

Submission to Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission

National Inquiry into Rural and Remote Education

**Department of Education, Employment and Training
(DEET) Victoria**

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- List of Appendices (not included with this electronic version)**

1. Rural and Remote Education National Inquiry Terms of Reference

The Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission's National Inquiry into Rural and Remote Education is to inquire into the provision of education for children in rural and remote Victoria with reference to :

- the availability and accessibility of both primary and secondary schooling
- the quality of educational services, including technological support services
- whether the education available to children with disabilities, Indigenous children and ethnic and religious minority children fulfils their needs and human rights.

2. Curriculum Context

2.1 Reviews of the P-12 Curriculum in Victoria

- In 1998 the Victorian Board of Studies (BOS) reviewed the Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE) curriculum at Years 11-12. Studies have been revised and updated. A number of these were accredited at the end of 1998 to be implemented in 2000. Twenty-four revised VCE studies will commence in 2000. During 1999 BOS will accredit the remaining revised VCE studies for implementation in 2001.
- A rigorous review by BOS of the Curriculum and Standards Framework P-10 (CSF) is currently underway. This review is premised on the view that there are essential learnings at particular stages of schooling, that Victoria's curriculum should be benchmarked against the best in the world, that the importance of the Information Technologies across all Key Learning Areas (KLAs) should be recognised and that students should be properly equipped to take part as life-long learners in an increasingly diversified and changing workforce. CSF II will be available at the start of the 2000 school year.

2.2 Priorities and Targets

- The Department has targeted the performance of students in the Early (P-4) and Middle (5-8) years, as areas requiring special attention by all schools.
- Literacy, numeracy and science have been identified as major priorities together with civics and citizenship education.
- The Department is committed to implement a comprehensive strategy to improve the quality of teaching and learning in science from Prep to Year 10. These projects have been collectively called the Science in Schools – *SET for Success* projects.
- Victoria aims to achieve 100 per cent literacy proficiency for school children at Year 3 by the end of 2005; and Victorian students to be in the top five in the world in mathematics and science by 2010

3. Demographic Data

The following data* is obtained from:

1. ***The Schools Census Data : Summary Statistics For Victorian Schools 28 June 1999*** This paper also compares some data with previous years back to 1994. (Strategic Planning, Project Development & Evaluation Division, Department Of Education, Employment and Training)
2. ***The Schools Census Data : Statistics For Victorian Schools February 1999*** (Strategic Planning, Project Development & Evaluation Division, Department Of Education, Employment and Training)
3. ***ABS Schools, Australia*** (Australian Bureau of Statistics 1998)
4. ***Victorian Schools and Students by Location 1999*** (Strategic Planning, Project Development & Evaluation Division, Department Of Education, Employment and Training)
5. ***Students with Disabilities and Impairments Data 1999*** (Student Welfare Section, School Support Division, Department Of Education, Employment and Training)

3.1 Victorian Government Schools General Information (including year levels)

3.1.1 Full-time Equivalent students (FTE) in Victorian Government Schools

Date	No of FTE students
February 1998	525,998.5
February 1999	529,072.0
July 1999	526,196.7

Table 1 : Full-time Equivalent students (FTE) in Victorian Government Schools

Source : Summary Statistics Victorian Schools 1998-1999 and Victorian Schools and Students by Location 1999 (1 and 4*)

3.1.2 Government Schools by School Type, February 1999

School Type	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
Primary	1,339	1,312	1,301	1,270	1,253	1,243
Pri-Sec	23	29	35	37	40	42
Secondary	295	289	281	272	269	267
Special	85	84	83	82	81	80
Language	3	3	3	3	3	3
Total	1,745	1,717	1,703	1,664	1,646	1,635

Table 2 Government Schools by type 1999

Source: School Statistics February 1999 (2*)

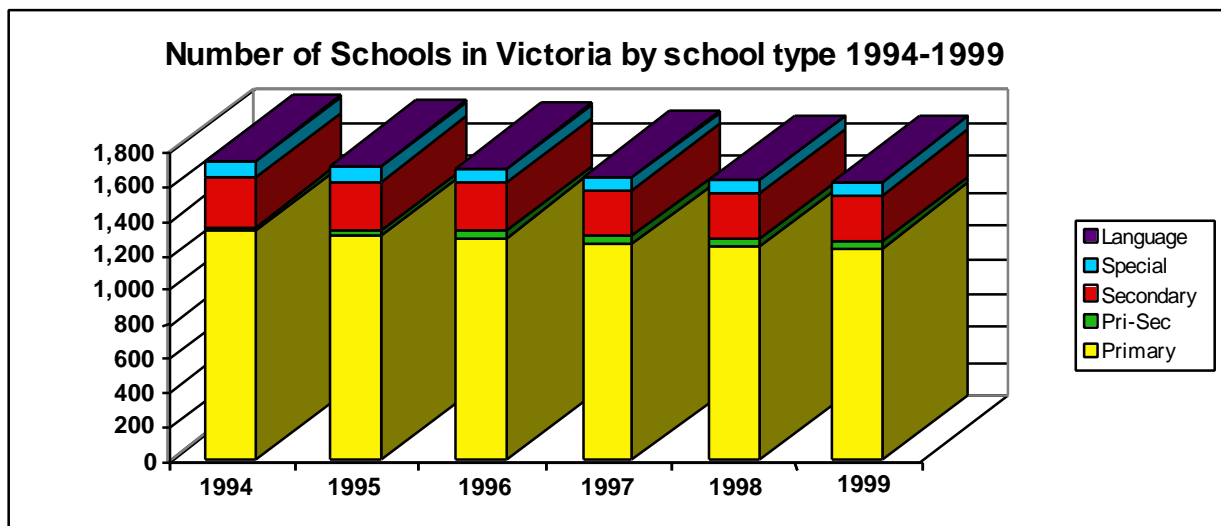


Diagram 1 : Victorian Schools by School Type 1994 - 1999

3.1.3 Government School Students (FTE) by Student Type, February 1999

Student Type	1998	1999
Primary	303,752.3	306,215.8
Secondary	216,355.4	216,369.6
Special	5,145.8	5,413.6
Language	745.0	1,073.0
Total	525,998.5	529,072.0

Table 3 : Government School Students by School Type

Source: Summary Statistics for Victorian Schools February 1998 - 1999 (1*)

Note : P-12 Information not listed as Primary students and Secondary students are distributed within appropriate categories.

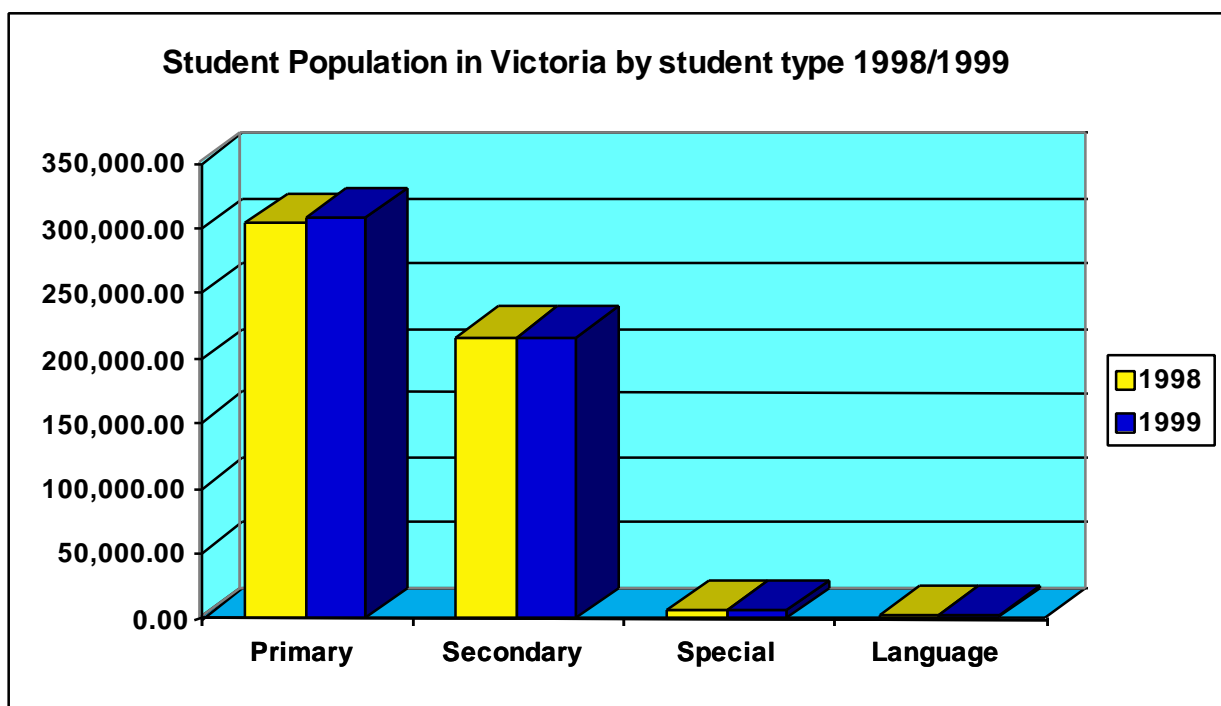


Diagram 2 : Victorian Student Population by School Type 1998-1999

3.1.4 Primary Students (FTE) by Year Level (Government Schools), February 1999

Year Level	Students
Preparatory	45,465.9
Year 1	45,262.2
Year 2	44,024.6
Year 3	44,539.8
Year 4	42,019.6
Year 5	43,006.8
Year 6	41,877.6
Ungraded	19.3
Primary Total	306,215.8

