

VICTORIA

Introduction

Victoria's three school sectors share many policy directions, strategies and activities. Although the information contained in this chapter mostly relates specifically to each sector, the extent of cooperation between sectors is at a high level and has contributed considerably to the success of many educational initiatives in Victoria.

Context

Government sector

Mission

The mission of the Department of Education is to help all young Victorians achieve their full potential at school so that they can create the best future for themselves.

Goals

In order to improve practices in school education in line with worldwide benchmarks, five goals have been identified. They are to:

- provide high-quality teaching and learning for all students;
- provide broad educational opportunities for all students;
- successfully manage all their resources and programs;
- establish effective and accountable reporting to parents and the community; and
- develop productive partnerships with parents, industry, further education and the wider community.

Major achievements

For 1996, the Victorian Government's achievements for school education were:

Springvale Secondary College's VET engineering program at Bosch.

- implementation of the Keys to Life strategy, with emphasis on students with special learning needs;
- implementation of the Classrooms of the Future strategies to develop the role of information technology and multimedia in learning;
- development and implementation of course advice for years P–10 in conjunction with the CSF;
- enhancement of the professional status of school staff through implementation of career structures, training and leadership development programs and the establishment of performance management processes;
- implementation of the Bright Futures projects in the areas of:
 - vocational education in schools;
 - provision of physical and sport education; and
 - increasing the range of educational opportunities for students by expanding programs for:
 - gifted students;
 - girls;
 - Koorie students; and
 - students with disabilities;

- implementation of the Broadening Horizons through Language policy in the areas of:
 - LOTE;
 - multicultural education; and
 - ESL;
- improvement of school accountability through improvement of monitoring and reporting on school performance and student achievement;
- support for Schools of the Future by:
 - refinement of School Global Budgets, including provision for rural and remote schools;
 - development of appropriate management information systems to support the Schools of the Future program;
 - enhancement of communication and linkages to support schools and school councils through clarification of responsibilities and accountabilities within the organisation and further development of the mechanisms for publishing and communication information to schools, parents and the community; and
 - implementation of integrated personnel approaches such as the Professional Recognition Program, workforce planning and full staffing flexibility; and
- improvement of school and student facilities.

Catholic sector

Mission

Catholic schools seek to provide a rounded education for children that is based on Christian principles and practices.

Structure of Catholic education in Victoria

Parish 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) coordinates Catholic education across the State and develops educational policies and strategies. The bishop in a 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 under guidelines produced by the CECV and diocesan CEOs.

Victoria is aiming for one computer for every five students in government schools by 2000.

Major developments

During the 1996 school year, the Catholic education sector:

- continued the focus on the provision of professional development opportunities that support the implementation of the Guidelines for Religious Education of students in the Archdiocese of Melbourne. Other focuses in professional development for religious educators included leadership, sacramental theology, church history, scripture, prayer and spirituality, faith development and morality;
- promulgated a LOTE policy to schools. The CECV produced this policy in recognition that all students should have the opportunity to study languages, not only for achieving linguistic competence, but also for intellectual growth, personal identity and enrichment, enhanced educational opportunities and strengthening of relations between and within groups in Australia;
- encouraged the expansion of the VET options in schools through greater availability of dual recognition (DR) programs and other VET programs. Many schools explored creative partnerships with industry, other schools and TAFE institutes to provide the best options for their students;
- continued to support the LAP which assessed students in years 3 and 5 in the areas of English, mathematics and SOSE. The LAP was administered in term 1, and results were included in schools' semester reports;
- agreed to participate in trials of Victorian Student Achievement Monitor (VSAM), a Statewide assessment of students in years 7 and 9 against the CSF in 1997;
- through its Pastoral Care Units in each diocese within the State, continued to provide advice, support and

professional development to an increasing number of primary and secondary schools in the following areas:

- the review and development of pastoral care policies and programs in schools;
 - training in 'Mandatory Reporting of Child Abuse' for teachers;
 - issues of personal safety in schools; and
 - the management of critical incidents in schools;
- sponsored a two-day symposium, Celebrating the Education of Boys, in partnership with the St Patrick's Province of the Christian Brothers. This focused on many of the difficult issues emerging for boys in today's society. Four themes underpinned the keynote addresses and workshops:
 - adolescent health;
 - the construction of gender;
 - conflict resolution; and
 - communication.

