

VICTORIA

Introduction

Victoria's three 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.

Government sector

Mission

The mission of the Department of Education is to give Victorians the opportunity to benefit from high-quality education and training.

Priority tasks for 1997

Strengthen focus on quality student outcomes by:

- full implementation of the Curriculum and Standards Framework (CSF);
- enhanced priority for early literacy and numeracy; and
- improvement of monitoring and benchmarking of student performance outcomes.

Strengthen school-level authority, responsibility and accountability by:

- implementing full staffing flexibility for schools;
- supporting principals in the management of staff;
- implementation of School Global Budgets for 1998;
- reporting to parents against curriculum standards in the Learning Assessment Project (LAP); and
- promotion of quality assurance at all levels of school operation.

Enhance the professional status of school staff by:

- developing the Professional Recognition Program as an element of school performance management; and

- introducing 'best practice' management strategies and procedures, changing approaches to leadership and increasing the profile of women in management roles within schools.

Strengthen quality assurance at the school level by:

- establishing principal performance management as a component of school improvement; and
- testing a range of quality assurance approaches in a sample of schools.

Give priority to curriculum initiatives including:

- Turning the Tide (drug education);
- Victorian Youth Development Program (fostering leadership and community service); and
- Keys to Life (literacy).

Develop and implement more effective approaches to enhance student learning by:

- reviewing models of 'alternative settings' for students experiencing difficulties in mainstream schools, and develop and implement approaches to improve their effectiveness; and
- cooperation with external agencies to improve student welfare services.

Improve teaching and learning by:

- improving the availability and application of learning technologies in Victorian classrooms; and
- encouraging diverse and flexible school-based responses to student learning needs.

Strengthen the capital assets of schools by:

- reviewing priorities for capital works funding; and
- improving the information system for school assets and needs, School Asset Management System (SAMS), as a basis for informed decisions for capital works planning.

Catholic sector

Mission

The mission of the Catholic school sector is to nurture in young people a strong awareness of God's love. Catholic education aims to provide the best quality education for each student to fulfil his or her potential, and invites them to make a difference to the world in which they live.

Objectives

Priority objectives for the Catholic sector in 1997 were to:

- continue to provide professional development opportunities to teachers in the areas of religious education and faith development, leadership, curriculum and teaching, information technology, special education, Asian languages and studies, pastoral care and Indigenous perspectives;
- promote the uptake of vocational education and training (VET) programs in schools, with particular attention being focussed on country schools;
- actively participate in Victorian benchmarking projects, the LAP for students in years 3 and 5, and the Victorian Student Achievement Monitor (VSAM) trials for students in years 7 and 9;
- develop and launch Home Pages on the Internet for both the Catholic Education Commission of Victoria (CECV) and the Catholic Education Office, Melbourne;
- establish a three-year technology strategy plan;
- implement changes to Commonwealth educational policies and programs and refine and further develop initiatives in the areas of vocational/post-compulsory schooling, literacy/numeracy, Asian languages and career education;
- continue to provide high-level support, advice and professional development to primary and secondary schools in the many areas of pastoral care and student welfare, including;
 - mandatory reporting of child abuse;
 - personal safety;
 - team building and stress management for teachers;
 - drug education;
 - suicide prevention; and
 - grief and loss programs;

- streamline the provision of student support services to schools; and
- further develop and refine organisational and operational arrangements to ensure optimum quality service delivery to schools.

Capital grants

Government sector

Capital expenditure

In 1997, the Commonwealth provided \$49.526m towards capital projects in Victoria.

Of the 204 capital projects funded by the Commonwealth and completed both physically and financially during 1997, the most common types of work undertaken and facilities provided were the refurbishment and upkeep of existing classrooms, the upgrade of existing classrooms, the provision of facilities for the disabled and the improvement of student amenities including toilets.

Catholic sector

Capital expenditure

In 1997, the Commonwealth provided \$18.07m towards capital projects in the Victorian Catholic sector.

