and must do more if we are to successfully prepare our children and young people for life in the 21st century.

The Victorian Government is embarking on an ambitious five year plan for school reform. This discussion paper outlines our proposed approach to reform and suggests a range of actions which could be considered for the future.

We are seeking feedback from families, practitioners, education stakeholders and the wider Victorian community to guide our reform direction and to provide views on whether the suggested actions will best meet the needs of our children and young people.

I encourage you to let us know your views and help support our children and young people to be the best they can.

I look forward to your contribution.



Bronwyn Pike MP

Minister for Education



Executive summary

The Victorian Government has made education its number one priority since coming to office in 1999. The November 2003 *Blueprint for Government Schools* signified the Government's long-term commitment to reform in school education, articulating a clear policy direction with specific goals and targets against which progress could be measured.

The creation of the new Department of Education and Early Childhood Development recognises the need for an integrated approach to the learning and development of our children and young people, from birth right through to adulthood. Along with the opportunities presented by the creation of this department, the new Commonwealth-State context provides unprecedented opportunities to align policy and funding and to establish workable partnerships to drive reform.

This discussion paper examines the achievements since the release of the November 2003 *Blueprint for Government Schools* and our ongoing challenges, and presents proposed actions for further improving student outcomes over the next five years.

Building on the reforms of the November 2003 *Blueprint for Government Schools*, our objectives for this next phase of reform are to

- Equip all young people with the skills and capabilities they will need for economic, social and cultural success in the 21st century
- Provide all young people with productive post-school pathways and the capabilities they need to become lifelong learners
- Enhance public confidence in a world class school education system for all young Victorians that has a strong and vibrant government school system at its core
- Reduce the effects of disadvantage on early childhood and education outcomes.

To achieve these objectives the next phase of reform will concentrate on three areas: system development and reform, workforce reform, and parent and community partnerships. Proposed actions in each of these key areas are described in the following sections.

1. System development and reform – creating a culture of excellence that delivers results in all schools for all students

To ensure each individual student achieves good progress, we propose to focus on developing a high quality national curriculum; implementing detailed strategies in the priority areas of maths, science and languages; and strengthening the capacity to measure, report and improve progress of individuals and cohorts of students, particularly in literacy and numeracy.

To improve transitions to and from school we propose to focus on taking a consistent approach to learning and development for 0–8 year olds; developing integrated support services for children 0–18 and their families; and improving pathways and transitions from school.

To support government schools to improve we propose to focus on developing a differential approach to accountability; supporting regional school networks to drive school improvement; articulating clear standards for what students and parents can expect from all government schools; and providing information for parents to assess school performance against these standards.

To support non-government schools to improve, we propose to collaborate with the non-government schools sector and the Commonwealth Government to provide more support, through better access to government resources, clearer expectations and standards for improvement in student outcomes and better information for students and parents about student progress and outcomes.

2. Workforce reform – focusing on developing teachers and school leaders and attracting and rewarding the best people so we have the best people doing the right things

To extend Victoria’s successful, flexible approach for teacher professional learning we propose to focus on leadership; consistently high quality teaching; skilling teachers and supporting schools to use technology effectively; and joint professional learning between primary schools and children’s services.

To attract the best people to teaching, and to encourage them to improve once they are teaching, we propose to focus on improving teacher training programs. These programs will encourage high performing graduates to enter teaching; find ways to motivate and reward high performing teachers and school leaders; provide incentives for the best people to work in the schools where they are needed most; and support teachers who have become disengaged to leave the profession.

3. Strengthening parent and community partnerships so we all maximise our contribution and opportunities to improve education outcomes

To assist schools to engage with parents and communities in ways that suit their particular circumstances, we propose to focus on ensuring that schools are welcoming and encourage active parental involvement. We also propose to support schools and teachers to use the Ultranet effectively and provide specific, practical guidance to families on supporting their child’s learning and development at all ages.

To help schools benefit – and to provide a wider community benefit – from partnerships with other groups in the community, we propose to focus on developing wider networks to offer post-compulsory education, training and employment options; developing schools as children’s and community hubs; and encouraging stronger links between schools and early childhood services.

A robust education system that offers real choice to Victorian parents is fundamental to a strong civic culture and economy. There is much to be proud of in our school system and we must continue to celebrate our achievements. We must also keep striving to improve educational opportunities and outcomes for all young Victorians and develop an education system that is second to none.



Introduction

Each school day, over 800,000 students attend Victoria's schools. We know that the parents of these students hope that our schools will bring out the very best in their children, encouraging them to thrive and grow, and helping them acquire skills to succeed in school and in life.

All of us working in education and government share that same hope, and are committed to delivering the best possible education outcomes for Victorian children.

The Victorian Government has made education its number one priority since coming to office in 1999. The November 2003 *Blueprint for Government Schools* signified the Government's long-term commitment to reform in school education, articulating a clear policy direction with specific goals and targets against which progress could be measured.

The creation of the new Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD) has been an important step. DEECD recognises that learning doesn't just start at school – rather, well-rounded individuals enjoy a continuum of learning from birth right through to adulthood. It is vital that our system underpins the entire learning journey and this new Department will provide unique opportunities for school partnerships and stronger relationships between parents and communities.

The discussion paper on the *Blueprint for Early Childhood Development*, also currently released for comment, provides more detail on the goals and objectives of our early childhood development focus.

The role of schools in the learning continuum remains of critical importance. The last four years have seen an enormous commitment by government schools to implementing the reform agenda and indicators show that this reform is having an impact. By international standards Victoria's school system is well above average, and within reach of being the best.

It is now time to review our progress and to renew our commitment to improving school education in Victoria.

The opportunity for reform and evolution has never been better. The new Commonwealth-State context provides the Department with unprecedented opportunities to align policy and funding and to establish workable partnerships to drive reform. We have ambitious goals and targets, and expectations of ourselves and our partners are high. We measure ourselves not by Victorian standards, or even Australian standards, but by world standards.

This discussion paper examines the progress made since the release of the November 2003 *Blueprint for Government Schools* and our ongoing challenges. It presents the Government's plan as we seek, together with our partners, to advance our facilities, our curriculum, our workforce and our thinking. It presents proposed actions and heightens our expectations and responsibilities for further improving student outcomes over the next five years.

We know the best results occur when schools partner with parents to help individual students become the best they can be. Together, we can create an education system that helps students develop into resilient, knowledgeable, highly skilled members of the Victorian community.

We encourage you to share the journey, to reflect on the goals we have set ourselves, and to let us know your thoughts and aspirations for Victoria's school system.

Key achievements in school education

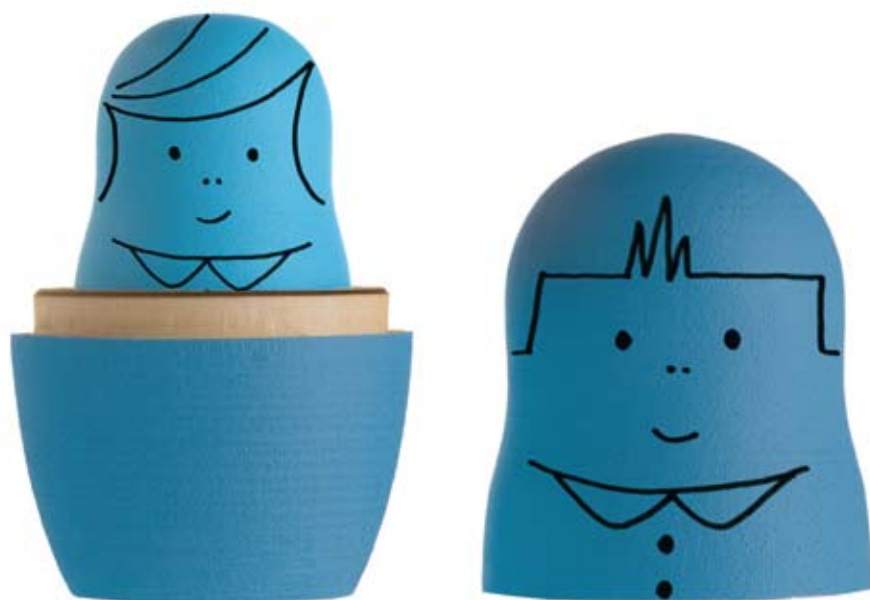
The November 2003 *Blueprint for Government Schools* started from the premise that every school could and should improve performance over time. At its core was an explicit intention to build the capacity of teachers, school leaders and regional staff and to focus on those actions that had the greatest potential to improve student learning outcomes.

Victoria's approach to school improvement has been recognised internationally. According to the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)

The quality of the systemic approach to school improvement in Victoria has been excellent since the Blueprint was published by the Government in 2003. The creation of a clear and persuasive, research-based school improvement, professional learning and leadership development culture, articulated through a common language, reflects clarity of focus.¹

Much has been achieved since the introduction of the November 2003 *Blueprint for Government Schools*

- At a national level, the performance of Victorian students is strong and we lead in critical national reform areas
 - our primary students perform well against national benchmarks
 - early years reading is now at very high levels
 - more students are completing Year 12 or its equivalent
 - by international standards, Victorian students are highly connected to their school
- School programs and practices better reflect contemporary knowledge about effective teaching and learning. A new world class curriculum framework, the Victorian Essential Learning Standards (VELS), has been introduced into every school. Together with new assessment guidelines and principles for quality teaching practice, the VELS assists schools to focus on what is important to learn and how learning should occur, as well as how it should be assessed and reported
- There has been a \$1.9 billion commitment to the *Victorian Schools Plan*, under which every Victorian government school will be rebuilt or modernised over a ten year period. The *Building Futures* policy directly links this record investment in educational facilities with improved educational provision, and will create the physical spaces where 21st century learning can occur



¹ Matthews, P., Moorman, H. & Nusche, D. (2007). *School leadership development strategies: Building leadership capacity in Victoria, Australia*. OECD, Paris, p. 28.

Key achievements in school education

- Regeneration projects are transforming education in many areas of Victoria already. These projects present an opportunity to reform educational provision in a locality, with state-of-the-art facilities and innovative, high quality educational programs, optimal use of ICT for teaching and the latest, proven approaches to teaching and learning. These projects will be expanded over the next five years to enable communities across Victoria to share in the benefits
- A new student report card gives parents clearer information about their child's progress. It includes simple, easy-to-understand explanations of progress, what the school will do to help each child's development, and advice on what parents can do to assist
- A new School Accountability and Improvement Framework supports and streamlines school improvement activity, with clearer reporting to the community on student outcomes. Greater use of their performance data has also improved schools' capacity to decide where to focus their improvement effort. This has been strongly supported by the Effective Schools Model, which provides a common language and an evidence-based framework to drive improvement in every school
- A new parent opinion survey collects and analyses feedback from over 55,000 parents every year
- All government schools are working towards a performance and development culture, with 656 schools already accredited. These schools have improvement rates up 10 per cent on 2002 in key areas such as professional growth and supportive leadership
- Over 3,000 principals, assistant principals, aspirant leaders and school leadership teams have undertaken professional development to increase their leadership capability. More than 2,400 teachers have undertaken professional learning leave that has improved classroom practice
- A new resourcing model, the Student Resource Package, allocates funds to schools in a way that more closely reflects costs and student needs
- There has been a significant expansion of program options for young people in the post-compulsory years, within and in addition to the Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE), to ensure our diverse range of students can access programs relevant to their learning needs. This includes the introduction of the vocationally oriented Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL), which had over 12,000 enrolments in 2006
- We are introducing into every government school the Ultranet, an intuitive, student-centred electronic learning environment that connects students, teachers and parents within the one platform. The Ultranet will, among other things, enable parents to view their child's school records, teachers to plan curriculum, and students to collaborate with their teachers and other students, online. It will bring together the key processes involved in the day-to-day running of a school and a classroom, and become an indispensable part of school practice and culture.

Objectives: what we aspire to achieve

International experts consider Victoria's education system to be high performing. However, to be among the world's best, we need to do more, based on a clear view of where improvement is needed. We will not rest until every Victorian child in every Victorian school has access to the best possible learning and education opportunities and outcomes. And we are not there yet.

In fact, this next stage of reform is guided by a very real understanding that we still have significant gaps in performance in some regions, in some areas, and within some schools. We know that some groups of students do not find clear pathways to further education, training and employment. We must improve performance for all students, while addressing the gaps between groups of students.

Our objectives apply to all Victorian students, in government and non-government schools alike. We recognise, however, that with two-thirds of students in government schools, major improvements will not be possible without a strong, high performing government school system.

Building on the November 2003 *Blueprint for Government Schools* reforms, our objectives for this next phase of reform are to

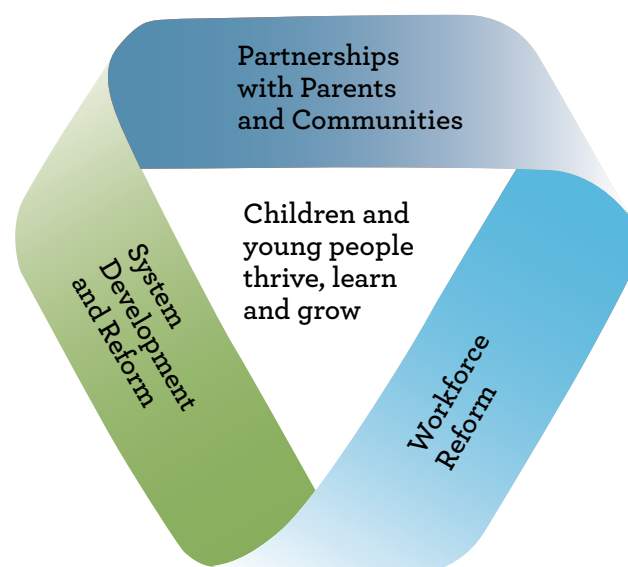
- Equip all young people with the skills and capabilities they will need for economic, social and cultural success in the 21st century
- Provide all young people with productive post-school pathways and the capabilities they need to become lifelong learners
- Enhance public confidence in a world class school education system for all young Victorians that has a strong and vibrant government school system at its core
- Reduce the effects of disadvantage on early childhood and education outcomes.

The next phase of reform will focus on three key areas

Figure 1 below provides the framework for the next phase of reform, which focuses on three key areas.

1. System development and reform – creating a culture of excellence that delivers results in all schools for all students
2. Workforce reforms – focusing on developing teachers and school leaders and attracting and rewarding the best people so we have the best people doing the right things
3. Strengthening parent and community partnerships so we all maximise our contribution and opportunities to improve education outcomes.

Figure 1.
Conceptual framework for early childhood and school education reform



We will build on the achievements of the last four years to accelerate reform in all classrooms, in all schools and across the whole system to lift student performance. Our commitment to parents, students and the community is that the vision of excellence in education will be vigorously pursued.

1. System development and reform – creating a culture of excellence

The November 2003 *Blueprint for Government Schools* established a vision for an excellent government school system that does not settle ‘for a school system with some excellent schools in it’. Our intent now is a statewide system in both government and non-government schools that reflects a culture of excellence for every student and every teacher in every learning situation. Twenty-first century learning demands excellence at all levels of the system and every school must be challenged and supported to achieve it.

This goal is inextricably linked with a performance culture; one that is measurable, based on clear standards, strong accountabilities and a collective commitment to action. As Richard Elmore observed about the Victorian approach since 2003

It is not about making schools more accountable for its own sake. It is about using accountability as a mechanism to support and improve practice. It is not about telling people in the field what to do. It is about setting overall expectations for performance and quality and putting the resources and supports behind those expectations.²

The School Accountability and Improvement Framework has provided a simplified approach to school planning, with a greater focus on student outcomes and clearer accountability. This has been confirmed by the Victorian Auditor-General as well as the OECD and international experts

The good news is that Victoria, because of the thoughtful design of its improvement strategy, is on the leading edge of policy and practice in the world. There are few improvement strategies close to or as well developed, and probably none that are focused with such depth and complexity on the basic human capital problems associated with school improvement at scale.³

Building on achievements to date, the next stage of reform is clear. While many schools are high performing, there are many that could do better. In 2007 the Victorian Auditor-General concluded that

Although a large proportion of schools provide high standards of education, there is a high concentration of poor outcomes in some schools and some regions.⁴

Research tells us that improving student learning outcomes and embedding accountability structures takes time. Cultures and behaviours take many years of support before work practices graduate from ‘premeditated and designed’ to ‘spontaneous

and natural’ ways of working. It is with this long-term journey in mind that the next stage of reform focuses on sustainable improvement in the system.

A key asset of the government school system is the system itself. With its mass of people, physical infrastructure and relationships, we can achieve extraordinary results. A strong performance culture implies a coherent set of values across the system, supported by robust structures, resources and interventions to enable the system to recognise and capitalise on excellence. The next phase of reform reflects this philosophy and focuses on three key areas

1. Ensuring every child makes good progress
2. Improving transitions to and from school
3. Establishing clear expectations and providing greater support for all schools.

Every student is unique. We must strengthen our focus on the needs and progress of each individual and provide the teaching and learning experiences that will allow each student to reach their potential. This will require better data and understanding of the needs of the diverse range of students that are found in Victorian classrooms.

Parents rightfully have high expectations that the schools they choose for their children will ensure all students are supported to achieve their best, irrespective of cultural background, location or school sector.

Government, in turn, has a responsibility to assure the quality of education delivered in Victorian schools. In Victoria, the non-government school sector educates some 35 per cent of all students. Many non-government schools are rightfully proud of their success; however, as in the government school system, some could be better supported to improve student outcomes.

We must collaborate with the non-government sector and the Commonwealth Government, particularly in areas of high need and low performance, to ensure a clear focus on improving student outcomes. This collaboration will extend both opportunity and responsibility, at a system and local level, and may include more support through greater access to government resources, better information to parents on student progress and outcomes, and stronger accountability for outcomes.

2 Elmore, R.F. (2007) *Educational Improvement in Victoria*, published in *From the Deputy Secretary OGSF*, No. 1, 5 February 2008, DEECD.

3 Matthews, P., Moorman, H. & Nusche, D. *ibid.*, p. 31.

4 Victorian Auditor-General (2007), *Improving Our Schools: Monitoring and Support*, Victorian Auditor-General's Office, Melbourne, p. 9.

