

Department of Education Strategic Plan 2024–2028



Acknowledgement of Country

The department proudly acknowledges Victoria's First Nations communities and their rich and enduring cultures.

We acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as Australia's first peoples and as the Traditional Owners of the unceded lands, waters and skies, and pay respect to Elders past and present.

We recognise First Nations people as Victoria's first educators, artists and scientists, and we value the ongoing contribution of First Nations people and communities to Victorian life and how this enriches us all.

We also commit to work together to deliver the Victorian Government's commitment to self-determination, Truth and Treaty.

Language statement

Throughout this document the terms Koorie, First Peoples or First Nations are used to refer to both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Use of the terms Aboriginal, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and Indigenous are retained in the names of programs and initiatives and unless noted otherwise are inclusive of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

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Cover Photos:

Northern Bay College

Ardmona Primary School

Boroondara Uniting Early Learning

Section 1:

Message from the Secretary



I am pleased to share with you the department’s Strategic Plan for 2024–2028. Our Strategic Plan outlines our overarching direction and planned outcomes, as well as the strategies we will use to achieve them over the next 4 years.

Our vision is a great education for every child and young person — so that they can thrive now, and in the future, for a fairer, smarter and more prosperous state. Making this vision a reality for every student and child in every school and early childhood education and care setting is what the department, along with teachers, educators and support staff strive to achieve every day.

The Best Start, Best Life reforms represent a significant step-change in terms of access and equity — they are transforming early childhood education and helping Victorian kids to get the best possible start in life. The reforms are progressively rolling out, with Free Kinder reaching more children and benefiting their families. The roll-out of the Three-Year-Old Kindergarten reform is progressing successfully with more than 80% of services across the state now offering 15 hours per week. Once fully implemented, Pre-Prep will give children across Victoria access to up to 30 hours a week of kindergarten in the year before school.

Early Learning Victoria has been created to lead the establishment and operationalisation of 50 new Victorian government-owned and operated early learning and childcare centres in areas of greatest need across Victoria. This will make it easier for families to access affordable, high-quality early education and care.

We have included child safety as one of the department’s key outcomes in this Strategic Plan. While child safety is front and centre in all our policies and practices, more can and must be done as identified in the government’s response to the Board of Inquiry into historical child sexual abuse in Beaumaris Primary School and certain other government schools.

The department is committed to improving outcomes for First Peoples children and young people across our early childhood and school education portfolios. We have established a new First Nations Strategy, Policy and Programs Group that will lead efforts to strengthen a whole of department approach to

embedding self-determination and cultural safety in schools and work with First Nations people and communities.

Victoria is a leading jurisdiction for school education outcomes, with strong primary years National Assessment Program Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) results, the best school attendance rates, and the highest proportion of young people engaged in education, training or work.

Reforms to our teaching and learning model, with an emphasis on explicit teaching, will ensure Victoria continues to drive improvement in education outcomes. The use of systematic synthetic phonics to teach reading in the early years will be universally adopted across the state.

Victoria’s senior secondary pathway reforms will continue to cultivate and fulfil each student’s potential, by providing young Victorians with an education that suits their goals and sets them up for success in school, work and life.

Our teachers, leaders, educators and education support staff are critical to the success of our education system. We are committed to growing teacher supply and lifting teaching and learning supports, as well as recognising the many contributions and achievements of our school workforce. Reducing administrative burdens, prioritising health and wellbeing, and providing impactful professional development will all contribute to a stronger workforce.

Work continues on our ambitious plan to deliver new and upgraded Victorian school and kindergarten infrastructure, so that children and students across the state have access to modern, fit-for-purpose learning environments.

Finally, the department is taking steps to further strengthen our integrity culture. Building and nurturing integrity as a core value informs all our work and underpins every action in this plan.

Aligning our values and efforts will bring this Strategic Plan to fruition over the next 4 years. I thank every person working in our sector for their continuing commitment and care in educating and supporting Victorian children and young people to learn, be safe and well, and fulfil their potential.

Jenny Atta

Secretary
Department of Education

Section 2:

Department overview

What we do

The department provides a wide range of learning and development support and services.

The department provides policy leadership, plans for the future of education in Victoria and leads key cross-sector collaboration.

The department plays an important system steward role by providing support, guidance, oversight and assurance across early childhood and school education systems, as well as directly providing school education.

Early childhood (birth to 8)

School education (5 to 18)



Early childhood education and care services, with a focus on kindergarten programs



Primary education Secondary education Special education Language education



More than **145,000** children funded to attend kindergarten

- over **67,000** children attend a 3-Year-Old Kindergarten program
- over **78,000** children attend a 4-Year-Old Kindergarten program



More than **1,049,000** students

- approximately **661,000** students in government schools
- approximately **216,000** students in Catholic schools
- approximately **172,000** students in Independent schools



More than **5,000** regulated education and care services of all types



Approximately **3,000** funded kindergarten services



1,570 government schools



724 non-government schools

Who we work with

The department and its portfolio entities work collaboratively with a diverse range of public, private and not-for-profit providers serving Victorian children and young people.