Positive and practical outcomes have occurred following the symposium and an additional number of boys' schools have selected this area for whole-school focus in 1997;

- actively pursued the establishment of a Catholic education site on the Internet, with work begun to create home pages for the CECV and for the Diocesan offices; and
- centrally organised professional development programs for primary schools which addressed a wide range of matters such as leadership, school development, all key learning areas, inclusive approaches, special education and Christian education for personal development. Professional development for secondary schools concentrated on leadership, whole-school development and review, teaching and learning, gender issues and the study of Asia within the curriculum.

Independent sector

Major goals for 1996

A survey administered by Price Waterhouse (Canberra) from a sample of 32 independent schools across Victoria identified the following themes as major goals in 1996:

- implementation of new technologies;
- improved capital stock;

- encouraging self expression through the creative arts;
- developing appropriate use of leisure time;
- improving literacy; and
- improving numeracy.

Capital grants

Government sector

In 1996, the Commonwealth provided \$49.6 million towards capital projects to the Department of Education in Victoria.

Of the 275 capital projects funded by the Commonwealth during 1996, the most common types of work undertaken and facilities provided in both primary and secondary schools were the refurbishment of buildings, the upgrading and/or provision of new general purpose classrooms, the upgrading and/or provision of new library facilities, including learning areas and specialist teaching/learning areas, the upgrading of staff administration facilities and the construction of new primary and secondary schools.

Capital expenditure by the Victorian State Government in government schools in 1995–96 was \$209.2 million.

Catholic sector

In 1996, Catholic Capital Grants (Vic) Ltd received a total of \$23.8 million under the Commonwealth Capital Grants Programme consisting of \$16.1 million under the General Element and \$7.7 million under the QCATS Element.

Thirty-seven projects were completed in 1996 from 1994, 1995 and 1996 funds, and, in one case by the use of bridging finance where the Minister had approved a grant from 1997 funds. Of the 37 projects, 25 were funded from the General Element and 12 from the QCATS Element. Twenty-four of the projects were located in primary schools and 13 in secondary schools.

Of the 25 funded under the General Element, six were targeted at the provision of facilities for schools in growing areas while the other 19 projects were for the refurbishment and upgrading of facilities in existing schools.

Independent sector

The Victorian Independent Schools BGA Limited allocated \$7.3 million under the 1996 Commonwealth Capital Grants

Programme to assist with capital projects in independent schools. This included \$4.9 million under the General Element and \$2.4 million under the QCATS Element.

During 1996, 40 Commonwealth funded capital projects were completed under the Capital Grants Programme partly from 1996 funds and partly from funds from previous years (1992–1995). Funding of all supported projects included a contribution from each school.

They included:

- a project funded under the AT SIS Element;
- 15 projects funded under the QCATS Element; and
- 25 projects under the General Element.

The projects covered:

- refurbishment of existing facilities;
- purchase of technological equipment to assist with the expansion and improvement of school curriculum;
- support for the development of science and technology centres;
- construction of general learning areas;
- upgrades of library, administration and science facilities; and
- development of information technology facilities.

Teachers and teaching

Government sector

Staff employed within the Victorian government sector include:

- teachers and non-teaching staff in schools;
- staff within the departmental offices and the nine school regions;
- staff of the Board of Studies, Standards Council of the Teaching Profession, Merit Protection Boards and the Registered Schools Board; and
- teachers providing extension services in institutions including the Melbourne Zoo, National Gallery of Victoria and the Museum of Victoria.

Staffing figures for other States include groundskeepers, technicians, farm assistants and janitorial staff. In Victoria, funding is provided for such services to be

contracted out by school councils as local priorities arise, and therefore Victoria's figures do not include staff employed under such arrangements. In addition, extensive use of new technologies and the increased development of computerised administrative systems for schools since 1993 enables administrative support in schools to be delivered with fewer employees than in the other States. The introduction of the career structure for school support officers has reduced demarcation issues and increased the flexibility and multi-tasking further streamlining employment needs in Victoria.

The delivery of high quality education and training is dependent on the professionalism of the staff in schools. The Department of Education acknowledges the pivotal role played by teachers and other staff in achieving a quality education for all Victorian students. Within the context of devolution of accountability, the integration of learning technologies into educational delivery, and the need to bring a variety of soundly based pedagogical approaches to diverse groupings of students, the growing complexity of teachers' skills is apparent. The provision of appropriate professional development opportunities to ensure the continuous improvement of professional skills is a Departmental imperative.