Transitions to and from school are increasingly complex. Improvements in early childhood services will improve transitions to school, as children will be better prepared to learn, and schools will have better information on the development of individual children. Schools face a major challenge in ensuring all their students have productive post-school pathways, and will require strong partnerships with other education and training providers, employers and communities to make this a reality.

Finally, the next phase of reform will focus on establishing a performance culture for all schools, through clear standards, strong accountabilities and a collective commitment to take action where it is needed. For the vast majority of schools that are performing well, this means access to expert advice and resources to support continuous improvement. At a system level, high performing schools will continue to share their knowledge and expertise. Underperformance in schools must be addressed.

Consistently underperforming schools require stronger interventions, which could include mentoring from high performing schools or additional professional development. Resources and incentives will be targeted to the areas where they are needed most and regional offices will continue their key role in school improvement. Where necessary, they will be supported to intervene urgently to ensure that all schools can improve and all students receive a high quality education and a genuine opportunity to succeed.

School networks and high performing schools will also play a greater role supporting underperforming schools by sharing resources and expertise and fostering innovation.

These arrangements must be transparent so that all schools understand them and parents and communities know what they can expect from government schools and how they will produce the best possible outcomes for their children.

What are we proposing to do?

1. Ensure every child makes good progress

The expectation that all students can meet high standards must drive teaching and learning. The Victorian Essential Learning Standards (VELS), combined with the Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE) and the Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL) in the senior secondary years, represent a world class modern curriculum that can prepare our young people for work and life in the 21st century. The challenge is to support schools and teachers to provide each individual student with the benefits of this curriculum. To strengthen implementation of the VELS and to improve teaching and learning overall, we propose to

- Work with other jurisdictions to ensure any national curriculum reflects the best aspects of Victoria's existing approach and benefits from the best all jurisdictions have to offer
- Develop detailed strategies in the priority areas of maths, science and languages
- Strengthen the capacity of schools to measure and improve progress of individuals and cohorts of students, particularly in literacy and numeracy
- Develop better data to allow the progress of individual students to be measured and reported, and form the basis of accountability throughout the system.

2. Improve transitions to and from school

The creation of the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development creates a major opportunity to improve transitions to school. At the same time, work must continue to improve transitions from school for all young Victorians.

To improve these transitions we propose to do the following

- Take a more consistent approach to learning and development for 0–8 year olds through
 - a new learning and development framework for children aged 0–8 and linked to existing frameworks
 - consistent approaches to assessment on school entry and in the early years of school, to provide the most useful picture of children's progress

System development and reform – creating a culture of excellence

- developing transition plans for all children starting school
- maintaining and sharing information, beginning at a child's entry into early childhood services, by developing consistent data systems across early childhood services and schools
- Develop a seamless system of support services for children aged 0-18 and their families through improved coordination and use of early childhood support staff and the non-teaching/allied health school workforce, including
 - coordinated Koorie supports, including a consistent approach to services and family assistance from birth to adulthood
 - a consistent approach to support for children with a disability
- Improve pathways and transitions from school including
 - develop and promote packages of VCE and/or VCAL subjects that provide clear pathways into specific industries and the vocational education and training (VET) sector
 - expand school responsibility for young people's pathways until they complete Year 12 or equivalent or turn 19.

3. Increase expectations and provide greater support for government schools

Effective accountability involves a tailored approach to intervention that provides support where needed, and intervenes more heavily as a school's performance and capacity to improve declines. To support government schools to improve, we propose to

- Refine the accountability system to provide
 - stronger interventions and more intensive monitoring in underperforming schools
 - greater incentives and responsibilities for high performing schools
 - monitoring and incentives to ensure that adequately performing schools are encouraged to improve
- Ensure that school networks focus on school improvement, and that regional offices support them to carry out this task
- Articulate clear standards for what students and parents can expect from all government schools, including access in their school, or in partnership with other schools or providers, to the full range of offerings that comprise a contemporary curriculum

- Provide information that allows parents to assess school performance against these standards.

4. Establish clearer expectations and provide greater support for non-government schools

There is a clear opportunity for collaboration between the government and non-government school sectors to improve student outcomes, particularly in areas of high need and low performance. This can encompass invitations to take advantage of opportunities available within the government school sector, as well as more transparent accountability requirements and information. To support this collaboration, we propose to work with the non-government school sector and the Commonwealth Government to

- Provide more support, through better access to government resources, which may include curriculum materials, professional learning opportunities, facilities and additional funding
- Refine the accountability system for non-government schools to provide clearer expectations and standards for improvement in student outcomes at a system level
- Work with non-government schools to provide parents and students with better information about student progress and outcomes at a local level.

Focus questions:

1. **Is the focus of the reform proposals to ensure every child makes good progress right? Are there other reform proposals we should consider?**
2. **Is the focus of the reform proposals to improve transition to and from schools right? Are there other reform proposals we should consider?**
3. **Do you agree with our reform proposals to increase expectations and provide greater support for government schools? Are there other reform proposals we should consider?**
4. **Do you agree with our reform proposals to establish clearer expectations and provide greater support for non-government schools? Are there other reform proposals we should consider?**

2. Workforce reform – the best people doing the right things

Good teaching is critical to improving student outcomes. Research indicates that, after student-related factors such as socioeconomic and cultural background, teaching quality has the greatest impact on how much students learn, accounting for 20 to 30 per cent of the variation in student scores. Research also confirms the critical role of school leaders in fostering quality teaching. An effective principal will foster a culture of high expectations, and strive for continuous improvement.

The recent McKinsey investigation into the characteristics of the top performing education systems put workforce quality at the core of their success and noted that

*school leadership is second only to classroom teaching as an influence in learning.*⁵

The best systems

- Get the right people to become teachers
- Develop these people into effective instructors
- Put in place systems to ensure every child succeeds.

The November 2003 *Blueprint for Government Schools* included three flagship strategies designed to improve the quality of the workforce to enhance the teaching and learning relationship.

Much has been achieved through these strategies including a shift from a compliance approach to a focus on learning and continuous improvement; a more sophisticated understanding of the relationship between organisational health and improved school performance; and positive feedback from participants in leadership development and teacher professional leave initiatives.

To ensure a highly capable education workforce in the future, we must attract and retain the best people. They must be strongly accountable for their professional practice and their students' progress and have clear actions to support performance improvement.

Workforce reforms need to be pursued

- In the classroom, through clear expectations of teachers, models and tools to improve student outcomes
- In schools, through clear performance standards, including interventions where appropriate
- Across the system, through strategies to attract, recruit and retain quality teachers and leaders.

The next phase of reform must build on past achievements and further improve the knowledge, skills and practice of the workforce. To an extent, the issues facing us in workforce development face every State in Australia and indeed, many countries around the world. A global skills shortage together with the lowest unemployment rate in Australia for over three decades means many careers and professions are facing critical shortages, and education is no different.

Nearly 40 per cent of the Victorian teaching workforce is aged 50 years and over and there are shortages of secondary teachers in key subject areas including maths, science and technology and languages other than English. Location is also an issue, with some rural areas having difficulty attracting casual relief teachers.

The focus of our reform is on two key areas

1. Further developing teachers and school leaders
2. Attracting and rewarding the best people.

Teachers deserve a clearly articulated career path, including an instructional model that outlines developmental levels, creates a common language and shared practice, and supports teachers in ongoing professional learning to move from novice to expert practitioners. They should be able to focus on teaching. It is critical to reward high performing teachers, both in recognition and performance-based reward.

We need to improve our succession planning so teachers know where they are headed and we can identify and prepare the next generation of school principals and leaders. And by making teachers more accountable for their students' outcomes, we can more easily encourage good teachers to remain in the profession and assist disengaged teachers to leave.

Improving our workforce will directly improve the learning outcomes for Victorian children, and we are committed to supporting every teacher in their quest to develop resilient, knowledgeable and articulate individuals of the future.

5. Barber, M. & Mourshed, M. (2007). *How the world's best-performing school systems come out on top*. McKinsey & Company, London.

Workforce reform – the best people doing the right things

What are we
proposing to do?

5. Further develop teachers and school leaders

Victoria has a successful and flexible system for teacher professional learning. This approach will continue. Emerging areas we propose to focus on are

- Leadership, through the development and accreditation of principals and school leaders
- Consistently high quality teaching, by developing an instructional model to ensure excellence in teaching and learning, particularly in the areas of literacy and numeracy, where teachers will work in teams to improve outcomes in these critical foundational skills
- Skilling teachers and supporting schools to use technology such as the Ultranet effectively and realise its potential to improve and share teaching practice across the system
- Creating opportunities for joint professional learning between primary schools and children's services.

6. Attract and reward the best people

To consistently improve student outcomes, the best people must be attracted to teaching, and encouraged to improve once they are teaching. To achieve this, we propose to

- Work with universities to ensure teacher training programs provide a solid foundation for their graduates to succeed and grow as teachers
- Develop a scheme to encourage high performing graduates from other fields to enter teaching, modelled on the UK's *Teach First* and the USA's *Teach for America* programs
- Find the best ways to motivate and reward high performing teachers and school leaders
- Provide incentives, including higher salaries, for the best teachers and school leaders to work in those schools where they are needed most
- Support teachers who have become disengaged to leave the profession, after appropriate opportunities and support have been provided to lift teaching practice
- Develop models that make best use of the skills teachers bring to their work, including through better use of non-teaching staff.

Focus questions:

5. Is the focus of the reform proposals to further develop teachers and school leaders right? Are there other reform proposals we should consider?
6. Do you agree with our reform proposals to attract and reward the best people? Are there other reform proposals we should consider?



3. Partnerships with parents and communities – partnerships for learning

Across the world, there is increasing recognition of the importance of building partnerships between schools, families and communities to enhance student learning, values and aspirations.

When schools, family and community work together to support learning, children tend to do better in school, stay in school longer and like school more.⁶

Effective partnerships between schools, families and local communities can help smooth transition points and improve student outcomes. This is particularly so for schools where low socioeconomic background and other forms of disadvantage continue to have a negative impact on student outcomes and perpetuate gaps in attainment.

In Australia, in 2007, the Commonwealth, State and Territory governments recognised that all schools can benefit from two-way partnerships. They outlined a commitment to

- Engage parents in planning their child's progress through school, provide them with the necessary information to understand and contribute to their child's achievement and to make informed decisions about future learning and employment
- Engage with a wide range of community, business and industry partners to help schools support students in achieving successful pathways for prosperous and fulfilling lives.

For the Victorian school system, this means

- At the classroom level, engaging parents in their child's learning
- At the school level, building the capacity of school leaders to establish strong relationships with families and communities
- At the system level, developing the partnership frameworks and infrastructure to enable schools to form productive, sustainable partnerships with their communities
- At the community level, working out ways communities and schools can best form meaningful, sustainable partnerships.

Providing teachers, principals and regional offices with the tools, resources and infrastructure to enable them to build successful, sustainable and mutually beneficial partnerships with parents, families and local communities will require action in two key areas

1. Partnerships with parents and families
2. Making the best use of school and community resources.

Parents and other family members have a major influence on their child's education and should be actively involved. Their influence is also crucial in building social skills and capabilities at all stages of a child's development.

There has traditionally been a strong focus on supporting and valuing the role of families in early childhood and the early years of school. To optimise outcomes for children and young people, parents and families must remain engaged throughout a child's schooling and into further education, training and employment; and must recognise that the type of involvement will change as the child develops.

Effective partnerships between schools and community resources, such as early childhood services, local government, health and community services, social networks, businesses and industry, enhance the quality of student support, benefit schools, students and the community. These partnerships can have a significant impact on reducing the effects of disadvantage and improving educational attainment.

Furthermore, business and community organisations such as local government services, social and sporting clubs can provide schools with access to a wealth of resources and opportunities to broaden students' educational experiences. These organisations can give learning real context and relevance. Local businesses, industry and vocational education centres can provide apprenticeships, referral pathways and strategies to engage young people leaving school.

⁶ Harris, A. & Goodall, J. (2007). *Engaging Parents in Raising Achievement: Do parents know they matter?* University of Warwick, UK.

Partnerships with parents and communities – partnerships for learning

Schools are also a major community asset. Sharing facilities between schools and community partners maximises the use of infrastructure; makes services more accessible to parents, families and community members; and enables schools to offer richer learning opportunities. Examples include the joint use of school and community facilities, co-locating services like kindergartens and schools and extending school opening hours so the community can use resources like performing arts centres and sporting fields.

With the right partnership frameworks in place, primary schools can become children's hubs and secondary schools can act as community hubs. These partnerships can enable schools, local services, parents, families and other members of the community to benefit mutually from each other's resources, skills and expertise.

Strong partnerships already exist. Examples include *ChildFIRST*, *Best Start*, Local Learning and Employment Networks and a range of other important and effective locally developed partnerships. The challenge is to make the good practice that exists the standard statewide.

What are we proposing to do?

7. Partner with parents and families

All schools engage with parents, and each school will need to adapt its work in this area to suit its own school community. To assist schools in this, we propose to

- Ensure schools are welcoming and encourage active parental involvement
- Use the immense potential of the Ultranet to provide parents with detailed, up-to-date information on their children's learning, and support schools to implement it effectively
- Provide specific guidance to families on how they can support their child's learning and development at all ages, in formats that are most useful to families.

8. Mobilise community resources

Schools have the potential to benefit greatly from partnerships with other groups in the community, and to provide a wider community benefit. To further improve the way this is done, we propose to

- Develop wider networks to offer post-compulsory education, training and employment options through
 - closer links between Local Learning and Employment Networks and DEECD regional offices, to ensure all parties are working together in agreed ways
 - brokering relationships between schools and the large number of businesses seeking partnerships with them
- Develop schools as children's and community hubs, through co-location of services and increased community use of school facilities. Regeneration projects provide particular opportunities to put this into practice
- Encourage stronger links between schools and early childhood services, to make the links developed through programs such as *Best Start* consistently strong across the State.

Focus questions:

- 7. Is the focus of the reform proposals to better partner with parents and families right? Are there other reform proposals we should consider?**
- 8. Do you agree with our reform proposals to utilise and mobilise community resources? Are there other reform proposals we should consider?**

The future

A robust education system that offers real choice to Victorian parents is critical. Improving the education outcomes for Victorian children is a challenge we embrace and are motivated by because we know how important it is to our future as a productive and enriched community.

Much has already been achieved on the journey of improvement – but there has never been a better time to increase our efforts, place high expectations on ourselves and specifically reject the status quo.

This Government has committed record levels of funding and established an aggressive school improvement program because it knows the importance of getting the foundations right. But we don't just want to lead the way in Victoria – we want to continue to be recognised by our international peers for our reform agenda and the specific outcomes it generates for our students.

We will continue to deliver funding and resources so we can develop the world class system to which we all aspire. We will work together with you, our partners, teachers and parents, to establish the best outcomes for our children. And we will continue to be rigorous in our approach to assess the data, monitor our progress and deliver the culture of excellence our children and workforce deserve.

There is a lot to be proud of in the Victorian school system. We must continue to celebrate our achievements, and to celebrate the wonderful well-rounded individuals our system develops every day. But we must also continue to set our sights high.

Our collective promise should be to do all we can to ensure every Victorian child has the opportunity to be the best they can be. We are all participants in the journey to improve our school education system, and your comments are a valuable part of this process.

How to contribute your views

Public consultation process

We have raised a number of focus questions through this discussion paper, and would encourage you to respond with your thoughts.

Your comments are a valuable part of the future development of our early childhood and school education services and systems.

Electronic versions of the discussion papers can be downloaded from the Blueprint website at <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/blueprint>

Additional information on the consultation process, including information on how to make a submission, can also be accessed from this site.

Written submissions close Friday 16 May 2008.
All submissions will be treated as public documents.





Wannik

Learning Together -
Journey to Our Future

**Education Strategy for
Koorie Students**

VICTORIA 2008

A Victorian
Government
initiative



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Wannik

Learning Together - Journey to Our Future

Acknowledgement

This Strategy has been prepared in partnership between the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development Victoria (DEECD) and the Victorian Aboriginal Education Association Incorporated (VAEAI). The Victorian Government and VAEAI are equal partners in the education of Koorie people. This partnership was formalised in 1990 in *Partnership in Education: Koorie Education Policy* and most recently in 2001 in *Yalca: A Partnership in Education and Training for the New Millennium*.

The Victorian State government would like to thank and acknowledge the Gunai/Kurnai people for allowing us the use of the word 'Wannik' (*pronounced 'Wunn-ick'*) to represent the Education Strategy for Koorie Students 2008.

Wannik means Learning Together – Journey to Our Future

Note

In Victoria the term 'Koorie' is used to identify Victorian Indigenous peoples. In using this terminology we are embracing all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples living in Victoria.



Minister's Foreword

The Victorian Government's commitment to education has achieved significant improvement in student outcomes and school performance across the Victorian education system.

However, the educational needs of Koorie young people have not been adequately recognised within the context of our reform agenda. As a result, and despite significant investment, Koorie students have not fared as well as they should. Quite simply, our key strategies are not working, and in some instances have actually had the effect of isolating Koorie students from broader school reforms.

Ensuring every Koorie child has the opportunities that a high-quality school education can deliver will therefore require a whole new approach. *Wannik* provides such an approach. It represents a renewed level of commitment from the Victorian Government to ensure that every Koorie child receives a first class education in Victoria's government schools.

Fundamental to *Wannik* is the fostering of a new culture of high expectations for Koorie students, and systemic reform across government schools to deliver the best possible education to meet these expectations. These reforms include an increased emphasis on accountability at the school, regional and system levels, strong leadership, and better engagement with Koorie parents and the community. We will work in partnership with Koorie parents and the community to create an education system that respects, recognises and celebrates cultural identity.

Our education system must provide for all Victorians. The Victorian Government, together with VAEAI and Victoria's Koorie community, is no longer prepared to accept anything less than excellence in the educational opportunities provided to Victoria's Koorie young people.

I am confident that in the spirit of *Wannik*, the Victorian education system and the Koorie community can achieve great things for Victoria's Koorie young people.

I commend this strategy to you, and look forward to working with all parts of the Victorian community as part of a new era of education in Victoria.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bronwyn Pike". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name being more prominent.

