

CHAPTER 13: QUALITY HEALTH AND EDUCATION

Key findings of the Committee:

- 2.1 In May 2008, the National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) replaced the different tests previously conducted in each State and Territory, including Victoria’s Achievement Improvement Monitor (AIM). NAPLAN seeks to measure student achievement in reading, writing and numeracy. The NAPLAN results showed that Victoria was one of the highest performing states in Australia, achieving at above the national average in reading, writing and numeracy.
- 2.2 Victorian Indigenous students were among the highest performing in Australia and above the national average in reading, writing and numeracy.
- 2.3 The Government accepted Recommendation 27 from the Committee’s Report on the 2008-09 Budget Estimates that it examine the reasons behind the significant variations in the performance of Indigenous students across the three benchmarks: reading, writing and numeracy.
- 2.4 The Government has released the Victorian Mental Health Reform Strategy 2009-2019, which sets out the Government’s policy aims for mental health in Victoria. The Government has committed over \$26 million to mental health in the 2009-10 Budget and over \$180 million for mental health from 2009-10 to 2012-13.
- 2.5 The Crisis Assessment and Treatment (CAT) service is a community based outreach program to assess and treat people in acute phases of mental illness. To improve the capacity of CAT services, the Government has allocated \$11.2 million over four years for a centralised 24 hour, seven day a week mental health triage service.
- 2.6 Ultranet is an online education and administrative system the Government plans on implementing in all Victorian Government schools by 2010. The \$60.5 million project is a web-based system and will give students, parents and teachers access to curriculum related information and other resources.
- 2.7 To support the Ultranet system, the 2009-10 Budget extends the funding for Ultranet Coaches. The Ultranet Coaches have been employed to work with schools and the community in preparation for the Ultranet system.

13.1 Introduction

In its analysis of the Budget Estimates, the Committee asked a total of 66 questions pertaining to the Quality Health and Education vision of the *Growing Victoria Together* (GVT) initiative. This represented 13.7 per cent of all questions asked in the Budget Estimates hearings.

The answers provided at the estimates hearings were recorded in Hansard and the transcripts of evidence were contained in Volume Two of the *Report on the 2009-10 Budget Estimates – Part One*.

This chapter sets out an analysis of several key issues canvassed by the Committee at the Budget Estimates hearings relating to the Quality Health and Education vision of *Growing Victoria Together*.

13.2 Literacy and Numeracy in schools

The Government considers Education to be its number one priority and has continued to place a high importance on strengthening literacy and numeracy skills in Government schools to provide children with a solid foundation to prepare them for further education and to participate fully in society.³³⁹

One of the Government's key measures of progress towards the *Growing Victoria Together* goal of 'high quality education and training for lifelong learning' is 'the proportion of Victorian primary students achieving the national benchmark levels for reading, writing and numeracy will be at or above the national average.'³⁴⁰

The Committee recognises the importance of literacy and numeracy skills and has taken an interest in this area in past reports.

13.2.1 National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN)

In 2008, the Commonwealth Government launched a national literacy and numeracy testing program, which replaced the individual tests previously conducted in each State and Territory. The National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) tests are conducted in May each year in all government and non-government schools to assess students in Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 on numeracy, reading, writing, and language conventions (spelling, punctuation and grammar).³⁴¹ NAPLAN was designed using nationally agreed Statements of Learning and broadly aligns with the curriculum of States and Territories.³⁴² In Victoria, NAPLAN replaced the Achievement Improvement Monitor (AIM) tests that were held in August each year.³⁴³

The decision to introduce a national testing program was made by the Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs, with the aim of improving national comparisons of student performance in literacy and numeracy. Conducting a common national test eliminates the technical problems of making comparisons with the different tests in each State and Territory. In addition, NAPLAN provides teachers and schools with information to inform curriculum development, improve education programs, and identify and support students requiring additional support.³⁴⁴

³³⁹ Media release: 'Blueprint makes Victoria Education Revolution Ready', 2 September 2008; and Department of Treasury and Finance, Budget Paper No. 3, 2009-10 Service Delivery, May 2009, pp.25, 400