Merit and equity

The Department of Education has adopted a managing diversity approach to merit and equity to integrate merit and equity principles into all personnel practices and the development of workplace cultures which value and effectively manage workforce diversity for high performance and improved educational outcomes. The strategy for managing diversity is based on the themes of leadership and development, people management and work/family/life balance.

Students enjoy the cultural diversity at Debney Park Secondary College

Initiatives and programs implemented in 1996 included the development of:

- a Flexible Work Options Project to explore and identify the range of flexible work options and family friendly policies which could be used to assist all Department employees balance their work, family and other life commitments;
- a Managing Diversity Policy framework for schools;
- models for managing diversity in the regions which have responsibility for supporting schools in diversity management and equal opportunity. Seminars were conducted to communicate and promote managing diversity and merit and equity principles and over 150 school and non-school personnel participated; and
- best practice equal opportunity training used a Statewide train-the-trainer program and included a training kit entitled *Rights and Responsibilities under the Victorian Equal Opportunity Act 1995* and distribution of a sexual harassment training video.

Professional Recognition Program

The new career structure for teachers, the Professional Recognition Program, applied to all teachers from 4 March 1996. The Professional Recognition Program provides for local, merit-based selection for all teaching positions. All service and eligibility requirements have been removed. Performance management procedures provide for the recognition and reward of high performing teachers. These procedures ensure a focus on continuous improvement which will enhance the quality of the teaching profession.

Career structure for non-teaching school staff

A new career and classification structure was introduced for non teaching staff in schools in October 1996. The new structure, the School Services Officer (SSO) Structure 1996, modifies and extends the original SSO structure which was first introduced in 1994. Key features of the new structure include:

- the introduction of performance-based assessment;
- revision of the classification descriptors;
- clarification of certain work practices; and
- the introduction of higher salary levels.

Professional development in the use of learning technologies

Support for teacher professional development at school level continued with a focus on learning technologies. Schools addressed learning technologies as a priority in their school professional development plans and in individual teachers' professional development plans.

A range of professional development programs to develop and extend expertise in using learning technologies for classroom and administrative purposes for teachers and principals was offered by a variety of providers at a local, regional and Statewide level. Programs are targeted at a variety of skill and experience levels and utilise mixed delivery modes. They include:

- seminars and publications;
- the provision of professional development grants directly to schools;
- subject specific professional development;
- extended professional development packages on classroom uses of technology (such as the Computing Across the Primary Curriculum program and Learning with the Internet);
- leading practice projects, including navigator schools and the Leading Practice Classrooms Network; and
- leadership development programs.

Professional development programs to support the Curriculum and Standards Framework – teacher networks

The CSF teacher networks, which are largely key learning area based, provide professional development support for teachers as they implement the CSF. Partnership conferences for network leaders were held in LOTE, technology, SOSE and the arts. Course advice professional development kits were distributed to network leaders and other curriculum leaders.

Professional development programs focusing on leadership and management skills

The Australian Principals Centre (APC) is a partnership between the Department of Education, The University of Melbourne, the Victorian Primary Principals Association

and the Victorian Association of Secondary School Principals. Its focus is the accreditation and development of members of the Principal Class.

The Department entered into a service agreement with the APC to conduct:

- induction programs for principals;
- principal and school development programs; and
- leadership programs.

School leadership teams

Following a needs assessment of members of the Principal Class and of teachers in leadership positions, a program for the professional development of school leadership teams was developed and trialled in 26 schools during 1996.

Leading teacher development program

A new modular professional development program targeted at leading teachers was developed in 1996 for delivery by regional teams at a local level. The six modules seek to provide leading teachers with a context for their new role, explore expectations of the role in specific high priority areas, identify areas for further development and strengthen collegiate support. The programs have been oversubscribed.

Teacher Release to Industry Program

The Department's collaboration with the Victorian Employers Chamber of Commerce and Industry (VECCI) continued in 1996. The Teacher Release to Industry Program (TRIP) provides teachers with the opportunity to spend a year in an industry setting and to use their industry expertise in the development of school programs. In 1996, 53 teachers were involved in the program.

Other programs for teachers and principals

A comprehensive program of training and support is also provided across a range of priority program areas including the early years of schooling, literacy and numeracy, LOTE, ESL, physical and sport education and increasing the range of educational opportunities for students (for example, gifted students, girls, Koories and students at risk).