Bronwyn Pike MP

Minister for Education



Introduction


Early childhood development and high-quality school education are key determinants of choice and opportunity for young people throughout their lives. We know that students who stay on at school and complete Year 12 are much more likely to undertake additional education and training. In turn, they will have more, and better, employment options. Increased education is also linked to a range of other social benefits, including better living conditions, better nutrition, lower rates of imprisonment, and a longer and healthier life. We know the first four years of a child's life are critical for development. That is why the Government has invested in programs to help Koorie children get off to the best start at school.

In *Victoria's Plan to Improve Outcomes in Early Childhood* the Victorian Government highlighted the need for targeted measures to ensure that Koorie children get the best possible start in life. Local initiatives which are culturally appropriate are essential if we are to both increase kindergarten participation rates and improve the quality of vital early years services for Koorie children. In the 2007/08 State Budget, the Victorian Government allocated \$11.5 million over four years for initiatives to improve the participation of Koorie children and families in early childhood and educational services, and to conduct a Child Health Survey to guide future directions. The early childhood initiatives are currently being implemented, based on the following strategies:

- Free access to kindergarten for three and four-year-old Koorie children with a health care card.
- Building service capacity in areas of low supply of kindergarten places for three-year-olds.
- Strengthening the capacity of all kindergartens to provide culturally inclusive kindergarten programs that respect and value Koorie culture.
- Building a more skilled workforce by increasing the number of Koorie Kindergarten Teachers in Aboriginal Children's Services.
- Providing opportunities for Koorie parents to become active participants in their children's early learning and development.
- Developing high quality information products that are culturally appropriate that promote the importance of the early years.
- Putting in place strategies that facilitate transition pathways for young Koorie children into kindergarten and school so that children and families are better supported at this critical time of change.

Building on the Government's work in early childhood, during 2007, the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development conducted the most comprehensive review of education provision for Koorie students ever undertaken in Victoria. On the basis of the outcomes of this Review, *Wannik* has been developed in close partnership with the Victorian Aboriginal Education Association Incorporated (VAEAI).

The analysis of data, programs and strategies as part of the review confirmed that the Victorian education system must do better in addressing the disadvantage experienced by many Koorie students and provide them with greater opportunities to succeed in life. The Strategy recognises that an increased level of commitment and action is required from both within and outside the education sector. It sets out in detail the steps the Victorian Government will take to improve educational outcomes for Koorie children, in conjunction with Koorie parents and the Koorie community.

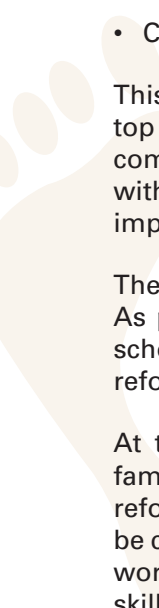


Fundamental to this Strategy is the improvement of outcomes for Koorie students across the whole of Victoria's government school system. This will be done by:

- Repositioning the education of Koorie students within all of our schools through strong leadership that creates a culture of high expectations and individualised learning for Koorie students.
- Underpinning this approach with explicit accountability mechanisms for improvement in outcomes for Koorie students across all levels of the school education system.
- Creating an environment that respects, recognises and celebrates cultural identity through practice and curriculum.
- Reinforcing the responsibility of all government schools to meet the needs of all students, by moving away from strategies designed around inadequacies in the general approach.

This Strategy will support the individual learning needs of Koorie students, through:

- Intensive literacy and numeracy programs for students achieving below expected levels.
- Additional support and incentives for top students, to provide encouragement to excel.
- The development of leadership opportunities for Koorie students in secondary schools.
- Celebration of Koorie culture and identity in all schools for all students.



This Strategy ensures that the relationship between schools and Koorie parents will be given top priority across the system. Schools will also be required to work in partnership with Koorie communities to develop an understanding of Koorie culture and the interpersonal relationship with that culture. The Strategy will be responsive to community needs at the local level – it will be implemented in partnership with, rather than for, the community.

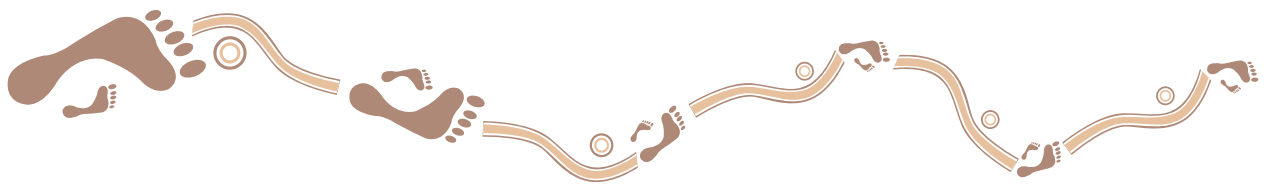
The success of *Wannik* will rely most heavily on the skills and capabilities of the education workforce. As part of repositioning the education of Koorie students within the government school system, school leaders and teachers will be given substantial professional support and development to lead reform in this area.

At the same time, the Koorie support workforce, which already plays a vital role in engaging families and supporting Koorie young people in early childhood and through their schooling, will be reformed and expanded. Roles and responsibilities of early childhood and school-level workers will be clarified to ensure that Koorie children are supported through key transition points, and all Koorie workers will be provided with professional development opportunities to give them the appropriate skills to implement the reform agenda.

Many Victorian schools are already highly innovative in creating strategies to improve outcomes for their Koorie students with involvement from their Koorie community. This Strategy includes funding that allows schools and regions to be innovative and responsive to local needs, based on those approaches that have been shown to work on the ground.

The success of *Wannik* will be judged in large part on the perception of Koorie parents that their children are valued equally alongside other children within the classroom, that they as parents are welcomed and respected within their school community, and that they are confident that their children are receiving the best education possible.

Of course, the ultimate measure of success will be the individual outcomes of each Koorie student in Victoria.



Where we started – building a case for reform

The broader school reform agenda is not reaching Koorie students

Over the last four years the *Blueprint for Government Schools* has driven a multifaceted approach to improve outcomes in student learning, student engagement and wellbeing, and student pathways and transitions. This has included initiatives such as the School Accountability and Improvement Framework, the investment in leadership and teacher capacity, and the introduction of the Victorian Essential Learning Standards (VELS).

Within this broader reform, the needs of Koorie young people in many instances have not been adequately addressed within our school system. A consequence of this is that the full strength of the Government's reform program has not had a significant impact on the outcomes for these young people.

Current performance data indicates that at a state wide level the current approach to education for Koorie students has failed to make significant inroads in addressing disadvantage experienced by many of them.

Our challenge is to improve the education outcomes for Koorie students within the broader reform program, and to ensure a culturally inclusive education system so that the needs of Koorie students do not become invisible or lost within the wider system.



The Koorie student population is highly dispersed and growing

In the last decade, the population of Koorie young people in Victoria aged between 5 and 19 years grew by about 50% to 10,700 people. At the same time, the number of Koorie students rose by 89% to over 8,500 people.

However, despite this growth, Koorie students make up only 0.9% of the student population in Victoria, the lowest proportion of any state or territory.

The vast majority of Koorie students (89%) are in government schools, of which two-thirds have at least one Koorie student enrolled. However, in 2007 only 72 schools had 20 or more Koorie students, with 200 schools having 10 or more. These 72 schools account for 35% of all Koorie students.

This pattern of enrolment – one of high dispersion, but with pockets of high concentration – creates some unique policy and program challenges.

We're investing but not achieving the results

On top of what Koorie students attract in funding through the Department's per capita student allocation, a total of \$15.3 million in specific funding is currently provided for a number of initiatives. This includes the largest and second largest allocation of specific funding:

- \$5.6 million for the Victorian College of Koorie Education (VCOKE)
- \$3.7 million for the Koorie Support Workforce

Other initiatives funded include:

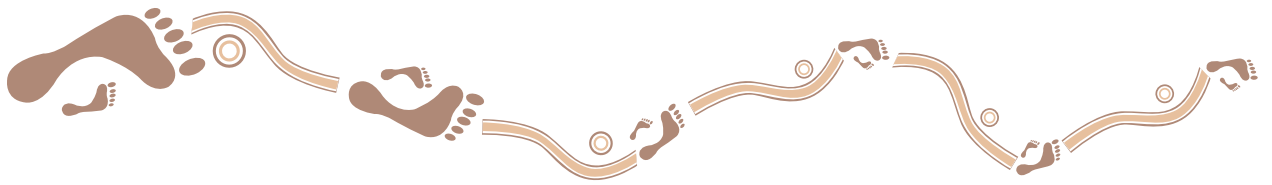
- Victorian Aboriginal Education Association Incorporated
- Koorie Student Allocation
- Regional Action Research projects
- Commonwealth Whole Of School Intervention program
- Commonwealth In-Class Tuition Assistance Scheme

Performance of Koorie students is behind that of non-Koorie students

While Koorie students generally perform better than Indigenous students in other states, they remain substantially behind other students and other cohorts with similar socioeconomic profiles.

Their performance against key measures such as participation, attendance, literacy, numeracy, retention and completion remains poor.





Some Koorie students may not be participating

It is possible that not all school-age Koorie children are participating in school. Over 700 students identified as Koorie by the Australian Bureau of Statistics cannot be found within our schools.

While it is possible that some students have not identified as Koorie, or that data systems have failed to identify them as such, it may also be that some school-aged Koorie children are not enrolled in school.

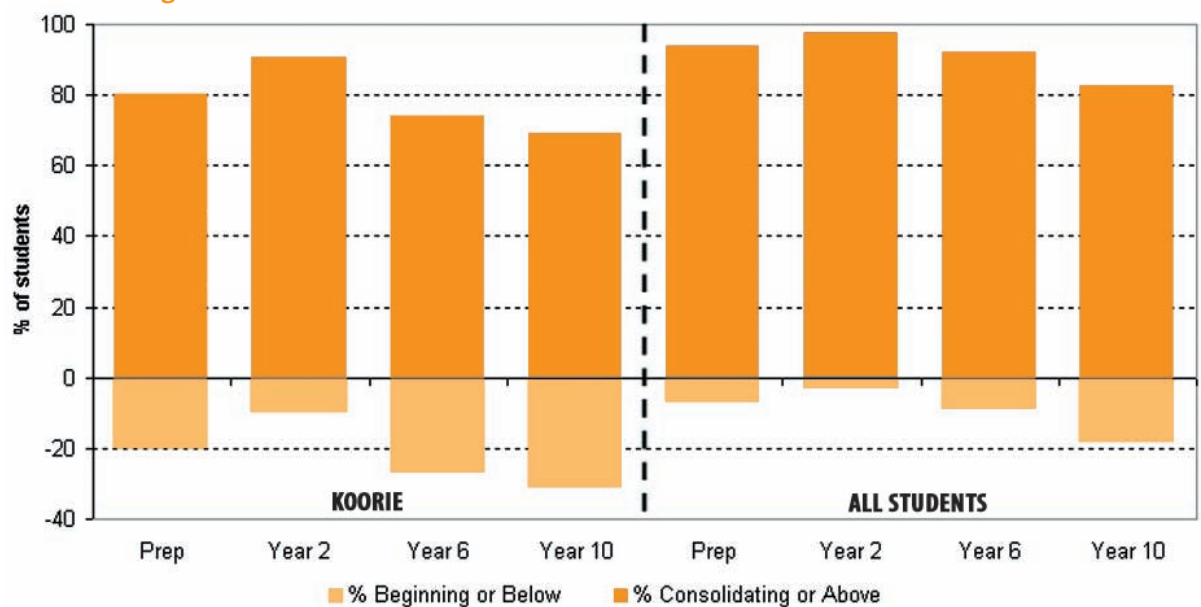
Koorie students entering Prep are under-prepared

Koorie students enter Prep with lower reading skills compared to other students, but do show significant improvement by Year 2. In fact, the achievement gap between Koorie and other students in government schools decreases substantially between Prep and Year 2.

Many Koorie students do not meet expected standards in reading and maths

Koorie students do well in meeting national literacy and numeracy benchmarks compared with Indigenous students in other states. However, the percentage of Koorie students failing to achieve the expected levels is higher than the percentage for other students, and this gap increases over the years (see Chart 1).

Chart 1: Achievement in reading: All students and Koorie students in government schools

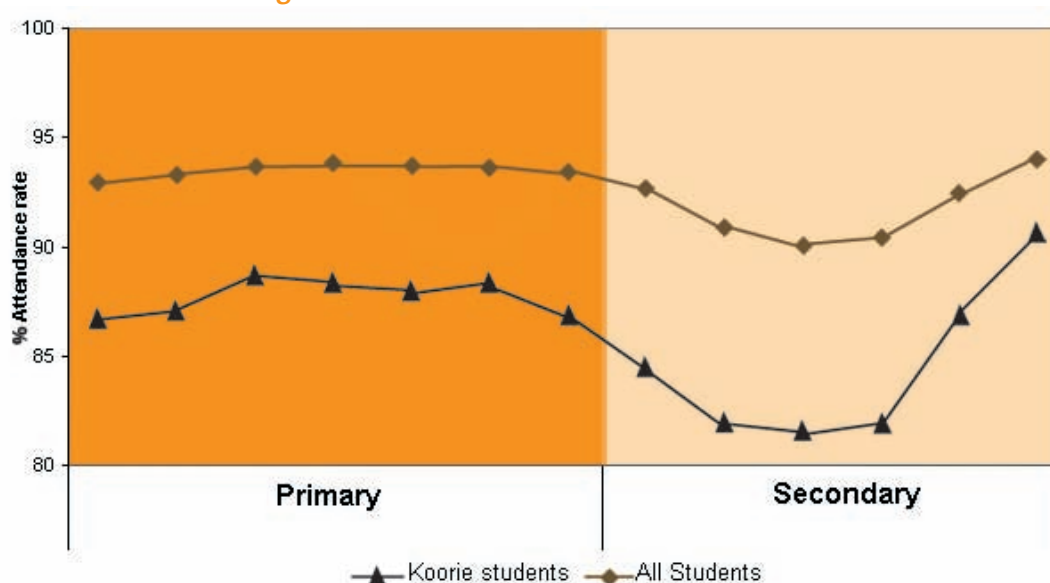


Attendance declines at the secondary level

In general, attendance at school is stable throughout the primary years, but declines at secondary level. This pattern is common across all students in government schools.

Koorie students have a lower level of attendance than all students across all year levels. On average, by Year 9, Koorie students are missing from school about one day a week (see Chart 2).

Chart 2: Attendance rate by year level: All students compared with Koorie students in government schools



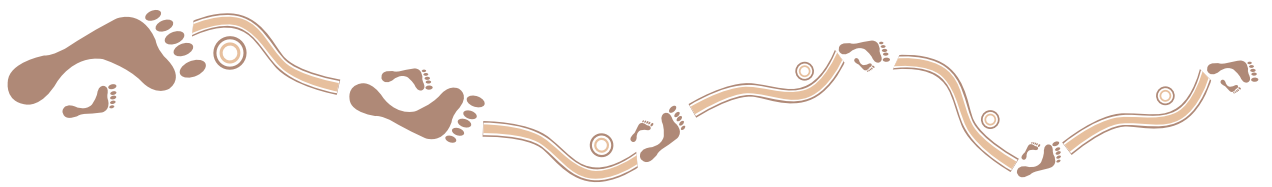
Koorie students are more likely to be early school leavers

At present, 16% of Koorie students leave school between Years 9 and 10, 22% leave between Years 10 and 11, and 41% leave between Years 11 and 12. The rates for non-Koorie students are 3%, 5% and 18% respectively.

Since 1999, the number of Koorie students doing post-compulsory study in the Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE) or the Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL) steadily increased to 603 students in 2005, but declined to 530 in 2006. One quarter of these students were enrolled in VCAL.

Out of 127 eligible Koorie students, 107 completed VCE in 2006 – a completion rate of 84.3%, compared to 96.7% for other students.





What we have done – using research and consultation to shape reform

The most comprehensive review ever undertaken

In 2007, the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development conducted the most comprehensive review of our approach to education for Koorie students ever undertaken in Victoria.

The review process was driven by the terms of reference listed below, which were developed in conjunction with the Victorian Aboriginal Education Association Incorporated (VAEAI), and endorsed by the Ministerial Taskforce for Aboriginal Affairs:

1. An assessment of the educational progress of Koorie students against an agreed set of indicators and an analysis of the reasons for any differential between the outcomes of Koorie and other students.
2. Consideration of the adequacy of existing educational support programs, including general and dedicated programs for Koorie students, and their value in achieving good educational outcomes.
3. An analysis of the roles and capacities of the various parts of the educational workforce to improve the educational performance of students.
4. An examination of contemporary examples of best practice in improving outcomes for Indigenous students in other jurisdictions within Australia and internationally.
5. An examination of how other government agencies involved with Koorie communities and families currently interact to support educational opportunities and the actions they can take to better support improved outcomes.
6. An analysis of the existing pathways between school and TAFE, university and employment, as well as a review of the effectiveness of current arrangements in providing workforce skills to Koorie students.
7. Consideration of the support structures available across government that may assist teachers, schools, communities and families to advance outcomes for Koorie students.
8. The development of a long-term reform strategy that takes into account best practice and state and federal government policies and objectives of Koorie communities, as well as any short-term practical measures that will improve educational outcomes.

