



# THE EDUCATION STATE

Consultation Paper

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#### ACCESSIBILITY

This document is also available on the internet at [educationstate.education.vic.gov.au](http://educationstate.education.vic.gov.au)

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## MINISTERS' MESSAGE

In the lead up to the 2014 election, the Andrews Labor Government made a commitment to establish Victoria as the Education State.

We made this commitment because we believe that every Victorian has an equal right to the knowledge and skills to shape their lives, regardless of their background, their personal circumstances or where they live.

We believe that every child should have the best start in life, with access to safe, quality early childhood services, and support to learn, play and grow.

We believe that every family should have access to great schools for their kids, with great teaching in every classroom.

And we believe that every Victorian should be able to access quality training to get the skills they need for the job they want, building employer confidence in the skills and expertise of our workforce.

The vision for Victoria as the Education State is about a public guarantee – the guarantee of educational excellence and opportunity in every community.

It's about supporting all Victorians to live the lives they want to live, and get the jobs they need, securing our state's economic and social future.

These ambitions come from strong Labor values, but we believe they go beyond politics to something more fundamental. We believe that education represents the beliefs and aspirations of all Victorians.

And so we invite all Victorians to guide and strengthen our ideas through dialogue and debate, to help us develop a universal and lasting plan for our state's education future.

We've already made a great start, investing \$3.9 billion in this year's Budget. This is the biggest ever single boost to education funding in Victoria's history.

But we need to go further. Education and training outcomes have stalled in Victoria over recent years and the pace of change in our economy means that standing still is going backwards. Victoria's education and training system must keep up with the new skills that industry needs to succeed in both local and international markets.

Building the Education State will require openness and honesty about what's great about education in Victoria now, what's holding us back and what we can all do to foster improved learning and development at home, in schools and kindergartens, in TAFEs, training providers and universities, and in businesses and communities across the state.

This paper is just the beginning of a discussion with all Victorians about how we can take a very good education system and make it consistently great for all Victorians.

As we build the Education State, we will involve you along the way. We welcome your ideas, your experiences, your aspirations and inspirations for learning – both in and out of the classroom – to make Victoria the Education State.



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "James Merlino".

**The Hon. James Merlino MP**  
Deputy Premier,  
Minister for Education



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "J Mikakos".

**The Hon. Jenny Mikakos MP**  
Minister for Families and Children



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Steve Herbert".

**The Hon. Steve Herbert MP**  
Minister for Training and Skills

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Victoria's economy is changing rapidly. Global forces are shaping the market for jobs and the industries that will dominate our economy in the years and decades to come.

Our education system – our early childhood services, schools, TAFEs, training providers and universities – will be the key to our future success.

Just as our economy is changing and new challenges are emerging, our knowledge and understanding of how the human brain learns throughout all stages of our lives is growing just as fast.

We're better prepared than ever before to ensure that education is a positive force in our lives.

Victoria currently has a good education system, with strong outcomes for most children, young people and adults from the early years through to post-school education. But if we're to keep pace with globalisation and ensure all Victorians can get the jobs they need and want to succeed in work and in life, then our education and training system needs to change.

The success that's currently experienced by most needs to be guaranteed for all.

We know from research into the world's best education systems that if we focus on a few key areas and work together, we can take our education system from good to great and ensure economic and social prosperity for all.

To develop a clear plan for the Education State, we're beginning a discussion with all Victorians about what our state could achieve, and how we could work differently to achieve it.

We are proposing to use six key ideas as a way to guide this discussion: achieving excellence, equity and lifelong learning; valuing expertise; working in partnership with communities and industry; and acting with integrity, accountability and transparency.

Through this discussion we will be seeking your views on education across all stages of life, through early childhood, schools, higher education, training and skills.

All Victorians are encouraged to have their say and work with us to build a vision for the Education State, a vision that will help shape Victoria's future.



## WE'VE ALREADY STARTED

Labor's *Back to School* plan mapped out a clear set of actions to rebuild the foundations of our education system. These promised actions are now being delivered through the allocation of \$3.9 billion to early childhood, schools, TAFEs and universities in the 2015-16 State Budget.

These investments will help a generation of young Victorians to get the education and training they need to secure good jobs, ensuring every Victorian has the best chance to succeed in life.

