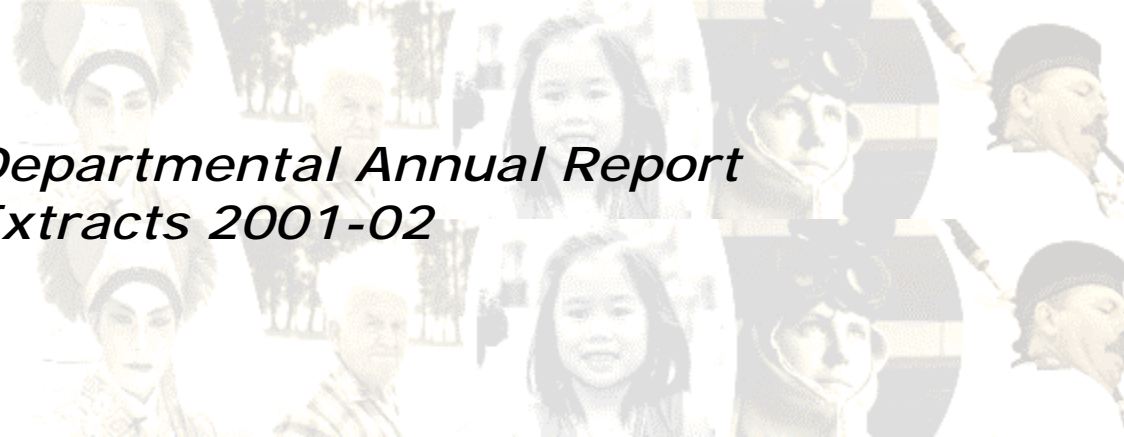




**VICTORIAN GOVERNMENT
COMMUNITY CONSULTATIONS
ON GOVERNMENT
RESPONSIVENESS TO
CULTURAL DIVERSITY**



*Departmental Annual Report
Extracts 2001-02*



Contents

| | |
|--|----|
| Department of Education and Training | 1 |
| Department of Human Services | 9 |
| Department of Infrastructure | 15 |
| Department of Industry, Innovation and Regional Development | 21 |
| Department of Justice | 25 |
| Department of Natural Resources and Environment | 33 |
| Department of Premier and Cabinet | 39 |
| Department of Tourism, Sport and Commonwealth Games | 45 |
| Department of Treasury and Finance | 51 |



Department of Education and Training



OVERVIEW

DE&T's responses to cultural diversity

Access to a high-quality and relevant education and training system is critical to the future of all Victorians. This means that everyone must have the opportunity to participate in education and training, achieve learning success and undertake continuous learning. Individuals and groups facing particular challenges to achieving in education and training because of cultural or linguistic background must be supported to continue and succeed in their learning endeavours.

Schools, in particular, play an important part in the development of student attitudes and values. Schools can contribute to the elimination of racism, the ongoing development of mutual respect and understanding, and the creation of a tolerant and harmonious community. Through the incorporation of multicultural perspectives across the school curriculum and organisational practices, schools can also fulfil their responsibility to develop confident, culturally aware young people who can function effectively in their communities and as citizens of the global community.

TAFE institutes and adult community education (ACE) organisations have a central role in equipping adults from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds with the English proficiency and the vocational skills they need to function effectively in the workforce and in society, or to proceed to other forms of education and training.

The programs and activities sponsored by the Office for Youth seek to foster attitudes of tolerance, mutual respect and harmony among Victoria's young people, and to ensure that youth policies and services reflect the needs of young people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

The Department's workforce management and development practices help to ensure that its workforce reflects the diversity of the Victorian community and is well equipped to work effectively with diversity within the education and training system and the broader community.

Key achievements

- Provision of English as a second language (ESL) and Languages other than English (LOTE) programs and services in government schools
- Allocation of \$560,000 in 2001-02 to provide interpreting and translation services to government schools
- Provision of the 23 most commonly requested school notices in 21 languages
- Encouragement of all government schools to observe Harmony Week from 18-22 March 2002

- Provision of annual funding for 31,000 students in 199 community-based, after-hours ethnic schools to support the teaching of 53 languages
- Establishment of a critical reference group to review the Managing Diversity policy to achieve improved access and outcomes for under-represented individuals and groups in the TAFE sector
- Through ACE providers, the provision of 880,000 student contact hours of accredited and non-accredited ESL programs, from beginner level to more advanced classes
- Provision of specialist multicultural language and employment services to over 30,000 people per year by Adult Multicultural Education Services (AMES), the largest provider of these services in Australia
- A Youth Round Table involving 50 young people who discussed the special challenges faced by youth from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds
- Development, as part of a whole-of-government process, of a Departmental multicultural performance reporting framework
- Expansion of the Department's human resources strategy to address cultural and linguistic diversity issues through a range of programs, including diversity management and leadership.

