

National School Reform Agreement

Victoria Bilateral Agreement:

2021 Progress Report

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Executive Summary

Victorian government and non-government schools made progress towards implementing their reform initiatives during 2021. Like the rest of Australia, reforms were implemented with the backdrop of the COVID-19 pandemic and disruptions and challenges faced by schools.

Victoria agreed to sixteen reform actions under three *National School Reform Agreement* (NSRA) directions with the aim of improving educational opportunities and outcomes for all Victorian students, foster greater collaboration between government and non-government sectors, and support Victoria's local policies and priorities under the states' Education State reform agenda.

This report outlines progress made towards the reform areas outlined in Victoria's Bilateral Agreement for the 2021 calendar year, noting that many reforms under Victoria's Bilateral Agreement are completed or ongoing. All reform actions have progressed, and are on track for the proposed timing for implementation. The report includes the following highlights for the 2021 calendar year: increasing the funding support for the Master of Inclusive Education and Graduate Certificate in Education (Learning Difficulties); successfully adapting the Community Understanding and Safety Training (CUST) program to the online environment; 200 candidates received a Statement of Readiness for the Victorian Aspiring Principal Assessment; and, the non-government sector progressed the transition to the Nationally Consistent Collection of Data on School Students with Disability.

The Victorian Government is progressing broad reforms under the Education State reform agenda to build a modern education system that fosters excellence, equity and wellbeing. While Victoria has completed or is progressing work as outlined in the Bilateral Agreement, the great majority of Victorian school education reform and investment is being undertaken outside of the reform commitments made under the Bilateral Agreement. The Victorian Education State has delivered significant investment and reforms in evidence-based teaching and learning; student inclusion, health, and wellbeing; senior secondary schooling; and modern, vibrant school facilities.

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Progress Against Each Reform Direction

Reform Direction A – Support students, student learning and achievement

Actions	Sector(s)	Timing	Progress towards implementation of actions (including progress of non-government sector actions)
<p>Strengthen teacher practice in Victoria by establishing a Digital Assessment Library, an online resource that will develop and make available new digital student assessment tools and teacher resources to improve student learning assessment.</p>	<p>All Sectors</p>	<p>2020</p>	<p>Implemented in 2020 (activities ongoing).</p> <p><i>Government Schools</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Digital Assessment Library (DAL) increased the number of assessments available for all sectors across 2021 (142). This included additional content for: English, Mathematics, Science, Critical and Creative Thinking and Health and Physical Education. <p><i>Catholic Schools</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A sign-on mechanism to the DAL from the ICON portal was created to establish access to DAL for Victorian Catholic schools. A trial of three schools proved technical access successful. Resources are being created to support schools with strategic intent in the use of DAL assessments. <p><i>Independent Schools</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The DAL increased the number of assessments available for all sectors across 2021 (142). This included additional content for: English, Mathematics, Science, Critical and Creative Thinking and Health and Physical Education.

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Actions	Sector(s)	Timing	Progress towards implementation of actions (including progress of non-government sector actions)
<p>Support students with disabilities and additional needs through providing scholarships for teachers to undertake postgraduate courses in special education.</p>	<p>Government</p>	<p>From 2019</p>	<p>Commenced and ongoing. <i>Government Schools</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Master of Inclusive Education Program has expended 626 Inclusive Education scholarships from 2018- 2022 for teachers in Victorian government schools, and regional support employees (Student Support Services, Visiting Teachers and Regional Behaviour Coaches) to undertake a VIT endorsed postgraduate course focused on inclusive education or applied behaviour analysis. • There are 400 schools involved with the program with 543 recipients, the remaining 83 are regional support employees providing 121 intervention and support. • Announced in November 2020, the Disability Inclusion reform agenda provided expansion funding for the master’s program and an opportunity to develop a Graduate Certificate in Education (Learning Difficulties) (GCE) course tailored to the Victorian context. Both programs have received ongoing funding and will aim to expend a further 300 additional scholarships over the next four years (2022-25). • To date, 266 recipients have completed the master’s program with 360 currently in progress (studying). In addition, 50 teachers were successful in obtaining a place in the GCE program through the Melbourne Graduate School of Education.

