

## Chapter 7

# VICTORIA

## Government sector

### Major developments

The achievements of Victoria's schools have gained widespread recognition. The continuing reforms over many years have led to very encouraging improvements in the quality of school leadership, teaching and learning and facilities and equipment. Most importantly, there have been signs of significant improvement in student achievement. A large number of national and international delegations have come to Victoria for the purpose of studying our programs. In 1997–98, 70 such delegations from 31 countries visited Victoria.

The scale, complexity and success of school-level reform has been acknowledged publicly. Many independent case studies have been undertaken, for example by the World Bank and the Productivity Commission, and numerous references now appear in international publications.

In 1998, there has been a very clear policy focus on the areas of literacy and numeracy, information technology and multi-media, school accountability and reporting in relation to student performance, science and technology and VET in Schools.

The government funded a significant salary increase for all school staff, bringing the total increase to 25 per cent in the period 1995–2000. The commencing salary for new teachers will be the highest in Australia by 1999. In addition, all school and central office staff now have the opportunity to participate in salary packaging, previously available only to principals and senior executive officers in the public service. This is an important development in providing flexibility for employees.

Staff health and well-being and effective workplaces are the result of a complex interplay between the physical, emotional and professional health of staff. Leadership, effective communication and staff development are critical, as is the

need for congruence between and understanding of organisational and individual workplace goals. The department has reviewed its policies and practices to ensure, among other things, that the human dimension is central to our improvement strategy. This focus on people in the workplace has been facilitated by the Quality Project, which has helped the department to reassess its business practices using the Australian Business Excellence Framework developed by the Australian Quality Council.

The Governor's speech, delivered at the opening of the Autumn 1998 Parliamentary Session, indicated the Government's clear priority to build a dynamic future for coming generations, with education as the basis of a vital social and economic strategy. The speech also outlined clear targets for the future. Victorian students are to attain 100 per cent proficiency in literacy by 2005, to be among the top five in the world in mathematics and science by 2010, and to have universal access to on-line technology by 2001. The Department of Education also developed and implemented models for schools to progress from self-management to self-governance if they meet the necessary pre-conditions.

To support education's contribution to the social and economic strategy, the following commitments were made in the 1998–99 State Budget for the next two years:

- \$76.1 million to expand the highly successful Victorian Early Years literacy program and to establish an early numeracy research project
- \$2.2 million to implement a comprehensive strategy to improve the quality of teaching and learning in science from Prep to year 10
- \$51.4 million in recurrent and capital funding to provide Victorian schools with unprecedented access to computers, the Internet, on-line curriculum material, technology for teachers and new systems for schools administration.

# Catholic sector

## Overview

Catholic education is based on Christian principles and practices, is holistic in nature, and seeks to:

- focus on the development of the whole person – spiritual, moral, intellectual and social
- pursue uncompromising respect for the dignity and rights of the individual
- promote the Catholic community of Faith
- ensure a just environment in which every student has access to the best quality learning
- foster cooperation, engagement and participation in the wider community.

## Structure

Catholic schooling in Victoria in 1998 comprised 384 primary, 91 secondary, 11 combined primary/secondary and six special schools, and provided places for 178,214 students. Secondary schooling offered both single sex and co-educational opportunities for students.

Catholic primary schools are established and operated by parishes. Secondary schools operate under the governance of a particular religious order, or of a parish or group of parishes or a diocese. The Catholic Education Commission of Victoria (CECV) provides the channel for rationalisation and coordination of education resources, policies and strategies throughout the State, and brings together all parties to Catholic education in Victoria. The State is divided into four dioceses and the Bishop in each diocese assists the good running of schools through his Catholic Education Office (CEO). Schools have a high degree of autonomy, and principals and staff are appointed locally in accordance with guidelines produced by the CECV and diocesan CEOs.

## Responsibilities and objectives of the Catholic sector

In the belief that parents are the first and primary educators of their children, Catholic schools assist parents in preparing young people to take their place in society and to make a difference to the world in which they live. Catholic education strives to provide the best quality education and aims to keep abreast of trends and challenges to meet society's demands.

