



Department
of Education

Public Accounts and Estimates Committee Inquiry into the 2024–25 Financial and Performance Outcomes

Monday 24 November 2025

Tony Bates PSM

Secretary, Department of Education

Department of Education – who we are



Vision

A great education for every child and young person – so they can thrive now, and in the future, for a fairer, smarter and more prosperous state



Principles

Hearts in,
minds on

We bring our passion, knowledge and skills to improve outcomes

Our best work matters

We do high-quality work that makes a difference to people's lives

Be curious and work together

We listen, collaborate and value challenge and diversity

Seize the day

We are proactive, seek to solve problems, and adapt to deliver

See the whole picture

We are guided by evidence and seek to understand the broader context



How we work

80,311

FTE staff in government schools, including **49,838** teachers

Around **5,000**

FTE corporate and allied health staff, across **17** areas and **4** regions

School and early childhood education regulatory entities

Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (VCAA)

The VCAA provides high-quality curricula and assessment for all Victorian schools.

Curriculum

- Victorian Curriculum (F-10)
- Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE)
- VCE Vocational Major (VCE VM)
- Victorian Pathways Certificate (VPC)
- Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL)
- Vocational Education and Training (VET)

Assessment

- NAPLAN
- VCE examinations (including the General Achievement Test)
- Authorise school and non-school providers to deliver VCE subjects

Quality Assessment and Regulation Division (QARD)

QARD is responsible for the regulation of around 5,000 early childhood services in Victoria under:

- the National Quality Framework
- the Victorian Children's Services Act and Regulations.

QARD is also the regulator of the Child Safe Standards for all early childhood services in Victoria.

As the regulator, QARD supports children attending early childhood services by:

- promoting their safety, health and wellbeing
- improving their educational and developmental outcomes

Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (VRQA)

The VRQA is Victoria's education and training regulator.

Primary, secondary and specialist education

Schools and non-school education providers must meet registration standards

Home schooling

Approximately 11,691 students were registered for home schooling (as at June 2025).

In addition to regulating schooling, the VRQA also has responsibility for adult education functions, including apprenticeships, traineeships and Registered Training Organisations

Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT)


The VIT regulates members of the teaching profession for both school and early childhood education. It supports teaching practice through professional standards.

Its responsibilities include:

- accrediting initial teacher education programs that prepare early career teachers working in Victoria
- monitoring the suitability of registered teachers
- supporting beginner teachers to enter the profession
- investigating instances of misconduct, incompetence or lack of fitness to teach
- regulating compliance with the codes of conduct and ethics


Department of Education – who we engage with and support

Early childhood education



Funds kindergarten programs

Regulates early childhood education and care services



More than
147,000
children funded to attend kindergarten programs

- more than **69,000** children attend a Three-Year-Old Kindergarten program
- more than **78,000** children attend a Four-Year-Old Kindergarten program



Approximately
5,000
regulated education and care services



Approximately
3,000
funded kindergarten services

School education




Primary education

Secondary education




Specialist education

Language



More than
1,063,000
students

- approximately **666,000** students in government schools
- approximately **219,000** students in Catholic schools
- approximately **178,000** students in Independent schools



1,575
government schools

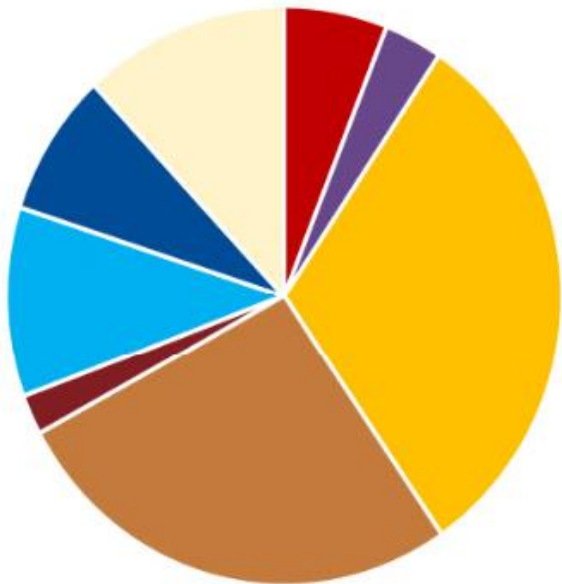
493
Catholic schools

233
Independent schools

Total
2,301











2024–25 departmental
actual operating
expenditure



\$17.4 billion (total)

