

NEW SOUTH WALES

Contextual information

Government schools

In 1997, there were 2,186 government schools operating in New South Wales. There were 1,649 primary and infants' schools, 64 combined primary/secondary schools, 389 high schools, 84 schools for specific purposes and 20 field studies centres. Attending these schools were 762,917 students in total, consisting of 453,142 primary and 309,775 secondary students.

Catholic schools

In 1997, there were 593 Catholic schools in New South Wales (including six special schools) serving 220,623 students. There were 424 primary schools, 131 secondary schools, 32 combined primary/secondary and six special schools serving 120,168 primary and 100,455 secondary students.

The schools are classified for administrative and grant purposes as systemic and non-systemic. Systemic schools are administered by 11 autonomous diocesan education structures in New South Wales. The non-systemic schools are independent of the diocesan administrative structures, although under the authority of the Diocesan Bishop, and operate as autonomous schools administered by boards of management or religious orders.

Independent schools

In 1997, there were 289 independent schools with 90,680 students. There were 41,609 primary students and 49,071 secondary students. These students were enrolled in 112 primary schools, 22 secondary schools, 130 combined primary/secondary schools and 25 special schools.

Objectives for schooling

Government schools

The New South Wales Government's objectives for schooling in 1997 were set out in the key corporate planning document *Agenda 1997*. The five key priorities for 1997 were:

- *Getting the Foundation Right*
This priority focussed on five areas: literacy, numeracy, student physical fitness, citizenship and civics and reforming the Higher School Certificate (HSC).
- *Excellence in Teaching and Learning*
Excellence in Teaching and Learning focussed on effective classroom practice. It also emphasised teachers using technology, the use of technology for learning, school leadership and language teaching.
- *Partnerships in Public Education*
Issues addressed in this area included reporting on student outcomes, student participation in decision-making, parent and teacher partnerships, reporting school performance and quality and customer service.
- *Safe, Challenging and Creative Schools*
This area encompassed child protection, student welfare, drug education, the working environment and school attendance.
- *A Fair Go For All*
A Fair Go for All focussed on Aboriginal education, special education, gender equity and equitable resource allocation.

Catholic schools

Catholic schools aimed to be communities of learning, excellence and Christian evangelisation. Objectives emphasised in 1997 included:

- improving desired educational outcomes for students;
- developing and implementing the curriculum key learning areas;
- providing opportunities for all students to develop their individual potential in all fields, especially for Indigenous students and students disadvantaged by socioeconomic status, isolation, special academic needs or gender inequity;
- the integration of students with disabilities into regular schools and the provision of necessary support structures;
- providing a diversified curriculum to meet the needs of the growing proportion of students continuing to years 11 and 12;
- maximising the competence, efficiency and confidence of school staff by increasing opportunities for professional and personal development;
- heightening teacher awareness of child protection issues; and
- developing in each school assessment and reporting procedures commensurate with national guidelines.

Independent schools

Independent schools proclaimed a range of objectives for the 1997 school year, including:

- objectives relating to changes to schools' curriculums, particularly in relation to literacy and numeracy with a number of schools identifying these areas as being important in preparation for the labour market;
- objectives relating to internal issues such as improving the school environment, obtaining more resources and improving teaching skills;
- objectives relating to the development of the individual such as preparing students for either adult life or secondary school, helping individuals achieve growth and reach their potential and encouraging the spiritual development of students; and
- the integration of technology into all parts of the curriculum.

Initiatives in schooling

Review of the Higher School Certificate

In August 1997, following extensive consultation, the Premier launched the White Paper on Higher School Certificate reform *Securing Their Future*. The paper outlines reforms that will make the HSC stronger and more flexible.

Curriculum standards will be improved with strict new criteria to be applied to existing and proposed syllabuses. All courses will be reported on a single scale and capable students will be rewarded for successfully completing advanced study.