Of the 18 projects funded by the Commonwealth and completed both physically and financially during 1997, the most common types of work undertaken and facilities provided were the construction of general learning areas and student amenities in primary schools; the construction or upgrading of specialist areas, e.g. art, science, computers, music, drama, home economics and textiles in secondary schools; and the construction or upgrading of staff and administration areas in both primary and secondary schools.

Independent sector

Capital expenditure

In 1997, the Commonwealth provided a total of \$5.589m to assist capital projects in Victorian independent schools.

During 1997, 28 capital projects funded by the Commonwealth were completed both physically and financially. The projects covered a range of works and facilities including the construction of specialist facilities (science laboratories and art and technology classrooms in secondary schools), construction of general learning areas in primary schools and the upgrading of administration facilities in both primary and secondary schools.

General Recurrent Grants

Non-government sector

In 1997, the Commonwealth contributed \$404.5m of recurrent funding to Catholic schools and \$107.2m of recurrent funding to independent schools.

Particular initiatives undertaken in 1997

Government sector

Keys to Life Early Literacy program

The Keys to Life Early Literacy program is based on the recognition that children should succeed in literacy and be numerate by the end of their third year of schooling. It draws on good practice in Victoria, interstate and overseas as well the expertise of literacy consultants and tertiary educators.

Stage one of the Keys to Life Early Literacy program – *Teaching Readers in the Early Years* was distributed to all Victorian government primary schools in July 1997. It has been accompanied by a Statewide training strategy. Stage two – *Teaching Writers in the Early Years* will be distributed to schools in July 1998 and Stage 3 – *Teaching Speakers and Listeners in the Early Years* will be distributed in February 1999.

Keys to Life Early Mathematics program

The Keys to Life Early Mathematics program, currently under development, reflects a strategic and comprehensive approach to numeracy achievement for students in the early years of schooling. The stages will be developed to reflect Levels 1–3 (P–4) of the mathematics CSF. The essential elements of this program are a structured classroom program, additional assistance, parent participation and professional development for teachers.

Catholic sector

Literacy Advance strategy

Literacy Advance is a systematic approach to improving literacy, founded on five key elements agreed by the Commonwealth and State Ministers of Education in 1997. It is designed to give schools maximum flexibility and choice while focussing on literacy development in the early years of schooling. Particular groups identified as disadvantaged or at risk of low levels of literacy attainment will be targeted through this strategy.

Education of boys

An action research project to investigate the relationship between gender and literacy was implemented in a number of primary schools. The wide range of aspects examined included:

- children's perception of their parents as readers;
- the gendered nature of topics chosen by students to discuss at 'news time'; and
- representations of subjectivity in students' story writing.

1997 focus areas

School-industry links

Government sector

Schools of the Third Millennium

Three working groups have been established as part of the Schools of the Third Millennium project. A member of the Minister's Business Advisory Committee on Education chairs each group. The three groups are working independently to look at ways in which the State education system can be improved. The groups are:

- Innovative Use of Multimedia—examining the widespread application of multimedia to teaching and learning;
- Autonomous Schools—examining the devolution of responsibility, authority and accountability to the school level; and
- Quality Management Processes—establishing the means to strengthen a school's capacity to manage change effectively within a culture of continuous improvement.

VET in schools

Vocational education and training (VET) in schools programs in Victoria supported activities in schools across all three sectors.

The *Joint Ministerial Statement: Vocational Education and Training in Schools*, which was released in August 1996, outlined the Government's commitment to:

- provide vocational education in schools;
- expand the level of provision of school programs;
- strengthen partnerships with industry and other VET providers;
- reinforce the importance of workplace learning;

- establish a range of quality assurance measures to ensure that programs meet the needs of industry; and
- provide financial support for VET in schools programs totalling \$10m over four years.

In addition, funding to support VET in schools has been provided by the Australian National Training Authority (ANTA).

