

TASMANIA

Introduction

In Tasmania, the *Education Act 1994* legislates compulsory schooling for all children from the age of six to 16 years through attendance at a school appropriate to the child's needs or through registered home education. Schooling is provided through government, independent and Catholic (systemic and non-systemic) schools from kindergarten to year 12. Compulsory schooling starts at year 1.

Government schools

In 1997, the Department of Education, Cultural and Community Development (DECCD) administered 222 government schools providing education for 62,921 students from kindergarten to year 12. Of these, 41.8 per cent (26,315 students) received Student Assistance Support to cover the costs of school books and compulsory levies. As well, Early Special Education Services provided specialist educational intervention to 311 children between birth and age five years and their families.

Tasmania is characterised by a school system comprising a number of relatively small schools (averaging 251 students for primary schools and 522 students for secondary schools). Few schools are over 800 students, and these are mainly secondary colleges.

Catholic schools

In 1997, there were 7,321 primary, 4,431 secondary and 1,484 senior-secondary students in 37 Catholic schools. The types of school comprised 25 primary, five primary/secondary, two secondary, one primary/secondary/senior secondary, three secondary/senior secondary and one senior secondary.

Independent schools

In 1997, there were 3,487 primary, 3,326 secondary, and 1,187 senior secondary students in 30 independent schools

comprising nine primary, one secondary and 19 K-12 schools. One special school caters for students with autism.

Resourcing

Capital expenditure

Government schools

In 1997, the Commonwealth Government provided \$6.1 million towards capital projects in the government sector. Of the eight projects completed both physically and financially during 1997, the type of work undertaken and facilities provided were provision of new classrooms, upgrading and refurbishing library facilities, development of new multi-purpose areas and the relocation of one infant school.

Catholic schools

In 1997, the Commonwealth Government provided \$1,383,694 towards capital projects in the Catholic sector. Six school projects were assisted from 1997 funds, and three were completed physically and financially.

Of the three 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 construction to provide general learning areas, science laboratories and technical facilities and upgrading of home economics facilities and chemistry laboratories in secondary schools.

Independent schools

In 1997, the Commonwealth Government provided \$678,103 towards capital projects in the sector. Of the two completed both physically and financially during 1997, the type of work undertaken and facilities provided were the provision of new learning areas in the primary schools and the upgrading of administrative facilities.

Recurrent expenditure

Government schools

In the year 1996–97, the government spent a total of \$370.8m on education. Of this \$322.3m was spent directly on schools, with a further \$40.7m spent on support programs including special purpose equity programs, student support services, distance education and support for students with disabilities. During 1997, the Commonwealth contributed \$29.3m to the recurrent funding of Tasmania's government schools. Additional funding for targeted programs is shown in Table 1.

Catholic schools

In 1997, the Commonwealth contributed \$30.5m of recurrent funding to Catholic schools. Additional funding for Catholic sector targeted programs is shown in Table 2.

Table 1. Commonwealth funding for targeted programs, government schools, Tasmania

Program	\$
Community Languages	23,662
Country Areas	442,000
Disadvantaged Schools	2,741,619
Early Literacy	347,923
ESL (General)	341,458
ESL (New Arrivals)	192,840
Special Education	1,648,100
Students with Disabilities	274,920

Source: Department of Education, Cultural and Community Development

Table 2. Commonwealth funding for targeted programs, Catholic schools, Tasmania

	Commonwealth programs	Other
<i>Indigenous students</i>	\$356,695	
<i>NESB Students</i>		
a) ESL New Arrivals	\$51,750	
b) Literacy Program	\$87,830	
<i>Isolated Students</i>		
a) Country Areas	\$45,026	
b) Boarding Facility		\$29,396
<i>Educationally Disadvantaged</i>		
Literacy Program	\$314,361	
<i>Students with Disabilities</i>		
a) Special Education	\$390,438	\$9,000
b) SWD Component	\$48,347	

Source: Catholic Education Office, Tasmania

Table 3. Commonwealth funding for targeted programs, independent schools, Tasmania

Program	\$
Early Literacy/ESL/Disadvantaged	77,000
NALSAS	46,037
New Arrivals	7,480
ANTA (School to Work)	62,576
Priority Languages	25,590
Special Education	183,300
DEETYA (School to Work)	9,793

Source: Association of Independent Schools, Tasmania

Independent schools

In 1997, the Commonwealth contributed \$11.7m in recurrent funding for independent schools. Additional funding for independent schools' targeted programs is shown in Table 3.