Catholic sector

National Schools Network

The Victorian Catholic system has 17 schools involved in the National Schools Network (NSN) in 1996 which is investigating a variety of changes to school structures and pedagogy to improve learning.

Some initiatives included:

- the linking of five schools to universities, in partnership, to document their work;
- involvement of the NSN in the Southern Key Competencies Talking Circle;
- Australian Curriculum Studies Association National Middle Schooling Project Research Circles;
- participation of Marian College, Sunshine West, in a collaborative school restructuring project with Victoria University of Technology and Queensland University of Technology for the next three years, using an Australian Research Council grant; and
- participation in National Professional Development Schools in Darwin and Sydney and the Leadership Seminar Series in Adelaide during 1996.

The Victorian NSN is a partnership of Department and Catholic schools. It has now developed capabilities to provide further professional development in Collaborative Management of Change, Middle Years of Schooling, Socratic Dialogue and the Team Small Group Model.

Vocational education and training

During 1996, VET was an area of expansion. Across the State 861 students participated in 84 separate DR programs conducted in 50 Catholic secondary schools. It is envisaged there will be a much larger increase in students enrolling in DR programs in 1997 as a further six programs have been accredited for commencement in that year, with several others under development. Expressions of interest for 1997 funding have been received from 71 Catholic secondary schools, attesting to this assumption.

In addition to the DR programs, 37 Catholic schools were involved in Australian Student Traineeship Foundation (ASTF) clusters, with several other schools receiving individual grants to undertake innovative projects.

Teachers were able to participate in a number of professional development programs provided by the CEO

in Melbourne, and in March, teachers from 27 schools attended a two-day conference on how to develop VET options within schools. A further 18 teachers engaged in industry-specific programs.

Geographically isolated students

Government sector

SOFWeb, the Department of Education's Internet service (<http://www.dse.vic.gov.au>), provided material to assist teachers to improve student learning; access for students, teachers and parents to high quality educational materials; and, opportunities to join collaborative activities such as The Networked Learning Projects, Global Classroom Project, Leading Practice Online, Professional Interaction Networks and Learning with the Internet. Many Victorian students have been able to communicate with their peers worldwide, through collaborative learning projects through the International Education and Resource Network (I*Earn).

The use of SOFWeb increased exponentially to over 1.5 million 'hits' per month from Victorian schools and countries including Canada, Germany, Israel, Japan, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Singapore, Sweden, the United Kingdom and the United States.

SOFNet has delivered over 700 hours per annum of high quality curriculum and professional development programs, including STEPS and Primary and Secondary Access to Languages (PALS and SALS), beamed live to classrooms via the Department's interactive educational television service. Ninety-one per cent of schools utilise SOFNet, with 70 per cent of these schools doing so on a regular basis. Over 91,000 students are being taught a language other than English through SOFNet, and over 880 schools are enrolled in the STEPS series on SOFNet.

Distance Education Centre

The Distance Education Centre is Victoria's major provider of distance education courses from P-12. It delivers programs to more than 2,000 students each year. Courses are delivered in a variety of formats, combining quality print-based, audio and visual learning materials and electronic interaction facilities. Additional services include student support, materials development, library, education technology and school support.

Traditionally distance education is provided for people from isolated areas, but now it caters for a wider range of people who find it difficult to attend classes. Students are eligible under the distance criteria if they are under nine years of age and they live more than three kilometres from the nearest primary school or bus route or stop, or if they are over nine years of age and live over five kilometres from the nearest school or bus route or stop.

Subjects available are not as broad as in normal school settings as there is a need to rely on printed and electronic media for instruction.

Country Education Project (Inc.)

The Department of Education in Victoria had a service agreement with Country Education Project (Inc.) for 1996 to provide support to rural schools. A number of activities across the key learning areas provided curriculum enrichment for students and training and professional development for teachers in rural and isolated schools were enthusiastically supported. These activities included:

- literacy - establishment of networks for secondary students;
- the arts - cultural programs across the arts and literature in which 870 primary and secondary students participated;
- English - enrichment activities for 265 students;
- science and technology - enrichment activities for 430 students;
- learning technologies - included the Teddy Bear Program where Prep and year 1 students in rural schools exchanged teddy bears with students in city schools through electronic media. Training for teachers was also provided;
- RACV Energy Breakthrough - 8,000 students from across Victoria, New South Wales and South Australia participated in this annual competition for projects combining applied technology and teamwork;
- personal development - camps provided 1,200 students with experiences in outdoor education and team building;
- mathematics - a problem solving workshop was conducted for 175 students;
- SOSE - approximately 200 year 5 and 6 students from inner city schools visited schools in 18 rural clusters and were billeted with families on farms; and

- gifted students - camps for 280 students from 45 schools in the Central Highlands Wimmera Region offered workshops in generic skill areas as well as presenting opportunities for development in individual areas of talent.