³⁴⁰ Department of Premier and Cabinet, *Growing Victoria Together, A Vision for Victoria to 2010 and Beyond*, March 2005, p.10

³⁴¹ Ministerial Council for Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs, *National Assessment Program Literacy and Numeracy, Achievement in Reading, Writing, Language Conventions and Numeracy*, September 2008, p.2

³⁴² Ministerial Council for Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs, *Frequently asked questions: NAPLAN*, May 2009, pp.2-3

³⁴³ Victorian Auditor-General's Office, *Literacy and Numeracy Achievement*, February 2009, p.19

³⁴⁴ Ministerial Council for Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs, *National Report on Schooling in Australia 2007 Preliminary Paper: National Benchmark Results Reading, Writing and Numeracy Years 3, 5 and 7*, pp.2-3

Although NAPLAN results are not directly comparable to results in previous years, as discussed above, similar broad patterns are evident, including:³⁴⁹

- the achievement of Victorian Indigenous students in reading, writing and numeracy is lower than Victorian non-Indigenous students; and
- Victorian Indigenous students have a higher level of achievement than Indigenous students in other States and Territories.

In comparison to other States and Territories, Victorian Indigenous students were among the highest performing, along with the Australian Capital Territory, Tasmania and New South Wales.

³⁴⁹ Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, *Wannik: Learning Together – Journey to Our Future*, Victorian Education Strategy for Koorie Students, 2008, pp.8-9

Table 13.1: Percentage of school students at or above the national minimum standard in reading, writing and numeracy by State and Territory (NAPLAN 2008)

Year	Reading, writing and numeracy	NSW	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT	Vic	Victoria 2009-10 Target (%) ^(a)	National average	Difference between Victoria's results and 2009-10 target (%)
3	reading	95.1	87.0	89.5	91.5	92.8	94.4	63.1	95.2	91	92.1	4.2
	writing	97.5	92.5	94.9	95	97.1	96.3	73.6	96.2	na	95.4	na
	numeracy	96.9	91.9	94.7	93.8	96.7	96.4	77.3	96.5	94	95.0	2.5
5	reading	93.5	86.7	89.2	89.9	89.7	94.8	62.6	93.7	90	90.9	3.7
	writing	95.1	89.5	91.0	91.7	92.6	94.9	65.5	93.9	na	92.5	na
	numeracy	94.4	90.2	91.2	90.5	92.1	94.9	69.3	94.6	92	92.6	2.6
7	reading	95.4	92.7	92.8	93.4	93.9	96.3	67.8	95.8	93	94.2	2.8
	writing	93.5	89.9	90.2	92.4	90.0	93.4	64.1	93.4	na	91.8	na
	numeracy	96.0	94.6	94.8	94.5	95.2	97.1	76.8	96.5	95	95.4	1.5
9	reading	94.4	90.4	92.2	91.7	93.0	96.6	70.8	94.7	92	92.9	2.7
	writing	88.9	83.6	85.6	87.2	84.1	88.9	63.5	90.1	na	87.2	na
	numeracy	94.7	92.1	92.7	92.0	92.3	96.6	75.0	95.2	93	93.6	2.2

Notes: (a) Actual time frame is the 2009 calendar year. There are no targets for 2008 as this is a new measure.

(b) The Government has not specified writing targets for Victorian students for 2009-10.

Source: Budget Paper No. 3, 2009-10 Service Delivery, p.75-77; National Assessment Program Literacy and Numeracy NAPLAN Summary Report: Achievement in Reading, Writing, Language Conventions and Numeracy, 2008, Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs; NAPLAN Indigenous Results <http://www.mceecdya.edu.au/mceecdya/default.asp?id=25847>, viewed 7 August 2009

Table 13.2: Percentage of Indigenous school students at or above the national minimum standard in reading, writing and numeracy by State and Territory (NAPLAN 2008).