Major initiatives

Government schools

Directions for education

The launch of *Directions for Education* in April 1997 was a major event that integrated educational directions with a range of strategic initiatives announced by the Government. Student learning outcomes will be the centre of all school based activities, and the focus of all reforms. These outcomes will be monitored and reported on effectively to provide a basis for continuing improvement.

The six "directions for education" are:

1. Learning outcomes will be measured, monitored and reported with schools being accountable for improving these outcomes.
2. Schools and their communities, in partnership with the Government, will determine the learning outcomes that schools will deliver, through formal agreements.
3. There will be more opportunities for local decision making and flexibility in school operations and more 'funds through the school gate'.
4. There will be improved school leadership through principal accreditation and performance based contracts.
5. School staff will be better equipped and empowered to do the job required of them, through improved professional development opportunities.

6. Schools will have access to modern information technology to facilitate teaching and learning processes as well as accountability and administrative arrangements.

Quality assurance processes

A new process of Assisted School Self Review (ASSR) was piloted in 28 schools. Schools undertook extensive data collection using information available at school and State level, as well as gathering information from parents, staff and students about their perceptions of the school's performance. This process was supported by District Superintendents and by summary data provided by the system against a range of indicators including human resources data, student performance data and areas such as participation and retention.

Schools used the information to develop a range of targets which became the basis for a three-year Partnership Agreement with the school community. The process was welcomed by those schools involved because of the framework that it provided for review and implementation of the findings. By the end of 1999, all schools will have undergone an ASSR.

In line with the Directions statement, all principals were offered the opportunity to negotiate a contract. Contracts contain performance indicators that will ultimately tie into the Partnership Agreements developed under ASSR. These processes will improve accountability measures in government schools.

Early childhood – Flying Start Program

The Flying Start Program provided 130.5 teachers over the staffing quota to provide additional support to students in years prep to 2 in the areas of literacy, numeracy and social skills. An extensive evaluation program began in 1997 to provide baseline data to assess outcomes.

Students will be assessed on Social Skills using the Rowe Behavior (sic) Rating Inventory (RBRI). This provides a

measure of those students who are 'at risk' because of inattentiveness, anti-social behaviour and restlessness. Reading will be assessed using the Woodcock Reading Mastery Test, a standardised test instrument providing age-equivalent scores. Numeracy will use an internal test, developed and trialled in Tasmania. Initial results for the RBRI and reading outcomes are reported in Tables 4 and 5.

These results have been obtained from students who have had minimal input from the program. Further testing in future years will provide an evaluation of the effectiveness of Flying Start.

Managing and Retaining Secondary Students in School

The Managing and Retaining Secondary Students in School (MARSSS) program provided 33 teachers over the staffing quota in secondary schools to provide additional support to secondary students whose behaviour is of serious concern, in an effort to retain these students at school. Programs targeted students in known educationally disadvantaged groups.

Positive outcomes at the end of 1997 included a lower rate of suspension, improved attendance and reported improved self-confidence and motivation for many students involved in the MARSSS program. For the future, schools are focussing on more proactive intervention in the early years of high school, and improved levels of literacy and numeracy in the target group.

Table 4. Rowe & Rowe Behaviour Rating Inventory
Total: percentages of students not of concern and potentially of concern by year and gender

	Year 1			Year 2		
	M	F	All	M	F	All
Not of concern	75.6	85.6	80.4	72.8	84.9	78.4
Potentially of concern	24.4	14.4	19.6	27.2	15.1	21.6

Source: Department of Education, Cultural and Community Development

Table 5. Woodcock Reading Mastery Tests: median reading age and age equivalents (years) by year and gender

	Year 1		Year 2	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Median Chronological Age (years)	7.33	7.33	8.33	8.33
Word Attack Median age equivalent (years)	7.25	7.41	7.92	8.25
Word Identification Median age equivalent (years)	7.25	7.58	8.17	8.50
Passage Comprehension Median age equivalent (years)	7.17	7.58	7.83	8.17

Source: Department of Education, Cultural and Community Development

Support for gifted students

Support for the education of students who are gifted was provided in the form of professional development, teacher assistance, the coordination of mentor programs and related activities. Some trialling of flexible class groups and early admission processes were undertaken in selected schools.

A Focus School Program provided four schools with \$10,000 per year for up to three years to support initiatives for students who are gifted. The funding was made in response to schools' initiatives on particular aspects of schooling.

