

## Chapter 2: Education & Early Childhood Development

*“We passionately believe that every Victorian child deserves every opportunity in life...we are committed to completing the transformation of our education system.”*

JOHN BRUMBY, PREMIER OF VICTORIA

Everyone deserves a great education, no matter what their background, age or aspirations.

Labor is committed to giving every child the best start in life with high quality early years services and a quality school education and options to learn so they can follow their life's choices and successfully participate in work and our society.

We will work to improve fairness in education: between public and private schools, between city and rural communities, and among children from all backgrounds. We will work to provide equal educational opportunity at every level.

We will help parents by providing high quality, integrated early childhood services. We will make sure the families of young children can participate in early education and care to ensure the health, well-being and learning of children is supported. A particular focus will be given to support at the critical transition points in the child's education and development.

Labor believes that when a child arrives at school they should find themselves in an environment that is warm, welcoming and a centre of excellence.

We will help our children grow up to be well-rounded citizens by improving the government school system. We will do this by:

- Focusing on innovation, excellence and achieve a better quality education for the children;
- Increasing transparency and accountability of school performance and give parents the tools to assess how their child's school measures up;
- Teaching a curriculum that is stimulating and relevant based on the latest approaches to teaching and learning, as well as a diverse range of available subjects;
- Completing the modernisation of school buildings, including the latest technology, and
- Investing in our teachers and principals - great teachers make great schools, and so we will further support our teachers as they develop professionally and personally. [Teachers who bring innovation and excellence to their classroom will be identified and rewarded].

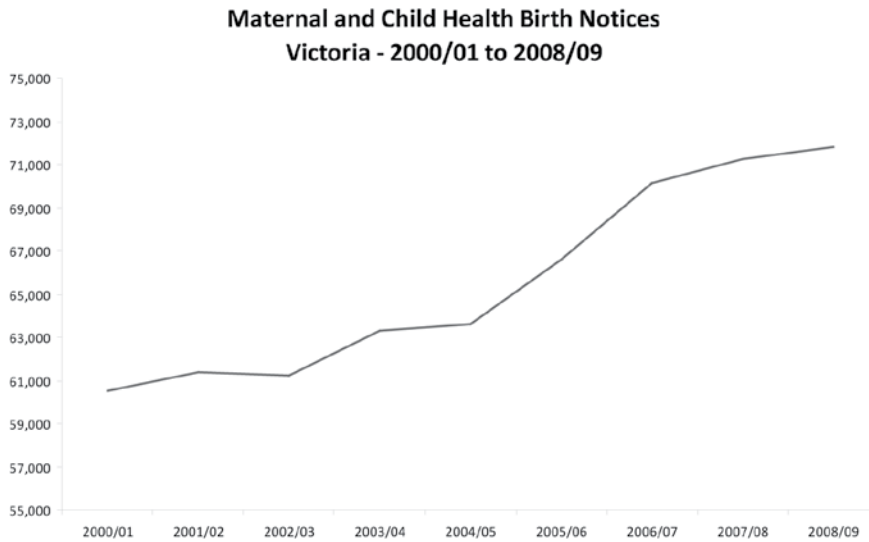
We will foster a culture of respect in our schools and teach our children to appreciate diversity, to value learning, and to look after the environment. Schools have a responsibility to identify young people who are at risk or have special needs, and respond by providing extra support.



## MANAGING THE NEW BABY BOOM

The resurgence in birth rates supported by Labor's family friendly policies and a stable economy is putting significant pressure on children's services and schools to keep up with demand and at the same time improve their services.

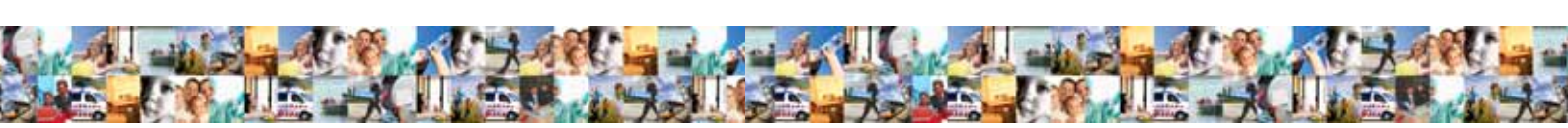
The 71,800 babies born in 2009 in Victoria is 20% more than the number born 10 years ago.



Source: DEECD, *Maternal and Child Health Services, Annual Reports, 2000-01 to 2008-09*

The growth in birth numbers means demand on maternal and child health services, and early intervention and support programs for children and students with disabilities, has grown rapidly in recent years and will grow in primary schools in coming years.

In addition as more women participate in the paid workforce and access the Commonwealth Government's *Child Care Rebate*, demand for childcare and kindergarten is rising. State Government efforts to increase participation rates in four year old kindergarten and the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) National Partnership commitment to increase early childhood education to 15 hours a week for four year olds are also significant challenges.



# THE BEST START FOR OUR CHILDREN

## AN INTEGRATED APPROACH TO EARLY CHILDHOOD SERVICES

### **2.1 Labor believes that every child, no matter where they live or their circumstances, deserves to have the best possible children's services and family support.**

Labor will:

- Ensure early years services are accessible where the demand is greatest;
- Strengthen and better integrate health, education and children's services;
- Integrate early years learning and development and care programs;
- Ensure that children with disabilities or from vulnerable families can access the services they need;
- Support the development and delivery of effective children's services management models;
- Invest in modern facilities in partnership with local government and the community sector, and
- Provide information to parents about service options available for their children.