## Financing

Funds are derived from three sources: Commonwealth Government, State Government and private. The CECV receives all Commonwealth and State grants and distributes these funds according to the level of need in each school. The CECV takes into account an expected amount of private income, which varies for each school according to its classification by a socioeconomic index.

## Major developments

### Literacy

A joint initiative of the CEO, Melbourne and the Centre for Applied Educational Research at the University of Melbourne is the Children's Literacy Success Strategy (CLaSS). CLaSS is a whole-school approach to ensuring that all students make progress and achieve success in early literacy. It is a comprehensive prevention and intervention program to maximise literacy achievements of all children in the first three years of schooling, especially those children who experience difficulty in making satisfactory progress and those with language backgrounds other than English. Some of the special features of CLaSS include:

- a balanced approach to the teaching of reading, writing and oral language
- extensive use of structured teacher classroom observations to diagnose students' strengths and weaknesses
- intensive school-based and off-site professional development for teachers
- parental involvement
- ongoing feedback from the research team at the University of Melbourne and ongoing evaluation by the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER).

In 1998, 139 Catholic primary schools introduced the CLaSS program.

## Indigenous education

Resource material entitled *Koorie Studies in SOSE: Years 7–10*, developed by the CECV, was published in July 1998. The production of this resource was considered to be one means of achieving dialogue, better understanding, partnership and justice for Indigenous Australians, and is distinctive for the breadth and wealth

of material it offers on a wide range of issues and topics, such as:

- Wik and the Native Title Act
- the forcible removal of Indigenous children from their families
- contemporary Koorie representatives of culture and identity
- Koorie life before colonisation
- the invasion/settlement debate
- frontier conflict in Victoria
- mission stations and reserves in Victoria.

## Technology for Catholic schools

Late in 1998, the CECV initiated the Technology for Catholic Schools project, designed to provide greater access to digital resources for teachers and students in Catholic schools. This project will be implemented by Catholic primary and secondary schools in 1999.

# Independent sector

## Overview

The survey of independent schools reported that the most common in the wide range of key objectives for Victoria's independent schools in 1998 were:

- providing a wide variety of quality opportunities to enable students to reach their full potential
- developing information technology via professional development of teachers, incorporating it into the curriculum, and extending facilities
- improving literacy and numeracy skills
- professional development for staff
- expanding internal and external communication (for example, with parents and the community).

## Major developments

The majority of schools undertook significant initiatives in 1998 to implement the national literacy goal and sub-goal agreed to by Education Ministers in March 1997 by implementing literacy assessment and reporting. This

included professional development for teaching staff, and the introduction of new activities and programs, such as the Victorian Early Years Literacy Program, a standardised reading program, a home reading program or individual programs for students. Parents were involved in several schools, for example by assisting in classrooms. Other 1998 initiatives included the appointment of key teachers or literacy coordinators.

In addition, the majority of schools undertook significant initiatives to implement the national numeracy goal and sub-goal agreed to by Education Ministers in March 1997. These included the employment of teachers aides, individualised programs for students at risk of not attaining adequate numeracy skills, policy reviews, employment of programs such as the Victorian Early Years Numeracy Program, and professional development. Actions planned for the future include identifying and assisting students with special needs, curriculum review and development, and professional development, such as training in the Victorian Early Years Program.

Independent schools also undertook a range of equity initiatives in 1998, in particular in relation to students with disabilities and students at risk of dropping out of school.

In terms of professional development, most schools took initiatives in assessment practices for literacy education, such as Victorian Early Years, seminars and in-service training, and internal reviews of procedures, including record-keeping, assessment, reporting policy and procedures.

The most common initiatives taken in terms of professional development for early intervention for literacy education were Victorian Early Years Literacy Program, in-service training in such programs as Reading Recovery, and collaborative approaches to early learning. However, the main types of professional development initiatives taken for diagnostic testing for literacy education were in-service training on assessing reading outcomes, Victorian Early

Years Literacy programs and ACER Development Assessment courses.

Professional development in numeracy attainment was important for a majority of schools, with teachers participating variously in seminars, workshops, in-service courses and conferences.