Support for country students

Country students in particular are at risk of not continuing into post-compulsory years. An allocation of 4.3 positions was made to promote retention from year 10 to year 11. As part of the initiative, schools and colleges submitted small but highly focussed projects designed to improve retention rates, particularly those of country students.

Focus areas 1997

School industry links

Government schools

Vocational education and training (VET) in schools in Tasmania is emerging as a diverse set of responses to the education and training needs of senior secondary students and industry. The key elements developed or enhanced and expanded during 1997 include:

- accredited VET programs, with institution-based off-job delivery and unpaid vocational placement;
- accredited VET programs delivered within New Apprenticeship arrangements;
- employment placement activities such as Job Pathways Program or arrangements within the new Employment Services Market;
- expanding career and work education options in years 9 to 12 that support VET; and
- regional skill centre developments for integrating VET provision at a community level.

To develop, manage and support these current activities and new initiatives, in 1997 the DECCD adopted or broadened the implementation of a number of responses:

- The VET in Schools Committee has the oversight role for the development and implementation of the

collective VET in schools initiatives. This committee is chaired by the Chair of the Tasmanian State Training Authority (TASTA) and comprises the heads of agency for DECCD, the Department of Vocational Education and Training (DVET), the Tasmanian Secondary School Assessment Board (TASSAB), the Catholic Education Office (CEO) and the Association of Independent Schools of Tasmania (AIST).

- The VET in Schools Development Team comprised eight college-based officers, three regional school-based rural retention officers and three system officers. This team had the responsibility for key elements of the curriculum development, professional development and infrastructure development requirements of VET in schools implementation.
- Memoranda of Understanding with Industry Training Boards (ITBs) are being negotiated to assist in clarifying the views and intents of DECCD and the ITBs with respect to the development and implementation of VET in schools, such as agreed processes for transition from VET courses developed under the National Framework for the Recognition of Training (NFROT) arrangements to new National Training Packages.
- A cooperative resourcing strategy for financial and other support for the implementation of VET in schools was negotiated with schools and colleges for 1997. This agreement will be subject to regular review over the 1998 to 2000 period. The scope of this agreement covers DECCD, Australian National Training Authority (ANTA), Commonwealth Department of Employment, Education, Training and Youth Affairs (DEETYA) and Australian Student Traineeship Foundation (ASTF) allocations for the government school sector for the 1997 to 2000 period.

DECCD is currently developing a policy on VET in schools for years 9 to 12. This will consolidate the current mix of regulatory requirements and best practice agreements, in a form which will reflect the dynamic nature of this area.

Catholic schools

All secondary schools provided five days work experience for year 10 students supported by the TASSAB courses Preparation for Work and Work Studies. Two schools provided individual programs for students with special needs involving some work in the local community to complement their school learning program, and another school began developing its No Dole Program. Some year 11 and 12 students utilised work experience to test career

options. Schools utilised business and industry personnel to assist with career counselling and mock interviews.

Program Provision

Four of the five schools with senior secondary classes offered VET courses in 1997. Schools have management committees that include industry, business, TAFE and union representatives and which support the delivery of VET in schools, assist with course development, enhance school–industry links and assist with marketing.

A 1996–97 emphasis was professional development and research to allow for the expansion of VET courses into new industry areas and the possibility of entering into the provision of paid traineeships.

Accredited programs offered in cooperation with industry and TAFE were:

- Training in Retail and Commerce (TRaC) Hospitality Skills Stage 1 a, b
- TRaC Office Skills Stage 1
- Automotive Services Certificate 1 & 2
- Building Services
- Foundation Engineering Career Pathway Certificate 1&2
- Hospitality Operations Certificate 1&2
- Hospitality Services Certificate 1&2
- Office Skills Certificate 1&2

Curriculum support was provided by TRaC materials, national training packages and Tasmanian Certificate of Education (TCE) materials including VET syllabuses, Work Placement C, and relevant TCE subjects such as Applied English, Design in Metals, Design in Wood, Graphics, Industrial Science and Maths 721B.

Structured workplace learning was provided by a work placement for a total of six weeks configured as, for example one day per week, two week blocks for each student or some other configuration as appropriate.

Cross-system cooperation included planning, professional development, information sharing, exchange of learning resources, development of materials and coordination of work placements with DECCD and AIST.

Accreditation gained

Of the school leavers whose destinations are known 17 moved into course-related employment, six to TAFE and eight to apprenticeships or traineeships.