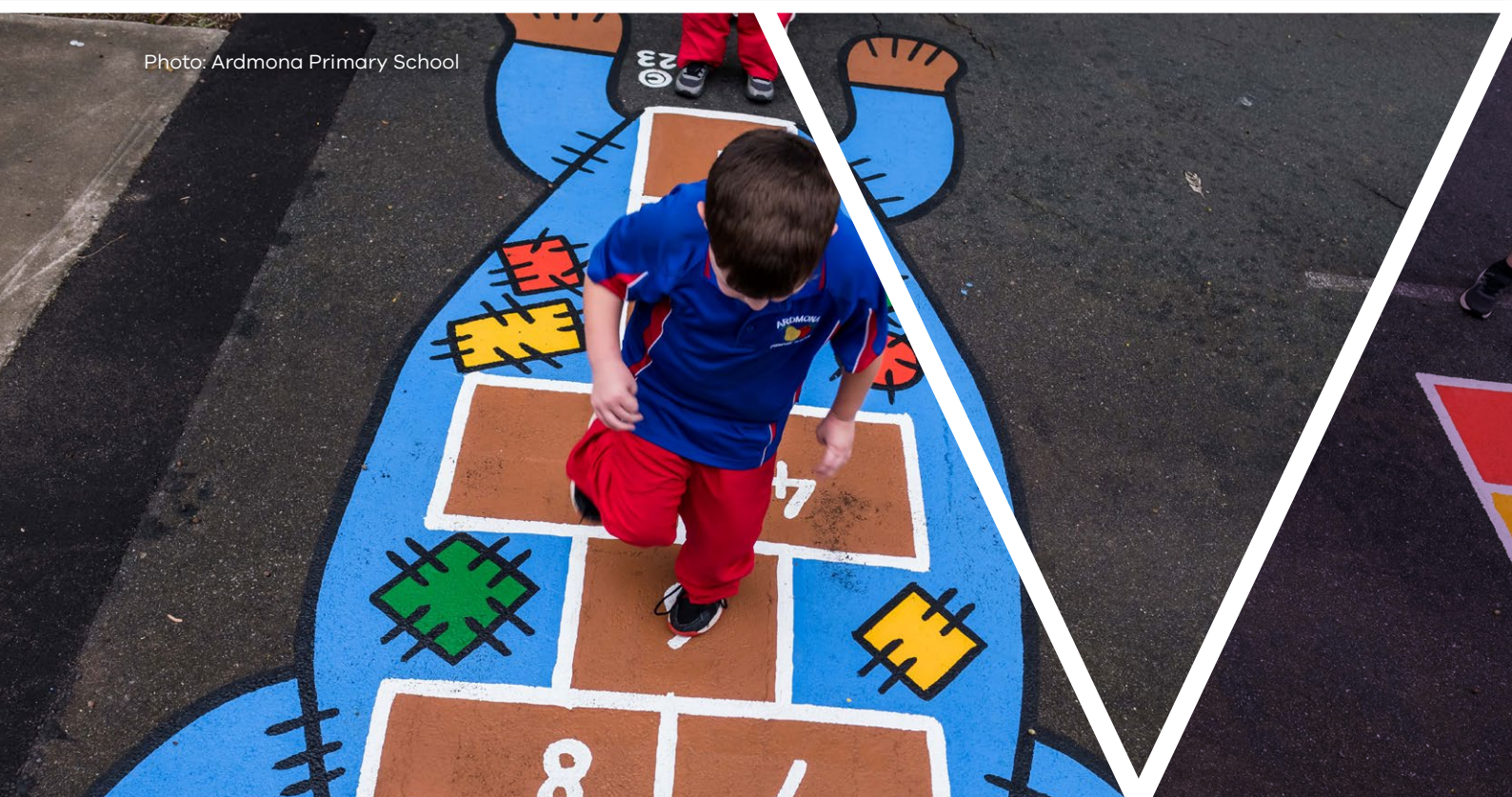
Education portfolio partners and authorities include:

- Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority
- Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority
- Victorian Academy of Teaching and Leadership
- Victorian Institute of Teaching
- Merit Protection Boards and Disciplinary Appeals Boards

Key stakeholder groups include:

- Early childhood and school education peak bodies
- Industry associations and unions
- Advocacy and special interest groups
- Government department and agencies
- Early childhood and school education experts
- Parents and students

Photo: Ardmona Primary School



Section 3: Strategic direction

Our vision

A great education for every child and young person — so they can thrive now, and in the future, for a fairer, smarter and more prosperous state.



Our outcomes

Our outcomes clarify the impact we want to see from the collective efforts of the department.



Outcome

Why it matters

Learning and development

Excellent learning and development outcomes. Strong engagement and wellbeing for all Victorian children and young people.

