

Overview

This chapter provides an overview of Education in Victoria, including details of the numbers of schools, teachers and students. Information relating to higher education and Technical and Further Education (TAFE) is also included.

In economic terms, the Education industry sector contributed 5% of the total Victorian Gross State Product at factor cost in 1996–97, and Victoria held a 27% share of national education Gross Domestic Product.

Schools and teachers

There were 2,345 primary and secondary schools in Victoria in 1997, 34 fewer than in 1996 (table 5.1). Government schools decreased by 39 while non-government schools increased by five. The total 1997 enrolment of students in all Victorian schools was 781,424 (0.6% increase over 1996), with 56% in primary and 44% in secondary schools (table 5.2).

Government schools constituted 71% of all schools in 1997, and had a student enrolment of 518,476 (an increase of 0.3% over the previous year), while non-government school enrolments increased 1.4% over the same period to 262,948 students. The proportion of students enrolled in non-government schools was higher at secondary level, with Year 12 (41%) the highest.

Catholic schools comprised 72% of the 684 non-government schools in Victoria. Accordingly, non-government school enrolments were highest in Catholic schools with 177,291 students (67%), followed by Anglican (25,786 or 10%) and other non-government (59,871 or 23%) schools.

Apparent retention rates are measures of the tendencies of students to remain in education from Year 7 to the senior years of secondary schooling. The apparent retention rate to Year 12 increased from 47% in 1986 to 81% in 1992 and declined to 75% in 1997 (government schools 70%; non-government schools 88%).

The number of teaching staff (expressed in full-time equivalent units) increased by 0.5% from 51,340 in 1996 to 51,582 in 1997. The average number of students per full-time teacher was 15.1 for non-government and 15.2 for government schools. The average student-teacher ratios for all schools were 18.2 for primary and 12.5 for secondary schools.

5.1 PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS, STUDENTS, AND TEACHING STAFF(a)

Year	Government			Non-government			Total		
	Schools	Students	Teaching staff	Schools	Students	Teaching staff	Schools	Students	Teaching staff
1992	2 013	533 909	40 550	687	253 713	16 192	2 700	787 622	56 741
1993	1 934	526 636	37 551	683	250 961	16 227	2 617	777 597	53 778
1994	1 731	520 328	34 635	679	252 866	16 661	2 410	773 194	51 295
1995	1 711	514 805	34 106	675	255 472	16 959	2 386	770 277	51 065
1996	1 700	517 062	34 045	679	259 393	17 295	2 379	776 455	51 340
1997	1 661	518 476	34 154	684	262 948	17 428	2 345	781 424	51 582

(a) Number of full-time teaching staff plus full-time equivalents of part-time teaching staff.

Source: Schools, Australia (Cat. no. 4221.0).

5.2 FULL-TIME STUDENTS, Category of School—1997

Year of education	Government schools	Non-government(a)				Total	Males	Females	Persons
		Anglican	Catholic	Other	Total				
Primary									
Preparatory	44 886	980	14 946	3 403	19 329	33 365	30 850	64 215	
Year 1	45 156	895	15 412	3 241	19 548	33 261	31 443	64 704	
Year 2	42 401	894	14 393	3 170	18 457	31 383	29 475	60 858	
Year 3	43 740	957	14 537	3 304	18 798	31 873	30 665	62 538	
Year 4	42 440	1 072	14 154	3 363	18 589	31 157	29 872	61 029	
Year 5	42 166	1 312	13 938	3 665	18 915	31 355	29 726	61 081	
Year 6	42 030	1 433	13 868	3 846	19 147	31 286	29 891	61 177	
Ungraded	1 954	—	62	520	582	1 670	866	2 536	
Total primary	304 773	7 543	101 310	24 512	133 365	225 350	212 788	438 138	
Secondary									
Year 7	38 265	2 748	14 144	6 082	22 974	31 297	29 942	61 239	
Year 8	38 351	2 895	13 953	5 899	22 747	31 305	29 793	61 098	
Year 9	37 799	3 089	13 404	5 848	22 341	30 797	29 343	60 140	
Year 10	36 626	3 234	12 798	5 999	22 031	29 368	29 289	58 657	
Year 11	32 925	3 179	11 257	5 836	20 272	25 884	27 313	53 197	
Year 12	26 765	3 098	10 326	5 297	18 721	21 170	24 316	45 486	
Ungraded	2 972	—	99	398	497	2 124	1 345	3 469	
Total secondary	213 703	18 243	75 981	35 359	129 583	171 945	171 341	343 286	
Total	518 476	25 786	177 291	59 871	262 948	397 295	384 129	781 424	

(a) Includes full-time students attending one special school administered by government authorities other than the Ministry of Education.

Source: Schools, Australia, 1997 (Cat. no. 4221.0).

Higher education

There were 179,030 students attending a higher education institution (excluding TAFE) in 1997, a 2% increase over the previous year (table 5.3). The most popular fields of study were business administration and economics (27%), arts, humanities and social science (26%) and science (18%).