The budget commits funding to a range of initiatives that will help remove the barriers to educational opportunity and set our system up for success, including:

- \$50 million to build early childhood facilities across the state
- \$9 million for Early Childhood Intervention Services
- a \$148 million Camps, Sports and Excursions fund to help the families of over 200,000 students with the cost of these essential experiences
- \$16 million for the Affordable School Uniforms program in partnership with State Schools' Relief
- \$14 million for School Breakfast Clubs to help over 25,000 students start the day ready to learn
- \$25 million for school maintenance to improve the physical standard of our schools and classrooms.
- \$8 million for planning works to establish 10 tech schools
- \$1.6 million for mentoring to connect secondary students with university life
- \$1 million for the Safe Schools Coalition to combat bullying and support all students
- \$688 million for new and upgraded schools, including \$325 million to renovate, refurbish and rebuild 67 schools, with nine receiving major rebuilds of \$10 million or more

- \$300 million to complete the \$320 million TAFE Rescue Fund
- \$50 million for the TAFE Back To Work Fund
- \$32 million to work with disengaged and at-risk youth through the Local Learning and Employment Networks
- \$8 million to establish the Victorian Skills Commissioner
- \$4 million for International Student Welfare Grants
- \$2 million to support the General Sir John Monash Foundation to offer a new scholarship category just for Victorians
- and \$1.4 billion for Victorian schools to help establish Victoria as the Education State.

This \$3.9 billion investment is an investment in Victoria's future and the potential of every Victorian student. It is founded in a belief that with the right support, every child and young person can succeed in education, in work, and in life.

The Budget also means that for the first time, Victoria will fully meet its obligations under the Gonski school funding agreement across the 2015, 2016 and 2017 school years. A review of the government school funding model is being led by former Premier, the Hon. Steve Bracks AC, to inform funding beyond 2017 and provide teachers, principals and school communities with greater transparency. A review of the Program for Students with Disabilities as part of the *Special Needs Plan* will complement the Bracks review.

Reviews are also underway into regional services to support schools, the funding of our Vocational Education and Training (VET) system, and the quality of training provision.

These reviews, and discussions with you and the community, will provide the Government with the basis for building a stronger, more coherent education system that supports every child, student and family, and helps us achieve the goals of the Education State.





## A STATE OF CHANGE

The 2015-16 State Budget and the work underway to rebuild Victoria's education system have kick-started our journey towards the Education State, but we need to do more.

Generations of Victorians have understood that our future prosperity depends on our capacity to change; to adapt to the world around us and carve out new futures.

This capacity to change has been at the heart of Victoria's story, from successive waves of migrants to our state, to the story of those leading the transformation of our economy from its traditional manufacturing base, to new frontiers in knowledge and service-based industries.

Through our shared history this capacity to change – to learn, adapt and to shape our lives – has defined us.

Now, in 2015, the global pace of change is demanding more of us than ever before.

Our economy is changing rapidly and we're experiencing unprecedented demand for highly skilled and creative workers. Employers want a workforce that can think critically and creatively, apply skills that are relevant to industry, understand the world through the eyes of others, and work collaboratively to solve problems.

Victoria's youth unemployment rate averaged 14.6% at the end of 2014.

Globalisation and technological change mean that our knowledge and skills will give Victorians the edge we need to succeed internationally. Victoria cannot have a prosperous future without an educated, highly skilled workforce that is well-placed to seize new opportunities in a changing economy, so making world-class education and training accessible to all Victorians is not just a matter of equity, but a matter of economic survival.

Over the next 20 years, digital processing, machine learning and technology will change jobs as we know them, including how our businesses work and connect to the world. There will be jobs in the future that we can't yet imagine.

Occupations requiring high levels of maths and science skills are growing between two and four times faster than occupations with low or no maths and science skills.

We also know that Victoria is shifting from an industrial economy to a services and knowledge-based economy.

The Government's *Back to Work* plan focuses on six sectors with potential for extraordinary growth, six sectors in which Victoria is ready to lead the world.

These are:

- medical technology and pharmaceuticals
- new energy technology
- food and fibre
- transport, defence and construction technology
- international education
- professional services.

The connection between these industries and the need for change in our education system – from our early years services to higher education and training – is clear.

For these industries to thrive in an unknown future, Victorians will again need to draw on our capacity to learn and change, to encounter these challenges with knowledge, wisdom, empathy and tolerance.

We're well positioned to respond to what the future will ask of us. Through developments in neuroscience and our involvement in innovations like the Science of Learning Research Centre, we now know more about how the human brain develops and learns – and about how teaching reliably leads to learning – than ever before.

But if we're to rise to these challenges and meet them head-on, our education system – our schools, kindergartens, TAFEs, training providers and universities – must be supported to change and grow. And we must act now.

*"Our brains renew themselves throughout life to an extent previously thought not possible."  
– Michael Gazzaniga, Cognitive neuroscientist*



## OUR CURRENT STATE

Since first enshrining our state's hopes and ambitions for education in the *Education Act of 1872*, Victoria has built a strong and diverse system that has at times led the world in innovation and outcomes.