Learning and development are central to our ambition for education services and support. The evidence shows a strong sense of wellbeing enables children to engage positively and confidently with their environment and take full advantage of learning opportunities. Quality of teaching matters for year-on-year student progression and achievement, and for child development more broadly.

Equity and inclusion

Equitable and inclusive education and care for all Victorian children and young people.

Every child and young person has the fundamental human right to education, so that they can fully participate in society and achieve their potential. Many learners face significant barriers to their learning and development that are outside their control and too often affect their life outcomes. Targeted and effective support is needed to ensure education is equitable and inclusive, so that every child and young person can thrive.



Photo: South Melbourne Primary School



Photo: South Gippsland Specialist School

Outcome

Why it matters

Pathways and opportunities

Children and young people have pathways through education to future careers. Victorian parents and carers are supported to participate in the workforce.

The individual journey through education settings looks different for every child and young person. It is important that pathways are in place for every learner to reach a variety of careers they may aspire to. Helping parents and carers to work and study supports their economic participation, their goals for themselves and their families, and has a positive influence on their children's aspirations and the pathways they choose to take.

Child safety

Children and young people who are safe from harm throughout their education. Staff who are well equipped to keep children safe and identify early signs of child safety risk or harm.

Children and young people should be able to live a life free of sexual and physical abuse, serious emotional harm, psychological harm and neglect. The care of children is of paramount importance and requires constant vigilance. This requires oversight, proactive strategies, enhanced child safety capabilities and strong support to schools to meet Child Safe Standards.

Our objectives¹

Objective 1

Raise development outcomes of 3 and 4-year-old children prior to attending school.

Objective 2

Raise standards of learning, development, engagement and wellbeing for all Victorian students.

Objective 3

Provide equitable and inclusive schooling to all Victorian students.



1. Department of Treasury and Finance (DTF), 2024–25 State Budget, Budget Paper No. 3 — Service Delivery, DTF, 2024.

Section 4:

Guiding principles and values

Guiding principles

Our guiding principles describe how we will approach our work and the culture we will foster.



Guiding principles	Why it matters
<p>Hearts in, minds on</p> <p>We bring our passion, knowledge and skills to improve outcomes.</p>	<p>Our people are passionate and knowledgeable, and we want to encourage every person to bring their whole self to work. When we put our 'hearts in' and 'minds on' it means we are authentic and make connections that are positive and impactful.</p>
<p>Our best work matters</p> <p>We do high-quality work that matters to people's lives.</p>	<p>Our efforts to do high-quality work means we follow the steps to get it right, we involve the right people and we hold ourselves to the highest standards. This approach to delivering high-quality work directly leads to greater impact.</p>
<p>Be curious and work together</p> <p>We listen, collaborate and value challenge and diversity.</p>	<p>Our inclusive and collaborative approach to working with our colleagues, partners and stakeholders brings in different perspectives and builds confidence. This is important for arriving at well-considered conclusions that are also well-supported.</p>
<p>Seize the day</p> <p>We are proactive, seek to solve problems and adapt to deliver.</p>	<p>Our commitment to be proactive, to solve problems and adapt is what helps us to deliver positive change. From marginal improvements all the way up to transformational reform, we seize the day and take the initiative to push our work forwards.</p>
<p>See the whole picture</p> <p>We are guided by evidence and seek to understand the broader context.</p>	<p>Our perspectives and discussions are shaped by the evidence of what works and are informed by our broader understanding of the context and system at play. This ability to see the whole picture improves our work and our influence on achieving better outcomes.</p>

VPS values

Our Victorian public sector (VPS) values describe the behaviour that the Victorian Government and community expect of us and are codified in the *Public Administration Act 2004*. These values ensure we are fair, objective and courteous in all our dealings.



Responsiveness



Integrity



Impartiality



Accountability



Respect



Leadership



Human Rights



Photo: Yarrabah School (Aspendale)

Section 5:

Operating environment and key challenges

Within our operating environment, there are drivers and challenges that require the department to adjust its planning, implementation and delivery of services and system reform.

The economy

While the Victorian economy has strong foundations, there are challenging economic conditions to be navigated with persisting high inflation and interest rates, as well as weakening national and global growth.

The department will actively manage the impacts of the rising costs of services, products and labour as it continues to deliver its infrastructure programs and provide high-quality services.

Climate change

Our experience with responding to natural disasters has improved our resilience and readiness to ensure continuity of learning, so that the impacts of future events can be reduced. This is being achieved through our emergency management preparedness and response to support swift resumption of services.

The department, all schools and early childhood education settings have a role to play in delivering on the Victorian target of net zero emissions by 2045; for example, through improving energy efficiency, reducing energy consumption and drawing energy from renewable sources. The department will embed renewable energy career pathways into the government's core offering of vocational education and training (VET) in schools.

Self-determination

With the Victorian Government's commitment to deliver all elements of the Uluru Statement from the Heart — Voice, Treaty and Truth — the coming years offer the opportunity for significant positive change, including accelerating our actions to improve learning and social and emotional wellbeing outcomes of First Peoples children and young people.