Table 6. VET accreditation – Catholic schools

<i>Course</i>	<i>Certificates</i>	<i>Statements of Attainment</i>
Cert 1 TRaC Hospitality (5319)	4	7
Cert 1 TRaC Office Skills (3917)	4	2
Cert 1 Automotive Services (4554)	7	–
Cert Building & Construction (Pre-employment)	4	5
Cert 1 TRaC Hospitality (5319)	7	2
Cert 1 Hospitality Operations (3490)	6	3
Cert 1 TRaC Office Skills (3917)	9	3

Source: Catholic Education Office

Future plans

Future intentions include consolidation of present courses, expansion of student numbers in VET courses and course extension with conversion of course content as training packages become available. The development of the Certificate of Work Education to enable lower ability students to gain work skills and experience in preparation for full VET courses is another priority for this area.

Independent schools

Work experience

At the beginning of 1997, no independent school in Tasmania was operating a school–industry linked curriculum. Each secondary school was involved in work experience at year 10 and many also at year 11/12 level. This included a required program at year 10 as preparation for experience in the work place for one week. The proportion of year 9 and 10 students involved in work experience programs ranged between 10 per cent and 100 per cent, whilst the number of year 11 and 12 students involved in school–work transition or vocational courses was reported as between five and 30 per cent.

In addition to work experience, year 11 and 12 schools reported that a variety of other vocationally oriented programs were in place including Enterprise-Team and Young Achievement Australia programs for year 11 students and familiarisation tours of local TAFE colleges. Some schools had special programs for the less academic students which were oriented to trades such as food, textiles and automotive.

School to Work Committee

The School to Work Committee developed strategies which were made possible through the DEETYA School to Work funding and the Australian National Training Authority

(ANTA) funding. The initial requirement was to raise the awareness of schools about the curriculum area. This was achieved through a series of seminars for senior staff and career teachers in addition to visits to individual schools by the School to Work program coordinator. On a number of occasions, a cross-sectoral approach was used involving the Catholic sector and DECCD. Industry personnel were involved in these activities with representatives from a variety of industries including hospitality, tourism, automotive and the metal industry.

The strategies developed by the Committee have seen one school and a cluster of three schools introducing a food industry curriculum – Hospitality – for the 1998 school year. These courses involve a total of 29 students and other schools are planning for the introduction of courses in 1999.

Links with TAFE

One school has established links with a local TAFE college, with the college delivering several modules of the school's year 11 and 12 catering course. The school reports that a private provider conducted an Introductory Hospitality Skills course for the school and that the school is looking to offer a Hospitality Operations Certificate for years 11 and 12 in 1998. The school is also investigating offering other vocational courses in the arts, construction and information technology industries in 1999 in cooperation with other local schools.

Another school has trailed using TAFE to deliver some technology modules as a forerunner to the school's delivery of vocational training courses in 1998.

Future challenges

The challenges identified by schools affecting the delivery of vocationally oriented programs included limited demand for some programs threatening their viability; difficulties freeing up school structures to allow for work placements; training of teachers; and resources limitations.

Indigenous students

Government schools

Major initiatives

Following extensive reviews of its operations, the Aboriginal Education Unit within DECCD has restructured to a decentralised model of local management with policy direction from a central office.

An intensive process of data collection and analysis generated a key report: *Indigenous Students in Tasmania*.

This will guide the development and re-direction of Aboriginal education through to the end of the century. The collection and management of accurate data has become a major role of the Aboriginal Education Unit.

The report has identified primary areas of concern as:

- Aboriginal students at risk in grades 2 and 3;
- Aboriginal student attendance grade 6–10;
- Aboriginal student retention through years 9–11; and
- a need for continued intensive research.

The restructuring of the unit and development of focussed locally-managed programs will lead to improved outcomes for Aboriginal students in these key areas.

Programs

The successful ABSTART project continued in 1997. This provides a mentoring and work program for Aboriginal students at risk of dropping out of school in years nine and ten. A program of cultural education continued as a series of 'birding' camps on Big Dog Island in the Furneaux Group (collecting mutton birds is a traditional activity of Tasmanian Aboriginal people) and as a live-in workshop for gifted Aboriginal young women in year 10. These programs also helped to retain Aboriginal 'at risk' students in DECCD schools and colleges.