The study of English will be strengthened through the introduction of a range of new courses. This will be done by including new two-unit standard and advanced courses and a new two-unit Literature course. For the first time, students will have the option of taking four units of English for the HSC. A new English as a Second Language (ESL) course will be introduced for students recently arrived in Australia. A course, Fundamentals of English, will be introduced for students needing additional help with English literacy, this will be taken with and complement the Preliminary standard English course.

There will be a substantial increase in the quality and status of vocational education within the school system. Vocational education and training offered as part of the HSC will contribute to the broad education of students as well as equip them for a range of post-school destinations including employment and further education and training. The relevance of vocational education and training courses will be ensured through collaboration between industry and training providers in course development.

One of the most significant results of the HSC review will be the abolition of the Tertiary Entrance Rank (TER) as a single number descriptor of a student's achievement at the completion of their schooling. The TER will be replaced by new assessment and reporting procedures which will see students' results reported against set standards which give parents, teachers and employers a clear understanding of each student's knowledge, skills and understanding.

Creation of the Department of Education and Training

In December 1997, the Department of Training and Education Co-ordination (DTEC), TAFE NSW and the Department of School Education (DSE) were merged into a single agency – the Department of Education and Training (DET). The creation of DET will ensure greater integration and coordination in the delivery of education and training services across the State. The Department of Education and Training coordinates policy, planning and resource allocation for government schooling, vocational education and training and the State elements of higher education.

The new Department will be better placed to respond to student needs and provide flexibility in the provision of programs and student services. The Department will allow for a smooth transition from school to further education, training and to work.

Literacy and numeracy

Literacy and numeracy have been a major focus of attention in all school sectors during 1997. A number of initiatives have been undertaken at both the system and school level.

Catholic schools have introduced the innovative five-day Early Literacy Inservice Program, which challenges teachers to reflect on their beliefs about teaching language, to consider the beliefs of others about how language can be or should be taught, and to consider how this influences their classroom practice.

The State Literacy Strategy—a comprehensive plan for integrating support for literacy teaching in government schools—was launched in 1997. The two areas of emphasis in this strategy were the middle years of schooling (years 5–8) and the early identification of reading difficulties. The Government provided \$50m to support literacy in the classroom.

In government schools, literacy is tested through the Basic Skills Test for years 3 and 5. The 1997 scores in these tests are the highest in the four years that both years have been tested. Analysis of the 1995 and 1997 results show that more than half of the year 3 students placed in the lowest band in 1995 moved to higher levels in 1997.

The 1997 school year also saw the piloting of the year 7 English Language and Literacy Assessment (ELLA) test in government schools. The ELLA follows on from the Basic Skills Test and focusses on the kind of literacy skills needed

for each of the secondary key learning areas. As it is largely a diagnostic test, it generates precise information for each subject area in each school. Originally, the pilot was to involve 80–100 schools, however, an overwhelming response by schools keen to be involved led to an expansion of the pilot to 361 schools. This positive response from schools demonstrates the desire by schools to have such a diagnostic tool. The introduction of the ELLA has increased the support available to schools for both literacy and numeracy.

In addressing the priority of numeracy, the major focus in government schools was on training and on the work of 40 mathematics consultants providing in-school strategic support in early numeracy. A new early numeracy program, Count Me In Too was implemented in over 80 primary schools.

National Strategy on Child Protection

New South Wales took a leading role in the development of the new National Strategy on Child Protection. In addition, New South Wales initiated a thorough and comprehensive program of reform of the way it managed child protection. With the combination of new internal procedures and the National Strategy on Child Protection, New South Wales is in a much better position to protect the children in its care than ever before in its history.

Other initiatives

A significant development in 1997 was the distribution of a draft writing brief of the K–6 Human Society and its Environment syllabus to schools for consultation. Civics education is another area in which systems and schools have been active. In 1997, the Discovering Democracy program, aimed at students from years 4–10, was introduced.