On average, First Peoples students achieve lower NAPLAN results, report lower connectedness with school, and attend school less regularly than their

non-First Peoples peers. Cultural safety and access to targeted supports are critical to ensure First Peoples learners achieve their potential, succeed in life, and feel strong in their cultural identity.

Victoria's commitment to self-determination in education and improving outcomes for First Peoples learners has been significantly elevated through the creation of a new First Nations Strategy, Policy and Programs group in July 2024. The new group will work with First Nations people and communities, building on our successes to realise the ambition of [Marrung: Aboriginal Education Plan 2016–2026](#) and the objectives of [Dhelk Wukang 2022–2026: Aboriginal Inclusion Plan](#).

Digital disruption and transformation

The society-wide take-up of generative artificial intelligence (AI) applications, such as ChatGPT, has sparked concern and debate about AI's productive potential and associated risks. Understanding how educators can best use AI in the classroom, with appropriate instruction, supervision and critical assessment of AI-generated outputs will be important in the future. The department has released a clear Generative Artificial Intelligence policy for schools that sets out the requirements and advice around using AI tools in a safe and responsible way, which complements the Australian Framework for Generative Artificial Intelligence in Schools.

How technology can be used within the classroom and at home is evolving quickly. Children and young people have greater access to internet-connected devices and social media. These are parts of contemporary life and present significant learning and teaching opportunities. However, they also carry potential negative consequences, such as online bullying, which can impact mental health. Appropriate protections, instruction and monitoring will help to keep children safe online.



Photo: Anne Sgro Child Care Centre

Population change

Our state is growing quickly, with Victoria's population expected to reach 10.3 million by 2051. Following the COVID-19 pandemic there has been a return to high net overseas migration to Victoria. Over the long term, net overseas migration is expected to add more than 80,000 people to the population each year. Most of this projected growth is concentrated in the inner and outer growth areas of metropolitan Melbourne. In regional Victoria, the strongest growth is expected in Greater Geelong and Ballarat.

Such rapid growth creates a need for additional schools, new kindergartens and early learning centres, additional staff and the expansion of existing education facilities to cater for more children and young people. Identifying shifting growth patterns quickly and planning effectively for future needs will be critical to keep pace with increasing demand.

Workforce availability and capability

Victoria needs to attract, recruit and retain more teachers, educators and staff to address the significant demand within our schools and kindergarten settings. There is significant growth projected in early childhood and school education enrolments for Victoria. By 2028, Victoria is projected to require 117,363 teachers across the early childhood education, primary school and secondary school settings². Supporting this growth will require more highly skilled teachers to deliver quality education to children and students.

There is an additional challenge to attracting and retaining educators in rural and regional areas, in specialist schools and in Melbourne's urban growth corridors. There are also specific subject areas such as digital technology and science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) subjects where demand is very high.

Addressing workforce supply challenges requires departmental efforts on multiple fronts and key initiatives are already underway. We have invested in comprehensive supports to address key areas of staff concern, including workload management, and improving career development and progression. Victorian Government investments, including teaching scholarships, paid placements, improved support for school staff mental health and wellbeing, and free courses, are already making a difference and having a positive impact on workforce supply, with further improvements expected in coming years.

Information security and privacy

Information security and privacy vulnerabilities are affecting all areas of society with significant implications for organisations large and small. High-profile data breaches are occurring more frequently, and this presents critical challenges for the school and early childhood education sectors, which deal with sensitive private information.

The department must be able to effectively prevent, detect and respond to inappropriate access to and use of information and technology, as must other employers in our sectors. This requires robust security protocols and protections being in place across the organisation, including in schools, early learning centres and with third parties holding departmental data. It also relies on capability and understanding of the responsibilities for appropriate handling of personal information and accurate and timely notifications of issues and breaches to and from affected services and suppliers.

2. [Victorian Teacher Supply and Demand Report 2022](#)

Section 6:

Strategic reforms

Best Start, Best Life

The department is continuing to deliver the Best Start, Best Life reforms that will be transformational for early childhood education in Victoria over the next decade.

Between 2025 and 2036, Pre-Prep will be rolled out across the state in stages. Once fully implemented, Pre-Prep will give children across Victoria access to up to 30 hours a week of kindergarten in the year before school. Led by qualified teachers, it provides greater opportunities to socialise and learn through play. A revised roll-out plan provides more time to build the infrastructure and grow the workforce needed to support the reforms. The roll-out prioritises children who will benefit the most from additional hours.

Free Kinder continues to be available for children enrolled in a kindergarten program, enabling greater participation for children from disadvantaged backgrounds. More than 140,000 families benefited from this program in 2023, with a similar number expected to benefit in 2024. The roll-out of the Three-Year-Old Kindergarten reform is progressing successfully with more than 80% of services across the state now offering 15 hours per week and almost 89% of

all eligible children enrolled in a program in 2023. We are ahead of schedule for the full implementation of Three-Year-Old Kindergarten by 2029.