Source: Departmental objectives, indicators and outputs section of the 2024-25 Annual Report (pg. 20 – 42)

Departmental operating expenditure
overview across outputs 2024–25

Output group (Budget Portfolio Outcomes)		24–25 \$m
	Kindergarten delivery	1,046.0
	Early childhood sector supports and regulation	589.5
	School education – primary	5,390.8
	School education – secondary	4,644.8
	Wellbeing and student supports	388.9
	Supports for schools and staff	1,848.6
	Promoting equal access to education	1,394.9
	Additional supports for students with disability	2,085.4



Tarneit Kindergarten

Best Start, Best Life: continuing reforms to Victorian early childhood education in 2024–25

90%

of eligible children attended **Three-Year-Old Kinder**, benefitting **69,000** children

96%

of eligible children attended **Four-Year-Old Kinder**, benefitting **78,000** children

90%

of services offered between **10 and 15** hours a week of **Three-Year-Old Kinder**

145,000

children attending a **Free Kinder** program, saving families up to **\$2,627** for each child in 2025

6

local government areas in regional Victoria delivering between **16 and 30** hours a week of **Pre-Prep** in 2025

Quality and assessment in early childhood education

In 2024:

4,729

compliance, monitoring, assessment and rating visits, exceeding the target of **4,000**

96%

rated Victorian services had an overall National Quality Framework rating of 'Meeting National Quality Standard' or above. This is well above the national average of 91%

99%

rated Victorian sessional kindergartens are meeting or exceeding the National Quality Standard

90%

parents and carers satisfied with their kindergarten service

Tyabb Preschool





Molesworth Street Kindergarten

Best Start, Best Life: creating early childhood infrastructure for the future

Projects completed in 2024–25

125 early childhood facilities built, expanded or improved, creating more than **7,000** kindergarten places, including:

30 state-delivered kindergarten projects completed	4 new government-operated Early Learning Victoria centres built and opened, and planning for 14 to open in 2026	17 Building Blocks Capacity Building grant projects completed	16 Council Building Blocks Partnership projects completed	58 improvement and inclusion stream projects completed
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Best Start, Best Life: improving access and equity in early childhood education 2024–25



4,945

children from vulnerable backgrounds participated in Early Start Kindergarten or Access to Early Learning programs – well above the target of **4,000**



3,704

First Nations children enrolled in 3 and 4-year-old kindergarten programs in 2024 – the highest ever number in the state's history



1,138

kindergarten services accessed the Kindergarten Inclusion Support Program for children with disability, developmental delay or complex medical needs



26

councils delivered the CALD Outreach Initiative from January 2025, supporting families to take part in kindergarten