The review had four major elements

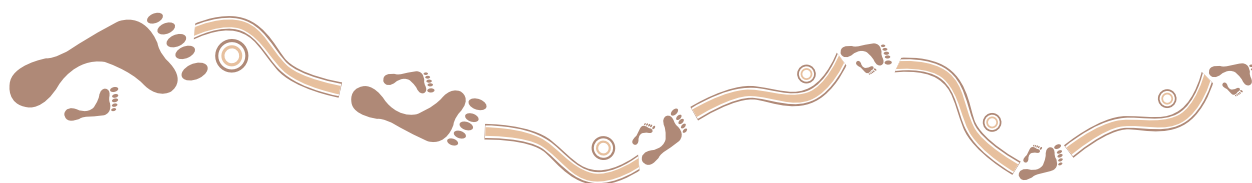
There were four main elements to the review process:

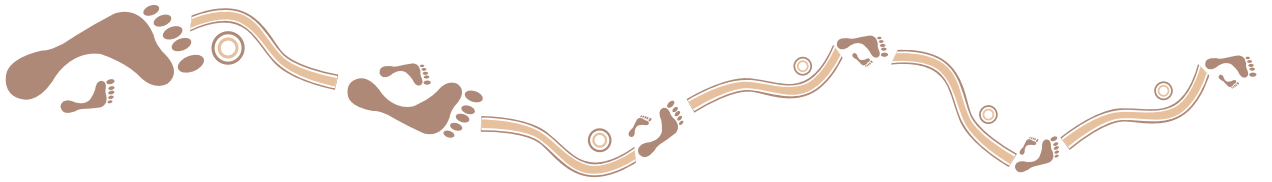
1. A review of *Indigenous Education Strategies: Supporting Indigenous Students through School* assessed what is required to support Koorie students to excel, with particular consideration given to the roles and functions of the education workforce, including the Koorie Support Workforce. The consultant reviewer was Professor Peter Buckskin, Dean, David Unaipon College of Indigenous Education and Research, University of South Australia.
2. A review of *Culturally Inclusive Education* assessed the effectiveness of dedicated provision, or separate Aboriginal schools, as a strategy for improving outcomes for Koorie students. Its particular focus was the Victorian College of Koorie Education (VCOKE), a government school for Koorie students. The consultant reviewer was Dr Chris Sarra from the Queensland Centre for Indigenous Leadership, Queensland University.
3. A series of research, analysis and evaluation projects designed to provide a comprehensive understanding of Indigenous education, and advice on what strategies have the greatest impact in improving outcomes in the Australian and international contexts.
4. A series of consultation processes designed to gain as much information as possible about 'what works' at a practical level in improving outcomes for Koorie students. This included school site visits, roundtable discussions, and a Principals' Forum and consultation with education experts. This stage also included inter-departmental consultation to identify whole-of-government approaches to improving outcomes for Koorie students.

Key findings that emerged from the review

In summary, the review found that:

- There is insufficient focus on education outcomes for Koorie students and a failure to make the education system, at all levels, explicitly accountable for improvement in outcomes for Koorie students.
- Improving outcomes will require specific approaches that target the individual needs of Koorie students within the context of the Victorian Government's school education reform program.
- Low expectations of Koorie students negatively affect students' learning.
- Victoria is well behind other states in recognising the cultural identity of our Koorie population within a curriculum framework.
- Engagement between school staff, parents and community is poor and undervalued.





- The Koorie support workforce requires improved professional development and support, and the roles and responsibilities of these workers need to be realigned within a regional structure.
- No conclusions can be drawn on dedicated provision in the form of separate Aboriginal schools as a strategy to provide high-quality educational outcomes.
- The Victorian College of Koorie Education (VCOKE) has not provided acceptable education outcomes.
- Pre-school education is vital to address the gap between the 'school readiness' of Koorie and other students.
- Issues from outside of school significantly impact on education outcomes.



What we propose to do – a strategy for improvement

The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development is charged with providing high-quality education that raises achievement, reduces disparity and leads to opportunities for all Victorians. This Strategy reasserts this responsibility with a new focus on Koorie students.

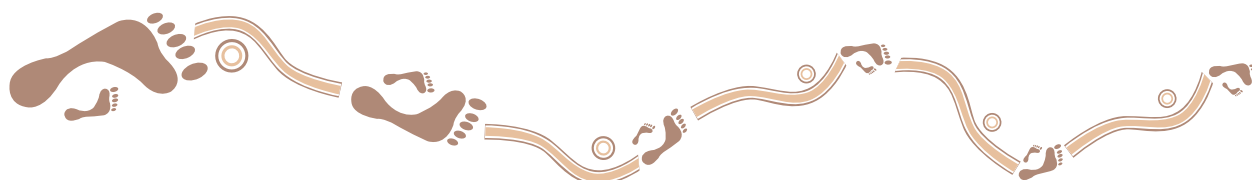
We know that improving education outcomes for Koorie students requires a comprehensive and holistic approach. We also recognise and acknowledge that significant improvement will take time. Therefore to deliver the improved outcomes we desire, we will use the best and most effective strategies from Victoria's education reform program, and work with those agencies within the Koorie community and across government best able to lift life chances and opportunities in Koorie communities.

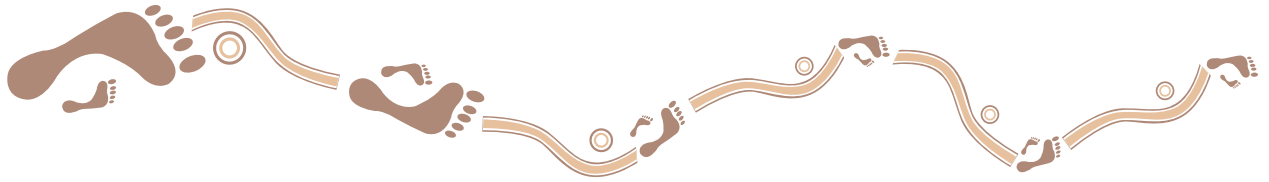
By placing Koorie students at the centre of the Government's school reform program, this Strategy maximises opportunities for Koorie students to reap the benefits of a revitalised Victorian government school sector. It also includes an uncompromising focus on accountability at the school, region and system level for improving education outcomes for each and every Koorie student.

This Strategy offers a comprehensive package of actions, based on the findings that emerged from the review process and builds on the success of existing school reform projects.

We will reform the government school system's education of Koorie students by

- Working within the existing accountability framework to ensure that all principals, teachers and departmental officers are directly responsible for the achievement of improvement targets for each Koorie student and for Koorie students overall.
- Requiring school principals with Koorie students enrolled at their school to undertake professional development in developing a culturally inclusive school in partnership with their Koorie community.
- Delivering extensive cultural awareness training to teachers and support staff in Victorian schools in partnership with the Koorie community.
- Requiring full implementation of the students-at-risk mapping tool in schools with Koorie students enrolled to enhance school understanding and use of learning and engagement data.
- Developing a professional learning package in partnership with universities and the Koorie community that supports pre-service and in-service training for teachers in the history and contemporary culture of Victoria's Koorie community.
- Ensuring teaching practices and student pathways opportunities are informed by high expectations for Koorie learners.





- Working with the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (VCAA) to develop a culturally inclusive curriculum within the Victorian Essential Learning Standards.
- Working with the Victorian College of Koorie Education (VCOKE) school council and the community on the findings from the review of *Culturally Inclusive Education*, to ensure that students receive a high-quality education into the future.

We will support greater student engagement by

- Requiring all government schools to develop an Individual Education Plan (IEP) for each Koorie student in a partnership between teacher, student, parent or caregiver and Koorie support worker. Each plan will cover key transition points from pre-school to school, primary to secondary and compulsory to post-compulsory education

- Expanding the Managed Individual Pathways initiative into Years 8 and 9 for Koorie students at risk of disengaging from school.



- Maintaining flexible funding arrangements to support regions and schools to build on the many effective programs already delivering improvements in attendance and engagement, such as breakfast programs, transport, clubs and community meeting spaces

- Expanding the Koorie-specific version of the *It's Not OK to Be Away* attendance strategy.

- Developing ready-for-school or pre-school Koorie programs in collaboration with Early Childhood Field Officers in all areas where there are high numbers of Koorie families.

- Developing Youth Transition Support Initiatives in locations where there is a high concentration of disengaged Koorie young people.

- Developing innovative learning tools and programs through the use of technology that builds community and student engagement.



We will provide more literacy and numeracy support by

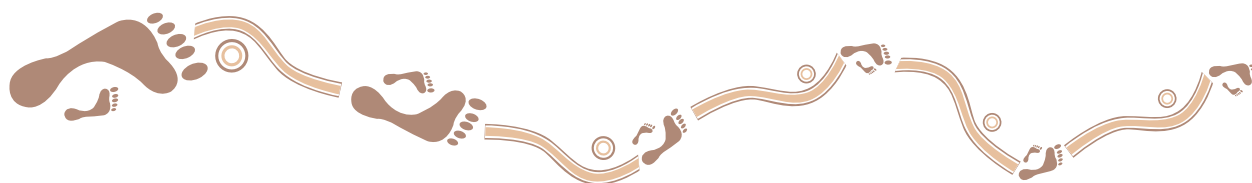
- Providing accelerated literacy and numeracy support based on best-practice models to Koorie students who are behind expected levels of achievement.
- Employing additional literacy specialists to work in schools with high numbers of Koorie students, building on the already successful Literacy Improvement Teams Initiative.
- Providing seeding grants to all regions to innovate and share effective practice in literacy and numeracy.
- Developing literacy programs that recognise the importance of 'code switching' between Koorie English and Standard Australian English.

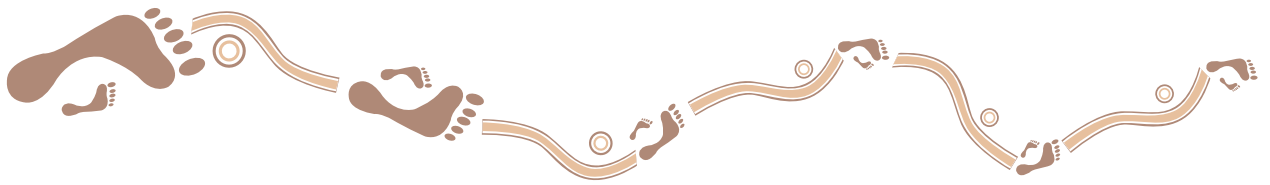
We will provide support and encouragement for high-achieving students by

- Providing scholarships for high-performing Koorie students to assist them with the costs of continued study.
- Allocating places for high-achieving Koorie students in Victoria's selective entry government schools.
- Providing mentoring programs to support students with the pressures of higher level study.
- Implementing a residential leadership and cultural identity program modelled on the Alpine School program targeting Koorie students from Year 9 onwards.

We will expand and develop the Koorie support workforce by

- Employing more Koorie support staff, and integrating the Koorie support workforce with regional support staff and functions linked to the Department's broader early childhood and school improvement strategy, including the coordination of developing Koorie education plans and pathway plans for students.
- Redesigning the roles and responsibilities of the Koorie support workforce to ensure high level support for individual Koorie students and families, with a particular focus on school-family engagement.
- Providing internships and scholarships to increase the number of Koorie teachers.
- Developing a professional learning package that supports the specific induction and professional learning needs of Koorie workers.
- Including Koorie-focused scholarships, for example the Graduate Certificate in Career Development, along with mentoring and coaching, short-term industry placement, and Vocational Education and Training (VET) familiarisation.





We will renew our focus on parental engagement by

- Developing school community partnership agreements in schools that have Koorie students enrolled.
- Requiring principals and teachers to work to remove barriers to Koorie parents' engagement in school.
- Investigating and developing initiatives that improve the literacy and numeracy of Koorie parents, to enable them to support their children through school.
- Working with Koorie parents and community to build their confidence in the school system.



We will share responsibility appropriately across government by

- Identifying the issues from outside the school gate that significantly impact on student education outcomes and participation.
- Continuing to develop programs that assist and support Koorie youth who have been placed on, or are at risk of being placed on, Youth Justice supervised orders.
- Maintaining support for Koorie organisations that are Adult Community Education (ACE) providers and registered training organisations, with appropriate evaluation to ensure programs are effective.



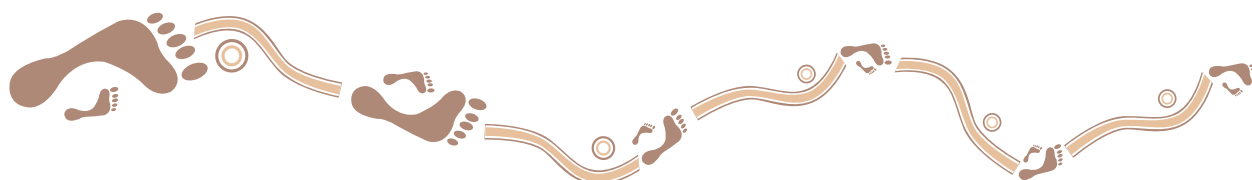
What success will look like

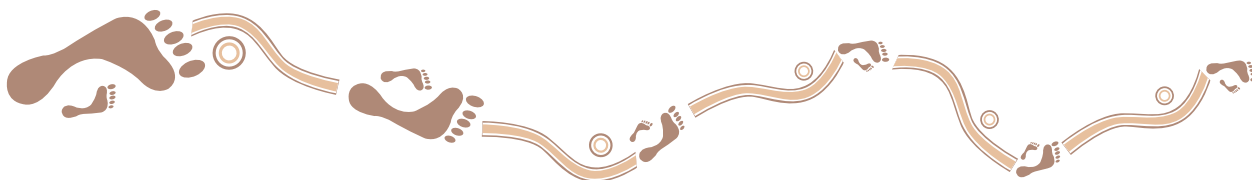
This Strategy is designed to ensure Victoria's Koorie students reap the full benefits of the Victorian government's reform agenda in education. A detailed action plan for its implementation is provided in the Appendix.

At a more general level, as a Koorie student, a parent of a Koorie child, or member of the broader Koorie community, you can expect to participate in ongoing changes and improvement in the educational outcomes for Koorie youth. This will occur through the commitment and leadership of our principals and teachers in each and every school of the Government education system working in partnership with the Koorie community.

As a Koorie student you can expect to:

- be attending school on a regular basis, and be offered support if you cannot attend for some reason.
- be valued within the classroom by your teachers and classmates.
- receive individual support if you are not making progress in English or maths.
- have individual support to excel to ensure your continued success.
- be involved in developing your education and pathway plan to achieve your future goals.
- engage with your culture in day-to-day school work and activities.
- have the opportunity to attend a residential leadership and cultural program during your secondary years.
- have scholarship opportunities on offer for further study.
- have the opportunity to engage in VCE, VET or VCAL, to have access to your chosen future educational or employment pathway.





As a parent you can expect to:

- feel welcomed and respected within your school community.
- feel assured that your child is valued within the classroom.
- have ongoing discussions with your school regarding your child's education and future aspirations.
- have your child's aspirations realised and supported by the school community.
- have your cultural heritage acknowledged and celebrated in the school and in the curriculum.

As a member of the community you can expect that:

- you will be recognised as a valued member of the broader school community with valuable contributions to make.
- you will be involved in discussions with the school to develop a school-community partnership agreement.
- your culture will be celebrated and respected by the broader school community.
- English and maths will improve for all Koorie students.
- attendance at school will improve for all Koorie students.
- schools will not use expulsions and suspensions as a first option for Koorie students.
- all Koorie students from Year 9 onwards will have the opportunity to participate in a residential cultural identity and leadership program.
- there will be an increase in students successfully moving through the different years of schooling; particularly from pre-school to primary, primary to secondary, from Years 10 to 11, Years 11 to 12 and from school to higher education, training or employment.
- there will be an increase in the number of Koorie students completing Year 12 or other education pathways.
- Koorie parents will be expressing higher levels of satisfaction with the Victorian government school system and its capacity to meet the education needs of their children.

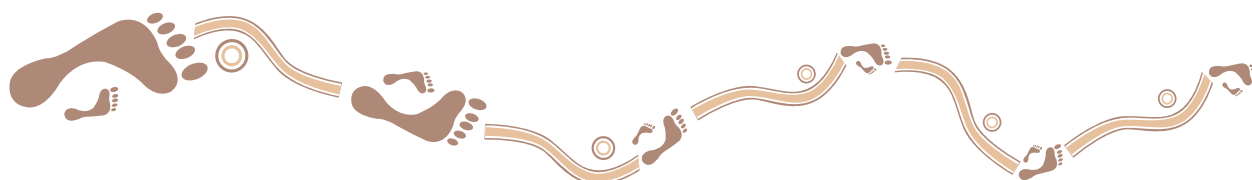


As a principal you can expect to:

- be reporting on the educational outcomes of your Koorie students every year.
- be supported to develop a culturally inclusive school.
- be involved in partnership agreements with the community on the education of your Koorie students.
- be supported to continue to run effective programs that have been shown to meet the specific needs of Koorie students.
- ensure that an individual education plan is developed for each Koorie student in discussion with their parent or caregiver.

As a teacher you can expect to:

- be developing a coordinated individual education plan for each of your Koorie students in discussion with their parent or caregiver.
- be supported to gain a greater understanding of Koorie culture.
- be provided with professional learning opportunities for delivering a culturally inclusive curriculum.
- be provided with professional learning opportunities to assist you to support Koorie students when education progress is not occurring.



What we propose to do – a strategy for improvement

Reform the government school system's education of Koorie students

APPENDIX

Action
Work within the existing accountability framework to ensure principals, teachers and departmental officers are directly responsible for the achievement of improved targets for each Koorie student and for Koorie students overall through strategic plans, Annual Implementation Plans and performance plans.
Require school principals with Koorie students enrolled at their school to undertake professional development in consultation with their Koorie community and VAEAL in order to develop a culturally inclusive school.
Develop in partnership with VAEAL cultural awareness training for teachers and support staff in Victorian schools. This will be delivered in partnership with the Koorie community.
Increase and encourage participation by Victorian schools in the national <i>What Works</i> program to improve Koorie learning outcomes and community engagement.
Increase and encourage participation by Victorian schools and regions in the <i>Dare to Lead</i> program
Require full implementation of the students at risk mapping tool in schools with Koorie students enrolled to enhance school understanding and use of learning and engagement data.
Develop a professional learning package in partnership with universities and VAEAL that supports pre-service and in-service training for teachers in the history and contemporary culture of Victoria's Koorie community.
Develop and implement a professional learning package for teachers that reflects the professional teaching standards informed by high expectations for Koorie learners.
In conjunction with VAEAL, work with the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority to develop a culturally inclusive curriculum within the Victorian Essential Learning Standards .
Work with the Victorian College of Koorie Education (VCOKE) school council and community on the findings from the review of <i>Culturally Inclusive Education</i> to ensure that students receive a high-quality education into the future.
Develop and implement a strategy to ensure that suspensions and expulsions for Koorie students are used as a last resort.