Early Learning Victoria has been established to operate the 50 new Victorian government-owned and operated early learning and childcare centres. The first 4 centres will open in 2025 with a further 14 locations opening in 2026. All centres will be open by 2032 and will be located in the areas of greatest need. The first 18 centres will be co-located with schools wherever possible to make life easier for parents and carers and help with a smoother transition to primary school. Where there are no suitable primary school sites, other sites will be explored, including co-location with TAFEs, hospitals and major employers. Where possible, the centres will also include space for co-located services such as maternal and child health services and playgroups.



Photo: Growrie Anne Sgro Child Care Centre

School reform

Our next phase of school reforms will drive improvements to teaching and learning to further strengthen Victoria’s position as the Education State.

Over the last 8 years, the department has delivered an ambitious school reform agenda. Future effort will build on these reforms to tackle enduring and new challenges to drive improved student outcomes. There will be a sustained focus on improving outcomes for priority cohorts, so that all students can succeed.

The new Victorian Curriculum Version 2.0 was published in June 2024 and sets out the knowledge and skills that Victorian students from Prep to Year 10 need to become confident, active and informed citizens. The new curriculum for English and maths will be implemented in government schools in 2025, with other learning areas from 2026.

High-quality lesson plans and professional learning programs will provide teachers with ready-to-use resources that reduce the burden of lesson

preparation. An updated Victorian Teaching and Learning Model will be implemented in all government schools across the state from 2025 with explicit teaching at its core so that we can achieve the best outcomes for the most students. All students from Prep to Grade 2 will be taught using systematic synthetic phonics approach as part of their reading program, which will bring consistency in the application of evidence-based methods in Victorian classrooms.

Generational reforms in student mental health and wellbeing and disability inclusion are underway and will begin to reach maturity and become embedded over the next few years. We have commenced significant senior secondary school pathway reforms to build the aspirations and skills of young people in Victoria. These reforms to secondary schooling will set up students for future careers and meet the needs of the modern economy.



Photo: Topirum Primary School

The government's response to the Board of Inquiry into historical child sexual abuse in Beaumaris Primary School and certain other government schools identifies a series of actions to support healing for victim-survivors, secondary victims and affected communities. We are taking proactive steps to safeguard students and ensure every school is a safe environment by strengthening accountabilities, child safety capability and response services.

Attracting, supporting and developing teachers and school leaders remains a priority. Scholarships, placement supports and employment-based programs have led to 1,600 new government school teachers being employed between March 2023 and March 2024 and 600 teachers placed in hard-to-staff roles. An independent review will report to government

by December 2024 with advice on options to reduce administrative and compliance work across the Victorian government school system.

We are providing a high-quality, contemporary learning environment through the delivery of modern infrastructure, including building 121 new schools between 2017 and 2026, as well as significant new upgrades. We will also deliver high-quality digital foundations that are cybersafe and enable schools, teachers and students to deliver a modern educational offering.



Photo: Tyabb Preschool

First Nations education

Victoria has achieved some important progress in the outcomes of First Peoples children and students, underpinned by the Marrung Aboriginal Education Plan.

The department has strengthened our commitment and support for First Peoples learners through the establishment of a new First Nations Strategy, Policy and Programs Group.

The group will work with First Peoples to strengthen self-determination and cultural safety in our schools. This is a fundamental enabler to lift education and wellbeing outcomes for Victoria's First Nations children and students. To accelerate improved learning and wellbeing outcomes for First Peoples learners, the group will identify opportunities to use existing and new existing policies and programs more effectively. Strengthening Aboriginal-led decision making in education, school-community partnerships, and sharing knowledge and understanding of First Peoples histories, communities and cultures will feature strongly in the department's work.

The Yoorrook Justice Commission is investigating historical and ongoing injustices against First Peoples in Victoria that has occurred since colonisation, including in education settings and as a result of education policy. The department will continue to engage with and pay close attention to the important work of the Yoorrook Justice Commission as its investigations evolve into findings and recommendations over the next 12 months. Opportunities to learn from past mistakes and to action self-determination in education settings is critical in the work towards Treaty and to embed systemic change.



Photo: Koorie Kids Shine

Section 7:

Focus areas and foundations



Focus areas

To lift outcomes for all children and young people, we will focus on:



Expanding early learning

Providing more hours of free, quality early learning for all children.



Excellence in learning

Supporting schools and services to achieve better learning outcomes for children and young people.



Strengthening safety, wellbeing and engagement

Having the right supports and services in place to meet the needs of each child and young person, including keeping them safe from harm.



Supporting Aboriginal self-determination and strengthening cultural safety

Improving learning and wellbeing outcomes for First Peoples learners and supporting community control and choice.



Addressing disadvantage and vulnerability

Enabling children and people experiencing disadvantage and vulnerability to get the full benefit of education.



Strengthening our teaching and education workforce

Growing and supporting our education and care workforces and supporting best practice in teaching.