Table 4 : Primary Students by Year Level 1999

Source: Summary Statistics for Victorian Schools February 1999 (1*)

3.1.5 Secondary, Special and Language School Students (FTE) by Year Level (Government Schools), February 1999

Year Level	Students
Year 7	37,803.9
Year 8	38,095.6
Year 9	38,430.8
Year 10	37,213.9
Year 11	35,160.0
Year 12	29,549.2
Ungraded	116.2
Secondary Total	216,369.6

Special	5,413.6
Language	1,073.0
Grand Total	529,072.0

Table 5 : Secondary, Special and Language School Students by Year Level 1999

Source: Summary Statistics for Victorian Schools February 1999 (1*)

3.2 Victorian Schools and Students by Location 1999

Victorian Schools can be classified according to location. The location classifications used in this document are as follows :

Location Classifications

1. 'Metropolitan' is defined as within the Melbourne Statistical Division
2. 'Provincial' is defined as a town or city with a population greater than 20,000 people

3. **'Rural'** is defined as an area with less than 20,000 people not receiving Country Areas Program (CAP) funding
4. **'Isolated'** is defined as a CAP funded school. CAP funded schools are more than 150km from Melbourne, more than 25km from the nearest Provincial city of 20,000 or more and located in a community less than 5000 people.

3.2.1 Summary of Victorian Schools by Location

School Type	Metropolitan		Provincial		Rural		Isolated		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Primary	613	49.3%	88	7.1%	276	22.2%	266	21.4%	1,243	100.0%
Pri/Sec	11	26.2%	3	7.1%	2	4.8%	26	61.9%	42	100.0%
Secondary	166	60.8%	30	11.0%	42	15.4%	35	12.8%	273	100.0%
Special	52	65.8%	11	13.9%	13	16.5%	3	3.8%	79	100.0%
Language	3	100.0%	-	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	3	100.0%
Total	845	51.5%	132	8.0%	333	20.3%	330	20.1%	1,640	100.0%

Table 6 : Summary Victorian Schools by Location 1999

Source : Victorian Schools and Students by Location 1999 (4*)

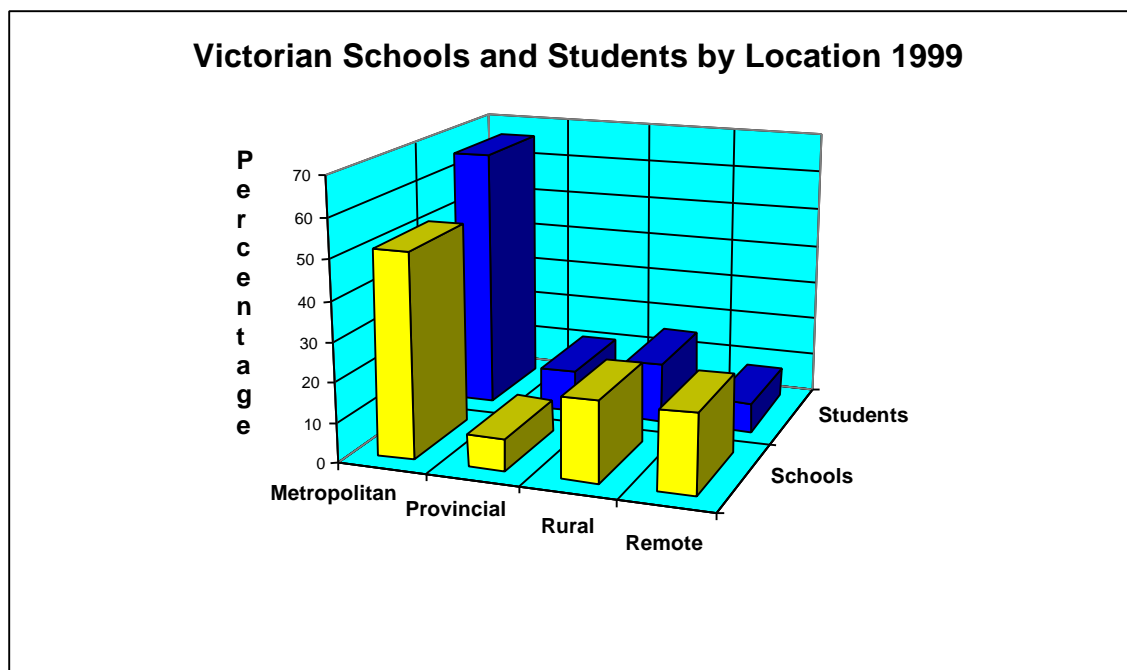


Diagram 3 - Victorian Schools and Students by Location 1999 (Source 1999 School Census)

- 51% of all Victorian schools (but 66% of the students) are located in the Melbourne Metropolitan area
- 20% of all Victorian schools (but only 8% of the students) are located in Remote areas

- 40% of all Victorian schools (but only 23% of the students) are located in Rural and Remote areas
- 66% of all Specialist Schools and 61% of all Secondary Colleges are located in the Melbourne Metropolitan area
- 14% of all Specialist Schools and 11% of all Secondary Colleges and are located in Provincial areas
- 5% of all P-12 Colleges and 15% of all Secondary Colleges are located in Rural areas
- 21% of all Primary schools and 60% of all P-12 colleges are located in remote areas

Student Type	Metropolitan		Provincial		Rural		Isolated		Total	
	FTE	%	FTE	%	FTE	%	FTE	%	FTE	%
Primary	204,320.6	66.4%	28,170.5	9.2%	48399.4	15.7%	26692.3	8.7%	307,582.8	100.0%
Secondary	139,022.2	65.6%	28,143.9	13.3%	31746.2	15.0%	13145.5	6.2%	212,057.8	100.0%
Special	4,270.0	77.5%	758.9	13.8%	434.9	7.9%	42.5	0.8%	5,506.3	100.0%
Language	1,049.8	100.0%	-	0.0%	-	0.0%	-	0.0%	1,049.8	100.0%
Total	348,662.6	66.3%	57,073.3	10.8%	80580.5	15.3%	39880.3	7.6%	526,196.7	100.0%

Table 7 : Summary Victorian Students by Location 1999

Source : Victorian Schools and Students by Location 1999 (4*)