Year	Reading, writing and numeracy	NSW	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT	Vic	National average	Vic 2009-10 Target (%) ^(a)	Difference between Victoria's results and 2009-10 target (%)
3	reading	83.5	66.2	57.3	71.5	88.4	84.9	30.4	88.1	68.3	66	22.1
	writing	90.9	77.2	72.0	82.5	94.2	89.5	46.6	92.1	78.8	na	na
	numeracy	88.6	75.5	75.5	79.2	94.5	88.4	52.4	93.0	78.6	76	17
5	reading	77.6	62.9	51.8	60.6	84.5	81.1	25.8	83.0	63.4	61	22
	writing	81.7	72.0	59.2	69.0	83.8	82.1	32.8	82.7	69.7	na	na
	numeracy	78.9	69.5	61.6	68.5	87.8	82.3	38.3	83.3	69.2	67	16.3
7	reading	82.4	74.8	63.4	69.6	89.0	94.3	32.4	85.5	71.9	69	16.5
	writing	76.9	72.3	59.9	67.5	81.9	84.1	29.9	77.6	67.9	na	na
	numeracy	84.5	81.8	74.2	75.9	92.4	90.3	50.2	87.9	78.6	76	11.9
9	reading	82.3	70.0	62.8	62.5	90.7	84.2	37.9	79.9	70.7	68	11.9
	writing	67.7	61.8	49.9	57.4	68.9	73.4	32.8	68.9	59.7	na	na
	numeracy	80.3	73.2	66.2	68.7	88.5	83.8	46.1	78.4	72.5	70	8.4

Notes: (a) Actual time frame is the 2009 calendar year.

na – the Government has not specified writing targets for Victorian students for 2009-10.

Source: Budget Paper No. 3, 2009-10 Service Delivery, p.75-77; National Assessment Program Literacy and Numeracy NAPLAN Summary Report: Achievement in Reading, Writing, Language Conventions and Numeracy, 2008, Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs; NAPLAN Indigenous Results <http://www.mceecdya.edu.au/mceecdya/default.asp?id=25847>, viewed 7 August 2009

13.2.4 Government response to Committee recommendations related to the performance of Indigenous students

In its report on the *2008-09 Budget Estimates – Part Three*, the Committee recommended that the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development report on the effectiveness of the *Wannik: Learning Together – Journey to Our Future* strategy in improving writing, reading and numeracy skills for Indigenous students and use this information to refine the strategy.

The Government response accepted the Committee’s recommendation. The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development informed the Committee that they intend to regularly report on the outcomes of the *Wannik* strategy using a range of reporting frameworks. An evaluation of the outcomes of the Koorie specific Individual Education Plans will also be conducted.

The Committee welcomes the Government’s response to reporting on the outcomes of the strategy and reaffirms its earlier recommendation to use this information to refine the Strategy.

The Committee also recommended that the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development examine the reasons behind the significant variations in the performance of Indigenous students across the three benchmarks: reading, writing and numeracy.

The Government response accepted the Committee’s recommendation. The Department informed the Committee that they had conducted a comprehensive review of Koorie education in Victoria in 2007 that covered the performance of Koorie students across literacy and numeracy benchmarks. The outcomes of this review included informing the development of the *Wannik: Learning Together – Journey to Our Future* education strategy for Koorie students. The Department advised the Committee that they will ensure that recommendations from the review are implemented through *Wannik*.³⁵⁰

While the Committee acknowledges that the Department carried out an extensive review on Koorie education, the Committee considers that there could be a need for further research to be conducted to determine the causes of wide variations in the performance of Indigenous students from year to year and between the three benchmarks of reading, writing and numeracy. The Committee would like to ensure that the underlying causes of these variations are taken in account and used to inform the further development of programs to support Indigenous students in achieving their maximum potential in literacy and numeracy.

13.2.5 Measuring performance of literacy and numeracy outcomes

***Growing Victoria Together* education goal**

The Committee noted that with the introduction of NAPLAN, student achievement in literacy and numeracy is now measured against the new national minimum standards, replacing the national benchmarks. Therefore, the Government’s key measure of progress towards the *Growing Victoria Together* education goal will require appropriate adjustments to reflect this change. The Committee considers that the Department of Premier and Cabinet should reflect this change in the *Growing Victoria Together* goal.