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Actions	Sector(s)	Timing	Progress towards implementation of actions (including progress of non-government sector actions)
<p>Assist government school students to make better career and pathway decisions through redesigning careers education to provide Year 9 students with access to a new Careers e-Portfolio, assisted by professional career diagnostic assessment and guidance, including one on one career guidance with accredited career professionals.</p>	Government	From 2019	<p>Implemented in 2019 (activities ongoing). <i>Government Schools</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • My Career Insights diagnostic was delivered online while students were learning from home in both 2020 and 2021.
<p>Roll-out Head Start school-based apprenticeships and traineeships in secondary schools as a new flexible model in senior secondary schooling, involving an optional additional year of school to give secondary students an opportunity to learn their trade at school and get a job sooner.</p>	Government	Ongoing	<p>Commenced and ongoing. <i>Government Schools</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As at the end of 2021, Head Start has supported 1,485 students to undertake an apprenticeship or traineeship alongside their senior secondary certificate since the program began in 2019. The program has a target of 1,700 students between 2018-2022. 820 Head Start students were signed up in 2021. • In 2021, 29 schools became part of 10 Head Start clusters across Victoria, bringing the total to 155 schools offering the program.
<p>Improve educational pathways for students expelled from school through developing and implementing cross-sectoral guidelines to support the</p>	All Sectors	From 2019	<p>Commenced and ongoing. <i>All sectors</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The School Policy and Funding Advisory Council (SPFAC) provides advice to the Minister for Education on regulatory, policy and

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Actions	Sector(s)	Timing	Progress towards implementation of actions (including progress of non-government sector actions)
transition of students expelled from a school into a new education, training or employment setting.			<p>funding issues that affect government and non-government schools.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The SPFAC has established a joint commitment for all three school sectors in Victoria to pursue opportunities for improved data sharing and student transitions between sectors, particularly for students who have been expelled from school. Work undertaken to date has identified barriers with capturing and sharing data across sectors to enable identification and support for these students. Options to address this are currently being pursued, including through proposed expanded use of the Victorian Student Number (subject to legislative change). • The Access and Inclusion Working Group (AIWG), established by SPFAC, is continuing to focus on options for improving transitions between schools, expulsion processes across school sectors, and ways to track student movement.
Participate in Getting it Right From the Start: a project to improve oral language and literacy outcomes in the first two years of school with a focus on equity intervention in low language performing schools.	Catholic	From 2019	<p>Commenced and ongoing <i>Catholic Schools</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Catholic schools continued to collaborate with the Department of Education and Training, the Royal Children’s Hospital and key stakeholders to deliver this project. Baseline data was collected from participating schools in 2021. Phase 1 schools have participated in professional learning and are in the first phase of implementation.

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Reform Direction B – Support teaching, school leadership and school improvement

Actions	Sector(s)	Timing	Progress towards implementation of actions (including progress of non-government sector actions)
Develop and implement the Victorian Aspiring Principal Assessment (VAPA), a benchmark assessment for all aspiring principals. The VAPA will provide feedback to guide development of aspiring principals, and assess their suitability and readiness for the role.	Government	2022	<p>Commenced and ongoing. <i>Government Schools</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> During 2021 a review was conducted of all participants in the VAPA pilot (2017-2020). 218 candidates were provided with a statement of readiness. 18 of these were from Catholic schools. A further 200 candidates were provided with a Statement of Readiness in 2021.
Strengthen STEM education through training additional teachers to become Primary Maths and Science Specialists, increasing STEM knowledge and capability within schools.	Government	2019-2021	<p>Implemented in 2021 (activities ongoing). <i>Government Schools</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cohort 6 of the Primary Mathematics and Science Specialists initiative commenced in 2021 with over 200 teachers due to complete their training in 2022.
Introduce a Professional Practice Leader to support Koorie students' literacy and numeracy.	Government	2019	<p>Implemented in 2019. <i>Government Schools</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> N/A
Work in partnership with the Koorie community to roll out Community Understanding and Safety Training in Victorian government schools to	Government	From 2019	<p>Commenced and ongoing. <i>Government Schools</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In 2021, Victorian schools implemented flexible learning in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Community Understanding and Safety

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Actions	Sector(s)	Timing	Progress towards implementation of actions (including progress of non-government sector actions)
<p>increase school staff’s understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander history, cultures, and experiences to ensure schools are inclusive, responsive and respectful of Koorie learners.</p>			<p>Training (CUST) was adapted to be facilitated virtually to schools during 2021. In a commitment to building ongoing relationships, Traditional Owners and/or local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people were part of virtual training.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In 2021, the number of schools that received training was steady. At the end of 2021, 1219 of 1570 schools (78 per cent) had completed CUST. At campus level, this included 1354 campuses out of 1779 (76 per cent). • Of the Victorian government schools that participated in a Department of Education and Training survey in term three 2021: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 72 per cent reported that they taught Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives in the curriculum ○ 89 per cent of schools flew the Aboriginal flag ○ 98 per cent of schools conducted Acknowledgement of Country at assemblies and special events ○ 40 per cent of schools reported holding celebrations and events in partnership with Koorie community or organisations