During 1997, schools were able to purchase specialist expertise and equipment from VET providers. Other activities supported by VET in schools programs included:

- expansion of the number of secondary teachers receiving professional development and training to assist in the development and delivery of VET in schools programs;
- development of comprehensive regional plans; and
- the introduction of a comprehensive school registration and quality assurance system.

VET programs developed by the Board of Studies provide students with a range of pathways into further education and training. They involve students in accredited courses, usually at Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) Level 2, which articulate into higher level VET courses and which often contain a component undertaken in the workplace. Future programs will be based on the training packages, as they become progressively available.

The number of industry programs available increased from 17 in 1996 to 23 during 1997 with the addition of Business Skills (Organisational Practices), General Construction, Horse Studies, Clothing Design and Production, Laboratory Skills and an enterprise specific course—Retail Operations (McDonalds).

There was also a significant increase in the demand for vocational programs. Student enrolments increased from 3,600 in 1996 to 8,200 at the start of 1997, and the number of schools providing programs increased from 113 in 1996 to 326 in 1997. The number of schools offering programs and the number of students are expected to again grow in 1998. A feature of this expansion is the number of students participating in structured work placements in industry; 1997 research undertaken by the Department of Education indicates that approximately 5,000 of the 8,200 students have been involved in a work placement.

Catholic sector

The main form of vocational education and training provision has been through the Vocational Education and

Training in Schools program, which enables students to combine vocational studies with the Victorian Certificate of Education. Student enrolments expanded from 801 in 1996 to 2,200 in 1997 across a broad range of industry areas, involving some 66 secondary schools.

A full-time officer was appointed in the latter half of 1997 to assist some 16 country schools that were experiencing difficulty in providing VET in schools programs, plan provision of VET for 1998.

Two particular initiatives linking directly with industry are:

- The VETASLOTE project, which was designed to explore ways of linking the study of Asian languages to traineeships in hospitality, retail, small business and office administration. This project resulted in 35 student work placements in Asian-speaking work environments; and
- The VETLIT project which was established to develop links between workplace literacy and the year 10 curriculum. This project involved a number of modified curriculum and work placements. It is expected that this program will be expanded next year to include students at risk or with disabilities.

Independent sector

Schools with students in post-compulsory years reported little activity in this area beyond a nearly universal week or two of work experience for students in post-compulsory years. This was attributed to little demand for such programs and a focus on pathways to higher education.

Schools which offered VET in schools programs reported very low student participation. Overall, five per cent of students in years 11 and 12 participated. Dual recognition courses offered by schools included hospitality, engineering, childcare and retail. Some schools indicated their intention to develop this area further. Special schools reported actively pursuing links with employers, work placement and transition to work programs.

Indigenous students

Government sector

Achievements of the Department in the area of Koorie education during 1997 included:

- in February Minister Gude launched *Koorie 2000*, a policy framework which strengthens and formalises the involvement of Koorie people in educational decision-making and builds further on the joint partnership between the Victorian Aboriginal Education Association

Incorporated (VAEAI) and the Department of Education in Victoria;

- Regional Koorie Education Committees—comprising both Department and Koorie community representation—were established with a responsibility for decision-making and allocation of resources relating to Indigenous education;
- the Koorie Education Development Unit provided policy advice, curriculum and professional development to a range of user groups, including Indigenous and non-Indigenous Departmental employees. A number of presentations were delivered at conferences, seminars and in-service training sessions;
- VAEAI continued to provide the Department with advice through its committee of management comprising Local Aboriginal Education Consultative Groups and Specialist Representatives;
- sixteen Koorie education development officers worked with regional clusters of schools to support the education of Indigenous students;
- two units of work focussing on Indigenous issues were released to schools in the studies of society and environment key learning area;
- Koorie perspectives were incorporated into the Victorian Course Advice to support the Victorian CSF;
- Koorie Open Door Education (KODE) campuses provided culturally appropriate education for Indigenous students. After the success of the two existing campuses—one in Glenroy in metropolitan Melbourne with 86 students in 1997 and another in the Latrobe Valley in Gippsland with 77.8 students in 1997—a third campus in Mildura was announced during 1997 to commence operation at the beginning of term one 1998 with over 120 students;
- fifty-six full-time equivalent (FTE) Koorie educators were located in schools with high numbers of Koorie students. These educators provided support for classroom teachers in areas of community and parental involvement, Koorie culture and support for Koorie children in the classroom;
- a pilot professional development course for Koorie educators was delivered by Ballarat University. This course focussed on features of the school education sector and practical strategies for working with teachers, Koorie students and the community; and
- four Koorie teachers graduated from the Koorie Intern Teacher Program at Deakin University which trains Koorie people as teachers. In total, 32 teachers will have completed this program at its conclusion.