## SUPPORT FOR PARENTS

### **2.2 Labor believes the best start a child can have in life is to have happy and healthy parents. Early intervention programs provide important assistance to families.**

Labor will:

- Actively involve parents in family services programs and provide support and encouragement to develop skills and family relationships;
- Give the families of children who have experienced trauma or have disabilities appropriate support, information and referral to early intervention services;
- Increase the opportunities for parenting education, and
- Train health professionals to recognise emerging issues within the family.

## DEVELOPING CHILDREN'S SERVICES HUBS

### **2.3 Labor will develop more children's hubs to bring together a range of early childhood services to provide an integrated service located at or near school grounds where possible.**

Young families deserve a choice of flexible and accessible children's services that includes an appropriate mix of quality childcare, kindergarten, and other early childhood services which may include maternal and child health and early childhood intervention services.

Children's hubs bring together these vital services which ensure families can access what their children need at a 'one stop shop'.

## SUPPORT TO MEET THE CHILDCARE NEEDS OF WORKING FAMILIES

### **2.4 Labor recognises the importance of children's services to help parents combine work and family responsibilities. We will help families access quality services and support, regardless of whether they are in the paid or unpaid work.**

The primary responsibility for childcare provision lies with the Commonwealth. Victorian Labor will work to:

- Promote better integration of childcare with education kindergarten and other early childhood such



as maternal and child health, and supported playgroups;

- Raise the quality and standard of children's services;
- Build a strong, professional, and high quality workforce, and
- Develop and implement targeted strategies to support families with greatest needs.

## **EARLY CHILDHOOD LEARNING REFORMS**

### **2.5 Labor will work with the Commonwealth to deliver the nationally agreed COAG goals for expanding 4 year old kindergarten provision, implementing higher staffing ratios and other important reforms to early childhood learning.**

The Commonwealth is funding a major package of reforms to early childhood learning to improve quality and ensure all children can access early learning programs for 15 hours a week for all four year olds. This will build on Victoria's record investment in kindergarten. Labor will make sure that all children in the year before school can participate in a structured learning program.

## **THE TRANSITION TO SCHOOL**

### **2.6 Labor will improve the links and pathways between early childhood services and school.**

Labor will complete the implementation of its "transition statement" for children moving from kindergarten to school and provide support to teachers and parents to support a smooth transition to school.

Young families need access to flexible and accessible, high quality, early years services that includes a mix of services such as childcare, kindergarten, maternal and child health, family services and childhood intervention services.

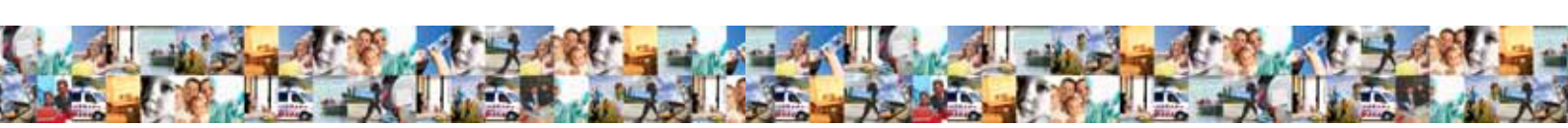
## **RURAL PROOFING POLICY FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES**

### **CHILDCARE IN RURAL & REGIONAL VICTORIA**

#### **2.7 Labor will develop new models for delivery of kindergarten and other children's services in rural communities based on greater use of small rural primary school sites and Local Government Early Years Plans.**

Small communities face different challenges in providing the same experiences and early learning for young children – compared to larger towns and cities. Labor will make better use of existing resources and deliver support services into rural communities using the local primary schools as the hub – delivering similar benefits as the proposed children's hubs in major growth areas.

Delivering services to small numbers of people is challenging but it is essential to Labor's goal of ensuring all children access services, regardless of where they live.



# QUALITY SCHOOL EDUCATION

## ACHIEVING QUALITY EDUCATION OUTCOMES

### **2.8 Labor will encourage all schools to achieve high standards across the curriculum and promote excellence and innovation to provide high quality teaching in our schools.**

Schools need to provide a range of curriculum choices and support programs to meet each student's needs – from the most able to those most in need of assistance.

Labor believes there are opportunities to strengthen secondary schools by encouraging each to excel in particular fields of study such as music, arts, languages, design, science, maths or sport. This will provide greater choice to parents and students about where they can study their subjects of interest while providing a full curriculum for all local students. Labor will:

- Document successful initiatives and ensure that information about them is shared between schools through the Ultranet;
- Ensure that schools have first class resources to deliver quality education;
- Support schools to work together to develop complementary areas of excellence and specialisation without reducing access for local students, and
- Recognise and encourage teachers to be innovative and to excel in their teaching practices.

## SCHOOL INFORMATION FOR PARENTS

### **2.9 Labor will provide parents with more information about their child's progress and their school's performance in order to increase school transparency and identify areas that need improvement.**

Labor will use performance information to provide additional resources to schools where improvement is needed. To make the most of these opportunities, Labor will ensure:

- A range of data is used to drive improvement in student outcomes;
- Information about school performance takes into consideration the unique characteristics of the student population (such as disadvantage);
- Parents receive regular detailed feedback about their child's progress and that parents and teachers discuss how they can help improve their child's learning, and
- Teachers and principals have access high quality professional development and to the latest resources for innovation in teaching and learning.