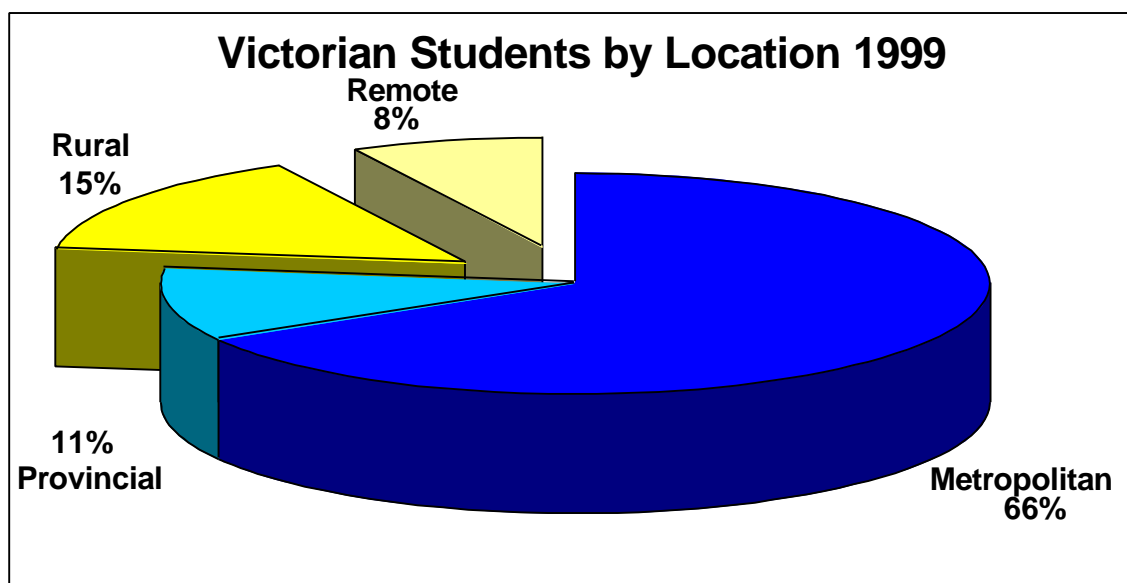
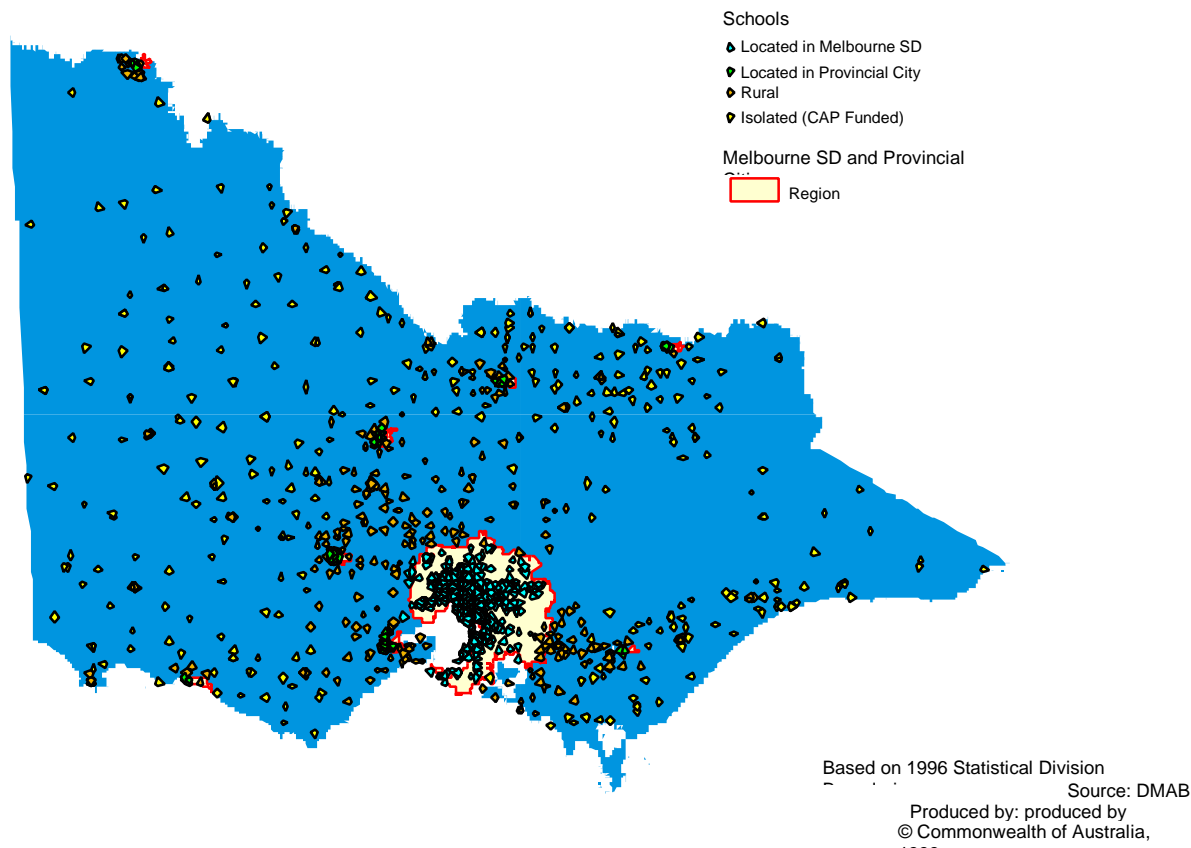


Diagram 4 - Victorian Students by Location 1999 (Source School Census 1999)

Education Victoria

Diagram 5 : Schools in Victoria by Location

Schools classified by location



3.3 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student population

3.3.1 Number of full-time equivalent students 1998

Location	Number of Students (EFT)	Percentage
Metropolitan/Provincial	3043.0	63.29
Rural/Remote	1764.9	36.71
Total Aboriginal students (EFT)	4807.9	100.00

Table 8 : Number of full-time equivalent Koorie students
Source : ABS schools 1998 (3*)

Aboriginal students account for **0.92%** of total government student enrolments in 1998.

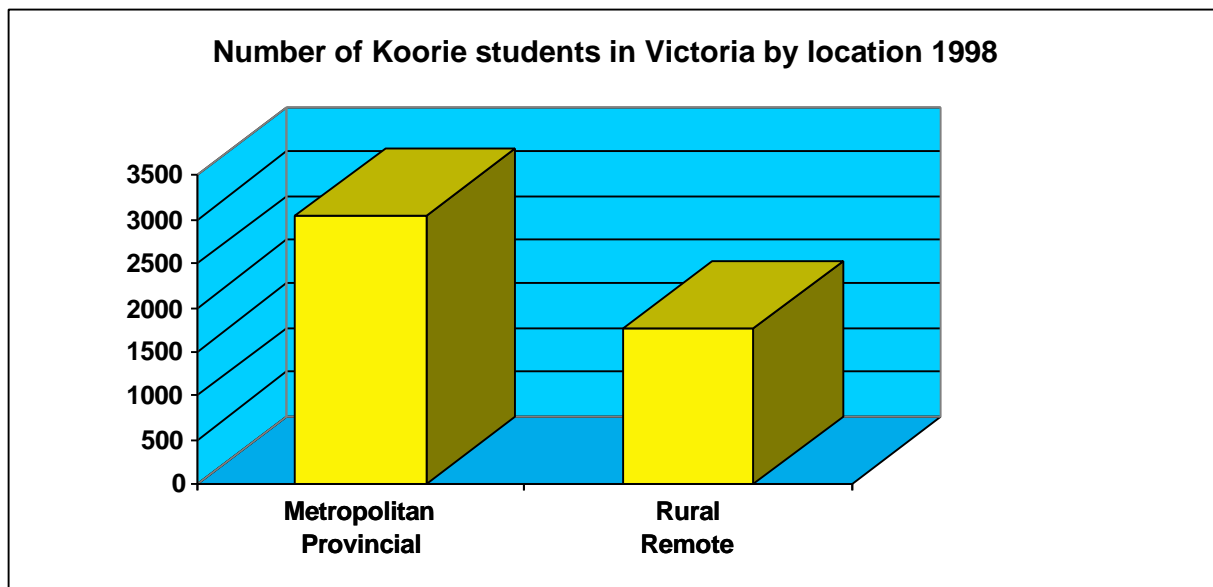


Diagram 6-Victorian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students by Location (Source School Census 1999)

3.4 Student population by Gender

3.4.1 Government school students (FTE) by Gender, February 1999

Males	Females	Total Students	% Female
271,859.0	257,213.0	529,072.0	48.6

Table 9 : Student population by Gender 1999

Source: Summary Statistics for Victorian Schools February 1999 (1*)

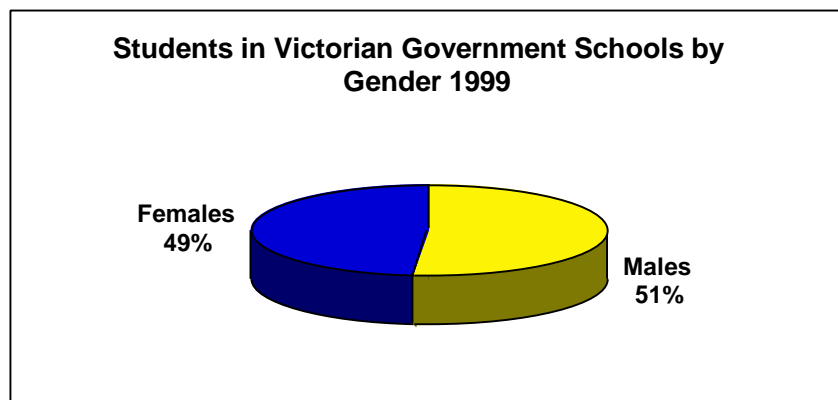


Diagram 7 : Victorian School Population by Gender 1999

3.5 Student population by NESB

Students by Type	Number of students
NESB students (No.) 1998	131,919
NESB–main language at Home not English (No.) 1998	68,756

Table 10 : Student population by NESB students

Source: ABS Schools, Australia 1998 plus 1998 DoE August school census. (3 and 2*)