Catholic sector

Across the Victorian Catholic education sector, CAP funds were used by 46 schools with a total of 5,288 students to maximise access to a broad-based curriculum supported by activities and experiences and allow whole-school communities to participate more fully in education. Cooperation between schools, especially in the area of professional development of teachers, is a feature of these programs. Innovative practices in the use of technology have been initiated in many schools to address their isolation. An indication of the types of initiatives and activities undertaken throughout Victoria is provided below.

Cooperative programs involving parents, teachers and communities included:

- introduction to computers and the Internet;
- Parents as Reading Tutors;
- Parenting for Achievement;
- school/business;
- collaborative policy development;
- family science; and
- science and technology camps.

Cooperative activities with other schools included:

- technology/computer inservice education programs;
- school cluster development and networking;
- key learning area network meetings;
- transition programs;
- cultural days – Italian, Japanese, Indonesian;
- curriculum material development; and
- sports events/carnivals.

Some of the innovative practices addressing distance barriers were:

- Internet access;
- satellite programs for students and staff;
- multimedia applications;
- e-mail networks;

- LOTE access through telematics links with Distance Education Centres; and
- programs addressing disadvantage through restricted access to social, cultural and educational activities:
 - excursions to regional and city cultural activities and schools;
 - Author/Illustrator/Artist in Residence; and
 - live music performances.

Professional development activities included:

- cluster technology inservice training programs – Internet, e-mail;
- LOTE for parents/teachers;
- parent sessions on specific learning programs;
- Computers Across the Primary Curriculum; and
- team management systems.

In 1996, considerable emphasis was placed on joint professional development activities between the Catholic and government school systems, particularly in the key learning areas of technology and LOTE.

Independent schools

The proportion of schools reporting enrolments from geographically isolated students was 18 per cent. Some of these schools had boarding facilities while others were rural schools. The majority were primary schools.

A significant problem for these students was the amount of time spent travelling to and from school. The cost of travel and time spent was perceived to have a detrimental impact on students' performance. Remoteness made access to public transport and public facilities such as libraries, leisure activities, creative arts and sports difficult. In addition, curriculum options such as vocational education and training, broad subject choice and teacher professional development opportunities were limited.

Schools reported that, in order to overcome these problems, they offered casual boarding to enable students to participate in activities outside school hours, opened the school library and computing facilities after school hours, ran weekend language classes for students and the wider community, ran excursions and planned visits from experts and performers to the school. For teachers, Internet access and membership of professional networks were strategies that resulted in increased access to resources.

Parent and community involvement in school encompassed provision of volunteer assistance with school activities, access to school facilities out of school hours and formal and informal opportunities for discussion and information sharing.

It was recognised universally that geographically isolated students bring a different and positive influence to the schools that they attend.

Significant curriculum initiatives

Government sector

Each fortnight, STEPS was broadcast via SOFNet to schools for students in Prep, years 1–2, 3–4 and 5–6 and their teachers. The broadcasts were accompanied by classroom support materials, linked to the CSF to assist teachers in the planning of their science and technology curriculum.

Science and Technology Centres formed a network of interrelated centres of excellence in science and technology education, providing resources for the development of science and technology education and the application of learning technologies across the curriculum. The centres are located in Bendigo, Geelong, Glen Waverley, Northcote, Shepparton and Casey.

Catholic sector

Mathematics

A large number of schools targeted mathematics as part of their development plan and a variety of professional development programs were designed to assist the implementation process.

Through funding from the NPDP, the CEO, Melbourne, and the Mathematics Teaching and Learning Centre at the Australian Catholic University, collaborated to produce a program titled Modelling Teaching and Learning. The predominant focus group of the program is teachers of the transition years 5 to 8 and its aims are to assist them in the examination of their own classroom practice and to consider alternative approaches to the teaching of mathematics. Several schools also took part in another NPDP project, Maths in Schools, in conjunction with the Mathematics Association of Victoria.

Students at Alphington Primary School participate in a science project.

