

National School Reform Agreement

Victoria Bilateral Agreement: 2023 Progress Report

National School Reform Agreement – Bilateral Agreement Report – VIC – 2023

Executive Summary

Victoria agreed to 16 reform actions under 3 National School Reform Agreement 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' reform agenda.

This report outlines progress made towards the reform areas outlined in Victoria's Bilateral Agreement for the 2023 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 2023 calendar year:

- In 2023 an additional 821 students commenced School-Based Apprenticeships and Traineeships in Victoria
- 274 Victorian Aspiring Principal Assessment (VAPA) candidates were awarded a Statement of Readiness across all sectors.
- Cohort 7 of the 2-year Primary Mathematics and Science Specialists initiative commenced in 2023, with 100 teachers due to complete their training in December 2024
- To date, school staff at 1,547 Victorian government schools (98 per cent) have undertaken Community Understanding and Safety Training (CUST) to better support Koorie learners, including through developing more culturally inclusive practices
- The Career Start initiative concluded in 2023 and supported over 900 graduates with more than 650 mentors in 200 schools, supporting early career teachers through mentoring, time release, networking opportunities with peers and additional professional supports
- Over 75 educators received wellbeing and mental health training as part of the independent schools' Wayfinder program in 2023, along with 3 Independent Schools Victoria (ISV) staff that are fully trained to deliver Wayfinder programs. The Wayfinder program is delivered to approximately 5000 students

National School Reform Agreement – Bilateral Agreement Report – VIC – 2023

- 9,967 Year 9 government school students accessed My Career Portfolio, which provides students with an online digital tool to develop a career action plan and store important documents such as their Morrisby online report, resumes, awards, and examples of their school work
- All Catholic schools were allocated a Quality Assurance session conducted by a Catholic sector Nationally Consistent Collection of Data on School Students with Disability; and

The Victorian Government is progressing broad reforms 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. Victoria 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.

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)
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.	All Sectors	2020	Implemented in 2020. All Sectors - The Digital Assessment Library increased the number of assessments available for all sectors across 2023 to over 350. - This included additional content for Mathematics.
Support students with disabilities and additional needs through providing scholarships for teachers to undertake postgraduate courses in special education.	Government	From 2019	Commenced and ongoing. Government Schools The Master of Inclusive Education Program has expended 756 Inclusive Education scholarships from 2018-2024, for teachers in Victorian

National School Reform Agreement – Bilateral Agreement Report – VIC – 2023

			government schools and regional support employees to undertake postgraduate courses focused on inclusive education or applied behaviour analysis. • There are 461 schools participating in the program with 662 recipients. The remaining 94 are regional support employees providing intervention and support for schools. • Announced in November 2020, the Disability Inclusion reform agenda provided expanded funding for the master's program and an opportunity to develop a Graduate Certificate in Education (Learning Difficulties) course tailored to the Victorian context. • The Graduate Certificate program has expended 136 scholarships from 2022-2024: ○ There are 115 schools participating in the Graduate program with 126 recipients; the remaining 10 recipients are regional workforce providing coaching and support to schools.
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National School Reform Agreement – Bilateral Agreement Report – VIC – 2023

Actions	Sector(s)	Timing	Progress towards implementation of actions (including progress of non-government sector actions)
			To date, the initiative is on target for expending postgraduate qualifications to schools and region/area teams, with 408 graduates of the Master of Inclusive Education Program and recipients of the Graduate Certificate expected to complete this course over the next 6-24 months.
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.	Government	From 2019	Implemented in 2019 (activities ongoing). Government Schools - My Career Insights diagnostic tool (Morrisby) and unpack interviews were delivered via a mix of face-to-face and remote delivery. - In 2023, 38,784 Year 9 students in government schools completed their Morrisby profile, and 36,091 students completed an unpack interview

National School Reform Agreement – Bilateral Agreement Report – VIC – 2023

Actions	Sector(s)	Timing	Progress towards implementation of actions (including progress of non-government sector actions)
			with a qualified career consultant trained to deliver Morrisby. • In 2023, 9,967 Year 9 government school students accessed My Career Portfolio.
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.	Government	From 2019	Commenced and ongoing. Government Schools • The statewide expansion was officially launched on 20 April 2023 by the Premier and the Minister for Education. • There are now 12 Head Start hubs across Victoria, covering all government secondary schools, ensuring all students have access to the program. Recruitment of more than 100 staff to the Head Start hubs has occurred. • The program will provide support to more than 400 schools, including specialist schools. At the