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<p>The Commonwealth will work with Victoria to address identified teacher workforce supply needs (particularly in the areas of Maths and Science) including the development of a national teacher workforce strategy reflecting respective areas of responsibility.</p>	<p>All Sectors</p>	<p>2019</p>	<p>Implemented in 2019.</p> <p><i>Government Schools</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N/A <p><i>Catholic Schools</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N/A <p><i>Independent Schools</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N/A
<p>Provide high-quality professional learning and training to teachers and school leaders to support school improvement in areas of identified need.</p>	<p>Non-government</p>	<p>From 2019</p>	<p>Commenced and ongoing</p> <p><i>Catholic Schools</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A suite of new professional learning programs in literacy and maths to support school improvement in these areas • The Maths Sequences of Learning project supports teachers to extend and challenge learning in maths through productive struggle. • The Explicit Teaching in the Early Years program is designed for teachers and leaders working in F-2 classrooms. It aims to develop literacy pedagogical content knowledge, capacity and agency at the individual, school and system level. The program will support

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			<p>teachers to become critically empowered, so that they can better plan for, teach, assess and appraise literacy in their classroom.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • System wide coaching in Agile improvement planning has been conducted with leaders and MACS office staff to support school improvement implementation. <p>Commenced and ongoing. <i>Independent Schools</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professional learning programs delivered by ISV were targeted to address both the content-specific needs of teachers and school leaders and their developmental needs at the different stages of their career development. • Separate programs were targeted, for instance, to new Principals and beginning teachers. • ISV developed a number of online resources and discussion forums to assist teachers in managing remote delivery of their programs during 2021.
Improve board governance in non-government schools through training and resource support.	Non-government	From 2019	<p>Commenced and ongoing. <i>Catholic Schools</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One of the dioceses, through the leadership development team, partnered with Australian Catholic University to offer sponsorship

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			<p>opportunities to 20 leaders in Catholic education to complete post graduate qualifications in 2021.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In order to provide a targeted opportunity for principals and senior leaders, the Master of Business Administration (Executive) (MBAE) was customised to address the unique nature of Catholic schools. This program continued in 2021. • In 2021, students continued to demonstrate increased capacity to demonstrate and maintain good governance, aligned with school-based policy, systemic and government compliance. <p>Commenced and ongoing.</p> <p><i>Independent Schools</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ISV developed and offered online governance training for school leaders and governing board members in 2021. This training covered areas such as board roles and performance, expectations and obligations under Australian company law, risk management, funding processes and financial responsibilities. • Only a limited number of schools received personalised training sessions in 2021 due to pandemic restrictions and personal safety for presenters. During the pandemic, ISV provided personalised training virtually, developed online training modules for governance modules, and continued to add to the suite of resources available on the ISV website. • Additional resources were updated for school board members and senior school staff to access in 2021 via ISV's new platform isComply with a focus on school compliance with VRQA minimum standards.
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			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Governance, Compliance and Risk areas of isConnect had more than 2000 users with over 4000 views.
<p>Continue the transition of Catholic schools to the Integrated Catholic Online Network (ICON) in order to implement best practice administration in schools to meet ongoing government accountability requirements and support teachers and school leaders to analyse, monitor and review student learning gain and wellbeing data.</p>	Catholic	From 2019	<p>Commenced and ongoing. <i>Catholic Schools</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Overall, the ICON project remains on track and on budget. An additional 91 schools migrated successfully onto ICON by the end of 2021. At the conclusion of 2021, 309 had implemented ICON. This included 264 primary schools in the Archdiocese of Melbourne that had 80% of schools serviced by a business manager. A total of 264 schools are using the ICON platform of which 256 are using ICON Shared Services.
<p>Increase the number of independent schools trained in the Process and Performance Management (PPM) approach through the Southern Cross Project in order to use the tools and techniques to improve student outcomes in areas of need, as identified by individual schools.</p>	Independent	2019	<p>Implemented in 2019. <i>Independent Schools</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> N/A

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Reform Direction C – Enhancing the national evidence base

Actions	Sector(s)	Timing	Progress towards implementation of actions (including progress of non-government sector actions)
<p>Support the transition to the Nationally Consistent Collection of Data on School Students with Disability (NCCD) through quality assurance and moderation of NCCD data.</p>	<p>Non-government</p>	<p>From 2019</p>	<p>Commenced and ongoing. <i>Catholic Schools</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All Catholic schools were allocated a Quality Assurance session conducted by a Catholic sector NCCD consultant. During the QA session, evidence of school moderations processes was provided together with evidence required for the inclusion of 8 students in NCCD (4 per-identified students and 4 identified by the assessor on the day). This QA process aligned to the recommendations made on the NCCD webportal. <p>Commenced and ongoing. <i>Independent Schools</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undertook data benchmarking of sector NCCD data to identify schools with unusual data patterns. From this benchmarking, schools were identified to receive targeted support to identify the causes of these variances, and to determine whether they are a

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			<p>result of an inconsistent application of NCCD or genuine differences. Met with a number of schools to provide this targeted support.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conducted a number of moderation workshops across Victoria. • Provided information sessions for staff who were new to the role overseeing their school's NCCD process. • Worked with a number of schools that had been selected to participate in a post-enumeration audit of the 2020 Census of Non-Government schools. The aim of this work was to help the schools understand the evidentiary requirements.