A school-based literacy program began in 11 primary schools throughout Tasmania as the Aboriginal Student Development Program (ASDP). This addresses the low literacy levels of Aboriginal primary students, in response to problems identified in the 1996 State literacy monitoring program. Similar programs operate in the early childhood and junior secondary areas.

Aboriginal students in DECCD schools gained a significant asset with the publication of *Tasmanian Aboriginal Perspectives Across the Curriculum* and its distribution. Other projects included Stories from the Big River, a literacy/arts project involving students in the south of the State and a district-based professional development program in Launceston.

IESIP data

Of data reported as part of the Indigenous Education Strategic Initiatives Program (IESIP) agreement, most significant has been the discovery that in Tasmania, Aboriginal students enter the school system no more at risk than non-Aboriginal students, as identified by the Kindergarten Development Check administered in all DECCD schools. Participation rates of Aboriginal students in the pre-compulsory years is not significantly different

from the rate in the compulsory early childhood years, indicating that most Aboriginal students undergo the Kindergarten Check. Improved processes for tracking students identified in the check will allow improved intervention in later years.

Catholic schools

Indigenous students were considerably over-represented as low achievers in literacy and numeracy. Special teacher or aide assistance was provided for 76 students in literacy and 45 students in numeracy.

The number of teachers receiving cross-cultural training or professional development in Aboriginal studies almost trebled from 1996 to 27 per cent of primary and 17 per cent of secondary teachers.

In-school assessments indicate that approximately 30 per cent of Indigenous students are in the lowest achieving one-fifth of all students at completion of year 6 and year 10 in both literacy and numeracy.

Apparent retention rates and progression rates are comparable with non-Indigenous rates through to year 10 but fall markedly into years 11 and 12. The apparent rates have been inflated by a number of additional students identifying as Indigenous in recent years.

Two Indigenous teachers and 13 para-professionals were employed in 1997. Of these one teacher and nine para-professionals participated in at least three days of professional development or training.

Sixty-three Indigenous parents were involved in educational decision making through Aboriginal Student Support and Parental Awareness (ASSPA) committees in 17 schools. In addition, two were members of boards of management, one as chairman, and 12 more were active in Parents and Friends Association.

Five part-time resource teachers and one full-time Liaison/Cultural Officer encouraged teachers to expand Aboriginal studies and attention to Aboriginal perspectives. As a result, planned programs in Aboriginal studies were offered in 94 per cent of schools to record numbers of students — 77 per cent of Indigenous students and 52 per cent of all students in the sector.

Independent schools

Only a small number of the combined primary/secondary schools reported having Indigenous students, and the numbers were generally low. These schools reported literacy and numeracy levels for Indigenous students as being either the same or slightly lower than school

averages, with some improvement over the last three years, although there were no difficulties in retaining Indigenous students to the end of years 10 and 12. The schools reported having established links with the Indigenous community, with one having an ASSPA committee and an Indigenous parent or community member on the School Board and both having Indigenous representation on the Parents' Committee. Both schools also invite Indigenous community members to participate in school activities.

All schools, including the special school, had instituted a variety of mechanisms to introduce Indigenous issues into the curriculum including class discussions and the use of Indigenous resources. One school additionally organised excursions to Aboriginal cultural centres and visits to the school by Indigenous performers and artists.

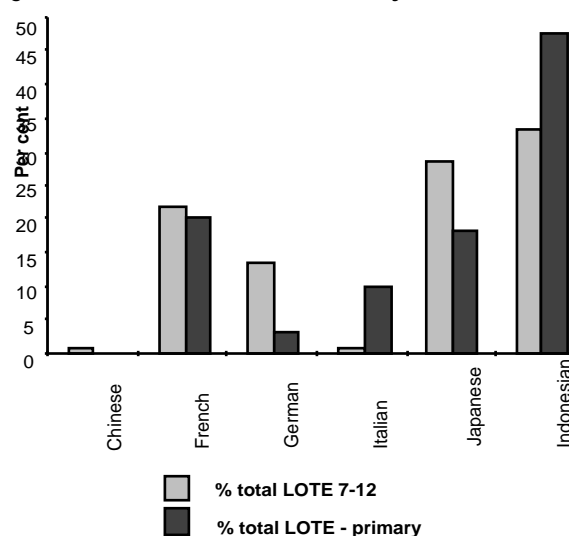
Languages other than English

Government schools

Languages other than English (LOTE) continues to grow as a learning area in DECCD schools, particularly in primary schools. Student numbers increased in 1997 by 259 per cent over those of 1996 in pathway LOTE schools, where continuity in LOTE is guaranteed from primary to year 12 in neighbourhood schools.