Support greater student engagement

Action
Require all government schools to develop an Individual Education Plan (IEP) for every Koorie student in their school. The school will develop this in partnership with the student, their parent or caregiver and a Koorie support worker. Each plan will cover key transition points (pre-school to school; primary to secondary; compulsory to post-compulsory) and will be linked to the Managed Individual Pathways initiative.
Expand the Managed Individual Pathways initiative into Years 8 and 9 for Koorie students at risk of disengaging from school.
Maintain flexible funding arrangements to support regions and schools to build on the many effective programs already delivering improvements in attendance and engagement, such as breakfast programs, transport, clubs and community meeting spaces.
Expand the Koorie-specific version of the <i>It's Not OK to Be Away</i> attendance strategy.
Develop ready-for-school or pre-school Koorie programs in collaboration with Early Childhood Field Officers in all areas where there are high numbers of Koorie families.
Develop Youth Transition Support Initiatives in locations where there is a high concentration of disengaged Koorie young people.
Develop innovative learning tools and programs through the use of technology that builds community and student engagement.

Provide more literacy and numeracy support

Action
Provide accelerated literacy and numeracy support to Koorie students who are behind expected levels of achievement.
Employ additional literacy specialists to work in schools with high numbers of Koorie students, building on the already successful Literacy Improvement Teams Initiative.
Provide seeding grants to all regions to innovate and share effective practice in literacy and numeracy.
Develop literacy programs in conjunction with VAEAL that recognise the importance of 'code switching' between Koorie English and Standard Australian English.

Support and encouragement for high-achieving students

Action
Provide scholarships for high-performing Koorie students to assist them with the costs of continued study.
Allocate places for high-achieving Koorie students in Victoria's selective entry government schools.
Provide mentoring programs to support students with the pressures of higher level study.
Implement a residential leadership and cultural identity program in conjunction with VAEAL modelled on the Alpine School program targeting Koorie students from Year 9 onwards.

Expand and develop the Koorie support workforce

Action
Employ more Koorie support staff and integrate the Koorie support workforce with regional support staff and functions linked to the Department's broader early childhood and school improvement strategy, including the coordination of developing education plans and pathway plans for Koorie students.
Redesign the roles and responsibilities of the Koorie support workforce to ensure high-level support for individual Koorie students and families, with a particular focus on school-family engagement.
Provide internships and scholarships to increase the number of Koorie teachers.
Develop a professional learning package that supports the specific induction and professional learning needs of Koorie workers.
Include Koorie-focused scholarships, for example by undertaking the Graduate Certificate in Career Development, along with mentoring and coaching, short-term industry placement, and VET familiarisation.

Renew our focus on parental engagement

Action
<i>Develop</i> school community partnership agreements in schools with Koorie students enrolled.
<i>Investigate and develop</i> initiatives that improve the literacy and numeracy of Koorie parents, to assist them to support their children through school.
In conjunction with VAEI, <i>work</i> with parents and community to build their confidence in the school system.

Share responsibility appropriately across government

Action
<i>Identify</i> the issues from outside the school gate that significantly impact on student education outcomes and participation.
Continue to <i>develop</i> programs that assist and support Koorie youth who have been placed on, or are at risk of being placed on, Youth Justice supervised orders.
<i>Maintain support</i> for Koorie organisations that are ACE providers and registered training organisations, with appropriate evaluation to ensure programs are effective.
<i>Undertake</i> further work with other agencies to identify school-aged Koorie students who are not attending school and support them to engage in the education environment.





Strengthening Outcomes

Refugee Students in Government Schools



Published by the ESL Unit

Student Learning Programs Division
Office for Government School Education
Department of Education and Early Childhood Development
Melbourne
March 2008

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Minister's Foreword



In 2007 more than 1600 refugee students enrolled in Victorian government schools. Refugees have always been part of the intake of recently arrived students into schools, but in the past three years the proportion of refugees has grown to more than a third of all recently arrived students. Many of the refugees, currently settling in Victoria, have experienced personal hardships before arriving, including many years in refugee camps, torture and trauma, loss of family members, little or no schooling and low literacy levels in their first language.

In recognition of the importance of assisting schools to meet the highly specialised education and personal support needs of this group of students, the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development has developed *Strengthening Outcomes – Refugee Students in Government Schools*. It is hoped that this document will provide useful contextual information for schools who are welcoming refugee students into their schools for the first time and be a source of useful support material for other schools and organisations providing support and services to refugees.

Strengthening Outcomes acknowledges that additional support is needed to deal effectively with the challenges refugees face in settling into school and remaining engaged with education. Most importantly, it identifies the need for the Department to work closely with community partners to achieve the best possible outcomes for refugee students.

I am enthusiastic about the improvements that are possible and this document will act as a catalyst for a range of strategies to be implemented by the Department to extend support for refugee students.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bronwyn Pike". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letter of each name being large and prominent.

Bronwyn Pike MP
Minister for Education

Minister's Foreword	1
PART 1 – INTRODUCTION	3
Strengthening outcomes: Refugee students in government schools	4
Australia's refugee and humanitarian program	5
Who is a refugee?	5
The refugee experience	6
Victorian government policy – A Fairer Victoria	6
Interrupted schooling and experience in camps	8
The impact of the refugee experience on schooling	9
Refugee and humanitarian entrants to Victoria	10
Changes in settlement patterns – Impact on provision	12
PART 2 – KEY STRATEGIES	13
School support	14
Existing programs	15
The New Arrivals Program	15
English language schools and centres	16
Out-posting programs	16
Isolated ESL Student Program	17
New Arrivals Kit	17
English as a second language – support in mainstream schools	17
Program responses	18
Additional support	20
Additional funding for literacy support	20
Extension of stay in English language schools and centres	20
Appointment of transition officers	20
Bridging and transition programs	21
Catering for pathways for older learners	21
Support for teachers and schools	26
Multicultural education aides	26
Outreach services coordinators	26
Funding for regional ESL program officers	26
The Languages and Multicultural Education Resource Centre (LMERC)	26
Improving the wellbeing of refugee students	27
Professional development strategies	28
Interpreting and translating	28
PART 3 – PARTNERSHIPS	29
Building effective partnerships	30
Foundation House, the Victorian Foundation for Survivors of Torture (VFST)	30
Department of Immigration and Citizenship	31
The Victorian Settlement Planning Committee (VSPC)	31
Centre for Multicultural Youth Issues (CMYI)	32
Department of Human Services (DHS)	33
Victorian Multicultural Commission (VMC)	33
PART 4 – FUTURE DIRECTIONS	34
Moving forward	35
Enhance transition arrangements	35
Support the development of pathways	35
Out of school hours learning support	35
Review ESL funding	36
Strengthen school capacity	36
Improve data collection and monitoring	37
Further develop partnerships	37
Resources	38
Links	38
Additional contacts and links	40
Agencies	40

Part 1 – Introduction



Strengthening outcomes: Refugee students in government schools

Victorian government schools can be both refreshed and challenged by their refugee students. Schools provide one of the first experiences of life in Australia for the increasing number of students from refugee backgrounds and their families.



The challenge for the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development and schools is to be able to recognise the realities of the 'refugee experience' of their students and respond with appropriate and targeted programs to better assist with their learning and settlement.

Refugee students have always been a component of the intake of school-age students who enrol in our schools each year. In recent years, however, refugee and humanitarian entrant students have made up a greater proportion of the overall intake of new arrivals entering Australia.

Over the past 10 years, the national origin of refugee and humanitarian entrants has changed substantially, resulting in many of the students who are now enrolled having had severely interrupted schooling or little or no experience of school. The lack of literacy in a first or a second language, little or no knowledge or understanding of how school works, and the trauma associated with the refugee experience, means that refugee students are likely to face substantial obstacles to settling, including learning in our schools. Without particular interventions at a system and a local school level, many students from refugee backgrounds are likely to experience considerable disadvantage and may fail to achieve their educational and social potential.

Australia's refugee and humanitarian program

The Australian Government has primary responsibility for migration and for providing initial settlement assistance to refugees arriving in Australia.

Each year, the Minister for Immigration and Citizenship sets the planning levels for both the Migration Program and the Humanitarian Program.

Refugee and humanitarian entrants are provided with specialised support under the Australian Government's Integrated Humanitarian Settlement Scheme (IHSS) to help them settle in Australia. The intensive assistance aims to help refugee and humanitarian entrants settle well and achieve self-sufficiency as soon as possible after arrival. Specialised assistance includes the provision of initial information and orientation, accommodation, household formation, and health assessment and early intervention. In addition, the Australian Government makes funding available to the states to provide adult and school programs for learning English.

Who is a refugee?

International law defines a 'refugee' as a person who has fled from and/or cannot return to their country due to a well-founded fear of persecution, including war or civil conflict.

A refugee is a person who 'owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality, and is unable to or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country...'

Article 1, The 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees

Offshore Resettlement

The offshore resettlement component comprises two categories of permanent visa and two categories of temporary visa.

Permanent offshore humanitarian visa categories

Refugee for people who are subject to persecution in their home country, who are typically outside their home country, and are in need of resettlement.

Special Humanitarian Program (SHP) for people outside their home country who are subject to substantial discrimination amounting to gross violation of human rights in their home country.

Temporary offshore humanitarian visa categories

The offshore temporary humanitarian visas are for people who have bypassed or abandoned effective protection in another country and for whom humanitarian entry to Australia is appropriate. It comprises two sub-categories:

Secondary Movement Relocation

Secondary Movement Offshore Entry

Department of Immigration & Citizenship Fact Sheet 60, March 2007

*For further information refer to
<http://www.immi.gov.au/media/fact-sheets/index.htm#humanitarian>*

The refugee experience

Refugee students and their families come to Australia from many different countries and backgrounds, but all share an experience of displacement and loss.

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) reports that, by the end of 2005, the number of refugees reached an estimated 8.4 million persons worldwide.

In Africa, half or more than half of the refugees are under the age of 18.

*2005 Global Refugee Trends,
UNHCR Geneva, June 2006*

The majority of people entering Australia under the Refugee and Special Humanitarian Program have been exposed to some form of political, religious or intercultural violence, persecution, armed conflict or civil disorder. Refugees have usually been forced to flee their homes and are likely to have been forcibly separated from families and communities. Many have spent long periods in refugee camps without adequate food, shelter or access to education and health services.

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) estimates that around one in three of the world's refugees has had at least one experience of torture, with almost seven in 10 being subject to other traumatic events such as prolonged political repression or loss of family members in violent circumstances.

For more information on the refugee experience, visit Foundation House, the Victoria Foundation for the Survivors of Torture home page www.foundationhouse.org.au

Victorian Government policy – A Fairer Victoria

Some very clear directions about how best to address the real and potential disadvantage likely to be experienced by refugee students can be found in the Victorian Government's statement of its key social principles, *A Fairer Victoria – Creating opportunity and addressing disadvantage* (AFV).

AFV sets out actions the Government will take to improve access to vital services, reduce barriers to opportunity, strengthen assistance for disadvantaged groups to ensure that people get the help they need at critical times in their lives.

"We have always provided special services to meet the particular needs of different groups, especially as they settle within the community."

A Fairer Victoria – Creating opportunity and addressing disadvantage

AFV recognises that the newer waves of migration will place some strain on language services and education programs and states the principle that help may need to be extended to refugee entrants to enable better access to all services and aid their successful transition to life in Victoria.

"We will increase our efforts to improve access to services for our multicultural communities, especially language services, education and health services. At the same time we will continue to promote multicultural harmony."

A Fairer Victoria – Creating opportunity and addressing disadvantage

AFV reiterates the principle that while universal access to services is the fundamental aim of government, special services have always been required to meet the particular needs of different groups. It notes that most refugee entrants to Victoria have experienced war and famine, sometimes children have never attended school and some have no experience of hospitals and doctors. Importantly, there is a commitment to providing resources and programs to assist those making a new life in a new country.



The population policy, *Beyond Five Million*, announced by the Victorian Government in 2004, also makes a clear and firm commitment to the ongoing acceptance and settlement of refugee and humanitarian entrants into the community. The policy recognises that refugee and humanitarian entrants have particular needs and require considerable assistance during the settlement period. To this end, the Victorian Government complements Commonwealth-funded settlement programs by providing additional funding and programs, many of which are also available to holders of Temporary Protection visas.

Humanitarian Entrants

“Australia’s Humanitarian Program reflects its commitment as a global partner in the system of international protection to share the responsibility for the protection of refugees and people facing significant difficulties. Victoria is committed to the acceptance and settlement of humanitarian entrants and refugees into our community. In 2002–03 Victoria attracted 36 per cent and 39 per cent of the total Australian intake in the Special Humanitarian Program and Refugee categories. The State’s tradition of compassion has enriched Victoria, with many refugees succeeding in building their lives.

Humanitarian entrants have particular needs and require considerable assistance during the settlement period. To complement Commonwealth-funded settlement services, the Victorian Government provides additional funding and programs for refugee and humanitarian entrants, many of which are also available to Temporary Protection Visa holders...”

Beyond Five Million The Victorian Government’s Population Policy, State of Victoria, December 2004

These policies clearly signal that the Victorian government has an ongoing and longer-term commitment to the provision of special assistance to refugee and humanitarian entrants in a range of settings.

Interrupted schooling and experience in camps

The overwhelming majority of young people from refugee backgrounds enrolling in Victorian schools will have experienced some disruption to their education prior to arriving in Australia.



Some will have experienced the harsh and often insecure conditions in refugee camps. While they are almost certain to have been exposed to disease, under-nourishment and high levels of stress, it is equally likely that they will not have had adequate and on-going access to school and schooling.

Disruption to schooling is a direct result of the refugee experience and the longer the disruption, the more likely it is that lives have been broken by war and displacement and the absence of the most basic of services and conditions. As they plan and provide educational support for this target group, it is critical for both education planners and providers to understand that low levels of education amongst young people from refugee backgrounds typically correlate with long-term exposure to traumatic experiences.

Although primary schooling is often offered in camps, many children do not attend because they may be needed to queue for the family at food distribution points, they may not be well enough or have adequate clothing or money for materials to allow them to attend. The quality of the schooling offered also varies enormously. Other refugee students will have spent time in a number of different countries before arriving in Australia and even though they may have attended some form of school in a number of places, their schooling also will have been severely disrupted and they are likely to lack literacy and other learning skills.

Children from a refugee background may not be literate in their own language so that learning English is doubly hard. Because they have not had the experience of school, they may not have developed the concepts needed to understand abstract notions or the language which describes them.

“...it must first be remembered that people become refugees in order to escape from an intolerable threat to their fundamental rights or security at home; protection is, by definition, a benefit that is not available to the refugee in his/her own country. However, in times of crisis, the granting of asylum to large numbers of prima facie refugees is often premised on their being confined to camps. Such measures, which are imperfect and not in conformity with the rights enshrined in the refugee instruments, represent compromises that balance emergency refugee needs and host State concerns.

If it is true that camps save lives in the emergency phase, it is also true that, as the years go by, they progressively waste these same lives. A refugee may be able to receive assistance, but is prevented from enjoying those rights – for example, to freedom of movement, employment, and in some cases, education – that would enable him or her to become a productive member of a society.”

Protracted Refugee Situations Executive Committee on the High Commissioner's Program UNHCR, June 2004

Because they may not have experienced the socialisation that comes with being at school, students may not know how to be organised or understand about sitting still and concentrating and might also find it difficult to cope with the usual practice in schools of spending long periods of time in the classroom. Because some children will have grown up in camps without being socialised according to the values of their own culture, they may have some difficulty in understanding, adapting to and dealing with the norms of behaviour that operate in schools in Australia.

The impact of the refugee experience on schooling

Many of the refugee students who are now entering the education system with severely disrupted schooling, or who have spent little or no time in school, present with learning needs which have created some real challenges for the system at several levels.

For many students, the trauma related to the refugee experience will also interfere with their capacity to learn and they will take a lot longer to make progress in learning English in the first instance.

Because programs need to take account of the time it takes to learn how to study and adapt to the culture and the discipline of a formal learning environment, existing programs have had to be modified and major initiatives launched to best cater for the students' needs.

For more information about the refugee experience and implications for schools, see www.education.vic.gov.au/studentlearning/programs/esl/refugees/default.htm



"Research confirms that those new arrivals students who enter school with minimal prior formal schooling, little or no literacy in their own language, refugee trauma experiences, weak or disrupted family ties or physical/sensory impairments experience a 'double disadvantage' and are typically several years behind their ESL new arrival peers in attaining comparable literacy skill levels."

Brown, Miller & Mitchell, Australian Journal of Language and Literacy, Vol. 29, no. 2, 2006. pp. 150–162

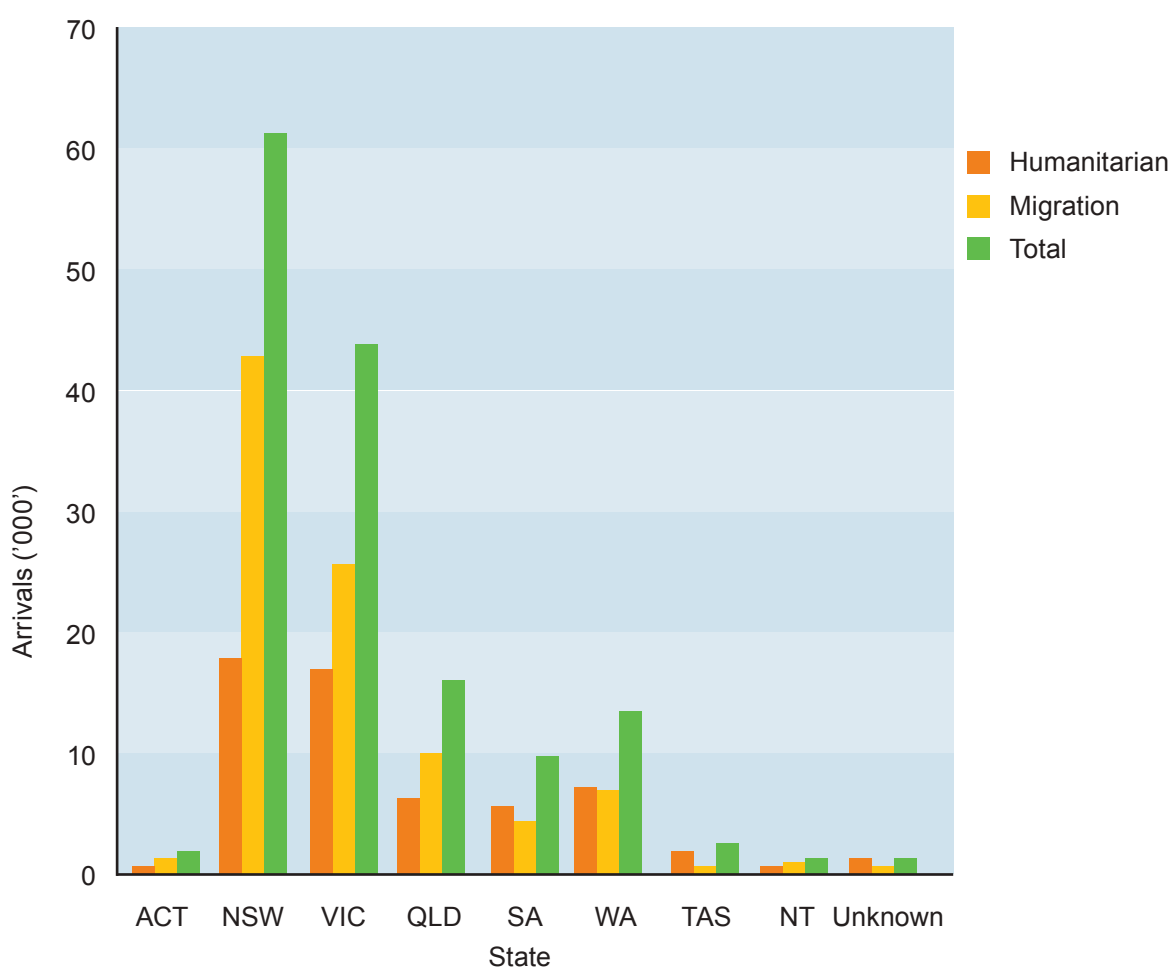
Refugee and humanitarian entrants to Victoria

The history of Australia's refugee intake reflects the history of conflict and upheaval around the world. Think of the devastation of post World War 2 Europe and the waves of violence that brought South East Asian boat people here in the 1970s. More recently, we have seen conflicts in the Balkans and the Middle East, and now the displaced millions in Africa and Asia.