Diversity Network

The Diversity Network provides a cohesive approach to diversity across the education and training portfolio, including coordinating and communicating diversity policy. The Network consists of senior officers from Offices and statutory authorities and is convened by the Secretary. A key goal for the Network is to ensure that the Department's policies, programs and services are inclusive and responsive to the diversity within the community including cultural and linguistic diversity, gender, and Indigenous status.

SCHOOL EDUCATION

English as a Second Language

English as a Second Language (ESL) programs and services aim to improve provision and targeted support for new-arrival ESL students, including those in isolated settings, and to provide ongoing support to these students for up to seven years. They include intensive full-time programs in English language schools and centres, out-programs in mainstream schools supported by English language schools and centres, and a combination of mentor training and short-term funding to support new-arrival students in isolated settings and country schools.

Key achievements

- Intensive ESL programs were provided for 1430 newly arrived students in English language schools and centres and through out-posting programs
- Support was provided for an additional 118 students through New Arrivals programs in Geelong and Shepparton, and through the Isolated ESL Students program in regional Victoria
- \$24.6 million was allocated to 345 primary schools, 109 secondary schools, ten primary-secondary schools and two specialist schools for the provision of ESL programs. In addition, 238 EFT multicultural education aides were allocated to schools
- An ESL school cluster was established in Wodonga. Four outreach services coordinators were appointed to support schools with programs for new-arrival students
- 7886 on-site and telephone interpreting assignments were provided in 60 languages, and 553 documents were translated into 45 languages for government schools
- Additional ESL support was provided through the development of print and multimedia resources and the provision of professional development programs for 1172 teachers and 150 multicultural education aides, and credit-bearing ESL courses for 25 teachers.

Languages

The objective of LOTE programs and services is to support language teachers and schools to implement high-quality languages programs.

Key achievements

- 87 credit-bearing training courses were provided to over 900 teachers to improve language teacher supply and quality
- Multimedia and online materials were developed in Indonesian, French, German and Italian
- Language awards and promotional forums were provided for later-years students
- A wide range of languages was taught, including 18 languages in government schools, 39 through the Victorian School of Languages, and over 50 languages in the after-hours ethnic schools

- The majority of students in government schools were involved in learning a language in 2001, including 87 per cent of primary students, 71 per cent of Years 7-10 students, and 13.6 per cent of students in Years 11-12
- 31,000 students learned more than 50 languages in after-hours ethnic schools
- A LOTE analysis was established in August 2001 to make recommendations on policy directions for languages, including more appropriate accountability mechanisms, greater choice and continuity of languages and better access for metropolitan and country students.

Cultural and linguistic diversity, and citizenship education

The objectives of these initiatives are to support schools to:

- Provide culturally inclusive programs;
- Promote understanding and appreciation of Australia's social and political heritage; and
- Encourage active citizenship and harmonious relationships in our culturally diverse, democratic community.

Key achievements

- Guidelines for Managing Cultural and Linguistic Diversity in Schools were distributed.
- Professional development programs were provided on anti-racism education and multicultural perspectives across the curriculum for 1015 teachers.
- Over 400 new borrowers were registered at the Languages and Multicultural Education Resource Centre and more than 12,000 items were borrowed from the Centre by education professionals
- Discovering Democracy professional development grants were provided to support 56 schools, and 150 teachers attended the annual Discovering Democracy conference.
- A manual entitled 'Civics and Citizenship Education: Extended Professional Development Program' was published and 70 teacher facilitators were trained to deliver professional development to support student learning.
- Schools' Constitutional Conventions were staged, involving 2100 secondary students.
- Over 200 students participated in the Primary Parliaments.

- Schools and teachers were recognised for their outstanding achievements in Civics and Citizenship Education through the presentation of awards.