Asian languages make up the majority of LOTEs studied; mainly Indonesian and Japanese. Primary and high school enrolments in a LOTE are shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Per cent enrolment in LOTE by school sector



Source: Department of Education, Cultural and Community Development

Time allocation

Time allocation in primary schools varies across grades. In years 3 and 4 most schools spend over one hour per week and schools receiving National Asian Languages and Studies in Australian Schools (NALSAS) funding spend at least two hours per week on a LOTE. This tends to drop in years 5 and 6 to between 30 and 60 minutes per week.

In secondary schools, students in years 7/8 spend between one and 1½ hours per week studying a LOTE. In years 9–12, most students studying a LOTE undertake a TASSAB course which runs for either 100 or 150 hours during the year. When LOTE becomes optional, generally from year 9 onwards, numbers of students drop and girls outnumber boys by approximately two to one.

Learning Outcomes

Students who study a LOTE in years 11 and 12 are generally very successful. Of those studying a European language 97 per cent received a TCE award, while for Asian languages the figure was 95 per cent.

NALSAS

In 1997, the focus in all 41 schools receiving NALSAS funding was on evaluation of student outcomes using the national profile outcomes. Results are indicated in Table 7.

Continuing and emerging issues

The first teachers enrolled in the new Graduate Certificate of Education (LOTE Teaching) program. This was a major step towards meeting the demand for qualified teachers of Indonesian and Japanese. In 1997, 61 teachers completed modules of the Graduate Certificate. However, there is still a shortage of qualified teachers of Indonesian and Japanese.

Catholic schools

Time allocation

Because of the unavailability of language teachers in some areas, some primary schools have concentrated on cultural studies rather than on the teaching of a LOTE. Uptake of languages continues in primary schools where ½–1 hour per week is given to LOTE, though with integration with studies of society and environment (SOSE) the actual teaching time may be more extensive. At least one language is compulsory in each of the secondary schools in years 7 and/or 8. Languages are offered as electives in years 9 to 12 and numbers of students in these classes remain small. The time allocations are 2–2½ hours per week in years 7–10 and five hours per week in years 11 and 12.

Table 7. Student outcomes in LOTE by profile level and grade

Profile Level	Grade 3	Grade 4
Level 1	53%	14%
Level 2	41%	68%
Level 3	6%	18%

Source: Department of Education, Cultural and Community Development

National statement and profile

Primary curriculum is being developed at each school utilising the statement and profile. LOTE teachers in secondary schools use TASSAB curricula in years 9–12 and develop appropriate introductory courses for years 7/8.

Continuing and emerging issues

The availability of language teachers remains a problem for some primary schools. Several primary teachers have undertaken language studies and native-speaking parents assist with conversational language and cultural days. Three teachers have used interactive satellite programs from interstate to supplement work done in the schools.

Independent schools

Languages studied

Statistics gathered in 1997 indicated that in secondary schools 956 students were studying French, 896 German and 27 Italian, making a total of 1,879 students, which was 62 per cent of all secondary students studying LOTE subjects. Of these students, 66 studied French, 82 German and zero Italian in years 11 and 12.

Of the 38 per cent of students taking Asian languages, 417 studied Indonesian and 741 Japanese—a total of 1,158 students. Of these students, 21 studied Indonesian and 46 Japanese in years 11 and 12.

In primary schools, 1,084 students were involved in some form of French program, 350 German and 42 Italian—a total of 1,476 students and 59 per cent of all primary LOTE students.

In relation to Asian languages there were 325 primary students involved in Indonesian and 704 in Japanese, a total of 1,029 and 41 per cent of all LOTE students.

Chinese has appeared in some secondary schools in previous years but the numbers have been less than ten students Statewide.

NALSAS

The Language Committee in the independent sector administered the NALSAS strategy grants to develop new LOTE Asian programs in nine primary and secondary schools. One of these grants was to research and develop the introduction of a second Asian language—Chinese—in 1999 at a school which already has two European and one Asian language in its secondary curriculum. This was regarded as an important step in the development of Asian languages in the State. The Committee also recognised the importance of the introduction of languages in primary schools and encouraged schools accordingly.

Professional development

Professional development activities were a vital strategy in most of the school initiatives supported. A need was indicated for more trained LOTE teachers particularly in primary schools. Population trends, such as few people of Chinese or Korean background, are probable factors in the lack of these languages in schools.