## A CURRICULUM WITH THE RIGHT PRIORITIES

### **2.10 Labor supports a national curriculum that is broad and in-depth with room for content relevant to Victoria and the local school community.**

Labor will:

- Ensure curriculum adequately addresses the disciplines of English, mathematics, civics and citizenship, history, geography, commerce, languages other than English (LOTE), science, the arts, music, health and physical education and technology;
- Give particular emphasis to literacy, numeracy, science, creativity, information technology and environmental sustainability, with the flexibility to develop multi-disciplinary approaches, and



- Focus on enhancing every student's intellect and reason, analysis and inquiry, understanding, character, independence, empathy, social interaction, spontaneity and imagination, aptitude and joy for learning.

## LITERACY & NUMERACY

### **2.11 Labor will invest in the literacy and numeracy skills of Victorian students by using literacy and numeracy specialists to help any students that start to fall behind.**

Schools will use diagnostic assessment to individually monitor and plan each student's progress to ensure Victorian students excel by national standards in NAPLAN.

## LEARNING RESPECT & LIFE SKILLS

### **2.12 Labor will ensure the curriculum fosters respect, cultural awareness and understanding; engages students in social, cultural, economic and environmental issues in our community, and develops the skills they will need as they grow up.**

Schools need to promote a culture of respect and positive student behaviour. They need to be inclusive and cater for different learning styles. In addition, to teach the skills students will need in life, schools should:

- Educate students about Australia's democratic system, citizen's rights and responsibilities, including rights at work and the important role played by unions and other democratic organisations, and
- Develop personal capabilities including workplace skills and lifelong learning.

## SAFE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

### **2.13 Labor will provide a safe learning environment in which the physical, emotional, intellectual and personal potential of all students can be realised.**


Labor will:

- Apply firm but fair discipline procedures that recognise the rights and responsibilities of all members of the school community and include the right of appeal for parents and students;
- Provide schools with resources and programs to assist schools and students to constructively resolve behavioural problems, and
- Support schools to develop individual educational strategies to meet each student's special needs, particularly young children in the early stages of their education.

## EDUCATION FOR DIVERSITY

### **2.14 Labor values our multicultural society and will increase the opportunity for culturally and linguistically diverse Victorians to participate fully in education.**

Labor recognises the importance of teaching English as a second language and teaching languages other than English in schools and community settings. We will ensure that the school curriculum reflects the multicultural nature of our community and encourage tolerance and appreciation of other cultures and their contribution to Australian society.



Labor will work with Victorian Universities and the Victorian Institute of Teaching to build cross-cultural awareness and communications programs into teacher training.

## MODERN SCHOOLS

### IMPROVING SCHOOL FACILITIES

#### **2.15 Labor will deliver its historic commitment to rebuild, renovate or extend every government school by 2016/17.**

The \$1.9 billion first stage of the *Victorian Schools Plan* has been boosted by the Commonwealth Government's *Building the Education Revolution* program which is delivering several complementary capital programs.

Labor will ensure that this once in a generation upgrade will deliver schools that are:

- Providing good value to the school community.
- Built using innovative and dynamic designs to best meet the learning needs of students and staff;
- Available for after-hours school and community activities, and
- Maintained to a level that meets community expectations.

### PLANNING FOR NEW SCHOOLS

#### **2.16 Labor will locate new schools according to educational and social needs. Schools should be appropriately sized, close to local urban hubs and transport facilities to ensure they are highly accessible and play a central role in local community life.**

Planning for new schools in growth areas needs to happen in a timely way with more flexible designs developed to allow a school to grow with the local community. Opportunities to share local facilities such as halls, libraries and sports facilities needs to be encouraged for more effective delivery of services.

Labor believes in the importance of the neighbourhood primary school and will use population demand, educational and social needs as the primary criteria for establishing schools. New secondary schools should be close to activity centres and public transport.

### REGENERATION OF EXISTING SCHOOLS

#### **2.17 Labor is committed to regenerating schools through modernisation of buildings, curriculum and accountability to deliver better education outcomes, matched to the needs of their students and the surrounding community.**

Labor will:

- Encourage schools to form local networks to work together and share resources to deliver quality education programs. A broader curriculum choice can be made available where there is a larger pool of students and a greater choice of school and community facilities, and
- Use locally developed plans to coordinate the modernisation of schools to create more vibrant schools with closer links to their surrounding communities.

### SAFE ACCESS TO SCHOOLS

#### **2.18 Labor will work with schools and local Councils to improve safety at school drop off zones and to reverse the downward trend in the number of students walking or riding to**



### **school – particularly in the later years of school.**

Labor has implemented 40 kph speed zones outside all schools which has markedly improved safety and automatic signs are being progressively installed on busy roads. Labor recognises that more needs to be done to prevent double parking and other dangerous behaviour in crowded environments with lots of children.

Labor will support schools to implement measures to encourage walking and riding to schools – including the provision of bike sheds and educational material.

## **ACCESS TO COMPUTER TECHNOLOGIES**

### **2.19 Labor will equip Victorian schools with the computers and other technology tools students need to get the best outcomes from a modern education.**

Labor will:

- Complete the delivery of the *Digital Education Revolution* and *Broadband in Schools* initiatives and ensure schools have the resources to manage and maintain equipment;
- Provide students and teachers with access to innovative e-learning curriculum materials through the Ultranet, and
- Assist teachers in developing and implementing learning technology programs in the classroom.