National School Reform Agreement – Bilateral Agreement Report – VIC – 2023

Actions	Sector(s)	Timing	Progress towards implementation of actions (including progress of non-government sector actions)
			start of 2024, 227 government schools had active School-Based Apprenticeships and Traineeships. • In 2023, alongside the statewide expansion of Head Start, an additional 821 School-Based Apprenticeships and Traineeships commenced in Victoria.
Improve educational pathways for students expelled from school through developing and implementing cross-sectoral guidelines to support the transition of students expelled from a school into a new education, training, or employment setting.	All Sectors	From 2019	Commenced and ongoing. All Sectors • The School Policy and Funding Advisory Council (SPFAC) provides advice to the Minister for Education on regulatory, policy and funding issues that affect government and non-government schools. • SPFAC previously endorsed cross-sectoral guidelines for collaborating across school sectors to explore the expansion of government school

National School Reform Agreement – Bilateral Agreement Report – VIC – 2023

Actions	Sector(s)	Timing	Progress towards implementation of actions (including progress of non-government sector actions)
			expulsion reforms to the non-government school sector. The Department of Education is exploring data linkages between education, training, and Commonwealth settings to enable enhanced follow-up and support for early school leavers aged 16 and under, and to be able to measure student destinations at key ages and stages. This includes strengthening system oversight for students leaving school prior to age 17.
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 and Government	From 2019	Commenced and ongoing. Catholic and Government Schools Catholic and government schools in phase 1 of “Getting it Right From the Start” have now completed the implementation period and outcomes data has been collected. Both sectors continue to collaborate with the Murdoch

National School Reform Agreement – Bilateral Agreement Report – VIC – 2023

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			Children’s Research Institute, university partners and key stakeholders to deliver the final phases of this project and publish papers on methodology and outcomes. • Phase 2 schools are completing implementation, and student outcome data will be collected at the end of 2024 with the final phases of the project continuing into the first half of 2025.

National School Reform Agreement – Bilateral Agreement Report – VIC – 2023

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.	All Sectors	2022	Commenced and ongoing. All Sectors In the 2023 calendar year, 274 VAPA candidates were awarded a Statement of Readiness. This included representation from across government (265), Catholic (1), and independent (5) schools, and international settings (3).
Strengthen STEM education through training additional teachers to become Primary Maths and Science Specialists, increasing STEM knowledge and capability within schools.	Government	2019-2021	Implemented in 2021 (activities ongoing). Government Schools Cohort 7 of the 2-year Primary Mathematics and Science Specialists initiative commenced in 2023, with 100 teachers due to complete their training in December 2024.

National School Reform Agreement – Bilateral Agreement Report – VIC – 2023

Actions	Sector(s)	Timing	Progress towards implementation of actions (including progress of non-government sector actions)
Introduce a Professional Practice Leader to support Koorie students' literacy and numeracy.	Government	2019	Implemented in 2019. Government Schools • A suite of online resources and professional learning has been developed to complement the role of the Professional Practice Leader in supporting Koorie students' literacy and numeracy, including: ○ Koorie English Online resources ○ Koorie English Teacher Guidance Package ○ Aboriginal-themed lessons in the Middle Years Maths Challenges

National School Reform Agreement – Bilateral Agreement Report – VIC – 2023

Actions	Sector(s)	Timing	Progress towards implementation of actions (including progress of non-government sector actions)
Work in partnership with the Koorie community to roll out Community Understanding and Safety Training in Victorian government schools to 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.	Government	From 2019	Commenced and ongoing. Government Schools - Community Understanding and Safety Training (CUST) is delivered to all government school staff to assist schools to better support Koorie learners, including through developing more culturally inclusive practices. To date, school staff at 1,547 Victorian government schools (98 per cent) have undertaken this training. - In 2023, CUST delivery focused on unmet demand from schools, including new and existing staff who had not previously undertaken the training. Schools were also eligible to apply for CUST Project funding which was released over two rounds and saw 73 schools receive funding to deliver a

National School Reform Agreement – Bilateral Agreement Report – VIC – 2023

			range of projects that further their learning from CUST. Through this funding, schools will continue to build and strengthen relationships with Aboriginal families and communities and to extend culturally inclusive practices in their local context. • The Number and proportion of government schools having undertaken CUST: • Schools undertaking CUST each year ○ 2018 - 356 ○ 2019 - 536 ○ 2020 - 135 ○ 2021 - 281 ○ 2022 - 181 ○ 2023 - 58 • Cumulative total number of schools ○ 2018 – 356 (22%) ○ 2019 – 892 (56%) ○ 2020 – 1,027 (65%) ○ 2021 – 1,308 (83%) ○ 2022 – 1,489 (95%) ○ 2023 – 1,547 (98%)
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National School Reform Agreement – Bilateral Agreement Report – VIC – 2023