Catholic sector

A new structural arrangement was put in place to enable Indigenous education officers to have closer links with Indigenous students in Catholic schools. This included the creation of four working parties to:

- develop and implement workplans;
- monitor implementation and evaluation processes;
- collect data; and
- provide support to Koorie educators.

Professional development of non-Indigenous teachers was conducted concerning the incorporation of Aboriginal perspectives across the curriculum. These programs provided opportunities for teachers to make links with Indigenous communities.

All schools with Indigenous school enrolments completed the Indigenous Education Strategic Initiatives Program (IESIP) survey to collect baseline data to enable targets to be set for the 1997–1999 triennium.

Independent sector

There were not sufficient numbers of Indigenous students at the independent schools sampled to provide a useful description of Indigenous education in this sector.

Languages other than English (LOTE)

Government sector

The implementation of the *LOTE Strategy Plan*, which aims to have all students in years P–10, and 25 per cent of students in years 11–12 learning a language by the year 2000, is well on track, particularly for years P–10. The number of primary students learning languages increased from 219,433 to 254,901 students or 84.4 per cent of all primary students in 1997, while the number of secondary students learning languages increased from 111,480 to 115,429 students or 53.4 per cent of all secondary students.

LOTE resources were provided to all primary schools and secondary colleges through the school global budget, to assist them to implement LOTE programs and employ LOTE teachers. LOTE resources to primary schools were increased to a minimum of \$50 per student and LOTE allocations to secondary colleges were maintained at the 1996 level.

The Primary and Secondary Access to Languages via Satellite (PALS and SALS) project enabled approximately 95,000 students in nearly 800 schools in Victoria to learn a LOTE

either entirely through PALS and SALS, or to use the broadcasts and support materials to enrich and extend their existing LOTE programs.

The average curriculum time provided for LOTE in mainstream primary schools and secondary colleges in 1997 was 2.4 hours per week and at the Victorian School of Languages, three hours per week.

In order to address the continuing shortage of appropriately qualified LOTE teachers, a range of credit-bearing LOTE training and retraining courses were provided. A total of 32 language courses, in six different languages, were provided for 465 teachers. Approximately 115 of these teachers were offered the opportunity to complete a component of their courses through in-country study. Five LOTE methodology courses were also conducted, with a total of 72 teachers participating. This program will continue in 1998. In addition, a range of professional development activities was provided and a train-the-trainer LOTE professional development kit, *LOTE in Practice*, was developed and forwarded to universities for consideration for accreditation.

LOTE Course Advice was developed and published in a range of languages and *LOTE Assessment and Reporting Support Materials* as well as a *LOTE Course Advice Professional Development Kit* were produced.

The inaugural LOTE Teacher of the Year Awards was successfully conducted with 'teachers of the year' identified for eight key languages and sponsorship for overseas study tours secured. These awards will be extended to include a school category in 1998.

The *LOTE Companion*, a publication that provides information and advice to teachers and schools to assist in implementing LOTE programs and promote them in their school and the wider community, was prepared. It is planned to strengthen the LOTE promotional campaign through paid television commercials targeting students, parents and the wider community.