## **CLIMATE ACTION IN EDUCATION**

### **ENVIRONMENTALLY SOUND SCHOOLS**

### **2.20 Labor will turn schools into demonstration sites within their communities for energy and water efficient technology and use this as a basis for environmental education programs.**

Labor will:

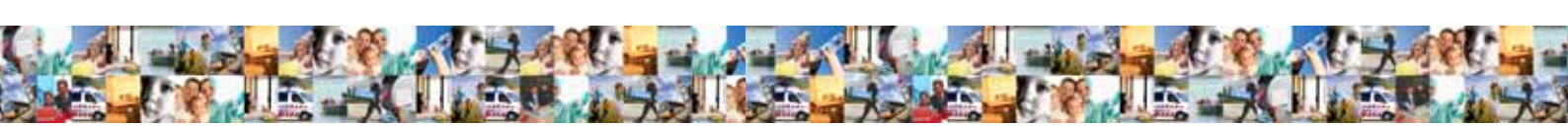
- Ensure that environmental factors and energy minimisation strategies are incorporated in the building and design of new schools;
- Increase the number of water tanks, solar and wind power demonstration projects in schools, retrofit energy and water saving devices and increase the prevalence of automatic lighting, and
- Ensure schools incorporate these design features into their curriculum and give a greater emphasis to environmental education and sustainable living strategies.

## **CATHOLIC & OTHER NON-GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS**

### **2.21 Labor is committed to ensuring that all Victorian students have the opportunity to thrive, learn and grow regardless of which school they choose to attend.**

Labor will:

- Work with the relevant sector authorities so no student is disadvantaged because of their choice of school;
- Labor will direct funding to those students who are most in need of additional support;
- Include non-government schools sites in the planning for new communities in growth corridors;



- Work co-operatively with Catholic and other non-government schools to ensure that parents and the broader community have access to high quality information regarding the educational performance of schools and the funding they receive;
- Ensure all schools receiving government funding meet the same accountability requirements, and
- Provide government funding only to not-for-profit schools and organisations.

## LOCAL SCHOOL MANAGEMENT

### **2.22 Labor will strengthen school councils as locally based decision-making bodies, which are democratic, representative of their school community and accountable.**

Under Labor, key decisions on matters including curriculum implementation, staffing needs and student welfare will be made at the school level. Funding will be flexible enough for local areas to determine their own priorities, within clear guidelines.

Labor will:

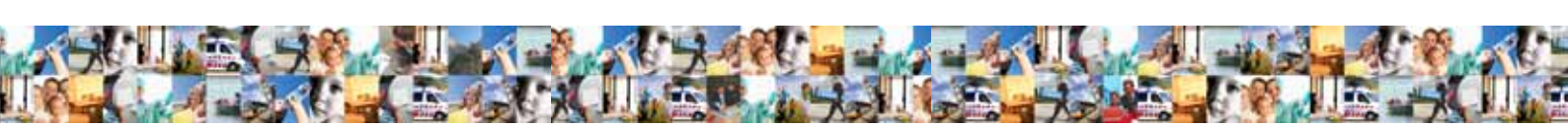
- Ensure decisions are made by democratically elected bodies, with direct knowledge of the points of view of all affected by those decisions;
- Strengthen support and advice for school councils, including offering appropriate training for parents and school staff and students, where appropriate;
- Encourage councils to work together on network plans to meet the needs of students through cooperative strategies across networks of schools;
- Promote best practice models for student participation and representation in schools such as Student Representative Councils;
- Assist school councils to engage all elements of their school communities in school decision making, including broadening representation and co-opting members of the school community and local business, and
- Ensure school councils receive appropriate training, resources and advice to undertake their devolved responsibilities, including on employment obligations and procedural fairness.

## BUILDING STRONGER EDUCATION PARTNERSHIPS

### **2.23 Labor will encourage partnerships between schools, their local community, local government, higher education providers, employers and the corporate, philanthropic and community sectors that bring tangible benefits to student outcomes and do not compromise educational outcomes.**

Labor will:

- Encourage business to pursue their corporate citizenship responsibilities to help students in schools and providing work experience opportunities;
- Ensure there are clear guidelines about appropriate school/business partnerships to make sure businesses are not using schools as marketing opportunities, that may compromise the delivery of a quality curriculum, and



- Maximise the use of shared resources and facilities including co-location of facilities and use of school facilities during weekends, evenings and holidays.

## RURAL PROOFING SCHOOL SERVICES

### STRENGTHENING SCHOOLS IN RURAL AREAS

#### **2.24 Labor believes the relative disadvantage of rural education can be greatly reduced by grouping schools into local networks and using the *UltraneT* to overcome the distance between small separate groups of students so they can study together.**

Special attention needs to be given to providing rural students with access to quality education in their local community. Rural living brings many benefits. However, one of the challenges is the capacity to provide as broad an educational choice as exists in larger communities.

Labor believes the strong community partnerships that underpin most rural schools are an excellent model to deliver the best education outcomes for students.

To build on these partnerships, Labor will:

- Create “sister school” arrangements between rural and city schools to enable them to share resources and ideas and understand each other’s circumstances
- Provide incentives to attract and retain quality teachers for rural schools;
- Create networks between schools to link students together;
- Provide country students with better access to state-wide education programs, and
- Expand curriculum choices by using information and communication technology.