Actions	Sector(s)	Timing	Progress towards implementation of actions (including progress of non-government sector actions)
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.	All Sectors	2019	Implemented in 2019 (activities ongoing). All Sectors - Alongside other jurisdictions, Victoria helped to develop, and is now implementing, the National Teacher Workforce Action Plan. - Since 2019, the Victorian Government has invested more than \$1.6 billion in school workforce initiatives across 5 priorities — attraction, recruitment, supporting early

National School Reform Agreement – Bilateral Agreement Report – VIC – 2023

			career teachers, retention, and career development. • There were approximately 8,000 more registered teachers in Victoria in June 2023 than in June 2020. • Key workforce initiatives implemented in 2023 include: • The Teach Today and Teach Tomorrow programs, which provide employment-based teaching degrees. These programs reduce financial barriers to studying teaching and help address staffing needs for schools. Across cohorts commencing in 2023, 2024 and 2025, these programs will provide up to 1,200 places for teaching degree students. • The Targeted Financial Incentives program, which supports teachers to take up hard to staff roles in Victorian government schools. Since 2019, the Targeted Financial Incentives
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National School Reform Agreement – Bilateral Agreement Report – VIC – 2023

Actions	Sector(s)	Timing	Progress towards implementation of actions (including progress of non-government sector actions)
			program has supported over 600 teachers to move to hard to staff roles in government schools, with approximately 70% of these positions in rural and regional schools. ○ The Career Start initiative, which supports early career teachers through mentoring, time release, networking opportunities with peers and additional professional supports. The 3-year pilot of Career Start concluded in 2023 and supported over 900 graduates with more than 650 mentors in 200 schools.

National School Reform Agreement – Bilateral Agreement Report – VIC – 2023

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Provide high-quality professional learning and training to teachers and school leaders to support school improvement in areas of identified need.	Non-government	From 2019	Commenced and ongoing. Catholic schools • Developed, delivered and implementation a suite of professional learning programs to uplift mathematics and literacy performance to support school improvement, and maths and literacy performance. • Developed, delivered and implementation of evidence-based, knowledge rich curriculum, and teaching and learning resources in Mathematics and Literacy. • Development and implementation of universal suite of resources for school leaders and teachers in evidence-based practice and explicit instruction. • System wide coaching for teaching teams, leadership teams and system wide

National School Reform Agreement – Bilateral Agreement Report – VIC – 2023

			improvement networks aligned with the MACS Vision for Instruction. Independent Schools • A suite of professional learning programs delivered by ISV continued to be focused on addressing the content-specific needs of teachers and school leaders and their developmental needs at the different stages of their career development. Programs were targeted at principals, new principals, and deputy principals. • A range of programs were developed in response to emerging issues of school improvement, such as • Wellbeing and mental health (Wayfinder) ○ 75+ educators trained in 2023 ○ Program delivered to approximately 5000 students ○ Three ISV staff are fully trained to deliver Wayfinder programs
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National School Reform Agreement – Bilateral Agreement Report – VIC – 2023

			• First Nations Cultural Alertness • Culturally Responsive Pedagogy and Cultural Safety • Decolonising your Library • Embedding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures • Aboriginal Cultural Insight • Rainbow Reflections 101: An introduction into LGBTQIA+ inclusive pedagogy and practice • Climate Change Education: Fit for the Future • Values and Your path in Education • From Burning Out to Burning Bright • StrategyStory – Rapid Strategy to Overcome Challenges • Teaching AI ethics • School Leadership: Juggling and Balancing • Emerge as the leader you are!
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National School Reform Agreement – Bilateral Agreement Report – VIC – 2023

Actions	Sector(s)	Timing	Progress towards implementation of actions (including progress of non-government sector actions)
Improve board governance in non- government schools through training and resource support.	Non-government	From 2019	Commenced and ongoing. Catholic Schools Catholic School Leaders were provided with a targeted opportunity to complete the Master of Business Administration (Executive). The project was delivered in collaboration with the Australian Catholic University and was customised to address the unique nature of Catholic schools. Participants that completed the program reported on the overall benefits and their increased capacity to demonstrate and maintain good governance, aligned with