Now, in 2015, there are lots of positives.

### OUR STRENGTHS:

- The vast majority of young Victorian children visit maternal and child health services and participate in kindergarten, which gives them a good start early in life.

Evidence shows students who attend at least one year of kindergarten have much better literacy and numeracy at Year 3.

- We rank above all other Australian states and territories when measuring the proportion of 5 year olds who are developmentally on track.
- Our students perform well in international tests compared to all other states and most similar countries, and are global leaders in problem solving and computer and information literacy.

Victoria had 39% of students achieve in the top two bands of the 2013 International Computer and Information Literacy Study, higher than all participant countries.

- We out-perform all other Australian states and territories in relation to Year 12 or equivalent attainment.

- Our international education sector is Victoria's single largest export industry, generating \$4.7 billion for the state and around 30,000 jobs.

The Victorian Year 12 attainment rate has increased from 84% in 2005 to 89% 2014.

- We have some of the world's best researchers in our universities, and have been awarded the highest level of health and medical research funding over the past 10 years.

For the most part, we have a high quality system, characterised by the quality and dedication of the workforce in early years services, schools, and TAFE. We are rebuilding TAFEs, improving training's responsiveness to industry needs, and strengthening quality assurance in our VET system. We also have a vibrant university sector, with strengths in its global links with business and research, and innovation.

But there are areas where we could do better.

### OUR CHALLENGES:

- In the years before school, too many children fall short of the key developmental stages that will prepare them for success at school.
- The educational achievement of Victorian students has stalled over the past decade, while funding has increased, and while students in other parts of the world have leapt ahead.

Between 2000 and 2012, Hong Kong, Japan, Korea, Ireland and Canada improved their performance in reading literacy and overtook Victoria in international rankings – while our performance did not change.

- Victoria has fewer students achieving at the highest academic levels than in comparable education systems.
- Each year, more than 10,000 young Victorians in Years 9 to 11 leave school and do not go on to any other education or training provider.

Students from regional and rural areas are less likely to complete Year 12 than their metropolitan peers.

- A further 6,000 young people leave school to enrol in training, only to exit entirely from education within a year.
- Student satisfaction with training is declining in Victoria. Training delivery is not meeting industry skills needs.
- Apprenticeship and traineeship student numbers have dropped by 40 per cent since 2012.
- TAFE enrolments have dropped by 33 per cent in 2014, and TAFE market share has dropped to 25 per cent of the total training market.
- Completion rates in vocational training are generally low – especially among young and adult learners experiencing educational or personal barriers to learning.

We also know that some Victorians face greater challenges than others, with persistent gaps in outcomes for particular groups, including Koorie students, children and young people with special needs and those from low socioeconomic backgrounds.

Only half of all Year 10 Koorie students are still in school two years later (Year 12), compared with 83% of non-Koorie students.

### DISCUSSION STARTERS

- Do these strengths and challenges reflect your experience of Victoria's education system?
- What other areas of our current performance do we need to address to help us to become the Education State?
- Are there areas of our performance that we need to know more about?
- Should we measure our performance against both local and global measures of success?



# A FUTURE EDUCATION STATE

We want to build on our strengths and respond to the challenges before us to ensure that Victoria moves from a good system to a universally great one.

This will require a long term and sustained effort with involvement across all Victorian communities.

There will be big changes, with each part of our system starting from different points and each bringing different skills and attributes.

To guide our work and re-imagine our education system, we've proposed a set of ideas and objectives relating not only to what we're striving to achieve, but how to achieve them.

These statements are intended to help us define what the Education State might look and feel like to students, parents and carers, teachers, and businesses.

Each idea is drawn from our research into how the best education systems across the globe have successfully transformed learning and development for their communities.

Ideas for what we can achieve	What success might look like
<b>Excellence</b>	Victoria's children and young adults aren't just reaching their potential, they're also happy, confident and resilient
	Victorian students are excelling not just in literacy and numeracy, but in the sciences, languages, music and the arts
	Students can access a diverse range of pathways that include high quality vocational and applied courses that prepare them for the world of work, meet industry skills needs, and grow economic productivity
<b>Equity</b>	Victorians are able to access high quality training that meets industry skills needs, grows economic productivity, and leads to jobs
	Victorians' success in education doesn't depend on their background, their abilities or where they live
	All new parents are supported with the knowledge and skills to help their kids thrive, from birth onwards
<b>Lifelong engagement in learning</b>	Victorians feel well supported to move between different stages of education and training
	At every stage of life, Victorians feel confident that they can transform their lives, their careers and their future, through re-learning and re-skilling
	Victoria has a highly connected education system, with schools, kindergartens, TAFEs and universities collaborating with business, local government and communities to share success and learn how to improve
<b>By valuing expertise</b>	Our educators and leaders are recognised as highly skilled professionals and teaching is respected and valued as a high-status career
	Employers have the confidence to grow, explore and innovate, backed by the availability of a highly skilled and adaptable workforce, with high quality, relevant skills qualifications