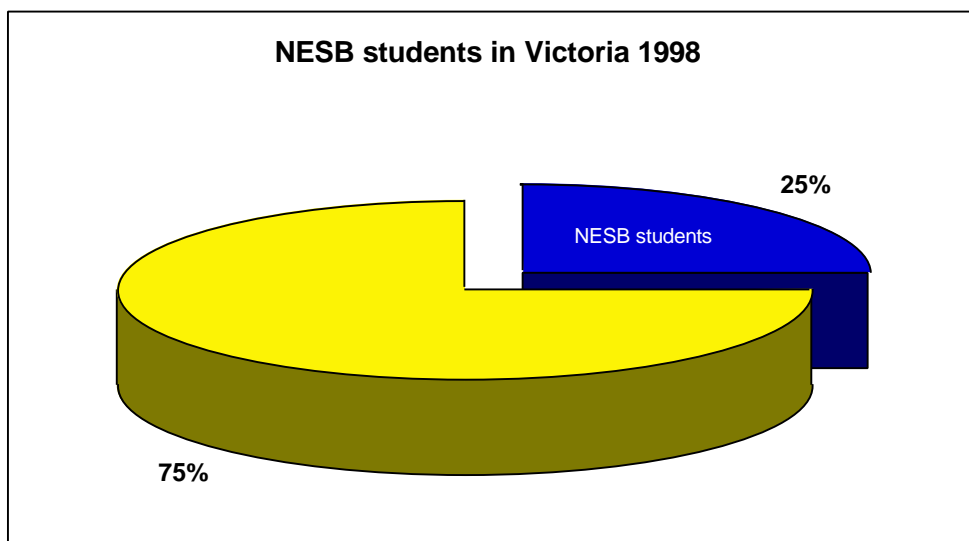


Diagram 8 : Victorian School Population by NESB 1998

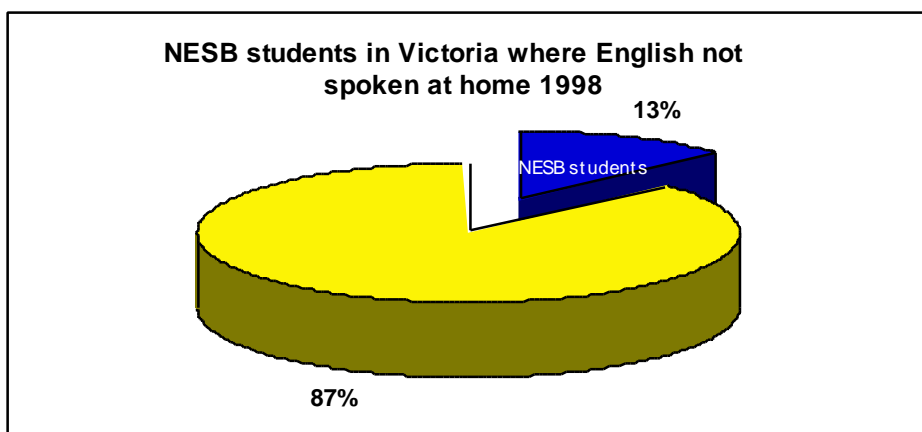


Diagram 9 : Victorian School Population by NESB 1998

3.6 Student population by students with disabilities

3.6.1 Schools providing for students with disabilities August 1999

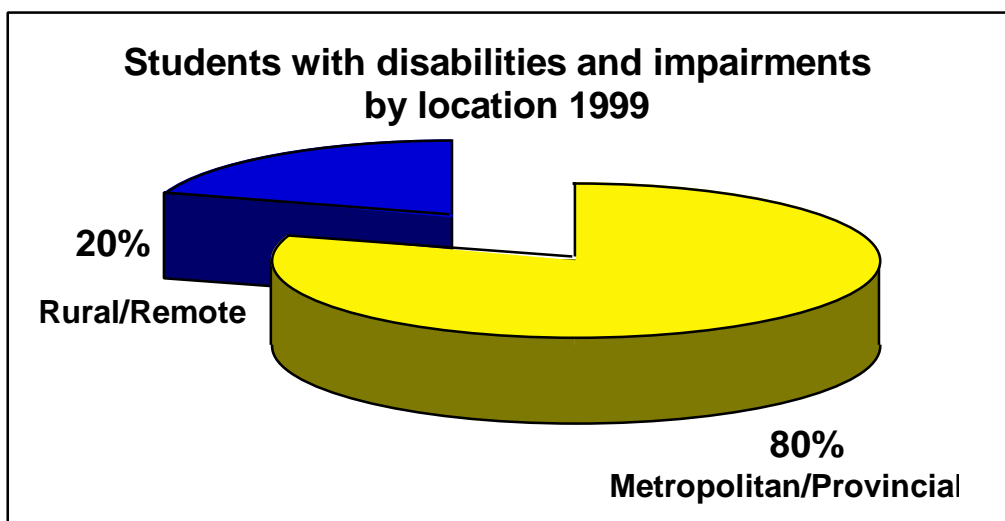
Type of School	Schools with D&I students	Percentage of all Schools	Number of Students
Mainstream schools	1335	81.65	8262
Special schools	80	100.00	5506
Total	1415	86.54	13768

Table 11 : Schools providing for students with disabilities February 1999

Source: Summary Statistics for Victorian Schools February 1999 (1*)

3.6.2 Students with Disabilities and Impairments August 1999

School Type	Metropolitan & Provincial		Rural and Remote		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Non-Special	6,356.5	73.4%	2,303.5	26.6%	8,660.0	100.0%
Special	5,028.9	91.3%	477.4	8.7%	5,506.3	100.0%
Total	11,385.4	80.4%	2,780.9	19.6%	14,166.3	100.0%

*Table 12 : Students with Disabilities and Impairments August 1999**Source : Student Welfare Section, School Support Division Data (5*)**Note : Special reflects the total enrolment in Special Schools, including some students without DAI numbers**Diagram 10 : Students with disabilities in Rural and Remote locations*

- The total number of funded students with disabilities and impairments represents 2.6% of the Victorian student population.
- The total number of funded students with disabilities and impairments in Metropolitan and Provincial areas represents 2.8% of the student population in those areas.
- The total number of funded students with disabilities and impairments in Rural and Remote areas represents 2.3% of the student population in those areas.

3.7 Secondary retention rates

3.7.1 Year 7-12 Apparent Retention rates

Year	DoE Census FTE February 1999	ABS Schools Data August 1999
1998	76.0	69.1
1999	76.5	N/A

*Table 13 : Apparent Retention rates**Source: ABS Schools, Australia 1998 plus 1998 and 1999 DEET school census. (3 and 2*)*

Note :

The August retention rates for all states published by the ABS are based on the number of students fulltime to education. The DEET calculates February retention rates on a FTE basis.

Regional Summary : Apparent Retention Rates

Region	7-12 (%)
Western Metropolitan	79.3
Northern Metropolitan	76.2
Eastern Metropolitan	83.8
Southern Metropolitan	80.1
Barwon South	69.3
Central Highlands	69.3
Loddon Campaspe	70.5
Goulburn North	65.6
Gippsland	64.4
<i>Metropolitan Regions</i>	<i>81.5</i>
<i>Non-Metropolitan Regions</i>	<i>67.9</i>
Total	76.5

Table 14 Regional Summary Apparent Retention Rates

Source: ABS Schools, Australia 1998 plus 1998 and 1999 DEET school census. (3 and 2*)

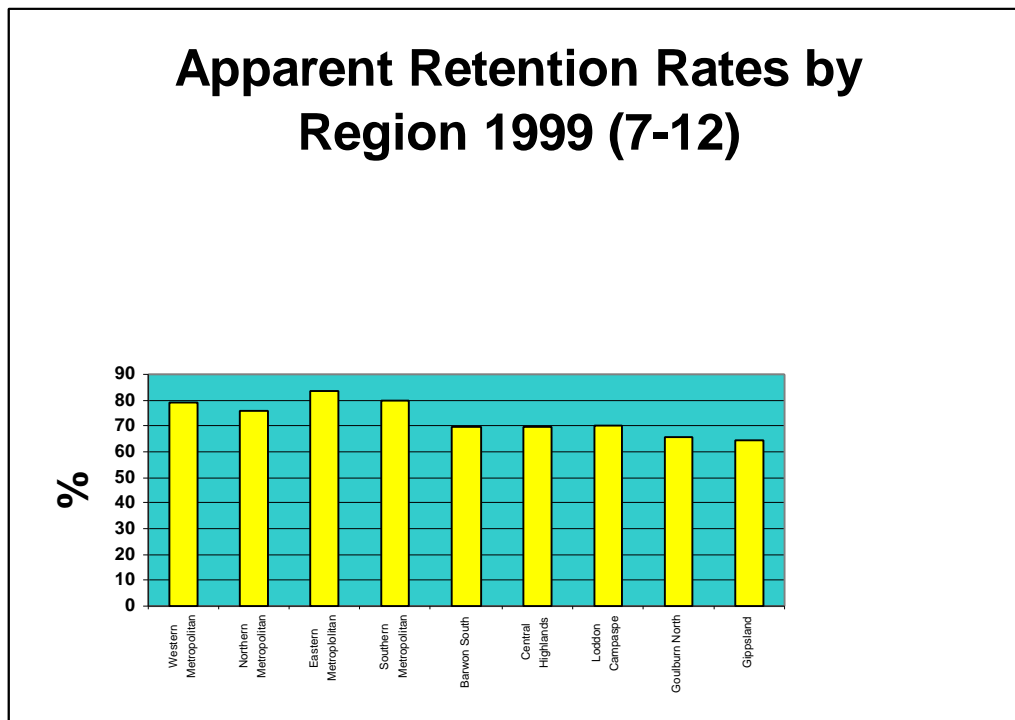


Diagram 11 : Apparent retention Rates by region 1999

Source : DEET Mid-Year School Census 1999 (1*)

3.8 Number of Teachers

3.8.1 Teachers (FTE) in Government Sector, August 1998

School Type	Numbers of Teachers
Primary	16,882
Secondary	16,881
Total	33,762

Table 15 : Number of full-time equivalent Teachers

Source : ABS schools 1998 (3)*

Note :

The ABS has specific definitions for counting teachers and excludes teachers such as those not in schools or ancillary education establishments and those on more than four weeks leave.