A VET in Schools and LOTE project, a LOTE Review Project and a LOTE and Literacy in the Early Years of Schooling Project will be undertaken in 1998.

Catholic sector

Highlights

The provision of LOTE in Catholic primary and secondary schools continued to increase in 1997. In all, 86.1 per cent of primary schools are offering LOTE programs and all secondary schools are offering at least one LOTE program.

In excess of 127,500 students are studying at least one LOTE at school.

In addition to learning LOTE at school, access is available to students through external provision via satellite transmissions, ethnic schools, the Distance Education Centre, and the Victorian School of Languages.

Emerging issues

Schools' adjustment to the changed status of LOTE as a key learning area

The challenge for schools is to develop structures and strategies that ensure that students, teachers and the school community regard LOTE as an important component of the school curriculum.

Continuity of LOTE learning from primary to secondary schools

Joint planning between primary and secondary schools in local areas is critical if continuity of LOTE learning and increased long-term language learning outcomes for students are to be achieved.

Gender and LOTE

Boys continue to be under-represented as students of LOTE in post-compulsory LOTE programs.

LOTE retention beyond compulsory years of schooling

The number of students studying LOTE beyond the compulsory years of schooling has remained constant over recent years. LOTE is not highly represented when students are asked to make subject choices. The complex set of variables influencing subject choice in the senior school years needs further investigation.

Assessment and reporting in LOTE primary classes

In the primary setting, an ongoing issue for teachers is the development of comprehensive assessment and reporting procedures within the constraints of limited time devoted to LOTE in the school timetable.

Technology and LOTE

The developments in the area of technology and LOTE have implications for resource availability in primary and secondary schools and teacher professional development and training.

Continuity of teachers in LOTE teaching positions

Data indicates that there is lack of continuity of teachers in LOTE teaching positions. Teachers report that the shift is

due to a lack of security in LOTE teaching positions; dissatisfaction with the perceived lower status of teachers of LOTE; a perception of reduced opportunities for career enhancement; and in the case of primary schools, the difficulties associated with working across a number of schools to maintain full-time employment.

Teacher supply and teacher proficiency

Although the CECV has supported teachers to undertake formal qualifications in LOTE, supply has not kept up with demand, particularly in languages that are relatively new to the curriculum of Catholic schools. Many teachers of the priority Asian languages are gaining qualifications in LOTE as they are teaching. Teacher language proficiency is important for the achievement of excellence and high standards in LOTE learning. In the current context this is only achievable in the long-term for the priority Asian languages.

Research projects are in the process of being developed to investigate ways to address and overcome these issues.

Teacher training

An objective of the CECV in 1997 was to increase the number of teachers in Catholic schools gaining qualifications in a priority language and LOTE methodology, and to provide teachers with the opportunity to build on their knowledge of languages and to consider options for further study.

Fully qualified teachers were also given the opportunity to participate in the Department of Education LOTE Training and Retraining Program.

Additional opportunities were offered to teachers to undertake in-country language studies.

Curriculum time

Details of the average time spent per week per language have been extracted for each year level, and are provided in Tables 1 and 2.

Developments

Thirty-five students participated in the VETASLOTE project, designed to explore ways of linking Asian LOTE to traineeships in hospitality, retail, small business and office administration. The languages selected in 1997 were Chinese, Indonesian, Japanese and Korean. This project involved student work placements in Asian-speaking work environments while their teachers adapted the LOTE curriculum to support the work placements.