National School Reform Agreement – Bilateral Agreement Report – VIC – 2023

			school- based policy, systemic and government compliance. Independent Schools • Developed and offered in person and online governance training for school leaders and governing board members in 2023. This training covered established content such as board roles and performance, expectations and obligations under Australian company law, risk management, funding processes and financial responsibilities. • A new topic area, crisis management, was developed and included in training in 2023. In 2023: • 41 participants attended an in-person governance forum, • 125 additional participants attended specific governance forum modules over four evening twilight sessions, • 70 participants accessed recorded twilight sessions, and
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National School Reform Agreement – Bilateral Agreement Report – VIC – 2023

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			• 72 school board members were trained at in-person tailored sessions covering general roles and responsibilities. • Additional resources were updated in 2023 with a focus on school compliance with Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority minimum standards. • The Governance, Compliance and Risk areas of isConnect had 2,174 users with 5,217 views in 2023. • The Governance Help Desk operated throughout 2023 to address specific board questions.

National School Reform Agreement – Bilateral Agreement Report – VIC – 2023

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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.	Catholic	From 2019	Commenced and ongoing. Catholic Schools • A total of 316 schools are using ICON. • Reduction in effort by schools to complete annual activities such as annual financial accounts. • In 2023, further implementation of ICON at schools was paused as a result of the CECV Digital Re-imagination and requirements to make changes aligned with the governance requirements. • At the last CECV ICON Working Group meeting in December 2022, the Committee agreed to consider a reset of the existing ICON platform with the catalysts for

National School Reform Agreement – Bilateral Agreement Report – VIC – 2023

			change, including three core reasons. These challenges recognise the ○ requirements of school governing bodies due to governance changes ○ platform reaching the end of life in October 2024 ○ experience of ICON's users. • A Digital Summit was scheduled in early 2023 with all Victorian dioceses to address the Digital Re-imagination of business capabilities solutions to support a reimagined ICON for Catholic education. • The Digital Re-imagination Program brings together the four Victorian Catholic diocese school governing bodies to align on a shared vision for how to best utilise digital tools to deliver education across Victorian Catholic schools. • The Steering Committee provides executive oversight and support for the Digital Re-imagination program.
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National School Reform Agreement – Bilateral Agreement Report – VIC – 2023

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			In 2023, the Digital Re-imagination program delivered on specifications of prioritised business capabilities and their inter-dependencies, followed by a procurement strategy and market analysis.
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.	Independent	2019	Implemented in 2019. Independent Schools - Southern Cross was offered in 2023 and ran with 4 schools participating. - An additional PPM program was offered in 2023, innovationXdesign, and 5 schools participated.

National School Reform Agreement – Bilateral Agreement Report – VIC – 2023

Reform Direction C – Enhancing the national evidence base

Actions	Sector(s)	Timing	Progress towards implementation of actions (including progress of non-government sector actions)
Support the transition to the Nationally Consistent Collection of Data on School Students with Disability (NCCD) through quality assurance and moderation of NCCD data.	Non-Government	From 2019	Commenced and ongoing. Catholic Schools • All Catholic schools continue to be provided with an annual Quality Assurance session conducted by a Catholic sector NCCD consultant to review evidentiary requirements. • Catholic schools are provided with templates and resources to support implementation of NCCD including a Key Timeframes and Activities guide to support schools to meet the evidentiary requirements in a timely manner, moderation tool and guides to support school moderation, and templates for recording Personalised Learning Plans for students. • All Victorian Catholic schools are provided with a high level survey annually to provide VCEA with

National School Reform Agreement – Bilateral Agreement Report – VIC – 2023

			data on the use of NCCD funding to support access and participation in education for students with disability. • VCEA conducts annual NCCD professional learning sessions for new staff overseeing the NCCD. Independent Schools • ISV undertakes annual data benchmarking of sector NCCD data to identify schools with unusual data patterns. From this benchmarking, schools receive targeted support to identify the causes of these variances (e.g. an inconsistent application of NCCD or genuine differences). The targeted support aims to assist at all levels within schools – school leadership, individual learning needs teams and classroom teachers – and focuses on: ○ How to identify students with additional need, including students with disability ○ How to undertake the NCCD process
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National School Reform Agreement – Bilateral Agreement Report – VIC – 2023

Actions	Sector(s)	Timing	Progress towards implementation of actions (including progress of non-government sector actions)
			○ The evidentiary requirements for inclusion in the NCCD ○ Links between the NCCD, the Disability Discrimination Act and the Disability Standards for Education • ISV conducted a number of moderation workshops across Victoria. This is a continual improvement project designed both to maximise data consistency between schools and to improve processes in schools, by schools sharing their approaches to issues such as to imputing a disability, consultation with parents and students, and general record-keeping. • ISV provided information sessions for 62 staff who were new to the role of overseeing their school's NCCD process.