A major initiative in 1997 was the connection of every government school to the Internet.

Student health and fitness was also a focus of activity in government schools. Benchmarks were established in relation to fitness levels for students in years 2, 4, 6, 8 and 10. The Department of Education and Training also implemented an Olympic 2000 strategy and coordinated the broadcast through the ABC of school sport on the *S'Cool Sport* program.

In government schools, the Student Community Involvement program (SCIP) was introduced and various environmental projects were undertaken. The Peer

Mediation Program has been instituted to help teach students to manage conflict constructively and new measures in drug education were also introduced.

School-industry links

A range of vocational education programs are offered to students in schools in New South Wales. In 1997, approximately 41,500 students undertook vocational courses as part of their HSC. The HSC curriculum included the following courses:

- Joint Secondary Schools-TAFE (JSSTAFE) courses across all ANTA categories developed and delivered by TAFE NSW and endorsed by the Board of Studies. Three of these courses are also recognised as Board-developed courses contributing to the calculation of tertiary eligibility. TAFE-delivered courses accounted for 23,696 enrolments in 1997;
- seven vocational Content Endorsed Courses developed by the Board of Studies and delivered by teachers in schools. School-delivered vocational courses accounted for 18,131 enrolments in 1997;
- Industry Studies, a Board-developed course which has three separate industry strands, is externally examined,

contributes to tertiary eligibility and is delivered in schools;

- a TAFE HSC Pathways program, leading to an HSC and a TAFE NSW Vocational Certificate; and
- school-delivered courses which include a mandatory workplace component and which can be done as a structured part of the course or an enrichment. Workplacement in the JSSTAFE courses can be organised if requested. Industry funds a number of JSSTAFE programs and arranges workplacements for these students.

Articulation, credit transfer and certification arrangements have been put in place to enable integrated packages of school/TAFE and school/TAFE/work to be offered to students. There are currently more than 40 HSC courses that provide credit transfer into over 185 TAFE NSW courses. The arrangements in place in New South Wales are designed to maximise the vocational education and training opportunities and outcomes for school students.

A small number of students undertake vocational education and training which is delivered by private training providers such as TRAC (Training in Retail and Commerce) Program, Group Training Companies, Skillshare and private business colleges.

Table 1. Participation in Vocational Courses, NSW, 1997

Type of Program	No. of Students	Gender		Year			Industry areas
		M	F	Yr10	Yr11	Yr12	
Joint Secondary Schools TAFE courses (a)	(b)23,696	11,428	12,268	1,323	15,245	7,128	Across all ANTA categories Board developed courses = Electronics Technology, Tourism Sector Services Accounting
Vocational Content Endorsed Courses	12,954	6,159	6,797		8,354	4,600	Office, Retail, Hospitality, Rural Industries, Building & Construction, Furnishings, Electronics
Industry Studies	5,588	2,598	2,990		3,555	2,033	Hospitality, Metals & Engineering, Retail
TAFE HSC Pathway	976	(c)119	(c)161		696	280	Child Studies, Design, Environmental Studies, Horticulture, Laboratory Skills, Rural Studies, Tourism Guest Services

NB: Numbers include provision in government and non-government school systems

(a) including three Board-developed status courses.

(b) including 8,500 doing the three Board-developed courses.

(c) Year 12 only.

Source: NSW Department of Education and Training

Key initiatives

Vocational education in New South Wales schools is strongly underpinned by partnerships and links between schools and enterprises. Partnership programs have contributed to positive outcomes in K–12 vocational learning programs in career education, work education and enterprise education as well as through the dual-accredited vocational courses in years 11 and 12. Examples of initiatives in this area during 1997 include:

- the involvement of government schools in more than 100 formal partnership arrangements including Local Vocational Education and Training (VET) in Schools Committees, Compacts and Local Industry Education Networks, careers markets, tertiary education forums and seminars for students. During 1997, over 50,000 students were involved in work placements and various visits to industry programs;
- the establishment of the South-West Sydney Business Education Partnership in the Catholic sector. The aims of this initiative were to develop long-term sustainable links with industry in order provide quality work placement for students and encourage a more ‘industry-led’ approach to VET. The achievements of the initiative include:
 - the establishment of the Lend Lease Project, providing quality workplace learning and training in the building and construction industry (160 work placement positions across six major work sites in Sydney and Canberra, including Olympic Village, Homebush); and
 - the expansion of opportunities for students and schools to effectively plan non-university pathways into employment and/or further vocational training according to School to Work Program guidelines;
- in the independent sector links between schools and local industry or businesses and with local education and training providers, including the TAFE system, covered a broad range of initiatives, industry sectors and approaches. Industry sectors in which schools were active included agriculture, childcare, electronics, hospitality, hospitality management, retail, aviation studies and travel and tourism;
- enterprise education initiatives in government schools included Australian Business Week, Young Achievement Australia and E-Team (Australian Quality Council) with expanded provision in regional areas and in years 9 and

10. A new years 9 and 10 program, *A Business Enterprise*, was developed for Young Achievement Australia. In 1997, more than 200 New South Wales schools accessed external enterprise programs;

- development of a Work Education curriculum framework by the Department of Education and Training. This is to be piloted in 1998 in 52 government schools involving 250 years 9 and 10 students. The Work Education curriculum framework includes integration of work education modules into the existing mainstream curriculum subjects, and a 100-hour discrete work education course accredited for the award of the New South Wales School Certificate. Other components of the framework include individualised School to Work Plans, the Recognition of Work Related Skills program and industry-specific Work and Training Expos;
- each government secondary school having a careers adviser, responsible for the development and implementation of a career education program for students. In 1997, 416 equivalent full-time teachers in secondary and central schools had responsibility for assisting students to explore and consider the range of school and post-school options available to them; and
- many independent secondary schools developed or implemented vocationally-oriented programs beyond work experience. These programs include school-based courses, traineeships, TAFE traineeships, TAFE courses and the Business Alive program. Various schools also operated visits to industry programs and received donations of technology from local businesses.

Proposals for improvement and expansion

The introduction of Training Packages and State Government initiatives will have a major impact on arrangements and organisational features of VET provision for school students. In particular, the New South Wales Government’s White Paper of reforms for the HSC includes reforms to the vocational education and training components of the HSC.

The Department of Education and Training is developing a Strategic Framework for Quality Vocational Education and Training in Schools to guide the implementation of State, national and Commonwealth changes. The overall objective is that funding will be applied to contribute to the expansion of vocational education and training opportunities in New South Wales schools.

The specific objectives are to raise the status of VET in schools; increase accessibility to VET programs for all students; provide programs that are consistent with State, national and Commonwealth trends; facilitate professional development and mobility; improve access to specialist VET expertise and resources; and use available resources effectively and efficiently.

The Strategic Framework will also support the expansion of part-time traineeships for students doing the HSC, pilots of which, will be put into place in 1998.

Initiatives being considered or undertaken by schools in NSW to provide post-school options for students include:

- continuing or enhancing established industry programs;
- looking to expand to new vocational areas;
- encouraging local business to sponsor disadvantaged students;
- establishing quality links with local business including in some cases Chamber of Commerce membership;
- making more effective use of past students' associations; and
- looking for collaborative opportunities with other schools.