5.3 HIGHER EDUCATION (EXCLUDING TAFE)—1997

Field of study	Students no.
Agriculture, animal husbandry	2 279
Architecture, building	3 982
Arts, humanities, social science	45 870
Business administration, economics	48 652
Education	14 913
Engineering, surveying	17 637
Health	20 079
Law, legal studies	6 436
Science	32 556
Veterinary science	295
Non-award	1 119
Total	179 030

Source: Department of Employment, Education, Training and Youth Affairs: Selected Higher Education Student Statistics, 1997.

TAFE

In 1997, 544,100 students enrolled in TAFE vocational courses, representing a rise of 10% over the previous year (table 5.4).

Business administration and economics recorded the highest number of enrolments (21%) followed by engineering and surveying (14%), multi-field education courses (18%) and services, hospitality and transportation (12%).

5.4 TAFE ENROLMENTS IN VOCATIONAL COURSES—1997

Field of study	'000	%
Land & marine resources, animal husbandry	25.7	4.7
Architecture, building	32.7	6.0
Arts, humanities & social sciences	36.5	6.7
Business administration, economics	114.2	21.0
Education	11.4	2.1
Engineering, surveying	76.9	14.1
Health, community services	45.4	8.4
Law, legal studies	1.6	0.3
Science	34.1	6.3
Veterinary science, animal care	0.6	0.1
Services, hospitality, transportation	66.1	12.1
TAFE multi-field education	98.9	18.2
Total(a)	544.1	100.0

(a) Students may enrol in more than one field of study, thus causing the number of students enrolled by field of study to exceed the actual number of students enrolled.

Source: Australian National Training Authority.

Literacy skills

The Survey of Aspects of Literacy was conducted nationally between May and July 1996. It was designed to measure elements of literacy and numeracy skills necessary to use printed material found at work, home and in the community.

The survey objectively assessed three types of literacy; Prose, Document and Quantitative (table 5.5). Literacy was defined as a continuum for each of these types, and progression along this continuum was characterised by an increased ability to 'process' information and draw correct inferences. Each literacy type was divided into five levels, with Level 1 referring to the lowest level of literacy and Level 5 the highest.

5.5 POPULATION AT EACH LITERACY SKILL LEVEL—1996

Level	Victoria			Australia		
	Prose %	Document %	Quantative %	Prose %	Document %	Quantative %
1	21.7	22.0	21.2	19.7	19.5	19.2
2	26.1	26.3	26.7	27.5	28.3	27.2
3	35.6	35.7	35.2	35.3	36.1	36.0
4/5	16.6	16.0	16.9	17.5	16.1	17.7
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: *Aspects of Literacy: Assessed Skill Levels, Australia, 1996 (Cat. no. 4228.0)*.

An estimated 3.3 million Victorians are represented in the survey results. The skill level distribution of Victorians was similar on each of the Prose, Document and Quantitative literacy scales. Around 22% of Victorians had very poor skills (Level 1) and could experience considerable difficulty using printed materials encountered in daily life, while a further 26% (Level 2) could experience some difficulty. Almost 36% of Victorians had literacy skills enabling them to cope, though not always with a high level of proficiency (Level 3); while 17% of Victorians had good to very good skills (Level 4/5) and were considered capable of managing the literacy demands of everyday life.

Educational attainment

Educational attainment is one of the strongest predictors of literacy, and is sometimes used as a surrogate indicator when objective literacy assessments are not available. In general, a greater proportion of people with high literacy skill levels had high levels of educational attainment, compared with those at lower skill levels. For example, 61% of Victorians at Level 4/5 on the Prose scale had a post-school qualification, compared with 24% of people at Level 1.

Work and literacy

A marked contrast was evident in skill level across different occupation groupings. Almost 51% of professionals recorded Prose skills at Levels 4/5, compared to an average of 21% across all occupation groups. In contrast, Level 1 Prose skills were recorded for almost 48% of plant and machine operators and drivers, compared to an average of 14% across all occupations.

5.6 PROSE SKILL LEVEL—1996

Occupation					Level	
	1	2	3	4/5	Total	Total
	%	%	%	%	%	'000
Managers & administrators	11.0	27.2	45.0	16.8	100.0	310.2
Professionals	*2.0	11.7	35.9	50.5	100.0	294.9
Para-professionals	*2.3	*18.5	44.5	34.7	100.0	130.8
Tradespersons	18.0	36.7	36.1	*9.3	100.0	304.7
Clerks	*6.2	24.3	43.8	25.7	100.0	315.9
Salespersons & personal service workers	9.4	29.0	43.9	17.7	100.0	379.9
Plant & machine operators & drivers	47.5	22.5	24.3	*5.7	100.0	143.8
Labourers & related workers	32.2	25.6	35.5	*6.7	100.0	272.1
All occupations	14.3	25.3	39.5	20.9	100.0	2 152.3

Source: Unpublished data, Aspects of Literacy Survey, 1996.

References

ABS sources

Aspects of Literacy: Assessed Skill Levels, Australia, 1996 (Cat. no. 4228.0)

Australian National Accounts: State Accounts, Main Tables, 1996–97
(Cat no. 5220.0.40.001)

Schools, Australia (Cat. no. 4221.0)

Non-ABS sources

Australian National Training Authority.

Department of Employment, Education, Training and Youth Affairs,
Selected Higher Education Student Statistics, Canberra, Nov. 1997.

National Centre for Vocational Educational Research Ltd, *Australian Vocational Education and Training Statistics 1997*, Leabrook SA.