4. Staffing and Funding Issues

4.1 School Global Budgets

The Resource mechanism for Victorian schools is known as the School Global Budget. The School Global Budget covers all the school's operating costs including salaries, curriculum program expenses and the costs of maintenance for buildings and grounds. Schools are able to move funds between salary and non-salary areas to suit the needs of their planning for student learning.

School Global Budgets enable school communities to set their priorities and resource their programs in accordance with these priorities. The priorities identified in school charters reflect the educational needs of the young people in those schools.

Hence the development and operation of the school global budget has been based on two key principles :

- Firstly the educational needs of students vary from school to school and that this should be reflected in the approach to resourcing schools. The structure and formulae of the school global budget has been developed in order to explicitly recognise the differing educational needs between sectors and individual schools.
- Secondly that schools should have the flexibility to enable them to develop a staffing profile and implement programs to meet the educational needs of their school community.

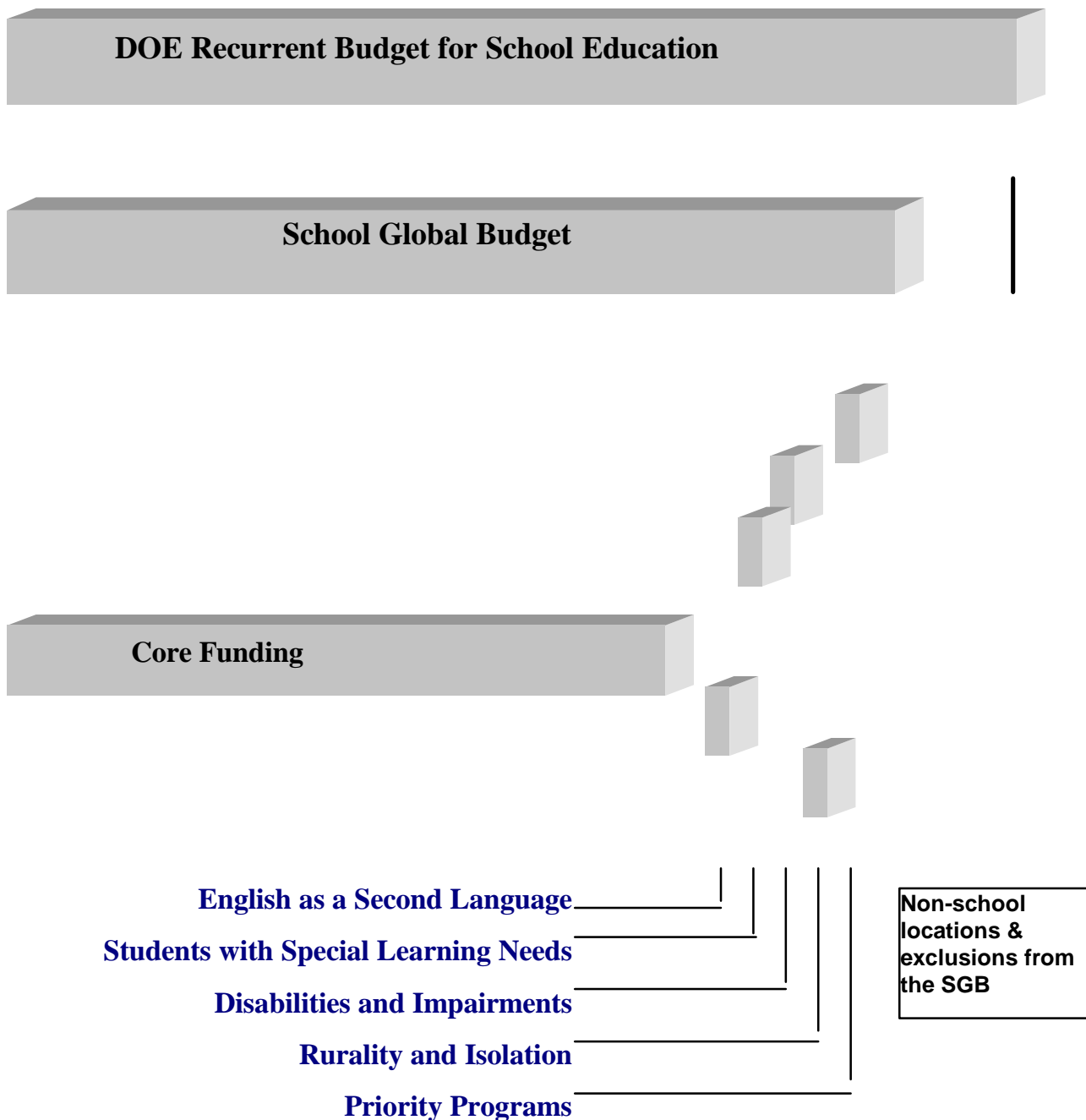
Ninety percent of the Department of Education budget is provided to schools via the School Global Budget. The remaining ten percent provides funding for non-school locations and exclusions from the School Global Budget. The School Global Budget is

structured so that, in addition to a core funding element, schools receive funds based on the educationally significant characteristics of the school and its students.

In addition to funding core activities and priority programs four equity elements are identified within School Global Budgets. These are :

- English as a second language
- Students with special learning needs (SLN)
- Students with Disabilities and Impairments (DAI)
- Rural and Isolated Schools

Funding formulae have been developed for each of these elements to address identified needs of students and schools. These needs can be in terms of additional or specialist programs for students or, support for additional costs incurred by schools because of their location or student population.



4.2 Core Funding

Core funding comprises at least 80 per cent (usually higher) of each school’s Global Budget. It includes funding for teaching and non-teaching staff, utilities such as gas, power, light and water, operating expenses and on-costs. Schools receive core funding through four components:

- **Leadership and Teaching** covers salaries and allowances for the Principal and teaching staff. The allocations are based on a formula derived from student numbers and a staffing promotion structure.

- **Teaching Support** funds are allocated to schools on the basis of a simple per capita formula with a size adjustment allowance recognising the greater costs in small schools. These funds can be used by the school to cover operating expenses, curriculum resources and non-teaching support staff.
- **Premises** funding for cleaning, utilities and maintenance is allocated according to a mix of formulae and historic expenditure patterns.
- **On costs** include superannuation and Workcover premiums and payroll tax. Workcover and superannuation allocations are notional and are not paid to the school. The inclusion of these on-costs in the global budget provides school communities with a full picture of the cost of running core programs in a school.

4.3 English as a Second Language Students (ESL)

English as a second language resources are provided through a seven level index, based on the stage of schooling and the number of years each non English speaking background student has spent in Australian schools.

As part of the August school census data is collected from each school on the numbers of students in the seven levels of the index. Only schools above a nominated threshold receive funding for this element.

4.4 Students with Special Learning Needs/Students at Educational Risk

The Special Learning Needs element is aimed providing additional resources to schools with high concentrations of students at educational risk due to family or other personal circumstances.

An index of need was developed incorporating six variables identified by research as the best predictors of at risk behaviours. Data on the proportion of a school's students in each of the identified variables is collected as part of the August census.

An Index is calculated for each school based on the weighted proportions of students in the categories below. Funds are allocated on a sliding scale to those schools whose index is above a nominated threshold. The data for school index calculations is based on actual student characteristics as opposed to previous indices based on characteristics of the surrounding population as identified in the national census. These characteristics are:

- whether or not a language other than English is spoken at home
- whether or not the student is in receipt of the Educational Maintenance Allowance(EMA) or Youth Allowance (poverty)
- whether or not the student identifies himself or herself as a Koorie (aboriginality)
- whether or not the student has changed schools recently (transience)
- whether the student is living with neither parent, one parent or both parents (family)
- whether the highest breadwinner is unemployed or is in an unskilled, skilled, white collar, or professional occupation (occupation)

4.5 Students with Disabilities and Impairments

A systematic approach to the funding for students with disabilities and impairments has been adopted. All such students are assessed and their educational needs classified against a six level funding index. Around 11,000 students are funded in this way in both regular and specialist settings. This represents 2.6 per cent of the total student population, which is consistent with World Health Organisation benchmarks in this area.

4.6 Rurality and Isolation

Two critical issues with respect to the resourcing of rural schools are addressed through this funding element. Firstly the impact of small school size on a school's ability to provide breadth in curriculum and second the impact of school location on the cost of providing a range of services. With respect to school size additional resources have been provided through per capita indices to primary schools with less than 200 students and secondary schools with less than 500 students in non-metropolitan and non-provincial locations. With respect to location an index has been constructed reflecting for each rural school, distance from Melbourne, distance from a major provincial centre and from another 'large' school of similar type.

4.7 Priority Programs

Priority Programs include funding for initiatives that are central to government policy on education or are specific to the needs of individual schools.