## A STRONGER TEACHING WORKFORCE

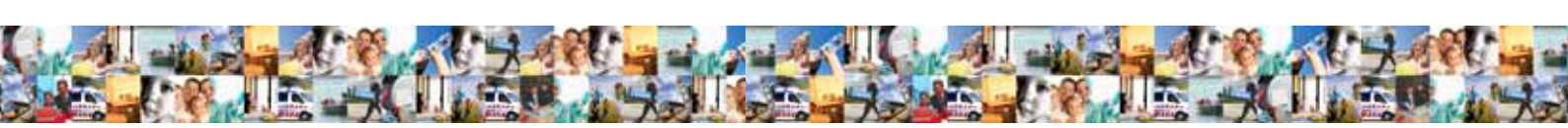
### INVESTING IN THE TEACHING PROFESSION

#### **2.25 Labor will lift the professional standing of Victorian teachers by investing in professional development, setting quality standards, providing security of employment and ensuring that the pay and conditions of our teachers are at professional levels.**

Labor recognises that investing in the teaching profession is the single most important element to improving student outcomes.

Labor will:

- Undertake long term workforce planning to ensure an adequate supply of teachers, particularly in specific subject areas or geographic locations;
- Base personnel practices in government schools on principles of merit, equity and transparency;
- Ensure that teachers have an active involvement in internal school decision-making, and
- Implement appropriate and effective assessment methods to identify and support outstanding classroom teachers and enable them to share their expertise. Reward outstanding classroom teachers and enable them to share their expertise.



## TEACHER RECRUITMENT

### **2.26 Labor will improve the quality and broaden the range of entrants to the teaching profession.**

Labor will:

- Attract entrants to the profession who have higher degrees or experience in industry and other relevant backgrounds;
- Encourage undergraduates to choose teaching as a career;
- Engage high quality graduates to work in underperforming schools, and
- Ensure the Department will be the employer of all educators in government schools, with appointments to positions to be made locally, except for broader workforce management and staff entitlement reasons.

## EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP

### **2.27 Labor will invest in school principals, future principals and teachers generally through high quality professional development and support focussed on leadership.**

Labor recognises that schools leadership resources are an essential element to provide support for the teacher workforce and to improve student outcomes.

Labor will:

- Deliver new high quality professional development programs through the Bastow Institute of Educational Leadership;
- Provide high quality pre-service and ongoing training that is accessible to teaching graduates and experienced teachers, to continually improve the expertise of the profession;
- Make all appointments and promotions according to set objective state-wide criteria based on educational leadership with some additional local variables, and
- Make appointments and promotions for principal class positions by locally constituted school-based panels including school council, parent, teacher, principal and Departmental representation as appropriate.

## FAIRNESS IN SCHOOLS

### REDUCING EDUCATIONAL DISADVANTAGE

### **2.28 Labor will reduce inequalities to ensure every child has access to a high quality education, regardless of where they live or their socio economic-background.**

Research is identifying the factors that underpin educational disadvantage and the lessons to be learned from the best practice in those schools getting good results in overcoming disadvantage.

One of the most effective measures is to encourage parents to play an active role in school life and their child's education.

Labor will:

- Ensure that core funding to government schools is closely related to the needs of the school's



community, to achieve more equitable outcomes;

- Give extra support to schools in remote and rural communities, and
- Expand support programs for newly arrived migrants and provide additional assistance for students from communities who have suffered from a disrupted education.

## **ABORIGINAL EDUCATION - CLOSING THE GAP**

### **2.29 Labor will substantially increase participation of children from Aboriginal communities in childcare, pre-school, kindergarten, primary, secondary and tertiary education.**

To achieve this, Labor will:

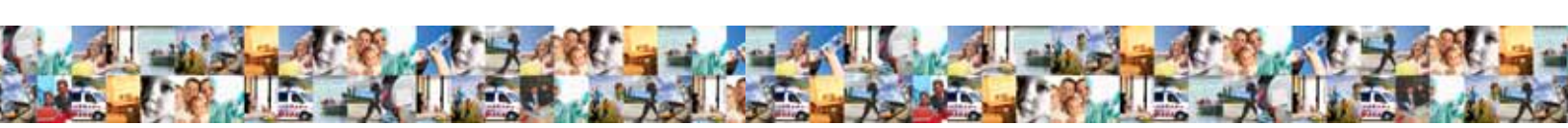
- Implement the principles and goals of *Yalca: A Partnership in Education and Training for the New Millennium*;
- Address ongoing concerns about access to maternal and child health services, kindergarten programs, school attendance, retention and non-completion of primary and secondary education by Aboriginal students;
- Work with Aboriginal communities, local Aboriginal Education Consultative groups and families to develop community and school-based programs to overcome systemic disadvantage, and
- Work with the tertiary education sector to provide a scheme to offer places for young Aboriginal people to enter medical, education and law faculties in Victorian universities.

## **SUPPORTING STUDENTS WITH A DISABILITY**

### **2.30 Labor will target funding to ensure highest levels of support for students with disabilities and impairments.**

Labor will:

- Provide integration support to enable students with disabilities and developmental delays to achieve their potential;
- Give parents a choice to place their child in either a mainstream school or a specialised setting according to the needs of the child;
- Ensure students have their disabilities and impairments appropriately assessed and that the provision of support services focuses on defined educational needs;
- Provide funding to schools based on the expectation that appropriate individual learning plans are developed for these students;
- Support case management partnerships between schools and providers of childcare, family, health and welfare services to address difficulties being experienced by students;
- Ensure that appropriate accountability mechanisms are implemented to monitor the progress of these students, and
- Ensure education and support staff have access to training programs.



