

Chapter 11

TASMANIA

Overview

Government sector

In 1998, the (then) Department of Education, Cultural and Community Development (DECCD) administered 220 government schools, including 143 primary schools, 33 high schools, 26 district high schools, eight senior secondary colleges and ten special schools. Education was provided for 62,978 full-time students and 2,628 part-time students from Preparatory to year 12 and 5,758 part-time kindergarten students. In addition, Early Special Education Services provided specialist education intervention to 374 children between birth and five years and their families.

A total of 38.6 per cent (27,900) of students received Student Assistance Support to cover the costs of school books and compulsory levies.

In May 1998, DECCD merged with the Department of Vocational Education and Training. Following a change of government in October, the department was renamed the Department of Education. A number of functions were transferred to and from the new agency.

Responsibility for child-care was transferred to the Department of Education in 1998. A review of child-care and education was initiated in 1998 for completion in 1999. As a first stage of this review, research is being undertaken to provide a synthesis of current research in the area of early childhood, incorporating pedagogy and child development theory. New child-care legislation is being prepared and the relationship between child-care and education is being better articulated.

In the year 1997–98, the government spent a total of \$391.1 million on education. Of this, \$346.9 million was spent directly on schools, and a further \$40.9 million on support programs, including specific-purpose equity programs, student

support services and support for students with disabilities. During 1998, the Commonwealth

Table 11.1 Commonwealth funding for targeted programs, government schools, Tasmania, 1998

<i>Program</i>	<i>\$</i>
Community Languages	23,662
Country Areas	442,000
Disadvantaged Schools	2,526,000
Early Literacy	400,000
ESL (General)	463,000
ESL (New Arrivals)	215,338
Special Education – Government	1,547,700
Special Education – Non-government Centres	79,100
Students with Disabilities	281,471

Source: Department of Education, Tasmania

contributed \$30.4 million to the recurrent funding of Tasmania's government schools. Additional funding for targeted programs is shown in Table 11.1.

Catholic sector

In 1998, there were 7,162 primary, 4,400 secondary and 1,575 senior secondary students in 33 systemic and four non-systemic schools.

All schools have a Board of Management or a Governing Council with parent representation.

Schools are funded by a combination of Commonwealth and State grants and school fees.

Independent sector

The independent sector remained fairly static in 1998 due to the lack of movement in the population of the State and the ongoing economic difficulties peculiar to Tasmania. Schools

have had to review their *modus operandi* and produce efficiencies without diminishing curriculum and pastoral care delivery.

While no new schools were commenced and one school ceased operation, feasibility studies were started by a few groups in relation to future new schools.

The diversity of schools in the State continues to give parents the opportunity to find a school which will meet the needs of their child and assist the development of the citizens of the future.

Major developments

Government sector

Statewide Numeracy and Literacy Assessment and Monitoring Programs

All students in years 3 and 7 were tested in literacy and numeracy in July 1998 as part of the Numeracy and Literacy Assessment and Monitoring Programs. This was the first year in which students in years 3 and 7 were tested in a statewide testing program, although the department has been monitoring year 5 and 9 students' performance in literacy and numeracy since 1975. Statewide results were sent to all government schools in December 1998. Each school also received reports for each of its students who participated in the monitoring program. The Assessment Research Centre at the University of Melbourne produced the reports.

Quality assurance processes

The process of Assisted School Self Review, piloted in 1997 with 28 schools, moved into its second year of implementation. One hundred and one schools from seven districts participated in 1998, refining and building on the experiences of the previous year. Schools undertook extensive data collection using information available at school and State level, and gathered information from parents, staff and students about their perceptions of the school's performance. Best practice indicators were developed and trialled and used as a focus for professional development activities.

The reviews culminated in partnership agreements specifying targets for improving learning outcomes in literacy, numeracy, behaviour management, information technology and vocational education.

Information technology

The Flexible Delivery Project commenced at the beginning of 1998. It was designed to provide a flexible approach to the delivery of professional development that fosters the use of educational computing in teaching and learning support, and to showcase good practice in the use of educational computing in all K–12 learning areas.

In-school resource teachers were trained to provide support and professional development to staff in their own school. They were able to deliver educational computing courses and provide guidance on issues associated with recognition of current competencies and the portfolio of professional learning.

A new interactive website, *Discover*, was developed and will be launched in 1999. This website will focus on allowing teachers and students to communicate and learn from each other using innovative technologies. It will provide web-enabled services to students, teachers and parents, and facilitate on-line learning services.