Community links

Some schools have established extensive links with the community or other organisations to support LOTE programs. In one school the teachers of the school's junior school French program offer French classes to parents to support their child's learning, a native-speaker program brings members of local ethnic communities to the school, and the school is in active contact with language and cultural bodies such as the Goethe Society, Alliance Francaise, and the Australia–Japan Society. The school makes active use of the Internet and computer-assisted learning. The school is looking at introducing a second Asian LOTE in the not too distant future. A second school regularly hosts exchange students and Japanese School Assistants as well as using the Internet and other information technology applications.

Statement and profile

Some schools indicated that the national statement and profile were used as a general guideline or reference. Others reported developing curricula using these documents.

Future directions

Directions for the future include raising the image of Asian languages in schools and giving individual school assistance with the development of LOTE curricula. This will be achieved by a professional development seminar in 1998 using a high profile speaker from interstate together

with plenary sessions; the funding of specific programs in schools; and the appointment of a coordinator on a part-time basis to work with schools.

Technology

Government schools

Technology education programs provide students with the opportunity to gain knowledge of materials, information and systems to build up their ability to solve problems in a creative and satisfying way. It is broad in scope to include the needs and aspirations of all students from years 1–12, and acts as a unifier of subject areas such as materials, design and technology (MDT), home economics, key-boarding, information technology, media studies, applied power technology, computer-aided drafting and design (CADD) and electronics.

Design centred facilities

The process of students undertaking design activities is restricted by facilities available in school workshops, science laboratories and home economics rooms. In response to this, centrally located design facilities to assist students to express their ideas two and three dimensionally, have been developed throughout the State. The concept of Design Centres developed within existing school workshops are cost-effective because many of the desirable physical features of the existing buildings are retained.

Twenty-five secondary schools now have impressive design facilities within practical areas, of which three were completed in 1997.

Curriculum matters

Students' designs have become prominent in Tasmanian schools in technology programs from kindergarten to year 12. Where previously 'making' was a task undertaken in isolation, students are now provided with opportunities and resources to express their intuitive ideas and appraise the products they create. In 1997, the Wood Design Trust Exhibition exhibited Tasmanian school students' work and acclaimed it to be outstanding in both design and technological processes.

Computer aided drawing and design

One of the most significant changes to the curriculum in Tasmanian schools has been in the area of graphics. Technical drawing has been replaced by two subjects, design graphics and computer graphics and design. Both these subjects have largely replaced many of the T-squares

and drawing boards with computers. This curriculum change has been popular. Both subjects provide a diverse curriculum with a focus towards animation, and are pre-tertiary subjects for university entrance.

Continuing issues

Upgrading equipment to meet the greater needs of students undertaking a design-based program has provided the opportunity to address issues relating to the location of dust-producing machines such as belt and disc sanders. Until recently schools have acquired equipment without fully considering the additional costs required for dust and fume extraction. The costs of extraction in some cases has proved more expensive than the purchase price of the equipment because of the additional ducting required. These issues have been addressed when new or refurbished technology facilities are being developed. In many instances, costs associated with relocating equipment were offset by the reduction in the amount of ducting required.

Interface between courses

Students were provided with opportunities to undertake technology tasks involving work that is similar to work in commercial, industrial, or professional settings. Work-related technology studies included business studies, manufacturing, food technology and hospitality industries, electronics, building and construction courses, fabrics and fashion design, computing, communication, and technician vocations. The interconnections and pathways between technology education in years 9 and 10 and more targeted courses in years 11 and 12 were clearly defined and communicated to students.

Many technology education syllabuses and courses in years 11 and 12 interface with those from other fields of learning to provide students with course structures which are in keeping with the directions for post-compulsory education in Tasmania. Linkages between technology education programs in years 11 and 12 and those in further education and training at university and TAFE institutions are increasingly explicit, detailing appropriate prerequisites for further study and credit transfer options.

Catholic schools

Curriculum matters

Primary schools have taken an integrated approach to technology and other learning areas such as science, maths and craft with the accent on the “design, make, appraise” strand. Computers in every primary classroom provide

access to programs designed around specific subject areas and the use of CD-ROMs.

In secondary schools a range of technology subjects is offered including information technology, computer science, business computing, business information and processing, personal information and processing, computer graphics and design, food technology, textiles, wood and metal technology, desktop publishing, and crafts.