In the case of the former, as much priority programs funding as possible (such as provisions for Languages other than English (LOTE) will translate to core funding when it is applicable to all schools. Items of program funding which are school-specific will remain as priority programs.

The Priority Programs element provides for initiatives which are central to Government education policy and are specific to the needs of individual school communities. Priority Programs includes items such as:

- Mobile Area Resource Centre (MARC) and Mobile Art and Craft Centre (MACC)
- Instrumental Music
- Koorie Educators
- Languages other than English (LOTE) allocations
- LOTE Teacher Assistants
- Science and Technology
- School Restructure
- Teacher Professional Development Grant
- Physical and Sports Education Grant

4.8 Examples of Priority Programs

4.8.1 Koorie Education

Koorie Education Workers

- 13 of 16 Koorie Education Development Officer positions are allocated outside of Melbourne
- 47 of 56 Koorie Education positions are allocated outside of Melbourne

Regional Koorie Education Committees

- 7 of the 8 Committees are located outside of Melbourne
- 83% of funds allocated to Regional Koorie Education Committees (ie \$344,356 of \$410,000) to non metropolitan locations

Strategic Results Projects

- 13 of the 16 schools involved in the two projects (which focus on improved literacy outcomes for Koorie students using information technology) are located outside of Melbourne

	Melbourne based	Non Melbourne based
Koorie Education Workers	17% (12 workers)	83% (60 workers)
Regional Koorie Education Committees	12.5% (1 committee)	87.5% (7 committees)
Funds to Regional Koorie Education Committees (Total of \$410,000 allocated)	17%	83%
Schools involved in Strategic Result Project	19% (3 schools)	81% (13 schools)

4.8.2 Teacher Professional Development Grant

Primary and Secondary Schools

Funding has been allocated to schools (not individual teachers) and has been calculated by multiplying \$260 by the teacher entitlement plus where applicable, applying a location index. Teacher entitlement is based on enrolment projections for the Indicative SGB and the enrolment census for the Confirmed SGB. The location index has been applied to schools outside the metropolitan area, increasing funding to schools on a sliding scale by up to 50%. For schools in receipt of the location index, the calculation for additional funding is as follows :

- \$130 (50% of \$260) x school specific location index (as advised in Rurality and Isolation element) x confirmed staffing entitlement = additional funding.

In addition to the above entitlements, where schools have a confirmed staffing entitlement of 3 or less a further allocation will be made equivalent to the confirmed staffing entitlement x \$130.

4.8.3 Country Areas Program Grant

The eligibility criteria and allocative mechanism implemented in 1997 will continue to determine eligible schools and allocations for the 1999 calendar year. The Commonwealth has advised Victoria that the 1996 census data has been applied to the allocative mechanism for Country Areas Program grants to states and territories. As a result, the total funding allocated to Victoria for 1999 has been reduced by over 20 percent. Consequently, schools eligible for CAP funding will receive reduced allocations for 1999.

Eligibility criteria

From 1997, all schools are eligible for Country Areas Program (CAP) funding if they are located :

- more than 150 km from Melbourne
- and**
- more than 25 km from the nearest provincial centre with a population of more than 20,000 (see 5.1 above — Rural School Size Adjustment Factor — for a list of these centres)
- and**
- in a community with a population of less than 5,000.

The CAP grants are calculated on a base allocation and separate per student formulae for primary and secondary enrolments multiplied by an isolation index based on the school's distance from Melbourne. Per student funding is provided for up to the first 300 primary students and up to the first 500 secondary students for eligible schools.

4.9. Rural and remote staff incentives

Other than additional funding provided in the SGB for the RSAF and Location Index funding there are no additional incentives provided for staffing in rural and remote areas.

5. Learning Technology Infrastructure in Victoria

Victoria is well-placed to consider online delivery of teaching and learning programs/courses for students. The current infrastructure for the delivery of curriculum online includes :

- a well established **Curriculum and Standards Framework** with significant associated curriculum support materials.
- well established **distance education provision** for rural and isolated students through the Distance Education Centre Victoria.
- well established **LOTE distance education** provision through the Victorian School of Languages.
- **VicOne** - a wide area network, consisting of a broadband core and a minimum 64Kbps link to each Victorian school, enabling them to connect to the Education Channel, other client/server applications such as **Edumail** (the electronic mail system available to 45,000 staff in schools and within the Department of Education, Employment and Training), **Edulibrary** (the electronic library of the Department of Education, Employment and Training's policies and publications) and the Internet.
- **SOFNet** - Victoria's interactive satellite television network providing schools with access to 'live' television programs.
- **SOFWeb** - the Department's Schools Web site which contains high quality support materials, activities, discussion forums and links to a vast collection of world Internet sites.
- Victoria plans to achieve a **1:5 computer student ratio** by the year 2000
- Provision (in the form of subsidies) of **63,000 new multimedia capable computers** for schools over a 4 year period.
- The provision of **notebook computers for 36,700 principals and teachers** over a 5 year period
- Work is currently proceeding to establish an **Education Channel** which will be a gateway to electronically provided educational resources.
- Statewide **licensing agreements** with major software providers, including Microsoft to provide free software to schools

6. Distance Education

Participation in the global information network is vital for all students, including rural and remote students for work, education and leisure. Access to a broad range of courses/curriculum offerings is the right of all students. Schools as educational and social institutions are able to create an environment where, in relationship with their peers, teachers and other significant adults, students can be provided with rich sets of learning experiences in VCE studies and across all key learning areas P-10 to develop their knowledge, understandings, skills and attitudes.

However there are many students who are not able to participate in regular schooling or who are unable to access particular subjects, courses or studies in their current schools. For such students it is essential that opportunities for continuing learning are created and sustained. Distance education using a range of technologies and delivery modes ensures that these students are provided with the same opportunities to access curriculum as their peers in those regular schools which offer full access.

6.1 Review of distance education

A review of distance education in Victoria was established in April, 1998 to review current provision and to make recommendations concerning future provision taking account of the educational needs of students who for various reasons are not able to participate fully in regular education settings or who are not able to access the full range of curriculum. Key objectives of the review were:

- to improve educational provision for students who are currently not attending school and those students unable to access particular courses or subjects
- to improve educational provision for students seeking curriculum programs, courses or activities which will augment, enrich and add value to current curriculum
- to expand technology supported educational provision for students currently undertaking distance education.

There are 3 major providers of distance education in Victoria - the Distance Education Centre Victoria (DECV), the distance education section of the Victorian School of Languages (VSL) and the Telematics Clusters. More than 90% of enrolments, however, are with either the DECV or the distance education section of the VSL.

6.2 The Distance Education Centre Victoria (DECV)

The DECV is a government school which provides distance education courses from Preparatory to Year 12 in all Key Learning Areas apart from LOTE. The courses are designed to meet the needs of students who for a range of reasons are unable to attend regular schools or who are unable to access particular courses/subjects in their current school.

Currently the DECV offers curriculum programs to students in remote areas. The delivery mode used is mostly a traditional correspondence education model. However a number of courses increasingly incorporate a range of media and online components. The DECV are currently trialing an online VCE Psychology module as well as participating in the Science Online trial.

6.3 The Victorian School of Languages (VSL)

The VSL is a government school where language programs are delivered through both face to face teaching in centres across the state and through distance education mode. Face to face classes are held out of school hours in 20 metropolitan and 8 regional centres of the VSL which are located in government secondary colleges. The centres are organised into ten areas, each under the management of an Area Manager based in one of the centres. The face to face component is the largest element, offering 40 Languages Other Than English (LOTE) to more than 12,000 students.

The VSL provides significant opportunities for the learning of languages other than English for students who are not able to access language teaching in regular school settings both through distance education and through face to face classes out of school hours. Distance Education courses at the VSL include fortnightly telephone contact, teleconferencing as well as extensive use of audio and some video taped materials. The VSL has recently developed two Italian for Beginners CD-ROMs which form a course

which is written in a communicative and topic based mode. An Indonesian CD-ROM has also been developed and is currently being trialed.

6.4 Telematics and Videoconferencing

84 schools in remote areas of Victoria are using Telematics, desktop videoconferencing technology and shared mobile technology resources (ShareTeks) to provide broader subject choice to more than 1000 students in 1999. The Telematics project uses computer conferencing, audiographics, videoconferencing, and facsimiles to create a 'virtual' classroom in which small groups of students in rural and remote schools are linked to expert teachers for lessons.

The Telematics and Videoconferencing Project has pioneered technology supported delivery of curriculum and professional development over distance since the late 1980's. Over the last five years the project has focused on the establishment of a cluster-based videoconferencing network which enables the interactive delivery of curriculum programs (predominantly VCE) to more than a thousand students each year.

The videoconferencing network, which won an international award for its work in November 1998, uses high quality ISDN (broad-bandwidth) technology to establish audio, visual and data links between participating sites. In the future technological developments will mean that the Department's EduConf internet-based videoconferencing service can be fully integrated with the Telematics videoconferencing schools. In the longer term it is anticipated that all videoconferencing operations will converge to a common platform.