Foundations

To be successful our priorities will be:



Our people

Supporting a strong culture of integrity, inclusion and high performance.



Strong systems

Ensuring we have the right systems and business processes in place.



Stewardship

Actively ensuring our sectors to deliver outcomes, through our state-owned schools and services and by providing support, guidance, direction, oversight and assurance across education and early childhood sectors.



Physical infrastructure

Building and partnering to create and maintain contemporary, safe, and sustainable spaces.



Partnerships and engagement

Building strong and effective partnerships across and with our sectors, families and carers.



Resilience, mitigation and adaptation to climate change

Doing our bit to address climate change and ensuring continuity of learning in the event of natural disasters and emergency events.

Focus areas



Expanding early learning

Description Providing more hours of free, quality early learning for all children

- Key Strategic Plan Initiatives**
- 1.1 Three-Year-Old kindergarten:** Continue to roll out kindergarten programs for 3-year-olds across the state, growing to 15 hours by 2029.
 - 1.2 Pre-Prep:** Transition 4-year-old kindergarten to 'Pre-Prep', increasing to a universal 30-hours a week program of play-based learning for every 4-year-old child in Victoria.
 - 1.3 New early learning centres:** Establish 50 Victorian government-owned and operated early learning centres, in areas of greatest need.



Excellence in learning

Description Supporting schools and services to achieve better learning outcomes for children and young people

- Key Strategic Plan Initiatives**
- 2.1 Best kindergartens for Victorian kids:** Provide grants for kindergartens to procure new or improved toys and equipment, Bush Kinder programs, toy libraries and expansion of bilingual kindergartens.
 - 2.2 Early years assessment and learning tool:** Provide teachers and co-educators with a new online observation-based tool that supports assessment of children's strengths, interests and abilities.
 - 2.3 Intensive school support:** Establish teams of regionally based executive-class principals and leading teachers partnering with schools that have challenging and complex settings to deliver improvements.
 - 2.4 Lifting student attainment:**
 - Deliver the Middle Years Literacy and Numeracy Support program to provide intensive learning support to at-risk students in Year 10.
 - The Tutor Learning Initiative provides targeted small-group learning support to students who need it most and the Student Excellence Program supports greater achievements for high-ability students.
 - Develop high-quality, sequenced lesson plans in priority curriculum areas to reduce administrative burden and ease workload pressure for teachers.
 - Implement the refreshed Victorian Teaching and Learning Model 2.0.
 - 2.5 New Tech Schools:** Build 6 new Tech Schools to provide hands-on and immersive STEM learning experiences to more than 62,000 secondary schools students.
 - 2.6 Senior secondary pathways reform:** Implement the Victorian Certificate of Education Vocational Major and the Victorian Pathways Certificate, deliver high-quality VET to all Victorian students, develop pathways for students to engage with emerging industries and improve vocational and applied learning pathways to pursue senior secondary education.

Focus areas



Strengthening safety, wellbeing and engagement

Description	Having the right support and services in place to meet the needs of each child and young person, including keeping them safe from harm
Key Strategic Plan Initiatives	<p>3.1 Inclusion in kinder: Implement disability inclusion reforms, including more Pre-School Field Officers, continuing the specialist equipment program, strengthening current assessment processes, and designing and piloting a new strengths-based approach to support.</p> <p>3.2 Kinder participation: Improve local kinder participation through strengthened local and state-wide strategies, leverage existing initiatives such as School Readiness Funding, and create a new kindergarten attendance data system.</p> <p>3.3 Student mental health reforms: Includes establishing a Schools Mental Health Fund supported by a menu of evidence-based initiatives, expanding the Mental Health in Primary Schools program, funding mental health and wellbeing leaders in every government and low-fee non-government school, and embedding mental health practitioners in every government secondary school.</p> <p>3.4 Disability inclusion: Roll out the Disability Inclusion tiered funding model and system capability-building initiatives to help schools better identify and respond to the needs of students with disability.</p> <p>3.5 Engaging students: Strengthen strategic focus on improving school attendance and student engagement, supported by targeted efforts to increase the scale and scope of the Education Justice Initiative for students in (or at risk of) contact with the youth justice system and Navigator program for chronically disengaged students, continue LOOKOUT centre support and individual education supports for students in Out of Home Care.</p> <p>3.6 Re-engaging early school leavers to remain in learning: Enhance data infrastructure to identify and support students who leave school early or are disengaged from the education and training system.</p> <p>3.7 Providing students with essentials: Continue to deliver school breakfast clubs, affordable school uniforms, glasses for kids and free period products.</p> <p>3.8 School Saving Bonus: Deliver a one-off \$400 School Saving Bonus that families can use to cover the cost of uniforms, textbooks, camps, excursions and other extracurricular activities through the year.</p> <p>3.9 Child safety: Strengthen child safety policy, guidance, training and support for schools and early childhood education and care services, so that children and young people are safe, and staff are equipped to identify and respond to risk or harm.</p>