Time allocation

Time allocation is at least 30 minutes per week in primary schools and varying times in secondary schools depending on the range of electives taken by particular students and the year level. TASSAB courses in years 10–12 require between 25 and 150 hours depending on the nature of the course offered.

Continuing and emerging issues

Primary teachers have become more confident in their use of computers and are looking for on-going professional development in this area. Secondary schools have provided in-house in-service training utilising their specialist teachers and teachers have generally been prepared to embrace new technology as its relevance and availability become apparent. Use of computers across subject areas is increasing in secondary schools but is limited by the availability of computer access for students.

Plans for future years involve the expansion of hardware available and of applications of computing.

Independent schools

Schools reported that the technology key learning area is being addressed at both the primary and secondary levels through subjects such as information technology, textiles and design, technical drawing, information systems, computer studies and home economics. Many of these subject areas are compulsory in years 5–7, 7–8 and/or 9.

For the most part schools reported no issues regarding gender balance in these subjects. One school did report that in years 5 and 6 boys did manual arts and girls did home economics.

Schools reported on a range of initiatives in technology, including a laptop program for all students in years 5 to 8, a plan to assess computer literacy of year 7 students on entry and develop skills courses to meet their needs, and the introduction of robotics into the curriculum.

Other learning areas

Government schools

English

English was supported through the provision of District Curriculum Officers. The officers both provided professional development opportunities and disseminated a range of materials produced to support the teaching of English.

The DECCD Literacy Policy was published which included mandated minimum time requirements for English in years 7–12.

Studies of society and environment

School-based renewal in the Studies of society and environment (SOSE) learning area was supported by eight senior curriculum officers, working in seven districts. A range of materials was produced and disseminated, including *Fifty SOSE Units From Tasmanian Schools*, containing teaching and learning materials written by schools, funded by the National Professional Development Program.

Health and physical education

Collaboration with the Department of Health and Community Services (DCHS) funded a project officer to work with personnel in both the health and education sectors to develop plans for the implementation of the Health Promoting Schools Project. Individual schools conducted initial projects in this area, explicitly making links between the health and physical education learning area and SOSE.

The arts

The arts was supported through the employment of six district curriculum officers who undertook professional development with a variety of teachers, schools and clusters throughout 1997. Many projects were undertaken in all areas of the arts, including the development of a sculpture park, a media project, a photographic essay, the development of a CD featuring student compositions, a "sensory journey" for students with special needs, and a music technology project, "Marimba Roadshow", in which students made and then played a variety of instruments.

Additional teacher support was provided through the continuing Artists in Districts program which was used to engage local artists to work with teachers to enhance their

skills, knowledge and understanding, instead of working directly with students, as in the past.

Secondary Music Scholarships continue to be offered to secondary students in the government system who reveal significant talent in music.

The development of a CD sampler of music from all districts was a major project. This featured the work of teachers and students from approximately 60 schools. In addition to showcasing student and teacher work, this will provide work samples for the use of K–12 teachers.

Science

A postgraduate program in science education was started in conjunction with Curtin University. In the first year, 40 teachers enrolled.

A three-year research and development project will focus on identifying and creating learning environments that improve participation, achievement, attitude and gender equity in science subjects in Tasmanian secondary colleges.

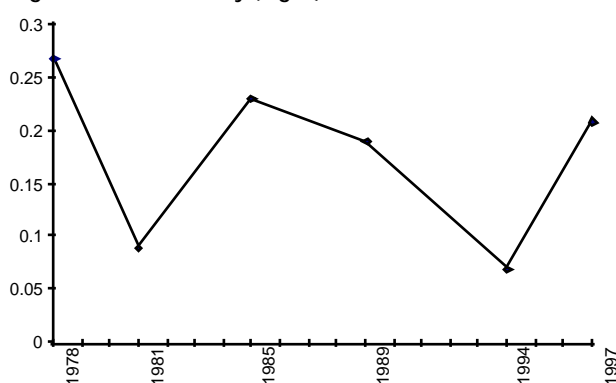
Curriculum materials that link Science and SOSE, *Investigating Social Issues Scientifically* were implemented.

Mathematics and numeracy

The DECCD Mathematics Policy was published which included mandated minimum time requirements for mathematics in years 7–12 from 1998 onwards.

Statewide testing of all year 9 students indicated that numeracy outcomes had improved by three per cent since the last monitoring program in 1994. The longitudinal findings are summarised in Figure 2.

Figure 2. Mean ability (logits)



Source: Department of Education, Cultural and Community Development