Refugees have come from many parts of the world, but share the common experiences of displacement and loss and, for the most part, starting again from nothing.

Victoria is the second highest settlement location in Australia (Figure 1), settling approximately 42,854 arrivals (combined Migration and Humanitarian Program) the years 2002–03 to 2006–07. Some 17,064 arrivals or 39.8 per cent of the State's overall intake consisted of humanitarian entrants as compared to an average of around 38.4 per cent at the national level.

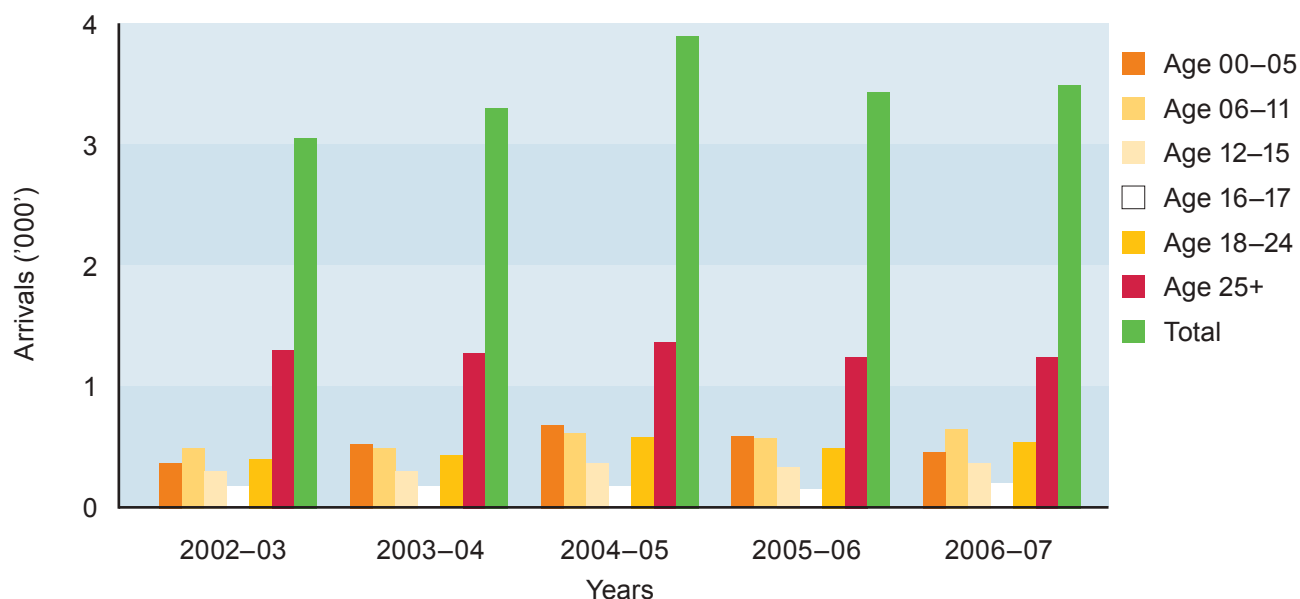
Figure 1: Arrivals by state or territory 2002–03 to 2006–07



Victoria – Settlement Needs of New Arrivals 2007. Department of Immigration and Citizenship, August 2007

Between 2002 and 2007, approximately 17,000 refugees settled in Victoria through the Refugee and Humanitarian Program. Each year over 30 per cent of the intake were of school age when they arrived (Figure 2).

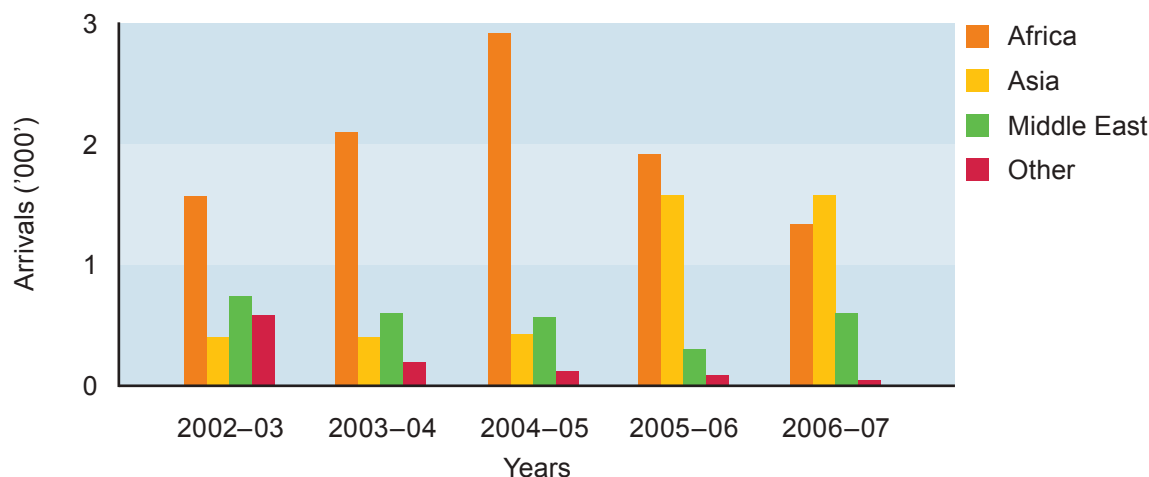
Figure 2: Age on arrival of humanitarian target group entrants, VIC 2002–03 to 2006–07



Victoria – Settlement Needs of New Arrivals 2007. Department of Immigration and Citizenship, August 2007

In the past five years, 2002–03 to 2006–07, entrants originating from Africa made up just over 57 per cent of the total humanitarian target group intake for Victoria (Figure 3). Sudan was the main country of birth in this period, comprising almost 39 per cent of all humanitarian entrants. This trend was also evident in 2006–07 where around 22 per cent of all humanitarian entrants were born in Sudan.

Figure 3: Main source regions of humanitarian target group entrants, VIC 2002–03 to 2006–07



Victoria – Settlement Needs of New Arrivals 2007. Department of Immigration and Citizenship, August 2007

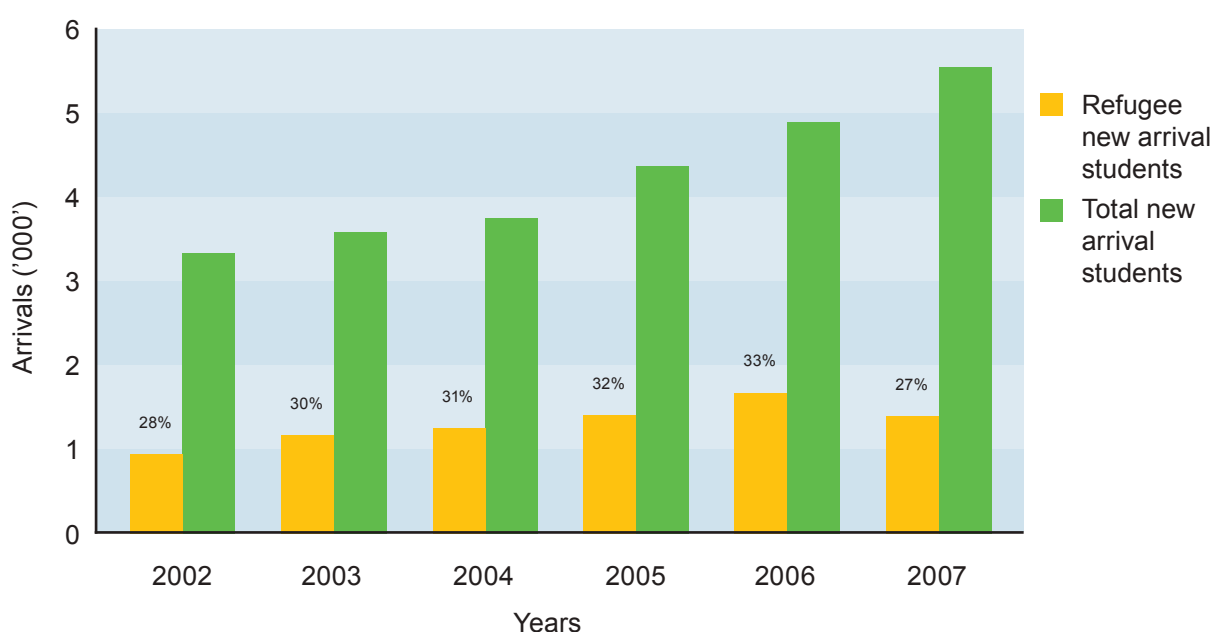
The overall increase in the number of entrants originating from Africa directly reflected the regional focus of the Refugee and Special Humanitarian Program of Australian Government in the years 2002–03 to 2006–07, where people from Africa were granted just over 57 per cent of the total number of places available. From a peak in 2004–05, entrants born in Africa declined by around 55 per cent over the last two years. There has been a corresponding rise in entrants from Asia (including Afghanistan) making up around 45 per cent of entrants in 2006–07. In the same year, there was a significant increase in arrivals from Burma/Myanmar (approximately 21 per cent of humanitarian arrivals in that year).

Changes in settlement patterns – Impact on provision

Government schools are often the first to experience the impact of changes in the location of refugee and humanitarian entrants.

In recent years, there has been a marked trend for more dispersed settlement as refugees have made both an initial and a second move to outer-metropolitan and rural areas as a result of sponsorship, joining existing communities or in search of more readily available and affordable housing or employment. School enrolments of refugee students have also followed on the successful implementation of a number of carefully planned regional humanitarian settlement projects.

Figure 4: Percentage of refugee and humanitarian entrant enrolments 2002–07



Department of Education and Early Childhood Development New Arrivals (NA) Data Collection, 2002–2007

In Victoria, in each of the years 2002 to 2007, the number of newly arrived students enrolling in programs for learning English as a Second Language (ESL) has increased.

In 2006, consistent with the pattern that emerged in the previous few years, some 2,128 newly arrived students in need of English language tuition enrolled directly in mainstream schools. They required considerable in-school support through outreach coordinators and other services provided by English language schools and centres.

Data for the same year indicates that there were significant increases in the numbers of new arrival students entering primary and secondary schools on refugee and humanitarian visas with severely interrupted or no schooling.

Part 2 – Key strategies



School support

Because some schools have little or no experience in providing programs in English as a second language and a limited capacity to recognise and meet the needs of newly arrived refugee students, key strategies have been put in place to make sure that the necessary targeted support is able to be delivered.

The strategies are varied and the targets are mixed. Some are system-wide and modify existing practices to allow the educational system to be more responsive to needs. Direct support

is being delivered to refugee students in schools, with a focus on transition and bridging programs, and additional programs for literacy. Other strategies are aimed at strengthening the capacity of schools and regions to support the work of classroom teachers and advisory staff. The further development of outreach and out-posting services, the appointment of transition officers, arrangements to extend transition and bridging programs and the funding of regional ESL officers are all designed to assist refugee students achieve positive education outcomes.

The key strategies can be categorised into two groups (further detailed in the following sections):

- Existing programs
- Program responses.



Existing programs

Specific ESL programs and services have been in place for several decades, supported by funding from the Commonwealth Government and supplemented by state funding.



The Victorian Government currently spends up to \$66 million to supplement existing ESL programs and to support strategies developed to target the students who are in greatest need.

The New Arrivals Program

Participation in an intensive program at an English language school or centre is the preferred point of entry for all newly arrived students, particularly those from refugee backgrounds.

Changes in the settlement patterns of refugee and humanitarian entrant families have meant that many more newly arrived students are now enrolling directly in schools not accustomed to catering for them.

The New Arrivals Program caters for students who satisfy specific visa requirements and are then eligible for English language tuition. The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development extends this service to temporary visa holders, if places are available.

The Commonwealth Government funds English as a Second Language – New Arrivals Programme, under the Special

Learning Needs (SLN) component of grants for Commonwealth Targeted Programs. This involves a once-only per capita grant made to the school education jurisdiction in each state and territory for each eligible new arrival student enrolling in primary or secondary schools. The per capita grant is intended to provide students with an intensive English language program of a minimum of 10 hours per week for six months. Funding for all capital works for the program and the various grants and allowances are provided by the State Government.

There are four broad categories of students catered for within the New Arrivals Programme:

- Permanent residents of Australia who attract Commonwealth funding
- Temporary residents of Australia who do not attract Commonwealth funding but satisfy all Commonwealth eligibility criteria except permanent residency
- Students on temporary protection visas
- Permanent and temporary residents of Australia who fall outside the Commonwealth eligibility criteria in terms of length of time in Australia but are in need of intensive ESL support.

Students who are temporary residents, or those seeking protection, do not receive funding under the New Arrivals Programme from the Commonwealth.

English language schools and centres

Ideally, newly arrived primary and secondary students with literacy learning needs will take part in a full-time intensive program at an English language school or English language centre for between two to four school terms, that is, for between six and 12 months.



Students are taught English within the context of all the learning areas common to all students in the State. The smaller classes and high number of contact hours allow teachers to provide an intensive program which is more easily tailored to the needs of individuals. The intense focus and structured nature of the program is designed to ease their entry to mainstream schools and to assist with their adaptation to a new education system and to Australian society generally.

In recognition of their particular needs, students with interrupted or no schooling generally remain in an intensive program for longer than other students and may be taught in smaller groups.

In the metropolitan area, students can enrol directly for intensive English tuition in one of four English language schools at Blackburn, Collingwood, Noble Park or at Braybrook in the western suburbs. As well, they can enrol in the primary English language centre at Springvale or in one of the secondary English language centres at Broadmeadows, Brunswick, Glen Eira or Westall. Non-metropolitan students can enrol for the programs which operate at Geelong, Ballarat and Shepparton. There are alternative programs available for students who cannot attend an English language school or centre.

Out-posting programs

The out-posting programs assign primary teachers from an English language school or centre to a mainstream primary school, or a cluster of schools, to provide an intensive English language learning program for newly arrived students.

The program is designed for students who are unable to attend a program in an English language school or centre.

For newly arrived students who have enrolled in schools in outer metropolitan

areas, support comes through a visiting out-posting program where teachers from English language schools or centres will visit a number of schools to provide targeted support to eligible newly arrived students.

“In my role as out-posted classroom teacher of newly arrived ESL students, I have gained a far greater understanding of the transition process for students who exit from the Language School or Outpost. I am now much more aware of the curriculum expectations and demands in the early years of secondary schooling and how many newly arrived students struggle to make satisfactory progress, particularly in the areas of reading and writing. As a teacher at a language out-post, I have students in my class who are in upper primary. I feel I can now better prepare these students for their transition to secondary school as a result of having spoken to numerous mainstream teachers and having surveyed the students themselves.”

*Anne Joiner. Collingwood English Language School
Follow-up of primary newly arrived students. March 2006*

Isolated ESL Student Program

Where students are enrolled singly or in small numbers in schools in country towns, there is often no knowledge of teaching English as a second language (ESL) or of the special needs of refugee students.

The Isolated ESL Student Program targets these students to provide funding and materials. Support can be directed to fund a qualified ESL teacher on staff or the employment of a qualified casual relief teacher to provide a program for the student. Alternatively, a mentor support program can operate where a qualified ESL teacher is not available. This provides funds to enable a classroom teacher to visit an English language school or centre to become familiar with teaching strategies and resource selection for students.



New Arrivals Kit

Schools in non-metropolitan and outer-metropolitan areas with isolated new arrivals can borrow the New Arrivals Kit from Languages and Multicultural Education Resource Centre (LMERC).

The kit consists of a selection of ESL resources and materials, which is sent from LMERC to schools on request. In both 2005 and 2006 more than 60 kits were provided free to schools and included the following Department of Education and Early Childhood Development publications (which can be found at: www.education.vic.gov.au/studentlearning/programs/esl/resources/pubprimesl.htm):

- *Where's English?*
- *Beginning ESL: Support material for primary new arrivals*
- *No English: Don't panic*
- *No English 2: Questions and answers*
- *Language games for ESL students.*

English as a second language – support in mainstream schools

Programs designed for students who have been enrolled in Australian schools for more than a year are known as post new arrival English as a second language programs.

Utilising funds made available through their global budgets and which are calculated according to a weighted formula, some 460 mainstream Victorian government primary and secondary schools are funded to provide ESL programs to their eligible enrolled students. To qualify for funding, students have a language background other than English, the main language spoken at home is not English, and will have been enrolled in an Australian school for less than five years.