# SUPPORTING YOUNG PEOPLE AT SCHOOL

## INCREASING SCHOOL RETENTION

### **2.31 Labor will ensure that all young people remain at school, in training, employment or a combination of these until they turn 17.**

Labor will provide a flexible range of support options to meet the diverse needs of young people and maximise the number of young people completing Year 12 or an equivalent training qualification.

Victoria has the highest state retention rate in Australia and is committed to meeting the new COAG targets to further increase school retention.

To achieve this Labor will:

- Plan a pathway for each student and keep in touch after they leave school through the *On Track* program and a network of Local Learning and Education Networks (LLEN's);
- Improve access to support services and mentors in schools and build partnerships in the local community to provide job experience and careers advice, and
- Build on the success of the youthcentral website to promote career and employment opportunities to young people.

## HELPING EARLY SCHOOL LEAVERS GET BACK ON TRACK

### **2.32 Labor will provide early intervention support services to help vulnerable young students and young parents to stay at school, undertake training or gain employment and give them help through the teenage years.**

Labor recognises that when young people leave school early they risk exclusion from education, training and employment opportunities. Concentrated efforts are required to ensure positive outcomes for these young people.

Specifically, Labor will tailor support packages for young people with complex needs which:

- Ensure that young people in need receive guidance and help with their education, followed by better support programs and job opportunities;
- Partner with local organisations to connect them to locally-based services such as training, job placement assistance, health, housing and recreation;
- Improve programs that target issues of homelessness, drug and alcohol abuse, STDs, contraception, youth pregnancy and family issues, and
- Implement a flexible strategy that allows for priority assistance to Aboriginal students, those with language and cultural problems and other disengaged young people who are at risk of experienced long-term unemployment.

*See also Chapter 7 Respect*



## RURAL PROOFING YOUTH POLICY

### EXTRA HELP FOR RURAL YOUTH

#### **2.33 Labor will work with local Councils to improve access to youth services and implement programs to increase the retention of young people in regional and rural communities and provide more recreational opportunities.**

Labor believes that while some young people will benefit from relocation to a larger centre to pursue education and employment opportunities, that there are great benefits to be had enjoying the breadth of economic and social opportunities that exist in regional and rural communities throughout Victoria.

Labor will:

- Invest in rural youth services and provide access to information through the Internet using *youthcentral*;
- Offer more training and university options closer to home;
- Attract investment in rural and regional communities to ensure a wider range of job opportunities are created for young people, and
- Expand the successful Rural Skills Cadetship Program, to create opportunities for graduates to take up suitable employment in their regional and rural communities.
- Work with higher education institutions and the Commonwealth to ensure adequate support exists for young students living away from home during study periods.

## SKILLS - PATHWAYS FROM SCHOOL TO WORK

Victoria needs a workforce with high level, broad-based skills, capable of responding to changes in the economy and maximising employment opportunities.

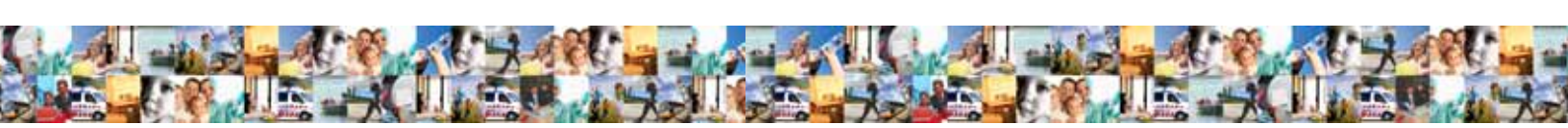
### ADDRESSING THE SKILLS SHORTAGE

#### **2.34 Labor will provide an additional 172,000 training places and introduce the Victorian Training Guarantee – an entitlement to a government subsidised place in recognised training that can be accessed at any time.**

Labor believes that the best way to generate high paid, high quality jobs is to make full use of the abilities, skills and ideas of all Victorians. Employers need to be able to attract work-ready employees who have the skills required to sustain our diverse industries.

To achieve this Labor will:

- Support Victorians seeking to increase their level of skills and qualifications so that they can move effectively from learning to employment in a quality job;
- Invest in pre-accredited training, giving adults another chance to re-engage in education;
- Help businesses and the community sector to invest in workforce skills development;
- Provide targeted assistance and support to those from vulnerable backgrounds engaging in the VET sector so people can reach their full potential.



## APPRENTICESHIPS

### **2.35 Labor will strengthen the quality of apprenticeship training, increase the number participating and provide incentives for completion, including increased social support for young apprentices and penalties for employers who breach their obligations.**

To ensure that full competency must be achieved prior to completion of an apprenticeship Labor will:

- Consistently apply the recognised and relevant industry competency standards when assessing trades for mutual recognition and for recognition of skills gained overseas;
- Strengthen the requirement for formal structured training relevant to the industry and ensure that this training is separate from the normal work process;
- Restrict public funding and recognition of skills qualifications to nationally consistent and portable qualifications, and
- Ensure that any review of the duration of apprenticeships is conducted on an industry by industry basis.

## TRAINEESHIPS

### **2.36 Labor will promote traineeships to provide young Victorians with an alternative skilled pathway from school to work that meets the needs of employers and industry.**

Labor will give young Victorians guaranteed access to training that leads to a nationally recognised qualification and opens up options for future employment and further education.