³⁵⁰ Victorian Government, *Government Response to the Recommendations of the Public Account and Estimates Committee’s 80th Report on the 2008-09 Budget Estimates*, tabled 19 April 2009, p.19

Recommendation 33: **The Department of Premier and Cabinet make appropriate adjustments to the Government’s key measure of progress towards the Growing Victoria Together education goal to reflect the replacement of the national benchmark measures with the new national minimum standards.**

Performance measures

With the introduction of NAPLAN testing, the 2009-10 Budget has introduced a suite of 16 new performance measures and targets for literacy and numeracy to measure the percentage of students meeting the national minimum standard for reading and numeracy in Years 3, 5, 7 and 9. This includes measures for Indigenous students. These performance measures replace 12 discontinued measures that previously reported student achievement from AIM results in reading and numeracy for Years 3 and 5.³⁵¹

The Committee welcomes the introduction of performance measures for student achievement in reading and numeracy for years 7 and 9, as this will promote greater transparency and allow assessment of student progress across school years.

The 2009-10 targets for the new performance measures, in the previous tables, are based on the percentage of Australian children meeting the national minimum standard for reading and numeracy in the 2008 NAPLAN tests. The government intends to review these targets in the future.³⁵²

The Committee would like the Department to provide to Parliament in its annual report the yearly results for student achievement in literacy, numeracy and reading.

Recommendation 34: **The Department of Treasury and Finance and the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development report the results for student achievement in literacy, numeracy and reading in future annual reports.**

Service delivery targets

The 2009-10 service delivery targets for education are based on the Government’s *Growing Victoria Together* measure ‘*The proportion of Victorian primary students achieving the national benchmark levels for reading, writing and numeracy will be at or above the national average.*’³⁵³ As discussed above, this measure now needs to be revised. However, the Committee found in its analysis of the testing results for 2008, Victoria exceeded against the 2009-10 targets set by between 1.5 per cent and 4.2 per cent. For Indigenous students, the target was exceeded by between 8.4 per cent and 22.1 per cent.

The Auditor-General noted in his recent report *Literacy and Numeracy Achievement* commented that Victorian students were achieving the national minimum standards set under NAPLAN and were above the national average in every test at every year level. Victoria also had the smallest proportion of students that did not meet the minimum standards as well as the largest proportion of students that achieved at the highest levels of testing.³⁵⁴

³⁵¹ Department of Treasury and Finance, Budget Paper No. 3, *2009-10 Service Delivery*, May 2009, p.74-77, 442-444

³⁵² *ibid.*, p.77

³⁵³ Department of Premier and Cabinet, *Growing Victoria Together, A Vision for 2010 and Beyond*, 2005, p.10

³⁵⁴ Victorian Auditor-General’s Office, *Literacy and Numeracy Achievement*, February 2009, p.21

The Committee considers that given Victoria's high performance, the service delivery targets could better reflect that performance. The *Growing Victoria Together* measure could be exceeding the national minimum standard rather than simply achieving the minimum standard.

Recommendation 35: **The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development adopt service delivery targets for the National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy measurements that exceed the national minimum standards.**

As NAPLAN does not report separate results for government and non-government schools, it is difficult to assess accurately the outcomes of the Government's vision for literacy and numeracy achievements for government schools. In future years, the Committee would welcome NAPLAN results that differentiate between government schools and non-government schools to improve accountability.

The national measurement of student literacy achievement, as reported in the *National Report on Schooling in Australia* uses both reading and writing test scores.³⁵⁵ It is unclear why the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development omitted writing as a performance measure. The Committee believes that reporting student literacy achievement using both reading and writing test results will provide a more accurate representation of outcomes in this area.

Recommendation 36: **The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development develop and report on appropriate performance measures and targets to assess student achievement in writing.**

13.3 Mental health portfolio

Approximately one in five people in Victoria will at some time in their life experience a mental illness and most people will at some time experience a mental health problem. Mental illness is a generic term that refers to a range of illnesses including but not limited to depression, schizophrenia, personality disorders, anxiety and eating disorders. Mental health problems are less severe than this and are generally a temporary reaction to life stressors, however if not dealt with can become mental illnesses.³⁵⁶

13.3.1 Victorian Mental Health Reform Strategy

In March 2009, the Government released the *Victorian Mental Health Reform Strategy 2009-2019* (the Mental Health Strategy) which sets out the Government's policy and aims for mental health in Victoria. One of the most important features of the Mental Health Strategy is that it recognises that mental health needs a whole-of-government approach to ensure that there can be fundamental shifts in policy and service delivery.³⁵⁷

The Government is also in the process of reviewing the *Mental Health Act 1986* to ensure that the legislative framework in place can adequately support the reforms in the Government's Mental Health Strategy.