These programs were developed with great expertise over many years but were designed primarily to cater for students with significant prior schooling.

Program responses

The sharp increase in the number of enrolments of students from refugee backgrounds in the past five years has had a considerable impact on the New Arrivals Program in English language schools and centres, and on ESL programs in primary and secondary schools.

In schools with little or no experience of enrolling and providing programs for refugee students, the impact has also been significant. The spike in direct enrolments of refugee students with severely interrupted or no schooling has meant that schools have sought additional information and guidance about approaches to the teaching of literacy and English as a second language. They have also sought advice about the resources and materials available to better manage a changing environment.



The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development has responded at a number of levels to ensure that the complex learning needs of refugee students are met. At a central office level, the Targeted Programs Branch, through the ESL Unit, has found ways to make existing practices and procedures more flexible to ensure the particular needs of these students can be adequately catered for. Practice has been modified, for instance, to enable refugee students with severely interrupted schooling and consequent low literacy levels to stay in English language schools and centres for extended periods. This allows more individualised support to be provided.

Approaches have been adapted to respond more readily to students from a refugee background, who might be scattered in small numbers in mainstream schools across both metropolitan and non-metropolitan areas. This has meant that teachers who are out-posted to provide English language tuition in single or clusters of mainstream schools have had to acquire additional, specialised knowledge to meet the learning needs of refugee students.

New strategies have been developed which provide strong support and close monitoring of refugee students as they make the critical transition from English language schools and centres to mainstream schools. To ensure that the move from one school setting to another can be staged and planned to match the learning needs of refugee students, options have been developed to coordinate and support the transition process and to establish bridging programs in mainstream schools.

As part of its management of targeted programs, the ESL Unit has developed state-wide professional learning activities related to teaching strategies for students with severely interrupted schooling and literacy learning needs.

The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development's nine regional offices support government schools as they work to improve and ensure quality outcomes for students. The regions – Barwon South Western, Grampians, Gippsland, Hume, Loddon-Mallee, Eastern Metropolitan, Northern Metropolitan, Southern Metropolitan and Western Metropolitan – have played a major role in progressing strategies to support refugee background students. Regional offices have also been given explicit responsibility in relation to youth transitions and are required to engage actively with their Local Learning and Employment Networks (LLENs).

At the local level, schools and school communities have been introduced to other partners with expertise in the settlement needs of refugee and humanitarian entrants. Particular programs have been developed in conjunction with Foundation House, the Victorian Foundation for the Survivors of Torture (VFST), Local Learning and Employment Networks (LLENs) or Adult Multicultural Education Services (AMES).

These programs have also assisted schools to successfully build on the broader global experience of these students to enrich and deepen the understanding and learning of all students.



Additional support

Additional funding for literacy support

Since 2004, the provision of around \$1 million in additional funding has enabled English language schools and centres to reduce class sizes and provide more intensive support to students with very low literacy levels.



Funding has been used to employ extra teachers and multicultural education aides and to purchase curriculum resources suitable to the needs of these students.

Extension of stay in English language schools and centres

New arrival students generally stay in an English language school or centre for six months. For the past few years, additional state funding has meant that the stay for refugee students has been able to be extended to up to 12 months to allow them the critical extra time they need to learn English.

The Commonwealth Government has now recognised the need for extended stays and will provide an additional \$127.8 million nationally over the four years 2010–11 to assist with intensive ESL tuition for refugee and humanitarian entrants.

Appointment of transition officers

For many refugee students, learning English intensively in a language school or centre for between six and 12 months is likely to engender a sense of security and familiarity with a known environment.

A move to a mainstream school will mark a further major transition for students and is likely to recreate former high levels of anxiety and uncertainty. The sense of dislocation may be more intense for refugee students as they move to a bigger school, from a primary school to a secondary school or move into post-compulsory education or employment.

Eleven teachers have been appointed as Transition Officers to provide critical support to students as they make the transition from an English language school or centre to a mainstream school. The work undertaken by these officers can range from introducing students and their families to the whole idea of schools and the schools system to advising the mainstream school about bridging and other teaching programs specific to students with disrupted schooling. Transition Officers will also negotiate with parents to choose a school that has an existing English language learning program or one that is close by and can adapt to meet the needs of students. They will work with ESL teachers and classroom teachers to improve transition processes and school-based programs and make sure that there is an awareness of the support services available in the wider community, which are designed to assist the settlement of refugee and humanitarian entrants.

Bridging and transition programs

Bridging programs in primary and secondary schools recognise that, because of their disrupted schooling, the majority of refugee students making the transition from an English language school or centre will still need intensive literacy teaching and targeted support to develop concepts and skills appropriate to their level of entry at the mainstream school.

With literacy levels well below fellow students who have had continuous schooling, refugee students will continue to require high levels of assistance to be able to manage the transition into mainstream programs.

Schools were invited to apply for specific funding to establish bridging and transition programs for newly arrived students who were not ready to enter mainstream classes and still in need of support. In addition to developing the literacy skills of students, bridging programs also aim to support students to acquire concept development and study skills and help them decide on educational and vocational pathways. Bridging programs are established for students who are at the early stages of literacy development and are run as parallel – but integral – to all other programs within the school. Schools are encouraged to keep the structure of the program flexible so that individual student's strengths and needs can be acknowledged and catered for.

“Students have shown steady improvement in two areas. They have integrated into Australian schooling and have been supported to involve themselves in a wide range of school activities and other opportunities. Not only have students enjoyed and learned from a wide range of excursions and real life learning situations, these opportunities have assisted their literacy and oral language development. Student achievement data shows that most students have improved in work practices. Students who have been in the school for some years have also made progress in grades and skills. A notable student, H, who could not read at all on arrival to the college three years ago is now averaging D⁺/C across all subjects and can read well.

One of the greatest benefits for the students has been their very positive connection with the team of teachers responsible for their care.”

*Brunswick Secondary College Evaluation of Bridging/
Additional Support Program 2005*

Schools can work with transition officers and regional staff to assess and identify the students who need to be included in a bridging program. Individual schools will take into account overall resource allocations and other English language and literacy programs available in the school to decide on the model that is best for them. In some schools, a full-time program will provide at least twenty hours of instruction in a class of at least 15 students. Where the school decides on a part-time program, intensive small group instruction will be combined with mainstream classes and supplementary ESL classes.

Catering for pathways for older learners

Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL)

Many newly arrived refugee young people, aged 15 years and older, have had severely disrupted schooling. Faced with the prospect of having only one or two years to learn written and spoken English and acquire basic learning skills, many refugee students are not able to meet the expectations common for their age groups in post-compulsory education. Because they have not had enough time to develop the levels of English language needed to attempt the Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE) or equivalent certificate, refugee students find it increasingly difficult to complete a standard educational pathway. Without specific and targeted interventions, they remain in danger of dropping out of education at the post-compulsory level.

The case for establishing a targeted intervention was made when it was observed that, even though students had completed the standard number of hours of English tuition and often had high educational expectations for themselves, they were still unable to operate at the level required for the VCE existing Victorian Education and Training (VET) courses and those available through the VCAL.

In 2003, a pilot transitional VCAL program was set up at the Western English Language School in partnership with Adult Multicultural Education Services (AMES).

The program focused on the elements that would be needed to make a successful transition to standard programs. As a result, there was a strong emphasis on the further development of skills in English language, literacy and numeracy.

The program was judged a success to the extent that AMES and other providers such as the Northern Metropolitan Institute of TAFE consortium started to develop partnerships with schools in other metropolitan areas.

Refugee and humanitarian entrants 16 years and older 2005–07

In 2005, around 2,060 refugee and humanitarian entrant students, aged 16 years and older, were enrolled in government secondary schools. This increased to 2,482 students in 2006, an increase of 18.2 per cent. In 2007, enrolments for this cohort declined slightly to 2,332.

Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, Language background other than English - August Census



Mayiik

Mayiik arrived in Australia in September 2004, age 17, with only four years of formal education. He was born in Sudan and spent several years in Kakuma Refugee Camp Kenya. He was assessed with advanced spoken and listening skills but with beginner level reading and writing. During a counselling session at AMES Footscray, he was advised to enrol in the Transition to Secondary School Program run in partnership with AMES and Debney Park Secondary School. He completed his VCAL Foundation over two years. Currently he is working full time at Baida Poultry. His long-term goal is to return to Further Education once he is more established financially.

Almaz

Almaz arrived in Australia in March 2004, aged 20 years old, and enrolled in the AMEP at Footscray AMES. She was born in Ethiopia and had six years of formal schooling. After completing two years at Debney Park Secondary College in the Transition to Secondary School Program, Almaz has this year enrolled at NMIT in an advanced English class. Her long-term goal is to study Nursing. She works part-time at Lentil as Anything restaurant.

Transitional VCAL programs were established at Debney Park Secondary College, Forest Hill College, Broadmeadows Secondary College and Cleeland Secondary College. Each setting has catered for students with similar backgrounds but each program was developed and tailored to take account of the level of English and the real level of disruption in the previous education of each group of students. Each program sought to expand and improve the education and training options available to refugee students.

Evaluation of these programs showed that two elements were critical for success. The first was the importance of communicating to parents and refugee communities that transitional VCAL programs were able to provide legitimate pathways to further education and training, and offered real opportunities to meet a range of career aspirations and achieve educational success.



Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL) is a 'hands on' option for students in Years 11 and 12. Like the VCE the VCAL is a recognised senior qualification. Unlike the VCE which is widely used by students as a pathway to university, the VCAL focuses on 'hands-on learning'. Students who do the VCAL are more likely to be interested in going on to training at TAFE, doing an apprenticeship, or getting a job after completing Year 12.

The VCAL's flexibility enables students to design a study program which suits their interests and learning needs. Students select accredited VCE and Vocational Education and Training (VET) modules and units from the following four compulsory strands:

- Literacy and Numeracy Skills
- Work Related Skills
- Industry Specific Skills
- Personal Development Skills

Students who start their VCAL and then decide they would like to complete their VCE, are able to transfer between certificates. Any VCE studies successfully completed as part of the VCAL program will count towards the VCE.

A certificate and statement of results will be issued to students who successfully complete their VCAL.

For more information, see www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/vcal/students/compulsorystrands.html

*Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority,
State Government of Victoria, 2007*

"I have found the VCAL curriculum flexible enough to start where the young person is at in their language and numeracy development. The Foundation level VCAL allows for a lot of scaffolding which is so essential to newly arrived students who come from educational situations where independent learning strategies are not developed and encouraged.

It is a perfect starting place for 17–21 year olds with 0–6 years' education who wish to study in a school setting."

Margot Hennessy, AMES Youth Coordinator

Debney Park Secondary College

Debney Park is a Year 7 to 12 secondary college in the inner suburbs of Melbourne. The students come from a diverse range of cultural and linguistic backgrounds, and many speak English as their second language.

In addition to the usual secondary school curriculum, the school runs a middle school bridging program and Year 11 and 12 Foundation VCAL classes for newly arrived migrants, most of whom are Sudanese young people who have had little or no schooling. The school's Managed Individual Pathways (MIPs) program therefore has to support a broad range of transitions, from university and TAFE entrance, to post-school literacy programs and employment.

To add to the challenge, during 2005–06 there was a complete staff turnover from the MIPs VCAL program, resulting in a complete change of pathways team members. Nonetheless, the school continues to refine a MIPs program that takes a caring case management approach to student progress and welfare.

Pathways plans to inform curriculum needs

The school's curriculum offerings are tailored to meet the learning needs of its student profile. The school achieves very high tertiary entrance rates through its VCE program. The pathways team also strongly promotes VCAL, apprenticeships and School-Based Apprenticeships as valid alternatives to the traditional VCE. However, 'the kids who most need VCAL are often the most resistant. Sometimes it is about meeting parent expectations, but many kids see VCAL as a step down from VCE,' says VCAL and senior school curriculum coordinator Gail Crennan.

"Everyone wants to go to university, whether or not that is a realistic or appropriate choice."

The school also provides a modified curriculum to meet the needs of senior Sudanese new-arrival VCAL students, who have had little or no previous schooling and who have come through the school's bridging program. For these students, the school's focus is teaching the students basic literacy, and giving them the skills to negotiate living in their new country.

"It is just a joy to teach them; you are with them as they are learning to read and it is great to watch them develop skills and familiarise themselves with Australia," says Gail.

Managed Individual Pathways – Case Studies
www.education.vic.gov.au/sensecyouth/careertrans/mips/mipscasestudydpssc.htm

The second critical element was the need to invest the right amount of time to coordinate the program to ensure that it was actually addressing the complex needs of refugee students.

VCAL programs currently operate at Debney Park Secondary College and at the Cleeland campus of Dandenong High School, and are being established at Shepparton and Ballarat Secondary Colleges. The programs result from the initiative contained in the Victorian Government policy, *A Fairer Victoria – Creating opportunity and addressing disadvantage*, which makes \$1.2 million available over the four years 2007–10 for specialist English as a Second Language services built around a vocational curriculum for the many newly arrived young people, including those 16 years and older, who arrive in Victoria with little or no formal education.

Local Learning and Employment Networks (LLENs)

Transitional VCAL programs are developed in conjunction with Local Learning and Employment Networks (LLENs). These Networks bring together education providers, industry, community organisations, individuals and government organisations to improve education, training and employment outcomes for young people. In Victoria, there are 31 LLEN support programs which have a particular focus on young people aged between 15 and 19 who are at risk of not completing year 12 or its equivalent.



Youth Transition Support Initiative

To extend and target support further, the Youth Transition Support Initiative began to operate in January 2007. The initiative funds 24 youth transition workers across 12 LLENs. Transition Support Workers provide personalised assistance to young people aged 15 to 19 who are not in education and training, not working full-time and do not have Year 12 or an equivalent qualification. The objective of the assistance is for disengaged young people to achieve a sustainable education, training or employment outcome.

In Dandenong, part of the South East LLEN, this resource is being used to support Sudanese young people disengaged from education, training and employment.

South East LLEN is also developing a mentoring program for Sudanese young people in conjunction with local agencies.

Support for teachers and schools

Multicultural education aides

Multicultural education aides (MEAs) make a vital difference in bridging the gaps in knowledge and understanding between students and teachers, and between the school and families. By working on a one-to-one basis in the classroom, aides can help students understand and interpret the world of school and so develop their learning and social skills. Aides will also help to make and maintain contact with the parents of students from language backgrounds other than English. For many refugee families, the aide will provide some of the first essential linkages with their child's school and will help to explain how things work.



Outreach services coordinators

An outreach services coordinator has been placed in each of the four metropolitan English language schools to provide services to schools within their regions.

In cooperation with schools, the outreach services coordinators are available to assist teachers to assess the English language learning needs of newly arrived students, and recommend the most suitable support program available.

Funding for regional ESL program officers

To further assist schools to meet the high level needs of refugee students enrolling in mainstream schools, funds were allocated to metropolitan regions for the employment of ESL program officers.

In non-metropolitan regional areas, grants were allocated to fund targeted initiatives in schools focusing on newly arrived students. A key expectation for the program officers is to work with and support the schools that received transition funding for students with disrupted schooling.

A new wave of newly arrived refugees settling in Mildura and Swan Hill prompted extra support to the Loddon-Mallee region to employ a program officer to work with the schools enrolling these students. Additional support was also made available to Wonthaggi to cater for a similar surge in enrolments of students with ESL and literacy learning needs.

In addition, all regions have received funding for professional learning and for the establishment or maintenance of ESL networks. These measures are designed to build on the capacities of teachers and multicultural education aides to meet the needs of ESL learners and communicate educational information to local communities.

The Languages and Multicultural Education Resource Centre (LMERC)

This resource centre is central to the provision of language and multicultural education in Victoria as it offers a wide range of specialist materials for programs in English as a second language (ESL), multicultural education and languages other than English (LOTE).

Victorian teachers can borrow from a wide range of resources at the Resource Centre. The LMERC online catalogue allows for searches of the e-library and checking of loans.

The LMERC lending library has a collection of over 20,000 resources which includes:

- Teacher reference materials for LOTE, ESL and multicultural education
- Culturally inclusive picture books, fiction and big books and posters
- Selected journals related to language teaching and multicultural education
- Pamphlets, clippings and articles
- Videos, CD-ROMS, DVDs and audio cassettes (English and multilingual)
- Resource materials on human rights education, civics and citizenship, prejudice, racism and social justice
- Studies in Asia resources
- Units of work and teacher notes
- LOTE, ESL and multicultural education policy documents.

The web-site can be found at www.sofweb.vic.edu.au/lem/lmerc/lib_online_cat.htm



Improving the wellbeing of refugee students

Primary – Welfare Officer Initiative

In 2004, the Department introduced the first of three phases of the Primary Welfare Officer Initiative. Through this initiative, funding for primary welfare officers is being provided to 573 Victorian schools in 2008. The Initiative has enhanced the capacity of schools and primary welfare officers to support students who are at risk of disengagement from school and who are not reaching their educational potential.

For more information, see www.sofweb.vic.edu.au/wellbeing/support/pwo.htm.

Secondary – Student Welfare Coordinators

Funds have been made available to all Government secondary colleges to employ student welfare coordinators.

The role of the Student Welfare Coordinator (SWC) is vital in responding to the needs of Victoria's young people. They are responsible for helping students handle issues such as truancy, bullying, drug use and depression.

Student welfare coordinators work with other welfare professionals and agencies to address student needs.

For more information, see www.sofweb.vic.edu.au/wellbeing/support/swc.htm.



Professional development strategies

In 2006, several professional development opportunities were offered to support regional staff to increase their knowledge and understanding in supporting teachers of ESL learners.

Regional staff attended a full-day workshop on professional learning models being developed around strategies for supporting new arrivals with disrupted schooling, ESL and the Victorian Essential Learning Standards, and developing effective ESL programs in primary schools.

In 2007, the focus remains on improving the transition of new arrival students from English language schools and centres to mainstream schools and improving the capacity of mainstream schools to respond to the needs of ESL students. To ensure this, 17 experienced ESL educators were trained as tutors to present in their regions the development course entitled Teaching ESL Students in Mainstream Classrooms.