With many schools adopting integrated learning approaches to curriculum implementation, the integration of mathematics across a range of key learning areas is emerging as a difficult area. Assessment is a concomitant problem.

Early numeracy education was identified as an important focus area and, in particular, number learning. Number, although only one of the five strands in the Victorian primary mathematics curriculum, underpins the other substrands and must be fully understood as it has important implications for learning in the other strands. A more extensive professional development program is being developed to support early numeracy learning.

Science

Primary and secondary schools continued to audit the science curriculum and implement the CSF. The importance of science has been recognised through it being included in the LAP: a program of Statewide assessment for students in years 3 and 5 undertaken in both government and Catholic schools and most independent schools.

Professional development programs for teachers were designed to assist the implementation of the Science CSF, consider the language and literacy demands of the CSF and

investigate approaches and key resources for the teaching of science in the primary classroom.

A publication, *Extending Literacy Through Science and Technology*, was developed and provides a compendium of resources for primary schools.

Technology

The Catholic education sector in Victoria is committed to technology and its use in the classroom.

A major initiative commenced and which will be further developed over the next three years is LaTTiCE (Learning and Teaching Technologies in Catholic Education). LaTTiCE is being designed to specifically integrate technology and the curriculum through the promotion of classroom-based use of computers in all Catholic schools.

KIDMAP, a joint CECV and Department of Education initiative introduced in schools in 1995, has undergone two upgrades in 1996, reflecting input from teachers using the program. KIDMAP has been welcomed by teachers and schools as it provides an understanding of how every student is performing in all key learning areas and, as well, assists teachers to enhance their curriculum and to plan for the future. This initiative is in place in all primary schools and is now being embraced by secondary schools.

Another project, Curriculum Use for the Internet, commenced in October 1996.

Work was ongoing to incorporate the broad areas of content, namely, materials, information and systems across all key learning areas of the curriculum. This was complemented by several professional development projects which were organised to facilitate teacher learning about the technology process and its integration into existing curriculum areas.

The rapidly expanding VET in Schools programs, as well as gender inclusive programs, are emerging as areas that will have a significant need for technology education.

Independent sector

Numeracy

Most schools sought to improve the participation and achievement of both boys and girls across all year levels. They also sought to improve the participation and achievement of students from special student groups. Schools sought to make numeracy interesting, attractive and integrated into real life situations. A variety of strategies was employed to this end, including use of

computers in the classroom (appropriate mathematics tutorial packages), ongoing inservice training sessions, team teaching (especially during the middle years of schooling), use of student portfolios to encourage higher level thinking, and an emphasis on hands-on or activity-based mathematics.

A number of schools were engaged in a review and audit of their current mathematics curriculum. Some provided tutoring for students from special student groups, while others employed external educational consultants to assist with developing programs and assessment strategies. Lessons for students from non-English speaking backgrounds were sometimes presented in the home language (for schools where the majority of the population is from an Arabic or Greek background). Several schools had begun to integrate problem solving across the curriculum.

At the primary school level, the time devoted to numeracy ranged from 1.5 to 8 hours per week. Longer periods of time were provided at single-sex, girls-only schools which focused on encouraging girls to develop numeracy skills from the beginning of their formal schooling.

Most respondents with secondary level students indicated that substantially all of their students took mathematical subjects during years 11 and 12.

Slightly more than two-thirds of the schools surveyed used the national statements and profiles in framing their school's curriculum and assessment strategies for numeracy. A number of respondents indicated that they used the Victorian CSF in addition to or instead of the national guidelines. Some schools also used Christian Community Schools materials.

Mathematics subject association seminars and conferences were the most frequently nominated type of professional development activities. Other sessions focused on the CSF and national framework, teaching mathematics in the context of ESL, the use of technology (for example, computers) to teach mathematics and graphical calculators. Professional development was more successful when it provided materials which could be shared among peers or when inservice sessions involved all teachers from a school.

Science

Respondents exhibited a clear preference for hands-on practically oriented science, which included robotics courses for middle school, fieldwork, excursions, obtaining

use of a nearby science laboratory, use of computers to process data, enhancement of science-related vocational courses (for example, year 10 agriculture and horticulture) and access to science-related matters via the Internet, and a whole-school science day, allowing the students to choose based on their own interests rather than require everyone to take the same units.

The First Steps program and visiting experts were initiatives employed to improve science learning outcomes. Several schools combined literacy and science in a focus on the language of science. One respondent used a senior school science teacher to present professional development for primary level teachers.