Traineeships will target areas of skills shortage critical to Victoria's economic and social development. In particular, Labor will:

- Support a proper award training wage;
- Strengthen safeguards and dispute resolution mechanisms to protect apprentices, trainees and their employers;
- Develop industry partnerships through high quality training facilities that create employment opportunities for trainees and increase employer training investment, and
- Expand opportunities for apprenticeships and traineeships in the public sector working for government agencies or on large government contracts.

## VOCATIONAL EDUCATION & TRAINING (VET)

### **2.37 Labor will provide high quality programs for training across many occupations and locations which meet labour market and community needs.**

Labor will ensure:

- Training delivery is properly supervised, monitored and assessed and that sufficient places are available in rural and regional areas;
- Students have information on available approved courses so they can choose the most suitable course and provider for their needs;
- Labor will maintain and enhance the Local Learning and Employment Network;
- Diversity of providers in education and training, from universities and TAFE institutes to community-based and private providers, so that all groups in society, including the most educationally disadvantaged, can access learning opportunities, and



- Provide small businesses and their employees with assistance to help them identify and access training to help their businesses grow and compete.

## **CLIMATE ACTION & SKILLS**

### **TEACHING GREEN SKILLS FOR THE JOBS OF THE FUTURE**

#### **2.38 Labor will expand training and development of green skills for emerging low-carbon industries, such as green building design and construction, low-emissions vehicles and fuels, and clean energy technologies to meet future demand for skills.**

Making the transition to a low-carbon economy means changing the way we produce and use energy, the way we move around and the way we manage our land. These changes bring significant opportunities for new growth, industries and high skilled jobs across Victoria in what are often referred to as 'green jobs'.

Labor will:

- Integrate green skills into apprenticeships and traineeships to put young Victorians at the cutting edge of new industry technologies;
- Work with industry, the training sector and the Commonwealth Government to implement the National Green Skills Agreement to ensure every apprentice will graduate with a core set of green skills, knowledge and training to equip them for the challenges of the modern economy, and
- Educate the community about the importance of choosing sustainably produced goods and services whenever practical, and to protect consumers from inaccurate 'eco labelling'.

In regional Victoria, Labor will:

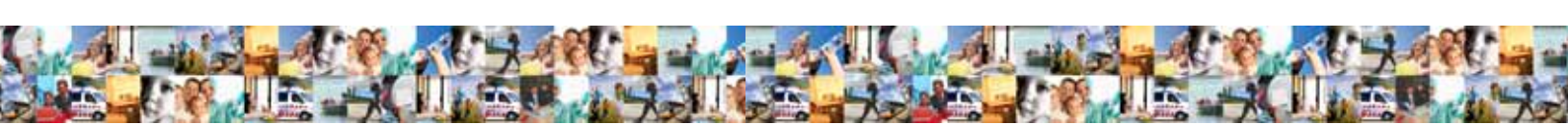
- Support regional communities who want to benefit from the opportunity for new investment and jobs in sectors like renewable energy and sustainable land management, including carbon sequestration and ecosystems services.
- Support regions at risk from the transition to a low-carbon economy, such as the Latrobe Valley, to diversify their local economies and attract new investment.
- Protect existing low carbon industries, such as the forest and forest products industry by equipping workers with skills able to meet challenges presented by climate change and environmental sustainability agendas.

## **TECHNICAL & FURTHER EDUCATION (TAFE) INSTITUTES**

#### **2.39 Labor will encourage TAFE Institutes to focus on innovation while delivering a broad range of services consistent with their role as full service provider.**

Specifically Labor will:

- Invest in the most up-to-date and advanced facilities at Victorian TAFEs, with greater accessibility to information and communication technology for students and staff;
- Ensure that Victorian TAFE Institutes provide a range of skills necessary for success in adult life as well as vocational education and training;
- Provide seamless pathways for students to move between schools, Adult and Community Education (ACE), TAFE and Universities;
- Regulate private training colleges to ensure they are properly run, financially viable and deliver quality outcomes;
- Promote a culture of respect so that Victorian TAFE Institutes are harmonious working environments;



- Support improved involvement of employers, unions and other stakeholders in the governance and policies of our TAFE system;
- Assist TAFE to play a key role in employment generation and in the delivery of vocational training in labour market programs, and
- Offer university style loans so TAFE entry costs are not a barrier to participation by students from disadvantaged groups.

## **ENGLISH LANGUAGE ON THE JOB**

### **2.40 Labor will support English language training in the workplace as one of the most effective ways for people to become competent in English.**

Labor will implement these programs in partnership with the Commonwealth Government, employers and unions with a particular focus on newly arrived groups from language groups with few members in Australia.

## **ADULT & COMMUNITY EDUCATION (ACE)**

### **2.41 Labor will strengthen the capacity of local community based providers of ACE to meet the educational and personal development needs of their local communities.**

Labor will:

- Support a diverse ACE sector based on community providers that are owned and managed by local or regional communities;
- Provide support for pre-accredited training as an important first pathway for many people into further education and training;
- Support the University of the Third Age (U3A) movement which enables people to share skills and teach each other, and
- Support the development of courses in neighbourhood houses and community centres that meet the needs of people less likely to enrol in formal training courses.