Seven Lighthouse Schools established at the end of 1997 continued to take a leading role in supporting other schools in their district. Computers were placed in classrooms at these schools at the beginning of the year. The schools adapted existing spaces to the new equipment and integrated computers into teaching programs.

Principal development

In 1998, an interim board was established to develop the Tasmanian Principals Institute, jointly funded by the University of Tasmania and the Department of Education, located in Launceston. The main functions of the institute are to:

- provide a recognition and accreditation function for current and aspiring principals
- develop and facilitate leadership programs
- provide a help and advice line for principals
- facilitate programs that lead to formal academic qualifications.

Over 240 principals and school leaders participated in the foundation program for Principals of the Future. More than 20 new principals completed an induction program and over 400 school leaders attended extension programs. All programs are designed to address competencies defined in the Department of Education's *Tasmanian Principal Competency Profile*.

Early Childhood – Flying Start Program

The Flying Start Program continued to provide additional early childhood teachers in all Tasmanian government schools to reduce the student–teacher ratio for a critical learning time each day in order to support the achievement of literacy, numeracy and social skills outcomes for students in years Prep–2. The parent participation component of the Flying Start Program was integral to all professional development activities, and was a major feature of early years and social skills professional development and school support. During 1998 three complementary initiatives were introduced within the Flying Start Program: Program of Additional Support and Structure for students experiencing literacy difficulties; Aboriginal Literacy Program in Early Childhood; and Count Me In Too, a number project initiated in 1998 to be undertaken in 1999.

The evaluation of the first year of the three-year program was published in 1998. Significant findings were that there was an extensive range of reading performance and numeracy ability in early childhood classes, and that reports of students' classroom behaviour were favourable. A minority of students (10 per cent of boys and 4 per cent of girls) exhibited behaviour that was of concern. This behaviour fell into three categories: 'irritable and anti-social', 'inattentive' and 'restless'. There was strong parental support for the program and its continuation.

Managing and Retaining Secondary Students in School program

This program provided 33 teachers over the staffing quota in secondary schools to provide additional support to secondary students whose behaviour was of serious concern in an effort to retain these students at school. Programs targeted students in known educationally disadvantaged groups. Positive outcomes reported at the end of 1998 included an increased emphasis on catering for individual needs, rather than group needs; an increased emphasis on improving basic literacy skills of students in an effort to enhance self-confidence; an increased focus on preventative programs; and an increase in the number of girls and in the overall number of students involved.

Catholic sector

In 1998, there was a major increase in collaborative approaches with other education sectors on Commonwealth programs and issues.

A major emphasis was planning for significant changes in information technology infrastructure and delivery.

Independent sector

A number of schools investigated the 'middle school' concept. One school was involved in two national projects in regard to its existing middle school. The general structure of most schools remained the same. Schools continued to evaluate their methods of curriculum delivery and pastoral care to ensure that students have every opportunity to realise their potential. More schools believe that the early years are important to a child's development and many have introduced kindergartens (pre-Preparatory) as a result.

Increased interest in Asian languages and studies led to the introduction of new courses in a number of the smaller schools to complement the breadth of this curriculum area in some of the larger schools. The two major Asian languages continued to be Japanese and Indonesian, and one school has been developing Mandarin Chinese.

Focus areas

Student outcomes in literacy

Government sector

1998 years 3 and 7 Statewide Literacy Monitoring Program

A statewide assessment and monitoring program in literacy was conducted in July 1998 for all years 3 and 7 students. The results of these tests form baseline data for monitoring the progress of these same students in the year 2000. The results are expressed in terms of the Key Intended Learning Outcomes (KILOs), which are statements of competency in aspects of literacy arranged in a two-year developmental continuum from Kinder-Prep to years 7–8.

Tables 11.2 and 11.3 show the percentages of students who achieved at each of the performance levels.