At the same time, professional learning materials have been developed for specific audiences. They include:

- *Designing effective ESL programs – Disrupted schooling*
- *Designing effective ESL programs – Primary.*

Interpreting and translating

When students and families from language backgrounds other than English have to deal with the complications of a school environment, they need immediate and expert interpreting and translating services.

Schools will often need to introduce parents to very different approaches to teaching and learning and will want to report on student progress. Parents will often have questions about programs and how their child is going at school.

The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development provides schools with free access to qualified and accredited interpreters to better assist parents and students make sense of the school environment and understand the range of education options to be explored.

Part 3 – Partnerships



Building effective partnerships

The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, through the ESL Unit, has developed some very effective partnerships with a range of agencies which have a specific brief for working with or providing direct assistance to refugee and humanitarian entrants.



The significant changes in the nature of the refugee intake have heightened the need for coordinated efforts and the targeted application of expertise.

Working in partnership has enabled the Department to respond to needs and provide programs for refugee students in a more targeted and coordinated way. The Department continues to work with a range of agencies, participates in planning and policy committees, and promotes links with agencies which might provide a direct service, such as health checks or tailored professional development, to increase awareness in English language schools and centres or mainstream schools.

The Department encourages or directly supports the development of research that focuses on elaborating and addressing the needs of refugee students in schools and in the wider community.

One particular development in this regard has been the Refugee Education Partnership Project. Starting in 2004, this project aims to establish a more coordinated system across community, education and government sectors to improve the wellbeing and educational achievements of refugee students.

The three focus areas of the project are:

- learning support programs (sometimes referred to as out of school hours or homework programs)
- refugee support in schools
- cross-sectoral coordination and policy intervention.

The partners are:

- Foundation House, the Victorian Foundation for Survivors of Torture
- The Centre for Multicultural Youth Issues
- The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development
- Department of Planning and Community Development (DPCD)
- The Victorian Health Promotion Foundation (Vic Health)
- Debney Park Secondary College
- A private philanthropic trust.

Foundation House, the Victorian Foundation for Survivors of Torture (VFST)

Foundation House – the VFST has a long history of working with schools to support students with a refugee background. The work includes individual counselling, group work with students and parents/guardians, assisting school communities to promote a supportive school environment for refugee background students and their families, and professional development for school administrators, teachers and school support staff.

Foundation House has developed a range of school resources drawing on its experience in working in partnership with schools. *School's in for Refugees – Whole School Guide to Refugee Readiness*, is a guide that covers the refugee experience and the implications for practice alongside immediately useable strategies to assist students with a refugee background to recover from trauma, overcome the adverse effects of disrupted schooling and initiate the process of readjustment to a new environment. The guide contains an audit tool and is carefully targeted for maximum use by teachers, administrators and non-teaching personnel in schools to improve policies, practices, curriculum, school organisation and partnerships with parents and services to better support refugee background students.

The series of resources for use in schools produced by the VFST includes:

- *Taking Action – Human Rights and Refugee Issues Teaching Resource* (2004)
- *School's In for Refugees – A Whole School Guide to Refugee Readiness* (Reprinted 2007)
- *Healthwise – Health Literacy Teaching Resource for Refugee and Other ESL Students* (2004)
- *The Rainbow Program for Children in Refugee Families* (2002)
- *A Guide to Working with Young People who are Refugees* (2002)
- *Klassroom Kaleidoscope – A program to facilitate connectedness and wellbeing in the culturally diverse classroom* (2007)
- *Education and Refugee Students from Southern Sudan* (2004).

For more information about Foundation House programs and other resources, see www.foundationhouse.org.au



Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC)

The Victorian Settlement Planning Committee (VSPC)

The VSPC is a partnership of Commonwealth, state and local government agencies and community organisations that plans for the effective delivery of settlement services in Victoria.

The Refugee Young People and Transitions working group has produced the following papers to provide information and promote discussion about issues affecting refugee students.

Good Practice Principles: Guide for Working with Refugee Young People (VSPC 2005)

The document is a tool to assist services with limited experience in working with refugee young people, and to support consistent and responsive services across Victoria. It was developed as a result of discussions amongst workers from public and community sector agencies who identified gaps in the provision of service delivery to refugee young people, particularly a lack of specific policies or guidelines to direct practice.



This document recognises the uniqueness of the experience of refugee young people and how this might impact on them accessing services.

Learning Pathways for Refugee Young People – An Issues Paper for Services Working with Refugee Young People, January 2005

This issues paper identifies the key learning barriers facing newly arrived refugee young people, particularly those moving through compulsory education to training and employment.

Resource Gateway: for Teachers Working with Refugee Young People

This is a website resource which contains links to the latest information on the range of settlement and education issues facing refugee young people in Victoria. It is available as a PDF online www.immi.gov.au/media/publications/settle/_pdf/resource-gateway.pdf.

Building Pathways: Resources to Support Transitions for Young People from Refugee Backgrounds (2007)

This downloadable resource includes a good practice framework and training materials aimed at improving the sensitivity and responsiveness of support provided to young people from refugee backgrounds as they move through education, training and employment. www.immi.gov.au/media/publications/settle/transitions.htm

The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development has used its partnership with the Victorian Settlement Planning Committee to seek ways of obtaining advance and predictive information about where newly arrived families are proposing to settle – particularly for rural and regional areas. Early indications of settlement locations assist in the planning and provision of programs for students in need of English language tuition. The successful outcome of discussions has been:

Regional Settlement Digest – This digest includes information about the progress of the settlement of migrant and refugee entrants in regional Victoria, expected arrivals and the latest statistics from the Department of Immigration and Citizenship's Settlement Database. The digest provides a major new planning tool for agencies seeking to provide services in non-metropolitan areas.

Centre for Multicultural Youth Issues (CMYI)

The CMYI is a community-based organisation that advocates for the needs of young people from migrant and refugee backgrounds.

The partnership developed between the Department and the centre has direct benefits for school communities. In 2006, the centre produced *Opening the School Gate*, a resource kit to provide teachers and other school staff with strategies to encourage parents and families from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds to participate more in the educational experience of their children at school. Through the Refugee Education Partnership Project, the centre had a major role in the preparation of the report, *The Education Needs of Young Refugees in Victoria*. For more information see www.cmyi.net.au

Department of Human Services (DHS)

The DHS works with the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development and other agencies to provide support to refugee students and families settling in Victoria. Two programs are of special interest for schools.

The School Nursing Program

The School Nursing Program is now part of the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development and provides an opportunity for all newly arrived children in an English language school and centre to have vision, hearing and oral health checks. School nurses from primary and secondary school programs also provide health advice and targeted health promotion activities in some school settings in response to identified need, working in partnership with the school welfare and support teams

School Focused Youth Services (SFYS)

The SFYS is a joint initiative between the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development and the Department of Human Services. The focus of the initiative is the coordination of preventative and early intervention strategies for young people, to be delivered through school and community clusters.

Each cluster is allocated funding to broker projects to address the needs of vulnerable young people. A welcome kit developed for refugee youth and their families to introduce them to expectations around schooling has been developed and includes a professional development component for teachers. Meetings with targeted community groups have also been organised to develop understandings about curriculum and discipline approaches of local schools



Victorian Multicultural Commission (VMC)

The VMC worked in partnership with the Department to develop the Welcome to Victoria Kit as a practical way to encourage newly arrived students and their families to engage more closely with the Victorian community.

The kit contains a CD-ROM with basic language and numeracy activities produced by the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development together with information about life in Victoria, a welcome letter from the Premier, tickets and vouchers and information from key organisations. It will be updated and distributed to newly arrived students in English language schools and centres.

Part 4 – Future directions



Moving forward

The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development will build upon the key strategies developed to date to provide maximum support to refugee students, in particular those with severely interrupted, little or no schooling.

Enhance transition arrangements

Recognising that refugee students need high levels of assistance when making the transition from an English language school or centre to a mainstream school, the Department will continue to allocate additional funding to primary and secondary schools to build on and improve transition and bridging program arrangements.

Regional program officers will provide support to schools to plan for and implement effective ESL programs.

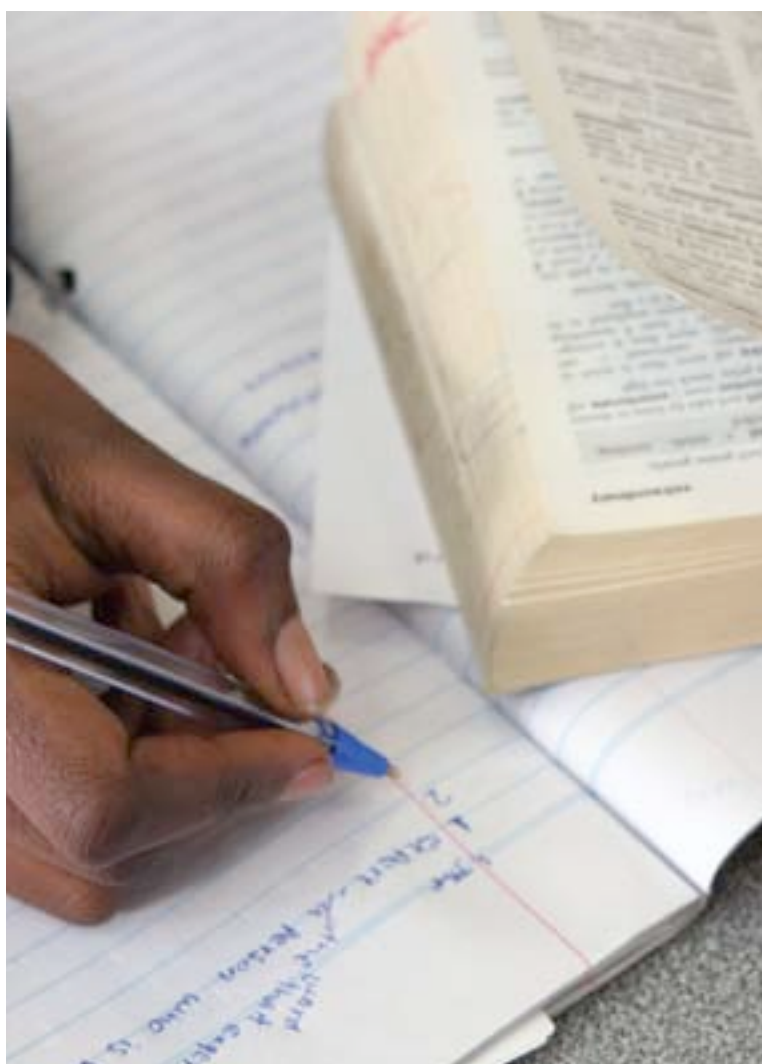
Support the development of pathways

The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, through the ESL Unit, will encourage schools to develop programs and pathways that cater specifically for the complex learning needs of refugee students with little or no formal schooling and who are under considerable pressure to urgently improve their English language and literacy skills.

The Department will encourage schools to build on work already undertaken and develop stronger linkages with local education and training providers, via the Local Learning and Employment Networks (LLENS), so that students can gain a better understanding of their possible educational, training and work options. Schools will be encouraged to develop the pathways, networks and relationships appropriate for their refugee students. These might incorporate vocational education and training programs, such as the Victorian Certificate of Applied Education (VCAL) or TAFE courses or pathways which could lead back to the completion of the Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE) and entry to university.

Out of school hours learning support

In response to local need, a range of volunteer run out of school hours learning support programs (OSHLSP) have developed in Victoria. There are currently over 80 programs in schools and local community centres in metropolitan areas.



These programs provide a range of valuable additional support for disadvantaged students and include homework programs, tutoring, social support and sporting activities. Departmental staff from central and regional offices will continue to work with relevant agencies and the Commonwealth to find ways of supporting the programs and strengthening refugee student access to them.

One current initiative is support for a pilot program in the Western Metropolitan Region to trial increased coordination of education tutoring programs across schools, increased linkages with mainstream school programs and improved volunteer support and training.

Review ESL funding

The Department wants to make sure that the ESL programs provided currently in English language schools and centres and mainstream schools are effectively planned, targeted at the students most in need and are able to improve their educational outcomes.

The Department has recently completed a review to determine the effectiveness of current delivery arrangements for programs and the extent to which they target the neediest students and reveal the factors that determine academic success for ESL students.

Strengthen school capacity

All schools need to be equipped to understand and meet the needs of students from refugee backgrounds.

For the immediate future, priority will be given to the improvement of transition arrangements for students making the move from an English language school or centre to a mainstream school. An equal emphasis will be placed on improving the capacity of mainstream schools to respond to the needs of ESL students.





Schools will also enhance their capacities by training in and use of the professional learning materials that have been specifically developed for students with disrupted schooling.

The Department will strengthen the link between welfare support in schools and knowledge of refugee issues by continuing to work in partnership with the VFST to build the capacity of schools to support their students of refugee background and by promoting their resources.

A refugee support area will also be developed and promoted on the ESL website.

Improve data collection and monitoring

Through its membership of the Victorian Settlement Planning Committee of the Department of Immigration and Citizenship, the Department will continue to explore ways in which predictive settlement data can be made available to service providers. This will help to match the delivery of ESL programs to where newly arrived families are settling.

The Department will collect ESL student achievement data that will be used to assist in improved targeting of funding to meet the needs of ESL students including those with interrupted schooling.

The Department will continue to develop comprehensive ESL student data sets for internal and public use and provide crucial advice on settlement patterns, school transition and retention figures.

Further develop partnerships

The Department will continue to work in partnership with Government and non-government agencies and the community to respond to issues involving refugee students.

Working in partnership has enabled all agencies to develop a better understanding of the variety of activities that are being undertaken to support refugee young people and deliver better outcomes for them.

Resources

Links

ESL support

The ESL Unit of the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development has developed the following web pages to provide assistance and practical information about the support available for ESL and refugee students, including those with disrupted or no previous schooling.

ESL home page

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/studentlearning/programs/esl/default.htm> – this link details the support available for schools and teachers, including curriculum and publications, and programs available for ESL students. The following will be of particular interest for teachers of students with a refugee or disrupted schooling background:

Not a Matter of Choice: Information about refugees for schools and teachers (video)

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/studentlearning/programs/esl/resources/pubdisrupted.htm>

Moving in new directions: Literacy strategies for ESL learners with disrupted schooling (video)

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/studentlearning/programs/esl/resources/pubdisrupted.htm#2>

New Arrivals

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/studentlearning/programs/esl/newstudents.htm> – details the New Arrivals Program that provides access to intensive English as a second language (ESL) tuition for between six to 12 months to newly-arrived students from language backgrounds other than English.

Interpreting and Translating

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/management/schooloperations/interpret/default.htm> – details the language services available to assist schools communicate with parents from language backgrounds other than English.

Curriculum and support materials

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/studentlearning/programs/esl/resources/default.htm> – links to information about a range of curriculum and support materials available for teachers of students who are learning English. The following will be of particular interest for teachers of students with a refugee or disrupted schooling background:

ESL Companion to the Victorian Essential Learning Standards –

<http://vels.vcaa.vic.edu.au/support/esl/esl.html>

ESL Companion to the English Curriculum and Standards Framework II (VCAA) Teacher Support Material –

<http://www.eduweb.vic.gov.au/curriculumatwork/Index.htm>

Talking in Tune: A guide to working with interpreters in schools (video)

Beginning ESL – Primary: Support material for primary new arrivals

Beginning ESL – Secondary: Support material for teachers of secondary new arrivals

ESL learners in the middle years: Strategies for the mainstream classroom (video)

ESL Students in the Early Years: A multimedia resource for teachers of ESL students in the early years (P–2) (CD-ROM)

First Language Assessment Tasks (Arabic, Chinese, Khmer, Turkish, Somali and Vietnamese)

Language games for ESL students – classroom activities for students learning English as a second language

No English: Don't panic

No English 2: Questions and answers

Where's English?: An interactive multimedia resource for students at the beginning stages of learning English as a second language

Word Study for New arrivals: Practical word-study materials for teachers of primary and secondary ESL students, beginning their English language learning

Other useful resources include:

Refugee Education Partnership Project, Refugee support in schools: resources, information and advice

www.education.vic.gov.au/studentlearning/programs/esl/refugees/default.htm – provides details of the range of resources and information available to teachers and school communities to support students from refugee backgrounds in schools, especially those with disrupted or no previous schooling.

Building Pathways: Training in Supporting Transitions for Young People from Refugee Backgrounds

www.immi.gov.au/media/publications/settle/transitions.htm

Resource Gateway for teachers working with refugee young people in Victoria

www.immi.gov.au/media/publications/settle/_pdf/resource-gateway.pdf

Refugee Education Partnership Project, The Education Needs of Young Refugees in Victoria (2007)

www.foundationhouse.org.au.

Refugee Education Partnership Project, I wish it was everyday... Out of School Hours Learning Support Programs Tutor Training Resource

www.cmyi.net.au

Refugee Education Partnership Project, I wish it was every day... Case Studies From Out of School Hours Learning Support Programs

www.cmyi.net.au

Refugee Education Partnership Project, I wish it was every day... Out of School Hours Learning Support Programs A guide for coordinators

www.cmyi.net.au

Additional contacts and links

For ESL policy, programs and resources

www.education.vic.gov.au/studentlearning/programs/esl/contacts.htm

For post compulsory initiatives

www.education.vic.gov.au/about/structure/postcomp/initiatives.htm

Agencies

Adult Multicultural Education Services (AMES) for English language teaching for migrant and refugees

www.ames.net.au

Centre for Multicultural Youth Issues (CMYI) for multicultural youth information and programs:

www.cmyi.net.au

Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC) for settlement information for service providers: www.immi.gov.au/settle/providers/index.htm

Languages and Multicultural Education Centre (LMERC) for the Ethnic School Resource Centre and resources: www.sofweb.vic.edu/lem/lmerc/index.htm

Foundation House, the Victorian Foundation for Survivors of Torture (VFST) for social and emotional counselling for refugees and to assist schools to develop a whole school approach to support students from refugee backgrounds and their families: www.foundationhouse.org.au

Victorian Multicultural Commission (VMC) is an independent statutory authority which provides advice to the Victorian Government about the development of legislative and policy frameworks and the delivery of services in a culturally, linguistically and religiously diverse society:

www.multicultural.vic.gov.au

Migrant Resource Centres

www.vtpu.org.au/links/#migrant

The Refugee Council of Australia

www.refugeecouncil.org.au/