6.5 Distance education enrolments in Victoria 1998

- there were 1277 full time and 1526 part time enrolments at the DECV and 1405 part time secondary students at the distance education section of the VSL.
- there were 1410 VCE students at the DECV; these include 384 FT and 1026 PT.
- there were 685 VCE students at the distance education section of the VSL (All part time and normally for 1 subject).
- 70% of enrolments at the DECV are from non-Metropolitan areas.
- There are 67 current fulltime students in Victoria who are enrolled at the DECV in 1999, who live in remote locations and cannot attend school
- 229 schools access the DECV and 307 schools access the distance education section of the VSL

YEAR LEVEL		DECV (SEM. 1, 1998)		VSL (DIST ED) (SEM. 1, 1998)	TELEMATICS (1998)
		FULL TIME	PART TIME	PART TIME	PART TIME
VCE	HOME, ETC	381	82	52	N.A
	SCHOOL BASED	3	944	633	121 (remote) 373 (onsite)
7 - 10	HOME, ETC	576	490	169	N.A
	SCHOOL BASED	N.A	10	551	27 (remote) 143 (onsite)
P - 6	HOME, ETC	317	0	N.A	N.A
	SCHOOL BASED	N.A	N.A	N.A	233 (remote) 143 (onsite)
	TOTAL	1277	1526	1405	461 (remote) 573 (onsite)

Table : Distance Education Enrolments 1998

Source : 'Switched on Learning : Report of the Review of Distance Education' 1998 (DEET)

Note :

1999 enrolment data for the DECV and the VSL are currently subject to enrolment audit. This data can be provided to the Commission as it becomes available.

6.6 Trial science online project

A trial science project has been developed in conjunction with the Curriculum Corporation. The project involves the development of online content at year 7-8 level and delivers approximately 16 hours of student work. The unit is suitable to be delivered to students in an online mode. It will have a dual role in that it will act as a prototype for a much larger national student online materials project and as a model for the delivery of distance education. The Science Online module is currently being trialed in two ways :

- with students in three non-metropolitan secondary colleges
- with ten fulltime distance education students enrolled at the Distance Education Centre Victoria (DECV).
- Students from rural and remote Victoria as well as a students in Fiji and the Philippines are participating in the trial

6.7 Report of the Review of Distance Education

Switched on Learning : Report of the Review of Distance Education was presented to the Secretary of the Department in December 1998. Implementation of the recommendations contained in the report involves the re-focussing of distance education provision through the establishment of a new networked online learning environment for full P-12 provision. The proposed new model of provision will involve the development of online courses, provision of hardware and software to remote and other students.

Distance learners, whether school or non-school based, should have access to high quality online instruction and appropriate learner support arrangements. Recommendations from the report are still under consideration.

7. Learning Technologies and the new Digital Curriculum

The core business of Victorian schools, including those in rural and remote locations is the improvement of student learning. All schools have a responsibility to monitor regularly its capacity and efforts to develop in students the knowledge, skills and attitudes required for life-long learning, successful work and effective and responsible participation in a rapidly changing society.

One of the great challenges facing educators in the new millennium is to ensure that students are equipped with higher order thinking skills and understandings to be effective members of a digital society. The new digital society requires students to manage complexity, find and use resources, and become lifelong learners who can frame problems, design tasks, plan, construct, evaluate outcomes and cooperate in finding innovative solutions. Online delivery of curriculum, whether by access to digital resources or to the provision of full courses will facilitate these requirements. This has important implications for curriculum delivery, particularly in rural and remote areas.

Information and communication technologies play a crucial role in the transformation of the school. Evidence from the Navigator Schools in Victoria is that a transformation of the teaching and learning environment is achievable. These schools emphasise improved student learning outcomes through routine access to learning technologies, networked communications and a strong commitment to changes in classroom practice. Research in these schools is showing that students work more effectively as a collaborative team, increasingly construct their knowledge, are socially aware and independent, self-starting global learners who are motivated, engaged and challenged. (see *Rethinking Teaching and Learning – The Navigator Schools’ Experience Report 1*, Department of Education, Victoria, July 1998 at <http://www.sofweb.vic.edu.au/navschls>). The increased use of learning technologies in schools will also enhance the educational opportunities for students in rural and remote areas.

8. Snapshots of Current Projects in Victoria

Victoria has developed a range of programs which highlight the use of learning technologies. These projects, whilst not exhaustive, have a significant impact on teachers and students in rural and remote schools.

8.1 Global Classroom Project

The Global Classroom Project (GCP) develops and promotes models of networked student learning. The 55 current projects allow students and teachers the opportunity to exchange ideas, opinions and research on the Internet. The GCP also assists in incorporating the benefits of global telecommunication technology into everyday teaching and learning.

Some of the projects include: the linking of indigenous students across the state, nationally and internationally, communication between students and veterans/survivors of war through email, online discussion groups and interviews face to face, a “talkback classroom” where students prepare questions and then interview politicians and respected members of the community, writing an online collaborative novel, compiling an international anthology of student writing submitted online and the linking of schools in Victoria with those internationally by sending “travelling” teddy bears which keep online journals which enhance student understandings and cross-cultural communication.

Networks of GC Project Coordinators and GC Mentors are available to assist schools with their involvement while the comprehensive GCP web site provides excellent access to projects, mentors, resources and professional development modules which can be downloaded and conducted in school-based training sessions.

<http://www.sofweb.vic.edu.au/gc/index.htm>

8.2 Science and Technology Education in Primary Schools (STEPS)

STEPS is a series of live television programs transmitted on the interactive satellite learning network (SOFNet). The programs aim to assist teachers in the delivery of science and technology education within the Curriculum and Standards Framework. STEPS delivers motivating and challenging science and technology activities in a fun and entertaining TV format. Students have the opportunity to interact with the presenters and ‘Y’, the show’s cheeky puppet, via the Internet or by phone or fax during the program. STEPS is presented in themes for each term which are different for each age group. It is a resource on which teachers can base their science and technology program for the year and has three components: comprehensive teacher support materials, a live TV program every 2 weeks and an interactive web site.

<http://www.sofweb.vic.edu.au/steps>

8.3 Early Years of Schooling

Victoria remains committed to expand the highly successful Early Years Literacy Program. This will enable all primary schools to ensure provision of a balanced and structured classroom literacy program and a one to one intervention program such as Reading Recovery which will target intensive teaching to students who require additional assistance. All Victorian Government primary schools, including those in rural and remote areas, will have access to funding that will enable them to provide an Early Years Coordinator to implement all aspects of the Early Years of Schooling

Program and a one to one intervention program such as Reading Recovery for the 20 per cent of students most in need of assistance in the statewide Year 1 cohort.

8.4 ESL students

ESL students, particularly recent arrivals, and their teachers who are in isolated settings have access to support material, practical resources and advice. Digital technology enables enhanced provision of both teacher resources and student targeted materials for ESL students. It will assist with the provision of targeted ESL support for ESL learners in isolated settings. It will also enable a regular and relatively easy method of updating and revising curriculum material which would otherwise require a substantial investment of time and resources.

Isolated ESL Student Support Program

ESL support is available for eligible new arrival students requiring ESL support in isolated and country areas through the Isolated ESL Student Support Program. There are two support options :

Direct: where a school has access to a qualified ESL teacher, either on staff or a CRT. Funding is provided to release or employ a teacher to provide ESL support to students.

Mentor: where an ESL qualified teacher is not available, funding is provided to enable a staff member to attend an ELS/C for mentor support where assessing ESL development, resource selection and appropriate teaching strategies are covered. The school receives additional resourcing to allow the participating teacher to provide support to the new arrivals student.

New Arrivals Kit

Schools in country and outer metropolitan areas where isolated new arrival students enrol can be provided with a selection of appropriate resources upon request. The kits are available on a long term loan for both primary and secondary students. The kits, and advice about their use, can be obtained from a centralised resources centre.

Professional Development

The ESL training program implemented is available to a number of teachers who are working in ESL programs and do not have ESL qualifications, to undertake credit bearing ESL courses, each year. This can be undertaken off campus. A range of professional development is provided for ESL teachers or teachers with ESL students in their classes. Where there is significant interest in country areas, professional development can be provided, including ESL in the Mainstream in country locations.

Teachers and school leaders in remote and rural areas have trialed two credit bearing PD modules *Multicultural Education in the Classroom and Curriculum* and *Managing Cultural Diversity Across the Whole School*. Each module contains 15 hours of tuition and was conducted over a weekend period. These units have been offered to universities to include in current courses with the suggestion that they are offered off-campus for teachers in country and remote areas. Briefing session on the Multicultural Policy were

held in regional locations to allow access to information for teachers and school leaders in country and rural areas.

Multimedia Support

The LOTE, ESL and Multicultural Education Branch is currently developing a multimedia package including video, CD-Rom and written materials to support isolated new arrival students who cannot access other new arrivals support programs. The first stage should be available in the second half of 2000.