Table 11.2 Year 3 literacy results, Tasmania, 1998 (per cent)

<i>Performance level</i>	<i>Girls</i>	<i>Boys</i>	<i>All</i>
Working towards years 1–2 KILOs	4	6	5
Achieved years 1–2 KILOs	23	35	29
Achieved years 3–4 KILOs	48	43	45
Achieved years 5–6 KILOs	23	14	18
Insufficient information	2	2	2

Source: Department of Education, Tasmania

Table 11.3 Year 7 literacy results, Tasmania, 1998 (per cent)

<i>Performance level</i>	<i>Girls</i>	<i>Boys</i>	<i>All</i>
Achieved kinder–Prep KILOs	1	2	1
Achieved years 1–2 KILOs	3	6	5
Achieved years 3–4 KILOs	20	32	26
Achieved years 5–6 KILOs	49	45	47
Achieved years 7–8 KILOs	26	12	19
Working beyond years 7–8 KILOs	1	0	0
Insufficient information	2	3	3

Source: Department of Education, Tasmania

Results for both years 3 and 7 suggest that, on average, the performance of girls exceeded that of boys. These results are consistent with all recent studies of literacy performance in government schools in Tasmania.

Aligning teachers' assessment practices against external testing mechanisms

The Department of Education has a biannual assessment and monitoring program in literacy and numeracy for years 3, 5, 7 and 9. National benchmarking data for reading, writing and spelling is required annually. In 1998, it was decided to trial an alternative means of meeting the national benchmark reporting requirements in the future in non-testing years. Tasmanian schools report their students' performances against the KILOs. At the end of 1998, the Office for Educational Review mapped teachers' assessments of year 3 students' performances against those KILOs that related closely to the year 3 literacy benchmarks. This data was collected via the Internet. Eighty per cent of primary and district high schools transmitted their KILO assessments to a central data bank during a 12-day period in December. The results were then aggregated and 'cut' using appropriate software.

Vocational education in schools

The Vocational Education and Guidance for Aboriginals Scheme (VEGAS) funded a project to address the under-representation of Indigenous students in vocational education and training (VET) courses in years 11 and 12. The VET in Schools: VEGAS Initiative 9–12 attempted to address the barriers facing students' participation and achievement, at the personal, family, school and community level. The project involved eight senior secondary colleges and their associate schools in a range of sub-projects. The project commenced in the second half of the year. The relatively short timeframe during 1998 meant that the sub-projects focussed on:

- encouraging and supporting students to access and remain in programs
- raising awareness of opportunities in the VET area.

The major outcomes included:

- improved networks between school and college personnel and other officers working in both VET and Indigenous education
- increased awareness of issues and benefits of educational participation in VET courses for Indigenous students.

The project will continue in 1999.

Other issues

Government sector

Curriculum priorities

The three-year priority cycle for English finished in 1998. Curriculum guidelines were published and were available on the *Discover* website. Health Promoting Schools was a continuing initiative. Approximately 80 community agencies worked with schools in the area of student health, and detailed workshops were conducted in order to facilitate a better understanding of the Health Promoting Schools initiative and the role the agencies play in promoting the concept. The initiative was linked to the three-year priority period for health and physical education and senior curriculum officers worked with schools in order to facilitate a better understanding of the positive relationship between the two initiatives.

State funding and expenditure data

Catholic sector

In Tasmania there is no needs-based allocation of State funds. Grants for recurrent programs are allocated on a differential per capita basis for primary, secondary and senior secondary students. The allocations in 1998 were:

- \$890 per primary student
- \$1,157 per secondary student
- \$1,674 per senior secondary student.

Grants to non-government schools

The following are the per capita rates used for the delivery of the 1998–99 State grants to non-government schools in 1998. These rates were used together with August 1998 census enrolments to fund non-government schools:

per Kindergarten student	\$445.19
per primary student	\$890.38
per secondary student	\$1,157.49
per senior secondary student	\$1,558.16

Commonwealth-funded capital projects

Government sector

In 1998, the Commonwealth provided \$6,086,000 towards capital projects in Tasmania. Of the five projects completed both physically and financially during 1998, the most common types of work undertaken and facilities provided were the refurbishment of specialist facilities in one high school and one

district high school, and the redevelopment of classrooms and library facilities in some primary schools.

Catholic sector

In 1998, the Commonwealth provided \$1,395,514 towards capital projects in Tasmania.

Of the three capital projects completed both physically and financially during 1998, the most common types of work undertaken and facilities provided were the construction and extension of library facilities in secondary schools; the construction of art, home economics, catering and food technology facilities in secondary schools; and the construction of student amenities and administration facilities in secondary schools.

Independent sector

In 1998, the Commonwealth provided \$684,219 towards capital projects in the independent sector.

Seven capital projects were physically and financially completed during 1998. They included the purchase of buildings for primary schools and the completion and provision of information technology areas in a secondary school.