Focus areas



Supporting Aboriginal self-determination and strengthening cultural safety

Description Improving learning and wellbeing outcomes for First Peoples learners and supporting community control and choice

- Key Strategic Plan Initiatives**
- 4.1 Cultural safety and inclusion in kinder:** Work with Victorian Aboriginal Education Association Incorporated (VAEAI) on new approaches to establishing a culturally safe environment in all services, which values and respects Aboriginal culture, children and families.
 - 4.2 Roll out Pre-Prep to Aboriginal children as a priority:** From 2026, children who identify as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander will be eligible for between 16 and 25 hours a week of Pre-Prep.
 - 4.3 Marrung — Aboriginal Education Plan 2016–2026:** Strengthen cultural inclusion and safety, and ensure equitable access to early childhood and education supports so that First Peoples learners achieve their potential, succeed in life, and feel strong in their cultural identity.
 - 4.4 Dhelk Wukang — Aboriginal Inclusion Plan:** Strengthen Aboriginal inclusion, self-determination and cultural safety at all levels within the department, including the Victorian public service and Government teaching service.
 - 4.5 Self-determination in education reforms:** Strengthen self-determination for First Peoples learners and their families through building school capacity and practice in partnership with First Nations communities.
 - 4.6 First Peoples workforce:** Attract and retain new and returning First Peoples to the schools workforce and continue to work with VAEAI on supporting First Peoples to become early childhood teachers and educators.

Focus areas



Addressing disadvantage and vulnerability

Description	Enabling children and young people experiencing disadvantage and vulnerability to get the full benefits of education
Key Strategic Plan Initiatives	<p>5.1 Fighting for students with disability and their families: Provide more support for students with disability and their families, ensuring more students have better access to the services they need.</p> <p>5.2 Roll out Pre-Prep to vulnerable and disadvantaged children: Priority cohorts of children will be eligible to receive between 16 and 25 hours of Pre-Prep state-wide:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → from 2026, children from a refugee or asylum seeker background and children who have had contact with Child Protection. → from 2028, children (or guardians) who have a concession card, and children who are a multiple birth child. <p>5.3 Multicultural, multifaith, and culturally and linguistically diverse support: Support multicultural and multifaith communities by strengthening and extending language provision and expanding refugee education support programs and continue support for students of African and Pasifika heritage through the Victorian African Communities Action Plan and Place-based education initiatives.</p>



Strengthening our teaching and education workforce

Description	Growing and supporting our education and care workforces, and supporting best practice in teaching
Key Strategic Plan Initiatives	<p>6.1 School workforce supply initiatives: Support the growing demand for teachers by delivering programs to attract people into the teaching profession and retain the teaching workforce, including Career Start, Initial teacher education and pre-service teacher initiatives, mathematics and science specialisations.</p> <p>6.2 Improving school staff mental health and wellbeing support and reducing administrative workload: Implement initiatives to improve government school staff mental health and wellbeing and undertake an independent review into administrative and compliance activities in government schools.</p> <p>6.3 Best Start, Best Life workforce initiatives: Implement the refreshed workforce strategy through initiatives to build workforce supply and support retention of existing early childhood workforce to deliver high-quality early childhood education.</p>

Foundations



Our people

Description Supporting a strong culture of integrity, inclusion and high performance

Key Strategic Plan Initiatives

- 1.1 Victorian Secretaries Board (VSB) Integrity Statement Action Plan:** Support a strong culture of integrity by implementing the 2023 VSB Integrity Statement Action Plan through the delivery of work planned as part of the department's integrity program and the department's Integrity Statement Action Plan.
- 1.2 Develop a new workforce diversity and inclusion plan:** Consolidate the range of existing strategies and plans into one, to focus effort and streamline actions for greater impact.



Strong systems

Description Ensuring we have the right systems and business processes in place

Key Strategic Plan Initiatives

- 2.1 Cyber security and Information and Communications Technology (Securing Connected Learners):** Create a safe and secure system-wide digital learning environment for students and schools to achieve a globally engaged and competitive education system.
- 2.2 Child Link and Kindergarten information systems:** Continue to roll out a digital register that integrates key information to support individual children's wellbeing and safety (birth to 18 years old). Establish updated kindergarten information systems for monitoring kindergarten funding applications, data collection and develop new enrolment and attendance collection systems.
- 2.3 Improve information access and records management practices:** Implement a strategic Records Management Program consistent with the Records Management Strategy 2024–2028 to improve access to departmental information, support staff to systematically keep high-quality, digital first records and ensure historic records are safeguarded and preserved.

Key Activities

- 2.4** Strengthen and streamline our early childhood regulatory approaches



Partnerships and engagement

Description Building strong and effective partnerships across and with our sectors, families and carers

Key Activities

- 3.1** Partner with Victorian Catholic Education Authority and Independent Schools Victoria to deliver the Teaching Excellence Program at the Victorian Academy of Teaching and Leadership.
- 3.2** Continue working closely with local and federal governments on maximising our collaborative impact.
- 3.3** Continue working closely with the Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions to improve access to VET Delivered to School Students and senior secondary certificate provision through non-school providers as part of the senior secondary pathways reform.