Slightly more than half of the respondents indicated that the national statements and profiles in conjunction with the Victorian CSF were used in framing their school's curriculum and assessment strategies. In particular, the CSF strands were used for reporting learning outcomes, as were the Christian Community Schools materials.

Parental involvement was sought through homework, participation in a science day, representation on a program evaluation panel, open days, family science nights, astronomy nights and supervision of fieldwork. Experts from the community often served as guest speakers and local businesses provided work experience placements.

Languages other than English

Government sector

The Government is committed to improving the teaching and learning of LOTE. The LOTE Strategy Plan provides the framework for the staged implementation of language study for all students from Prep to year 10, and for at least 25 per cent of years 11 and 12 students, by the year 2000.

Achievement of these targets is well under way. In 1996, 97 per cent of primary schools were providing a LOTE program, with 72 per cent student participation, comprising 80 per cent of year 4 students, 96 per cent of year 5 students and 93 per cent of year 6 students.

In 1996, for the first time, a LOTE program was offered by all 316 government secondary schools, with 53 per cent of students participating. Ninety-nine per cent of year 7 students were learning a language and the study of LOTE in years 7 and 8 was compulsory in 97 and 91 per cent respectively of secondary colleges. The percentages of

students studying a LOTE at Victorian Certificate of Education level rose to 8.2 per cent for year 11 and 6.2 per cent for year 12.

In 1996, the PALS and SALS Project enabled approximately 108,000 students in over 1,000 Victorian government and non-government schools to learn a LOTE entirely via broadcast programs or to enrich and extend their school-based LOTE programs.

The LOTE training and retraining program, provided by Victorian universities, enables current and potential LOTE teachers to upgrade their language skills and their LOTE teaching qualifications in credit bearing courses. Approximately 470 teachers undertook one of 30 language and two LOTE methodology courses. In addition, other teachers attended courses in China, Indonesia, Japan, Italy, France and Germany.

A range of LOTE curriculum and materials, including LOTE Course Advice, is being developed to support schools. Levels 1–3 Course Advice have been distributed to schools.

In 1996, grants to primary schools for LOTE projects and resources totalled \$4.5 million as well as the provision of 225 EFT (Equivalent Full-time) teachers. In secondary schools, 258.6 EFT teacher positions were made available.

The Victorian School of Languages provides programs in 40 languages in 30 centres to over 13,000 students. It also provides LOTE courses to approximately 1,000 adult students on a fee-for-service basis and distance education courses in seven languages to over 1,000 secondary students. In addition, 220 after hours ethnic schools, providing over 50 languages, were funded to the level of \$80 per student for approximately 28,000 students. Funding of \$240,000 was also made available for materials development grants and Statewide professional development activities for ethnic school teachers.

Catholic sector

In 1996, language-specific regional networks were established in the metropolitan area to enable LOTE teachers employed in Catholic schools to address language-specific issues and share ideas and resources. In addition, links were maintained with language and community associations, teacher training institutions, the Department of Education and other providers.

Throughout the year, intersystemic cooperation took place in a number of CSF-specific projects, including the NPDP-sponsored Language Train-the-Trainer Project, designed to

Table 85. LOTE programs, Catholic schools, Victoria, 1996

<i>Language</i>	<i>Primary</i>	<i>Secondary</i>
Arabic	7	—
Chinese (Cantonese)	2	—
Chinese (Mandarin)	11	8
Croatian	1	—
French	13	47
German	4	8
Greek (modern)	—	1
Greek (ancient)	—	1
Indonesian	41	31
Italian	236	77
Japanese	58	39
Korean	1	1
Latin	—	1
Maltese	1	—
Spanish	5	2
Tagalog	2	—
Vietnamese	8	1
Total	390	217

Source: Annual Report 1996, Catholic Education Commission of Victoria

support teachers in becoming familiar with aspects of the LOTE CSF and the issues relating to its adaptation to specific languages. The Diocese of Sale also assisted some schools to access LOTE through Telematics links with the Tasmanian School of Distance Education.

Table 85 provides an overview of LOTE programs in Victorian Catholic schools for 1996.

In addition to the language provision detailed in Table 85, outside providers offered language learning opportunities to students in Catholic schools. In 1996, 50 languages were studied through the Victorian School of Languages, the Distance Education Centre, or ethnic schools.