Regional New Arrivals Programs

New Arrivals Programs have been established in Geelong and Shepparton to cater for new arrival students settling in regional areas :

- *The Geelong English Language Program.* A new arrivals program is provided in the Geelong area by a team of ESL teachers. This program is based on a visiting teacher model and caters for both primary and secondary students and provides for all new arrival students in the Geelong and outer Geelong areas.
- *The Shepparton New Arrivals Program.* A new arrivals program is provided in the Shepparton area through a cluster arrangement of local primary and secondary schools. New arrivals teachers work within clusters of schools providing support to new arrival students.

Interpreting and Translation Services

Interpreting and translating services are provided free of charge to all government schools. The telephone interpreting service is of particular use to rural schools.

8.5 LOTE

Primary and Secondary Access to Languages (PALS and SALS) programs

The PALS and SALS programs provide a series of multimedia language teaching programs and enrichment materials in a range of languages and at a number of levels. PALS and SALS programs provide students with quality LOTE programs that give them access to authentic linguistic and cultural content in the target language as the foundation for development of effective communication skills.

In some cases these programs have enabled schools that have no other means of doing so, particularly those in country and isolated rural areas, to access LOTE programs or expand the range of languages offered. They have also provided a means for schools to supplement and extend their face-to-face programs in the languages offered by exposing learners to other models of the target language.

The PALS and SALS materials comprise an integrated package, incorporate a range of learning technologies, including video tapes, audio tapes, CD-ROMs and printed resource, comprising outlines of the video programs, posters of the key language introduced, worksheets and activities to use and practise the language that has been

introduced, teacher's notes, cultural information, and assessment and reporting strategies.

PALS programs aimed at primary students at Years 3-6 are available in French, German, Indonesian and Italian. In addition, there is one PALS series available for students in Years 3-6 for Modern Greek. In 1999, SALS YEARS 11-12 (VCE) enrichment and extension programs are offered in Chinese, French, German, Indonesian, Italian, Japanese, Modern Greek and Vietnamese. Three Year 7 SALS programs are also available in Indonesian, Italian and Japanese.

LOTE Training and Retraining Program

Some schools, particularly those in country areas, have difficulty in attracting and retaining suitably qualified LOTE teachers to maintain their LOTE programs. The LOTE Training and Retraining Program enables teachers to access credit-bearing tertiary courses at Victorian universities in a range of languages other than English and in LOTE methodology in order to gain approved LOTE teaching qualifications. Places in LOTE Training and Retraining Program courses are available free of tuition costs to teachers in government schools, who also receive study support time to complete course work or prepare for examinations. Classes are scheduled at times practising teachers can attend – during school vacations, after school hours or at weekends – according to the location of the teachers involved. A significant number of courses are conducted off-campus in country centres or through a combination of face-to-face teaching and distance education modes. Opportunities for in-country study during the January school vacation are also provided as part of the final year of LOTE studies.

LOTElinx is an interactive group of websites representing 24 language specific teacher associations. These sites are used to promote learning technologies in the LOTE classroom

8.6 Gifted Education

Horizons is a series transmitted through SOFNet which offers middle years students, including those isolated by distance, the opportunity of interacting with university academics and others from a range of disciplines.

As the Crow Flies is an Internet and email based program where students (in Years 5-8) in clusters of schools work together on extension activities. The students meet electronically and exchange ideas regarding the work they undertake together and then meet at a forum to present their projects.

Virtual Mentoring is offered to gifted students at Year 10 level from geographically isolated areas. The program matches these students with under-graduate and post-graduate mentors from universities across the state.

8.7 Ararat Community College Cyber Café

Ararat Community College in rural Victoria has established a Cyber Café as an integral part of its curriculum. They have developed cooperative projects with local business and community organisations. For example, students also work alongside the Rural City of Ararat to create a ‘virtual municipality’ as part of their work requirements. The Department of Education has provided some funding to support this initiative.

8.8 Successful Learning Cyberschool Project

An example of the new learning technologies in action to meet the needs of specific student groups requiring special attention is the Successful Learning Cyberschool Project. The Commonwealth Government requires young people under the age of 18 to be in full time education and training in order to receive the Youth Allowance. This project aims to create a virtual environment, combining the best features of computer games with a structured learning approach for 15-17 year old students returning to school.

By entering this environment, young people can learn the range of skills they need and have access to knowledge that motivates them to continue learning. It is assumed that the technology itself will be attractive, but it is anticipated that many skills will be able to be learned, as the student enters the virtual environment and progresses along a path of his/her own choosing among the content offered. Research undertaken in Victoria found that young people at risk of not completing school are likely to require learning experiences that :

- are relevant to their culture and the community they live in
- meet students’ individual needs and build on their previous experience
- involve practical and experiential learning
- incorporate student negotiation, working cooperatively with others and in teams, time management
- enhance written and oral communication skills
- reward students by giving credit in some form, as a part of a qualification, or provide other incentives
- are explicit about where they lead

It is also recognised that for many young people the use of the technology itself provides considerable motivation. Young people who cannot read and write and communicate well are unlikely to be interested in programs that are formally called “literacy”. The Cyberschool project aims to explore ways in which these young people can improve their skills, as they engage with the technology. This may be through simulation of real or fantasy situations or by other means. This project will be implemented in 2000.

8.9 Koorie 2000

Koorie 2000, launched in February 1997, provides the framework for initiatives to improve educational outcomes for Koorie students in the schooling sector. The following programs/initiatives operate as part of Koorie 2000:

Regional Koorie Education Committees (RKECs)

Eight RKECs are located across Victoria and comprise representation from Local Aboriginal Education Consultative Groups and the Department of Education. The committees are allocated funding to implement regional Koorie education programs.

Koorie Open Door Education (KODE) campuses

Three campuses have been established in Glenroy, Morwell and Mildura. The campuses provide Koorie inclusive curriculum and programs for students.

Koorie Education Development Unit (KEDU)

The KEDU comprises five central unit officers and sixteen outposted Koorie Education Development Officers who provide policy, curriculum, professional development and program advice relating to Koorie education.

Koorie Educator Program

Fifty six (EFT) Koorie Educators are located in schools with a significant Koorie student population. The Koorie Educators provide support to Koorie students at the school and act as a liaison between the school and Koorie community.

Victorian Aboriginal Education Association Incorporated (VAEAI)

The VAEAI are funded to provide advice relating Koorie education matters.

8.10 VET in Schools

The VET and Youth Policy Branch of School Support Division within DEET currently manage a range of research projects which have implications for students and teachers in rural and remote areas.

TAFE VC Cluster Project

The TAFE VC Cluster Project has developed clusters of schools for the Electronics, Business and Hospitality Courses to develop and use online content to deliver VET in Schools programs. Investigation is also underway into the development of a CR-Rom to enhance VET studies in Automotive in rural areas.

RTO Resource Project

3 Clusters of Secondary Colleges have been established to deliver Multimedia units from RMIT's Multimedia programs via the TAFE Virtual Campus.

Synchronous Delivery Project

The Synchronous Delivery Project has been established at Eumemmerring Secondary College to develop a synchronous delivery platform to enable virtual presentations and teaching for students in a distributed learning environment.

9. Professional Development Programs for Teachers

- A **Leading Practice “IdeaBank”** of fully searchable teaching and learning activities has been established and is accessible through SOFWeb. Teachers submit teaching and learning strategies which they have found to be valuable in helping students achieve learning outcomes.
- **Professional Interaction Networks** facilitate the operation of online teacher networks in all KLAs and support the sharing of expertise and online peer support .
- The **ESL in the Mainstream** teacher development course has been trialed for online delivery
- The department has developed a range of professional development programs to assist schools with **Learning Technologies** including :
 - *A Learning Technologies Teacher Capabilities kit*
 - *Online Professional Development programs* (developed in 1999 and delivered in 2000)
 - *Learning With the Internet (LWTI)* is a professional development program for teachers.
 - *Computing Across the Primary Curriculum (CAPC)* and *Computing Across the Secondary Curriculum (CASC)* are extended hands-on programs to assist teachers
 - The *Leading Practice Classrooms Network (LPCN)* provides models of leading practice in the classroom use of learning technologies.
 - *Navigator Schools Practicums for teachers and principals*

List of Appendices (not attached to this electronic version)

Appendix 1

The Schools Census Data : Summary Statistics For Victorian Schools 28 June 1999
(Strategic Planning, Project Development & Evaluation Division, Department Of Education, Employment and Training)

Appendix 2

The Schools Census Data : Statistics For Victorian Schools February 1999 (Strategic Planning, Project Development & Evaluation Division, Department Of Education, Employment and Training)

Appendix 3

Victorian Schools and Students by Location 1999 (Strategic Planning, Project Development & Evaluation Division, Department Of Education, Employment and Training)

Appendix 4

'Guide to the 1999 School Global Budget, April 1999' (Published for the School Funding Unit by the Community Information Service, Department of Education, Employment and Training)

Appendix 5

'Glossary of School Global Budget Terms', abridged version from ***'Guide to the 1999 School Global Budget, April 1999'*** (Published for the School Funding Unit by the Community Information Service, Department of Education, Employment and Training)