Indigenous students

Initiatives in Indigenous education continued to be a major priority of New South Wales schools during 1997. All school sectors continued to develop programs for both assisting Indigenous students and increasing awareness of Indigenous issues for all students. In 1997, these initiatives included:

- the launch of the Aboriginal Education Policy in Government schools. Full implementation of the policy will entail training and development for teachers and school administration staff. This training has stimulated a great interest in Indigenous history and cultures, as well as creating a heightened awareness of Indigenous issues. This policy is particularly significant as the majority of Indigenous students in New South Wales attend government schools, with 25,097 Indigenous students enrolled in 1997. Indigenous education consultants reported that, while schools are very enthusiastic about the policy and its implementation strategy, there is a need to augment teachers' knowledge and understanding of Indigenous issues;

- the employment of Indigenous staff to assist the school community and support Indigenous students' needs in the Catholic sector. This initiative is partly responsible for an increase in enrolments of Indigenous students in the Parramatta diocese to 176 students across a range of schools;
- the development of the publication *Guyunggu: An Aboriginal Way of Being* in the Broken Bay diocese of the Catholic sector. *Guyunggu* is a publication inspired by teachers in the diocese who asked for guidance on how to teach Aboriginal Studies. This resource aims to provide opportunities for students and teachers (K–6) to learn about themselves and their connectedness to this land through an Aboriginal way of seeing. The Broken Bay diocese has also employed an Aboriginal Education Adviser; and
- most independent schools, with or without Indigenous students, including special schools, reported that Indigenous issues were raised in class discussions, that Indigenous resources were used in school and that Indigenous studies were part of the school curriculum.

Languages other than English (LOTE)

In 1997, there were a number of initiatives undertaken in New South Wales in regard to LOTE. These initiatives were in areas such as the use of technology in languages teaching and learning, language study overseas, the study of Asian culture and links to parents and the community.

A number of significant developments in the use of technology for languages teaching and learning took place in 1997. Examples include:

- implementation of a program of support in the use of computers in the teaching and learning of languages for teachers of years K–12 in government schools. This program supported the expanded availability of computers and Internet links in schools and the dissemination to schools of a range of technology-based resources;
- the provision of satellite broadcasting in LOTE;
- the use of the Internet and the development of Internet pages in LOTE. Use of the Internet was a particular focus of the Wollongong Diocese within the Catholic sector; and

- computer-aided LOTE teaching and the use of CD-ROMs were being investigated by some schools in the independent sector. Technological aids to the teaching of LOTE were common in schools, primarily through the use of the Internet and specialised software packages.

Asian culture study was also a priority for New South Wales schools. For example in the Catholic sector, Asian culture study was further developed by a total of six schools participating in the Access Asia program. In addition, 33 schools were given small grants through the National Asian Languages and Studies in Australian Schools (NALSAS) strategy, with which to purchase resources to promote both Asian language and culture. Involvement in Community Languages continued with 18 primary schools teaching Italian and Spanish to 1,280 students in years 3–6.

Links to parents and the community were features of the study of LOTE in New South Wales. For example, in the independent sector many schools reported that they had established links with parents and community groups with respect to the teaching and learning of LOTE. In addition, some schools with strong connections to particular ethnic communities, such as the Greek and Armenian communities, had the relevant community languages as compulsory subjects, usually through to year 9 or 10. Links have also been established with other education providers, either locally or overseas.

Students and teachers also benefited from language study overseas, for example:

- the Student Language Study in Overseas Countries program provided funding support for senior secondary students in government schools to undertake intensive language study overseas. In 1997, 373 students in years 10–12 were supported through this program. In addition, the second year of student exchanges with Nagoya, Japan, was implemented as part of the Sydney–Nagoya sister city agreement; and
- in the Diocese of Maitland – Newcastle, four Diocesan primary teachers attended a training course in Indonesia in 1997. This program was offered with the support of NALSAS funding and the Diocesan Language and Culture Planning Group.

Technology education

In primary school all students undertake study each year from the Science and Technology K–6 syllabus. This study

involves the processes of investigating, designing and making and using technology. The study is applied to the strands of built environments, information and communication, living things, physical phenomena, products and services and earth and its surroundings.

In years 7–10, all students learn about a broad range of applications of technology and develop designing, making and evaluating skills through 200 hours of the Design and Technology mandatory course. Across years 7–10 and years 11–12 students may elect to undertake further study in Design and Technology or select from a range of more narrowly focussed technology courses.