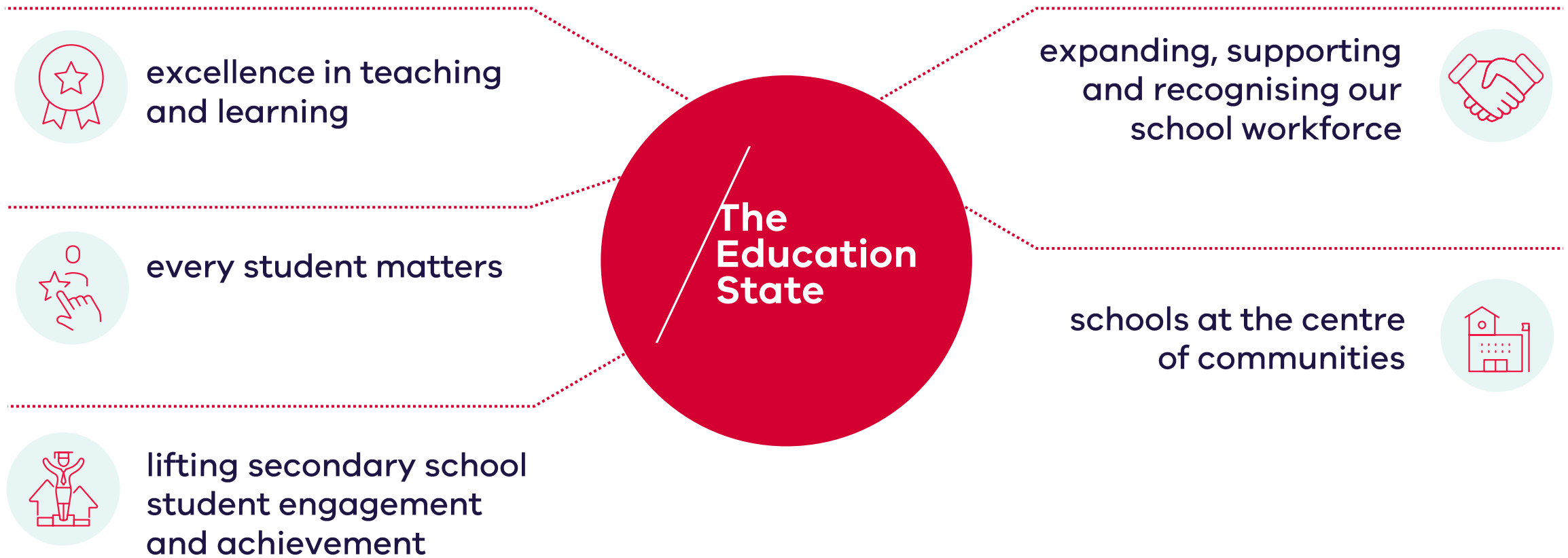
Best Start, Best Life: building the early childhood workforce supply and quality

- **11.5%** increase in the number of fully registered early childhood teachers since 2024
- **800** educators supported to upskill from a Certificate III to a Diploma qualification since 2024
- more than **5,000** scholarships awarded since 2018, removing financial and other barriers to study early childhood teaching
- **10** new partnerships with tertiary education providers established since 2024 to support more Victorians to obtain early childhood educator and teacher qualifications
- **70** Early Years Learning Networks operating across Victoria in 2024-25 to connect and support early childhood teachers
- **more than 800** grants awarded in 2024 to support provisionally registered early childhood teachers to progress to full registration
- **841** experienced teachers completed the Effective Mentoring Program to support early childhood teachers in 2024-25



Victorian government schools – where we are now

The refreshed Education State vision was launched in October 2024



NAPLAN in 2025

Victorian students achieved the best overall results nationwide

Highest scores:

- in **18 of 20** measures, Victoria ranked **first or second**
- Victorian primary school students ranked **first or second** in all **10 domains**

Year level		Victoria's ranking				
		Reading	Numeracy	Writing	Spelling	G&P
Primary	Year 3	1	1	2	2	1
	Year 5	2	1	1	2	1
Secondary	Year 7	2	2	1	-	2
	Year 9	2	1	1	-	2

Greatest improvement:

- mean scores were **higher in 17 of the 20** measures, compared to 2024
- Victorian secondary students **exceeded** the results of their 2024 peers on every measure



More students excelling and fewer needing additional support:

- **70%** of Victorian students were **'strong'** or **'exceeding'** in 18 of 20 measures
- Only **7.3%** of Victorian students **needed additional support**



Excellence in teaching and learning: strengthening evidence-based approaches

Achievements in 2024–25:

- started implementing the updated **Victorian Teaching and Learning Model** in all Victorian government schools
- developed more than **4,000** high-quality, curriculum-aligned lesson plans to support effective and consistent teaching practice. These lesson plans had more than **1.2 million views** and **143,000** downloads
- started implementing Victoria's **reading position**, including a requirement of **25 minutes** of daily explicit teaching of phonics in early primary years
- **93%** of government primary schools already using this approach to teach reading, well ahead of the 2027 requirement
- **94%** of government schools already choosing to use **Grade 1 Phonics Check** before it becomes mandatory in 2026
- Victoria's **mathematics position** announced in May 2025, with work under way to lift students' numeracy attainment
- more than **55,000** students accessed the Victorian High-Ability Program and the Victorian Challenge and Enrichment Series
- more than **120,000** students accessed additional targeted learning support or intensive support



Leongatha Primary School

Attitudes to School Survey 2025

This year's survey of students continued 2024's improvements on most factors

94%

of all survey factors improved for primary school students

97%

of all survey factors improved for years 7 to 9

91%

of survey factors improved for years 10 to 12

80%

of students report positive peer relationships

Every student matters: supporting health, wellbeing and inclusion

21,000+

strengths-based Disability Inclusion Profiles completed since 2021

1,575

Victorian schools now delivering Disability Inclusion, reaching state-wide implementation in 2025

520

teachers and department staff supported to obtain a post-grad qualification in inclusive education through our scholarships since 2021

1,300

government and low-fee non-government primary schools onboarded for the Mental Health in Primary Schools Program, all funded for a Mental Health and Wellbeing Leader in 2025

260,000

interventions delivered to secondary students through the Mental Health Practitioners initiative since 2019

Every student matters: supporting access, participation and equity

60m+

healthy meals across **1,200** schools, delivered through School Breakfast Clubs program since 2016

13m+

free period products delivered to students since 2019

240,000

items delivered to **91,000** students through the Affordable School Uniforms Program in 2024–25

13,000

students provided with vision screening and free glasses to **3,200** students through the Glasses for Kids program 2024–25. The expanded program has tripled its annual capacity

900,000

School Saving Bonus transactions in 2024–25, supporting families with the costs of textbooks, school uniforms and camps, sports and excursions

Wyndham Park Primary School



Lifting secondary school student engagement and achievement



92.8%

completion rate of the VCE Vocational Major in 2024, compared with **82.3%** for Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning in 2022



97.5%

Year 12 completion rate in 2024; increased from 91.7% in 2021



58,000

students undertaking vocational education and training in 2024 – a record high – with nearly **27,000** enrolled in the VCE Vocational Major



1,300

young people re-engaged with school or another positive pathway, through the Navigator program in 2024

Mansfield Secondary College



Work continues to close the learning achievement gap between First Nations students and their non-First Nations peers. While the gap remains unacceptably large, 2025 NAPLAN results show the gap in average attainment for First Nations students in Reading decreased for both Grade 3 and Year 9 students.

Supporting self-determination and improving outcomes for First Nations learners in 2024–25



26

Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations and Registered Aboriginal Parties approved to employ an Education Liaison Officer to deliver self-determined projects



585

First Nations students completed their VCE (including VCE Vocational Major)