Teacher exchange programs

A total of 150 native-speaker assistants provided language support to teachers and students studying LOTE in government schools. This compares to 127 in 2000-01, indicating a return to levels of participation experienced in prior years. However, there was a reduction in the number of teachers and principals (67 in 2001-02 compared with 106 in the previous year) participating in the International Teaching Fellowship exchange program. The decline in the value of the Australian dollar was an important deterrent.

Longer-term programs have been expanded to include exchange with countries such as Canada, Denmark, Greece, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Switzerland, the United Kingdom and the United States. Short-term exchange programs have also expanded to include Denmark and Bordeaux, France.

Victoria's participation in the United Kingdom's Teacher International Professional Development program continued, with an inaugural reciprocal visit to the United Kingdom in January 2002 by Victorian educators.

The Department continues to coordinate the provision of support for the reconstruction of education in East Timor in conjunction with the East Timor Reference Group.

Full fee-paying overseas students

The number of overseas students choosing to study in government schools continues to increase. As at 30 June 2002, there were 2123 international students enrolled in government schools compared with 1635 at the same time last year, an increase of 30 per cent.

The largest numbers of overseas students choosing to study in Victorian government schools in 2001-02 came from China, Japan, Korea and Hong Kong, although there has been an increase in student numbers from Germany, Brazil and Taiwan.

Over the past year, there were 1823 students enrolled to undertake a study tour in Victorian schools compared with 2148 for the previous year, a decrease of 15 per cent. Some scheduled groups cancelled travel plans, while other groups arrived with lower numbers of participants than anticipated originally.

TRAINING AND TERTIARY EDUCATION

Managing diversity

The Managing Diversity policy framework applies to all government-funded providers and other agencies of the State Training System. Providers are required to develop and report on Managing Diversity plans to improve outcomes and employment prospects for groups including Victorians from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

Adult, community & further education

Adult, community and further education provides lifelong learning opportunities for Victorian adults, including ESL Courses aimed at improving the English language skills of learners with a language background other than English.

Employment¹

Multicultural Employment Program

The Multicultural Employment Program is designed to enhance the skills base of the Victorian workforce through attracting skills from overseas and to assist particular groups in our multicultural communities who need assistance in finding work.

Overseas qualifications

This free service facilitates the entry of overseas-qualified professionals in the Victorian workforce. By February 2002, 2550 services had been provided to overseas-qualified professionals resident in Victoria.

Skilled migration

This program implements initiatives to attract skilled migrants to Victoria and link them to employers, industries and regional areas with skill needs. By 28 February 2002, 4531 services were provided to people wishing to migrate to Victoria. This included 563 services to Victorian employers.

Overseas-qualified professionals

This program provided assistance for unemployed or under-employed, overseas-qualified professionals to enter the Victorian workforce by addressing two of the major issues confronting them – a lack of work

¹ In March 2002 the Employment Division was transferred to the Department of Innovation, Industry and Regional Development.

experience in Australia and a limited understanding of the workforce culture in Australia.

YOUTH

Victorian Youth Round Tables

The Victorian Youth Round Tables provide a forum where young people can express their views. Attended by the Minister for Youth Affairs, the Round Tables aim to include young people in the development of Government programs and policies. 'Living in a culturally and linguistically diverse society' was the theme of one Round Table in 2001.

DEPARTMENTAL SERVICES

Managing diversity

In 2001-02 the Department strengthened its commitment to diversity and equal opportunity by:

- Integrating and sustaining the management of diversity across the Department through the establishment of a Diversity Network, which received an Office of Public Employment award for people management leadership
- Issuing sexual harassment policy and procedures that promoted safe workplaces and the prevention of discriminatory, harassing and unlawful behaviours, including the designation of responsibilities of principals and managers and provision for sexual harassment contact officers
- Making available an online workplace discrimination and sexual harassment training course on rights and responsibilities under equal opportunity and anti-discrimination laws
- Conducting managing diversity quarterly forums for Office of School Education staff to support the implementation of diversity management policy in schools
- Establishing a project in which 16 schools explored flexible work practices to develop a better understanding of the drivers, barriers and benefits of flexible work arrangements in schools. Coaching and professional development addressed improved attraction, recruitment and retention of school-based staff, as well as work and family issues, staff health and well-being and links to innovative teaching and learning practices.

Department of Human Services