Foundations



Physical infrastructure

Description Building and partnering to create and maintain contemporary, safe, and sustainable spaces

Key Strategic Plan Initiatives

- 4.1 Department of Education Asset Strategy:** Develop and maintain a high-performing asset base by targeting investment and improving processes so assets meet demand, are safe and in good condition, are fit-for-purpose and inclusive, environmentally sustainable, and asset managers are accountable and capable across the early childhood and school systems.
- 4.2 School infrastructure program:** Deliver infrastructure to meet demand including new school construction and associated establishment processes, land acquisition, additional permanent, refurbished and upgraded infrastructure at existing schools and relocatable buildings, with the aim of building 100 schools between 2019 and 2026.
- 4.3 Early childhood infrastructure:** Grants and direct delivery to support expansion of places through kindergarten building projects that support the roll-out of Three-Year-Old Kindergarten and Pre-Prep. Building Blocks is also making kinder buildings, playgrounds and equipment more inclusive for children of all abilities.

Key Activities

- 4.4** Update Kindergarten Infrastructure and Service Plans with all local governments.
- 4.5** Partner with local government, non-government schools and not-for-profit providers to deliver new early childhood infrastructure and identify school sites for delivery of Kindergartens on School Sites.
- 4.6** Undertake analysis to determine where and when new schools should be built, and additional capacity required at established schools.



Stewardship

Description Actively ensuring our sectors deliver outcomes through our state-run schools and services by providing support, guidance, oversight and assurance across education and early childhood sectors

Key Activities

- 5.1** Support Best Start, Best Life provision, planning and change management at the sector and local level.
- 5.2** Strengthen child information sharing and improve service connections in the early years, working with other departments, local governments and partners.



Resilience, mitigation and adaptation to climate change

Description Doing our bit to address climate change and ensuring continuity of learning in the event of natural disasters and emergency events

Key Strategic Plan Initiatives

- 6.1 Education and training climate change adaptation action plan 2022–26:** Build understanding of and guide how to adapt and build resilience to the impacts of climate change.
- 6.2 Greener Government Schools Buildings:** Install solar power systems in schools to lower the cost of electricity and reduce schools' carbon footprint.

How we measure our success

The department uses a set of objective indicators and performance measures to evaluate outcomes and assess how well we are meeting our objectives and delivering our outputs.

Through monitoring and measuring our performance, we are better able to understand and demonstrate the impact we are having on the educational outcomes in the Victorian community. The full set of the department's objective indicators and performance measures are published in the 2024–25 Victorian State Budget Paper 3³.

The department reports progress against the objective indicators and performance measures in the Annual Report⁴. The Annual Report also provides a summary of the progress in implementing the key initiatives outlined in this Strategic Plan.

3. Department of Treasury and Finance (DTF), [2024-25-state-budget, Budget Paper 3](#) — Service Delivery, DTF, 2024

4. [Department of Education Annual Reports](#)

Appendix

Financial and Asset Outlook

Output costs

The 2024–25 Department Performance Statement sets out the department’s outputs and funding. For the 2024–25 financial year, the department’s output budget totals \$16.8 billion.

The department’s objectives and outputs	2024–25 (\$m)
Raise development outcomes of 3 and 4-year old children prior to attending school	
Kindergarten delivery	1,081.4
Early childhood sector supports and regulation	637.5
Raise learning, development, engagement and wellbeing outcomes for all Victorian students	
School education — Primary	5,207.1
School education — Secondary	4,433.5
Wellbeing supports for students	375.9
Supports for schools and staff	1,769.4
Provide equitable and inclusive schooling to all Victorian students	
Promoting equal access to education	1,447.6
Additional supports for students with disabilities	1,855.1
Total ⁵	16,807.5

5. Table may not add due to rounding

Operating performance

The department is expected to report an operating surplus of \$551 million in 2024–25, compared with an expected operating surplus in 2023–24 of \$505 million for the revised budget.

Balance sheet

The department’s net assets position is estimated to increase by \$2.5 billion in 2024–25, compared with the 2023–24 revised budget, reflecting an increase in total assets of \$2.6 billion.

Investing and finance

The department is anticipating an increase of \$110 million in its net cash position in 2024–25, compared with the 2023–24 revised budget increase of \$90 million.

Asset outlook and investment

The department manages a significant and growing asset portfolio to deliver effective education services for Victorians. The asset portfolio includes schools’ property, plant and equipment.

The department’s total assets are estimated to increase to \$50 billion by 30 June 2025. More than \$2.7 billion has been committed in 2024–25 for new and existing capital projects and \$1.6 billion remaining expenditure committed for future capital works. Further financial detail on the department’s asset program is available in the 2024–25 State Budget Paper 4: State Capital Program.



Photo: Bendigo High School





Department
of Education