Ideas for what we can achieve	What success might look like
<b>In partnership with communities</b>	All parts of the community – including local government, business, parents and community groups – contribute to building the Education State
	Victoria's public TAFEs are rebuilt and supported to provide students with relevant skills and service the job needs of their local communities and industries
<b>By acting with increased integrity, accountability and transparency</b>	All Victorians have confidence in their local early years services, schools, TAFE and training providers and universities
	Our educators feel empowered to make good decisions, with access to the best available evidence and support to learn and improve
	All parts of the education system are transparent about their performance and Victorians feel involved in the progress of the Education State
	Policy makers, educators and other service providers act with integrity and in the best interest of the communities they serve

These statements of what success might look like are intended as stakes in the ground as we continue to rebuild and reshape our system.

They indicate the scale and ambition of the changes we hope to see in building Victoria as the Education State. They are a starting point for a discussion with you and the community.

Based on your feedback, these statements will form the basis for setting clear targets, and for benchmarking and measuring our progress in a way that can be shared with all Victorians.

### DISCUSSION STARTERS

- What will the Education State look and feel like to you? How would you define it?
- As a learner, what is your experience of education and what impact has it, or will it have, on your life?
- What would you like to be different when you visit early years services, kindergartens, schools, TAFEs and training providers – now and in the future?
- What is the most important thing you could do, and Government can do, to help Victoria become the Education State?
- What targets do you think we need to set to measure our progress towards becoming the Education State?
- How can we make better links for people through their education stages, for example, transition from school to employment, training or university?
- What opportunities exist in our communities for learning outside of the formal education system, for example in our libraries, museums and community centres?

## A STATE-WIDE DISCUSSION

Establishing Victoria as the Education State will require the most inspired thinking from across the Victorian community, tapping into the best local and global expertise about what works to improve education.

To be successful, we need to start with a discussion with all Victorians about what education means to us and about how our education system can support us to succeed in life, in work and in society.

We want to hear from all Victorians about what the Education State means to you.

We have already started to hear from parents and carers, early childhood providers, students, businesses, TAFEs, local councils and schools about what matters to them and many of the ideas have contributed to this paper.

We've heard that Victorians share a strong commitment to improved student engagement and achievement, and to see us build educational leadership and a world-class teaching profession, maximising the contribution of education and care institutions to the social, cultural and economic life of the community.

We have heard about Victoria's many excellent institutions, and many inspirational educators, health professionals and support services.

We've also had consistent and sustained feedback that we need to do more for our most vulnerable Victorians, that transitions between institutions and stages of learning and work are not adequately supported and that our current support arrangements for schools, community providers and TAFEs are insufficient to meet the rising demands in society and the expectations of parents and employers.

The discussion about the Education State has started with this paper to spark ideas that span across our entire education system.

A more detailed set of ideas and proposals for what improvement could look like for our schools is available at [educationstate.education.vic.gov.au](http://educationstate.education.vic.gov.au)

You can access more information about the Education State consultation at [educationstate.education.vic.gov.au](http://educationstate.education.vic.gov.au)

## HOW YOU CAN GET INVOLVED

This document and the questions in it are just the start of an ongoing discussion across the Victorian community to build a vision for the Education State.

Throughout 2015, there will be specific opportunities to provide your views about each of our education sectors: schools, early childhood services, and vocational education and training.

### FEEDBACK AND OPPORTUNITIES TO PARTICIPATE

We are inviting all Victorians to be part of a state-wide discussion on what the Education State means to them.

Throughout June and July we will be running a series of consultation forums on the Education State where we will be asking the community to share their views.

The timetable for the consultation is:

- Release of discussion papers – June 2015
- Stakeholder consultations – June to end of July 2015

We would like to hear from students, parents and carers, early childhood providers, teachers, business, local

government, education providers, principals, school council members and the broader Victorian community. Education impacts all Victorians in one way or another, so it is important that we all have an opportunity to say what we think it will take to make Victoria the Education State.

To register for the Education State consultation opportunities, or to join the conversation online, go to [educationstate.education.vic.gov.au](http://educationstate.education.vic.gov.au)