As an outcome of the evaluation of Science and Technology K–6 and Design and Technology 7–10, the New South Wales Board of Studies, in collaboration with school sectors, began a project to develop a Science and Technology K–6 CD-ROM and a Design and Technology 7–10 CD-ROM.

The Minister's Young Designers Awards showcases the achievements of year 7 and 8 students in design and technology. It attracted 7,000 participants from government and non-government schools across New South Wales and was exhibited at the Powerhouse Museum during second semester 1997.

A potential shortage of secondary technology teachers was of significant concern to the Department of Education and Training in 1997. A range of short and long term initiatives were put in place to address this issue. A retraining program, sponsorships, promotion of existing preservice teacher training programs and ongoing negotiations with preservice teacher training providers have begun to yield some promising results.

Many initiatives in 1997 were aimed at increasing access to technology, for example:

- the implementation of the Computers in Schools program has provided quality curriculum, quality teaching and learning and quality support for students and teachers in government schools. More than 22,000 computers were distributed to schools in 1997 in phase one of the Computers in Schools allocation. Phase two of the allocation provides a potential computer distribution of more than 33,000 computers for schools. Phase three will distribute an additional 22,000 computers to schools early in 1999, bringing the total allocation for government schools to 77,000;
- the connection of all New South Wales government schools to the Department of Education and Training's

Internet service. In 1997, over 90 per cent of schools were regular users of the Internet service. They collectively used more than 3.5 million minutes of connect time per month and requested over 600,000 World Wide Web pages per day;

- the launch of the Department of Education and Training's World Wide Web site, *Network for Education* in May 1997. The Department continues to maintain and expand the information available to schools on the site;
- the expansion of computing facilities and other technology acquisition, and increasing access to the Internet within the independent schools sector;
- the development and installation of a system-level Wide Area Network (WAN) and 80 Local Area Networks (LAN) under the Parramatta Diocese's Learning Technologies Initiative. This initiative has been developed to enhance learning and teaching through the curriculum integration of various technologies; and
- the introduction of whole-of-school curriculum networks in a number of schools in the Wollongong Diocese. These networks (Intranets) allow communication between all classrooms, the library and administration. The Wollongong Diocese has also established Internet connections in 85 per cent of schools, established a domain name and expanded the Catholic Education Office web site.

In 1997, technology initiatives within New South Wales schools were also concerned with providing teachers and students with the knowledge, skills and support to use computer-based technologies effectively. Examples include:

- the appointment of a technology adviser to each of the 40 district offices to provide technology advice and support to government schools;

- the focus on technology teacher development in the State Literacy Strategy. Teachers in government schools received a range of professional development and support including the resource document *Teaching Literacy in Design and Technology* in year 7 and advice regarding the relevance of student data to technology learning from the year 7 English Language and Literacy Assessment (ELLA) test;
- provision of the the 30-hour Technology in Learning and Teaching (TILT) training program which provides training for government school teachers in the use of computers and associated communications technologies in the key learning areas. Eight thousand and twenty-six teachers participated in the program in 1996 and 1997. A further 5,021 teachers will participate in 1998. Fifteen thousand teachers will have completed the course by mid-1999;
- provision of system-level professional development and support as a part of the Parramatta Diocese's Learning Technologies Initiative; and
- employment of teachers of both genders in technology-related subjects and the provision of specialist equipment and extra tuition to students with a disability. These initiatives are underway in independent schools to address trends such as the tendency in some schools for male students to dominate in subjects such as technical drawing, welding and rural technology.

The integration of technology into non-computing subjects and the need for a cross-curricula, integrated approach within all KLAs has been a common theme across New South Wales schools. An example of progress in this area is in the independent schools sector where technology has been integrated into a variety of technology-related subjects such as science and technology, craft and computing (primary school), and computing studies and design and technology (secondary).