## **HIGHER EDUCATION**

### **TERTIARY EDUCATION REFORM**

#### **2.42 Labor will seek to make the most of the national Bradley reforms to strengthen Victoria's university sector and expand capacity to meet the current level of unmet demand and ensure Victoria receives a fair share of Commonwealth funded places.**

Victoria's economy has been undersupplied with graduates in part because of Victoria's high level of unmet demand for University places relative to other states. The Commonwealth's recent commitment to fund places in relation to demand should overcome this problem.

Labor will encourage greater flexibility and innovation in program delivery, allowing for accelerated study opportunities, recognition of prior learning, credit transfer arrangements between the higher education, VET and ACE sectors and for study patterns that reflect the diverse needs of Victorians undertaking higher education.

Labor will:

- Work with the Commonwealth Government to help universities meet the participation targets set out in the Bradley report, including funding for capital, research and support for students;
- Strongly advocate that access to, and participation in, higher education must not be dependent on the capacity to pay;



- Provide special support to meet the needs of those regions that are disadvantaged in their access to higher education (including Melbourne's outer suburbs);
- Work with the Commonwealth Government to make tertiary and TAFE education more affordable, offer more courses and modes of delivery and ensure women are better able to pursue further education; and
- Work with the Commonwealth Government, education providers and relevant community groups to facilitate engagement with regional and Indigenous students and increase retention rates amongst under-represented groups in higher education.

## **BETTER UNIVERSITY GOVERNANCE**

### **2.43 Labor will ensure high standards of governance and accountability in higher education institutions and ensure University Councils are constituted with an appropriate balance of interests.**

The legislation governing Victoria's Universities has recently been modernised to reflect contemporary best practice principles of governance and ensure the governing bodies are broadly representative of the diverse communities they serve, including staff, students and alumni.

Labor will:

- Ensure University proceedings are conducted openly, wherever possible, with due regard to the public interest and principles of transparency;
- Uphold the legitimate role of student organisations in representing student interests and in providing valuable services, facilities and amenities, and
- Provide for proper accountability of university-owned business arms to ensure public funding is used only to support programs that bring a return to the public.
- Recognise the strong role played by university staff unions in representing the legitimate interests of staff at universities and university controlled entities. Labor supports the rights of university unions to uphold important principles such as academic freedom.

## **RURAL PROOFING ACCESS TO UNIVERSITY**

### **ACCESS TO UNIVERSITY & TRAINING FOR RURAL STUDENTS**

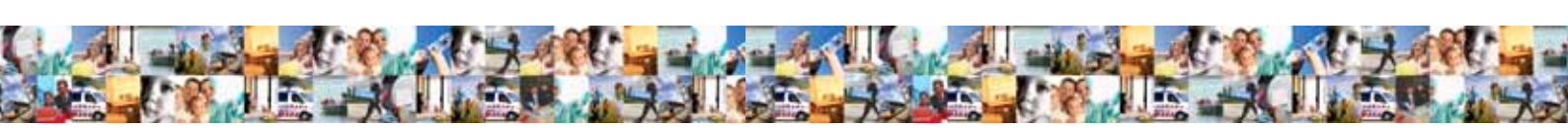
#### **2.44 Labor will provide more opportunities for young people in rural and regional Victoria to get a tertiary education closer to home.**

Universities play a crucial role in the economic and social life of their communities that extends well beyond their educational activities.

A strong network of outer urban and regional campuses is essential for providing students from diverse backgrounds access to higher education and helps drive regional development.

Labor is committed to increasing tertiary education participation among traditionally under-represented groups, including those in rural and regional Victoria, in order to meet national higher education participation and attainment targets set by the Commonwealth Government.

Labor will support the development of partnerships between Victorian Universities and TAFE's to increase access to tertiary education through new models of delivery and sharing resources as part of the Victorian Tertiary Education Plan.



## **INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS**

### **2.45 Labor welcomes the many international students who come to Victoria to get further qualifications and will provide support services so they can quickly settle into their studies and that their time in Victoria is rewarding and safe.**

This export of education services is one of Victoria's largest industries and it is important to ensure it is put on a sustainable basis delivering a quality product as a major part of Victoria's overseas reputation.

The large influx of overseas students to Victorian Universities, TAFE's and private training organisations has stretched resources and tested existing regulatory arrangements. Labor is concerned that more needs to be done to protect international students from rip-offs, bad landlords or irresponsible employers and that they are not the targets of theft or racially motivated attacks.

## **INTERNATIONAL STUDENT REPRESENTATION & ENGAGEMENT**

### **2.46 Labor recognises the legitimate role of international student representative organisations in ensuring that international students interests and concerns are heard and addressed by governments and education providers.**

Labor also recognises the importance of social inclusion for international students and the role played by many student organisations in facilitating engagement between domestic and international students through activities and support programs.

Labor will:

- Encourage education providers to ensure international students have channels for student representation and are engaged in the institution's decision-making in areas relevant to them,
- Work with international students and student representative organisations to develop strategies to combat the particular challenges that international students face in their studies, employment, living arrangements and safety.

## **OVERSEAS QUALIFICATIONS**

### **2.47 Labor will examine how to improve the processes for acceptance of overseas qualifications and recognition of prior learning undertaken overseas to enable migrants and visitors to work in skilled positions.**

Labor will:

- Ensure those with overseas qualifications can meet local requirements by utilising upgrade and training programs in areas of employment shortages, and
- Work with the Commonwealth to provide targeted job placement assistance to link skills recognition with employment outcomes.