51

First Nations students awarded the Victorian Pathways Certificate



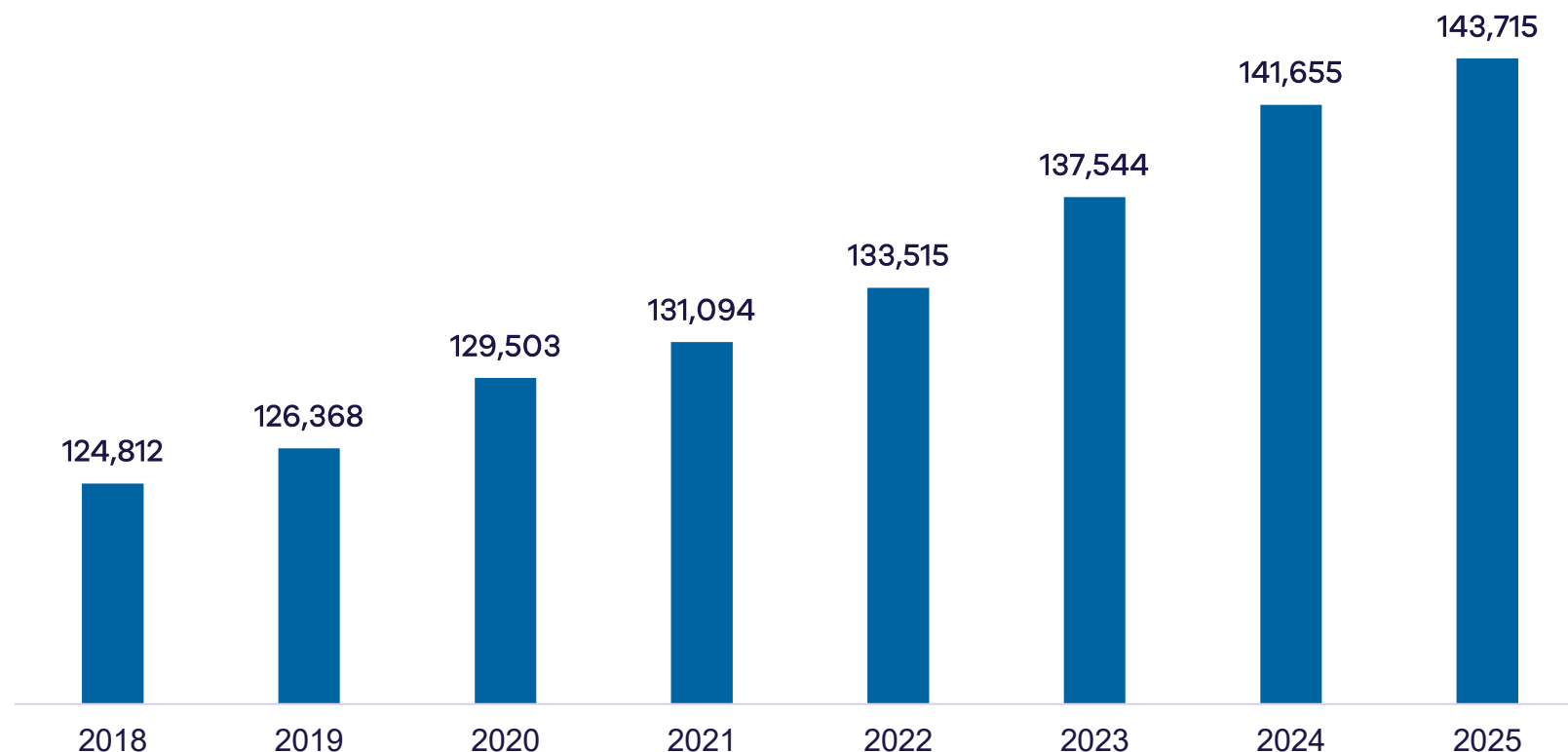
98%

of schools have taken part in Community Understanding and Safety Training

- **14,000** more registered teachers in Victoria than in 2020
- **1,350** more FTE teachers in Victorian government schools in 2024-25
- **6,155** pre-service teachers received grants to support their placement in eligible regional, remote or specialist Victorian government schools in 2024-25
- **139** teachers receiving targeted financial incentives to fill hard-to-staff roles in 2024-25

Expanding our education workforce

Number of registered teachers in Victoria



Note: excludes early childhood only teachers



Reservoir East Primary School

Expanding, supporting and recognising our school workforce in 2024–25

1,750

graduates supported by **1,400** mentors across **650** government schools, through our scaled-up Career Start program

3,752

scholarship payments granted to students studying teaching

1,222

students enrolled in or completed an employment-based teaching degree across postgraduate and undergraduate programs as part of our Teach Today and Teach Tomorrow programs

536

grants to participating schools to support flexible work for school leaders and classroom teachers

4

new university partnerships to support up to 45 First Nations students to teach in Victorian government schools

Schools at the centre of communities: infrastructure in 2024–25

6

new schools opened

108

school upgrades and modernisation projects completed

2,582

jobs in construction and associated industries

979

Planned Maintenance Program projects commenced

227

relocatable buildings installed

Goonawarra Primary School