**Table 7.1 State government support to non-government schools, Victoria, 1998**

<i>Initiative</i>	<i>\$ millions</i>
State Recurrent Grant	215.0
Education Allowance	12.6
Support Services	2.9
Conveyance	8.8
Education Maintenance Allowance	7.1
Interest Subsidy	1.0
Salary Subsidy	1.2
Transport subsidies	4.3
Board of Studies	8.1
Registered Schools Board	0.5
Government initiatives including 'Turning the Tide' and Suicide Prevention	1.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>263.0</b>

Source: Department of Education, Victoria

**Table 7.2 State recurrent grants to non-government schools, Victoria, 1998**

<i>Category</i>	<i>Primary</i>	<i>Secondary</i>
1A	\$295	\$434
1B	\$353	\$518
2	\$411	\$607
3	\$529	\$781
4	\$568	\$896
5	\$570	\$898
6	\$593	\$934
7	\$596	\$938
8	\$616	\$969
9	\$677	\$1,064
10	\$681	\$1,066
11	\$685	\$1,068
12	\$687	\$1,070

Source: Department of Education, Victoria

## Grants to non-government schools

### 1998 State funding arrangements for non-government schools

Table 7.1 shows the extent of Victorian government support to non-government schools during 1998.

#### State Recurrent Grant

The State Recurrent Grant is provided to assist schools in meeting the administrative and operating costs they incur during the normal course of operations. It is an annual per capita grant paid to non-government schools, based on Commonwealth school funding categories determined by the application of the Education Resources Index (ERI). In 1998, the State Recurrent Grant rates were as indicated in Table 7.2.

#### Education allowance

The Education Allowance is provided to schools for the purpose of providing textbooks; class sets; stationery and consumable supplies; classroom requisites, including notes; and small items of classroom equipment used by students. It is a per capita payment based on a year-level entitlement. This funding is provided only for schools in ERI categories 3-12.

The 1998 per capita rates were:

<i>Primary</i>	<i>Years 7-10</i>	<i>Years 11-12</i>
\$30.10	\$71.10	\$105.20

#### Other services

In addition the department has:

- provided increased opportunities in professional development for teachers and principals in non-government schools including:
  - LOTE teacher professional development
  - Computers Across the Primary Curriculum
  - Primary Technology and Science
  - Australian Principals Centre
- provided access for non-government schools to interactive satellite learning technology programs, at the same cost of access as for all government schools
- involved non-government schools and teachers in the development of the curriculum and assessment services of Department of Education's Learning Support Project Teams, including:
  - Early Years of Schooling
  - Curriculum Standards Framework (CSF)
  - CSF Course Advice
  - Ministerial Advisory Council on LOTE and ESL
  - two joint schools-tertiary committees, on LOTE and on ESL
  - access to LOTE advisers and consultants
- provided access to the services and materials offered by the Standards Council of the Teaching Profession.

# **Commonwealth-funded capital projects**

## **Government sector**

In 1998, the Commonwealth provided \$50.129 million to the Department of Education towards capital projects.

One hundred and ninety capital projects funded by the Commonwealth were completed both physically and financially during 1998. The most common types of work undertaken and facilities provided in both primary and secondary schools were the upgrading and/or provision of new general-purpose classrooms, library facilities, technology facilities and staff administration facilities, and projects for the proper upkeep of capital infrastructure.

## **Catholic sector**

In 1998, the Commonwealth provided \$18,141,571 to the Catholic sector towards capital projects.

Sixteen projects funded by the Commonwealth were completed both physically and financially during 1998. The most common types of work undertaken and the facilities provided were the construction and upgrading of general learning areas, libraries and student amenities in primary schools; the construction or upgrading of specialist areas, for example science, music and materials technology in secondary schools; and the construction or upgrading of staff and administration areas in both primary and secondary schools.

## **Independent sector**

In 1998, the Commonwealth provided \$5,839,105 to Victorian independent schools towards capital projects. Twenty-nine capital projects were completed during 1998 and assisted with funds from the Commonwealth Capital Grants Programme. The most common types of work undertaken and facilities provided were the construction of general classrooms in both primary and secondary schools; the construction of specialist learning facilities, including art, science and technology for secondary levels; and the construction, refurbishment and upgrade of library facilities.