Independent sector

Languages offered in the independent sector in 1996 included Aboriginal languages, Arabic, Auslan, Chinese, Dutch, French, German, modern Greek, Hebrew, Indonesian, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Latin, Russian, Sanskrit, Spanish, Turkish and Yiddish.

The proportion of independent schools offering a LOTE was 81 per cent, with 36 per cent offering three or more.

French and German are the most widely taught languages, while the teaching of Asian languages is increasing. Of the 150 schools offering a LOTE in 1996, 38 offered Chinese, 43 offered Indonesian, 51 offered Japanese and two offered Korean.

In 1996, 79 per cent of secondary students and 70 per cent of primary students studied a LOTE. In most schools, the study of a LOTE was mandatory in the first two years of secondary school. NALSAS and PLSE funds were used to support:

- professional development for teachers, including in-country study and language upgrading courses;
- seminars on LOTE methodology and curriculum;
- development of curriculum materials; and
- grants to schools for programs and curriculum development.

National Asian Languages and Studies in Australian Schools

Catholic sector

The CECV embraces the NALSAS initiative of the Commonwealth Government, which has the positive aspects of raising cultural awareness in all schools and giving the students and more isolated country areas a broader, international outlook. This program is also about relationships which are at the heart of the Christian message Catholic schools seek to impart to their students.

The objectives for the introduction to the studies of Asia in Catholic schools are being delivered through School Development Grants, the Professional Development Program and through the In-Country Program. In 1996, funds were expended in the following areas:

- developmental grants to assist schools to incorporate appropriate aspects of studies of Asia across the curriculum and to promote the study of Japanese, Chinese, Korean and Indonesian;
- the promotion of networks of teachers of these Asian languages;
- assisting teachers who wish to pursue short periods of study in an Asian country;

Table 86. National Asian Languages and Studies in Australian Schools, Catholic schools

<i>Priority Asian language</i>	<i>Years 3–6</i>		<i>Years 7–10</i>		<i>Year 12</i>	
	<i>1995</i>	<i>1996</i>	<i>1995</i>	<i>1996</i>	<i>1995</i>	<i>1996</i>
Chinese	696	1,257	1,037	1,492	12	7
Indonesian	2,318	2,875	5,226	7,228	38	74
Japanese	4,678	6,201	8,226	10,831	63	161
Korean	92	166	128	136	—	—
Total	7,784	10,499	14,617	19,687	113	242
<i>Source:</i>	Catholic Education Office, Victoria					

- securing maximum assistance for schools from government funded bodies, such as the Asia Education Foundation, through its Access Asia (formerly Magnet Schools) Project and its cultural study tours of the countries of Asia;
- encouraging teachers to pursue studies about the countries of Asia and the priority Asian languages by covering course costs, both for intensive courses run by tertiary institutions in January–February 1996 and for continuing tertiary study in languages, LOTE methodology and studies of Asia;
- offering various forms of inservice activities to assist teachers to develop the knowledge and skills required to impart appropriate knowledge to students about the studies of Asia and the priority Asian languages;
- offering to schools the services of specialist personnel and teachers in residence to assist schools to develop curriculum approaches and materials involving studies of Asia, and to assist schools to introduce an Asian language; and
- other innovative projects which will benefit students in Catholic schools.

Progress to date is encouraging and Table 86 provides actual enrolment comparative data for the 1995 and 1996 school years.

When compared with the total student enrolments, there was a seven per cent increase for years 3–10 and a 0.7 per cent increase in year 12. Evaluation to date indicated that the national target, that 60 per cent of students in years 3–10 will be learning one of the four targeted languages by the year 2006, is already almost halfway to being met. The year 12 target of 15 per cent for the same timespan was slightly behind, due to a decrease in enrolments. However, it is to be noted that as the present primary and junior secondary cohort progresses through the year levels, the Commonwealth targets should be reached, provided the retention rate in the languages is maintained. Revised targets are currently being set and will be closely monitored.

The success to date is largely attributed to the professional development available for teachers. Over 750 teachers and principals participated in professional development activities for 1996 that were organised by the CECV. In addition, the CECV encouraged educators in the Catholic sector to participate in a range of professional development offered by other educational institutions and providers, particularly the In-Country Program.

In-country study tours

A total of 55 participants were supported through the 1996 In-Country Program to either participate in a study tour or further develop language expertise in one of the four priority Asian languages.

Developmental grants

A total of 100 schools were supported for specific developmental projects for studies of Asia of which 51 were primary schools and 49 were secondary schools.