Table 1. Catholic Schools Victoria Study of LOTE, February 1997, primary classes

<i>Year level</i>	<i>Average of duration (mins)</i>	<i>Average No. of lessons</i>	<i>Average lesson mins/week</i>
Prep	45.88	1.3	57.42
Year 1	46.79	1.2	57.02
Year 2	47.32	1.2	56.89
Year 3	49.24	1.2	56.99
Year 4	49.43	1.2	57.17
Year 5	49.93	1.1	57.02
Year 6	50.20	1.1	57.43
Total	48.43	1.2	57.19

Source: CECV

Table 2. Catholic Schools Victoria Study of LOTE, February 1997, secondary classes, average number of minutes per week

<i>Yr 7</i>	<i>Yr 8</i>	<i>Yr 9</i>	<i>Yr 10</i>	<i>Yr 11</i>	<i>Yr 12</i>	<i>Total</i>
130	135	151	161	208	213	160

Source: CECV

Independent sector

All primary schools surveyed reported teaching at least one LOTE. Japanese was the most popular, followed by French, Indonesian, German, Italian, Modern Greek, Arabic and Hebrew.

Some of these schools reported using community resources, including volunteer teachers (e.g. parents), visiting programs, sharing resources with other schools and satellite programs.

The Victorian CSF was used as a basis of LOTE curriculum in a small number of schools, others used it as a resource and guide, while national documents were a minor resource.

Availability of trained teachers and the place of LOTE in an already crowded timetable, were challenges to implementation of LOTE in these schools.

At secondary level, LOTE was compulsory to year 9, then optional. The most commonly reported languages included Indonesian, German, Japanese, French or Chinese. Other languages offered included Korean, Italian, Russian, Arabic, Hebrew, Turkish, and Modern Greek. At year 12, the proportion of students studying LOTE ranged from eight per cent to 14 per cent.

Secondary schools used links with other schools and institutions offering the same LOTE, cultural organisations as well as exchanges, visits and development of sister school arrangements to support LOTE programs.

Generally schools reported that the CSF was a major resource in the development of curriculum to year 10.

Technology

Government sector

Technology key learning area

All schools offer technology across the primary years. It may be integrated into other areas such as the arts or science.

In years Prep to 10 the CSF accompanied by the Course Advice provides a structure for schools to develop their own curriculum programs in this learning area.

Developments in the technology key learning area in Victoria in 1997 included:

- development and distribution to schools of Course Advice for:
 - Levels 5–7 (secondary years); and
 - Levels 1–2 (early primary years);
- the production of professional development kits and training of network leaders;
- publication of information for teachers on <http://www.sofweb.vic.edu.au/curric/ktech.htm>, the Victorian SOFWeb website; and
- the provision of interactive TV programs via satellite i.e., Science and Technology Education in Primary Schools (STEPS) was broadcast via the Schools of the Future Network (SOFNet) to schools each fortnight for students in years Prep, 1–2, 3–4 and 5–6 and their teachers. The broadcasts were accompanied by classroom support materials to assist teachers in the planning of their science and technology curriculum.

Learning technologies

In addition to encouraging outcomes-based learning in the technology key learning area through the implementation of the CSF, the Victorian Department of Education is committed to the widespread use of technology in all aspects of learning and school operation. This commitment stems from a belief that when appropriately applied in the classroom, technology can:

- lead to improved learning outcomes in all areas of learning;

- increase student engagement in learning;
- assist in addressing learning needs of individual students;
- improve communication and technology skills; and
- lead to an understanding of the importance of information and communication technologies in the future economy.

In order to achieve extensive uptake of learning technologies in a devolved government school system, the Department of Education has instituted a suite of interrelated initiatives. Principal among these are:

- Global Classroom Project (1995 – present) – Internet mediated, school-based collaborative projects across most areas of learning. Approximately 50 per cent of schools are currently involved in one or more activities (<http://www.sofweb.vic.edu.au/gc>);
- Navigator Schools Project (1995 – present) – Seven test-bed schools have undergone major re-engineering and improvement through use of technology, and provide intensive professional development for teachers and school leaders. A progress report will be available in April 1998;
- SOFWeb (1995 – present) – One of the world's leading educational websites providing resources and interactive services for students, teachers, administrators and the community (<http://www.sofweb.vic.edu.au>);
- Statewide Learning Technologies Teacher Professional Development Strategy (1997–2000) – Worth \$56m and covers every aspect of technology use in the classroom and for staff development. The target of 6,000 teachers per year is currently being exceeded;
- Learning Technologies Planning Guide (1996) – Assists schools to implement technology according to local needs (<http://www.sofweb.vic.edu.au/lt>);
- Major Hardware and Software Roll-out (1997 – present) – Provides central tendering for all technology goods and services, subsidies for priority items, Statewide upgrade of standard office technology environment, leading to rapid increase in number of computers (currently one computer for every seven students, target is 1:5) and networks in schools (<http://www.sofweb.vic.edu.au/lt>);
- Technology Supported Learning – Best Practice Dissemination (1997 – present) – Successful technology-related practice is incorporated into curriculum support materials, accessible on-line and on video. (<http://www.sofweb.vic.edu.au/lpol>);

- Ministerial Statement on Learning Technologies (Feb 1998) – Includes targets for schools 1998–2000 regarding the uptake of technology in the classroom;
- VicOne Statewide Network (first half 1998) – A wide area network connecting all schools via ISDN link to each other, to central information services and the Internet;
- Learning Technologies Teacher Capabilities Kit (Feb 1998) – Assists teachers and schools to identify and meet professional development needs (<http://www.sofweb.vic.edu.au/pd/tchcap/>); and
- Digital Resource Centre (second half 1998) – Provision to every school of high quality digital teaching and learning resources, including content.

Catholic sector

Through its representation and participation on the National Catholic Education Commission (NCEC) Information Technology Management Committee, the CECV was involved in a project to develop Home Pages for all State and Territory Commissions. The project was supported by the Department of Employment, Education, Training and Youth Affairs (DEETYA) through EdNA. The CECV Home Page was launched in September 1997, along with NCEC and all other State and Territory Commission Home Pages.

Liaison and cooperation in the area of technology has been strong with the Department of Education, and Catholic schools were able to avail themselves of TV programs such as STEPS, PALS and SALS through the Department of Education satellite broadcast system, SOFNet. The Diocese of Ballarat made use of SOFNet to broadcast the introductory session for teachers involved in the CECV Literacy Advance strategy.

The CECV facilitated the involvement of Victorian Catholic schools in the Telstra Learn IT project. There were two rounds of submissions in 1997, and one primary and several secondary schools received limited funding from Telstra to conduct innovative projects involving telecommunications.

The Learning and Teaching Technologies in Catholic Education (LaTTiCE) initiative, which commenced in 1996, was further developed in 1997. LaTTiCE was developed to

establish models of best practice in learning and teaching; to develop skills and confidence of teachers and parents as they help students in the use of information and communication technologies; and to share learnings and guide others in Catholic education so that benefits will be available to other teachers and schools.

Initially, six schools were invited to participate in the project, and the implementation phase saw:

- the establishment of a school learning technologies implementation plan;
- the arrangement of appropriate professional development; and
- the organisation of a technology plan and the purchase and installation of associated hardware and software.

Progress has been encouraging, and an evaluation after 12 months has put the CECV in a position to provide guidance and advice to schools in relation to the introduction of computers and other learning technologies into the classroom curriculum. Participating teachers have also gained sufficient skills and confidence to be able to lead seminars and workshops.

It is intended to create a 'LaTTiCE Mentors Network' in 1998 to further promote the classroom use of learning technologies. Schools invited to be involved in this Network will be required to be open to school visits by staff from other schools, provide on-site professional development for teachers and document activities for possible publication.

Independent sector

All primary schools taught a range of technology subjects including science, computing, technology, art and textiles.

Secondary schools reported the integration of technology into technology-related subjects such as drawing and design, ceramics, information technology, graphic design, textiles and material design studies. Some of these subjects were compulsory in the early years and optional thereafter. Schools reported no differential participation in these subjects by gender and educationally disadvantaged student groups.