³⁵⁵ Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs, *The National Report on Schooling in Australia*, 2007

³⁵⁶ Department of Health and Ageing, *What is mental illness?*, May 2007, Canberra, p.2

³⁵⁷ Department of Human Services, *Victorian Mental Health Reform Strategy – Summary*, March 2009, p.6

The vision for mental health is defined in the Strategy as:³⁵⁸

All Victorians have the opportunities they need to maintain good mental health, while those experiencing mental health problems can access timely, high quality care and support to live successfully in the community.

The Mental Health Strategy also sets out a vision for Victoria towards 2019 for service delivery for those with a mental illness and society’s attitude towards mental illness. In achieving this, the Mental Health Strategy sets out the following four core elements:³⁵⁹

- **Prevention** – preventing or delaying the emergence of some mental health problem as well as promoting positive mental health in the community;
- **Early intervention** – minimising the impact of mental illness on individuals, families, carers and the wider community by intervening early in a person’s life or in an episode of illness to decrease the escalation;
- **Recovery** – promoting treatment and ongoing support that offers the individual the possibility of achieving change, independence and the opportunity to achieve their personal goals and lead productive lives; and
- **Social inclusion** – ensuring that people with mental illness and mental health problems as well as their families and carers can participate in society, with the aim of preventing further mental health problems.

The Mental Health Strategy sets out eight Reform Areas, which each have four goals and a list of actions to meet the goals.

To support the Mental Health Strategy, the Victorian Government has committed over \$26 million to mental health in the 2009-10 Budget, with more than \$180 million to be spent on mental health in the next four years. The table below shows the government’s expenditure, broken down by program and year.

Table 13.3: Funding for mental health initiatives 2009-10 to 2012-13

Mental health programs	2009-10 (\$million)	2010-11 (\$million)	2011-12 (\$million)	2012-13 (\$million)	Total (\$million)
Foundations for Recovery	7.8	9.9	10.1	10.1	37.7
Early in Life	3.4	5.8	6.0	6.1	21.3
Pathways to Care	1.5	3.1	3.2	3.3	11.2
Aboriginal Mental Health	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.9
Workforce and Service Development	1.5	1.6	1.7	1.7	6.6
Strengthening Specialist Support	5.1	5.3	5.4	5.6	21.4
Boosting capacity	2.2	2.3	2.3	2.4	9.2
Investing in more beds	4.4	23.1	20.5	16.8	74.0 ^(a)
Total per year	26.1	51.3	49.4	46.2	182.1

Notes: (a) includes capital contributions of \$3.7 from agencies and expenditure beyond 2012-13

Source: Minister for Mental Health, response to questions taken on notice, 19 May 2009, p. 3 and Budget Paper No. 3, 2009-10 Service Delivery, p. 321.

³⁵⁸ Department of Human Services, *Victorian Mental Health Reform Strategy – Summary*, March 2009, p.7
³⁵⁹ *ibid.*, p.5

In line with the *Blueprint*, the main aims of Ultranet are to:³⁷⁰

- better respond to ‘individual learning needs’ by providing students with access to their own online work area, teacher support, curriculum related information and other resources;
- promote greater involvement of parents in their child’s education, including access to lessons, homework, marks and attendance, an automatic function to notify parents by email, text or phone when their child does not attend school, and the facility to email teachers;
- increase the efficiency of school administration systems, including timetabling and attendance records, thereby reducing the administrative workload on teachers; and
- contribute to the professional development of teachers.

In 2005, the former Department of Education and Training conducted a pilot project of Ultranet at 12 schools over 18 months, which was evaluated by the University of Melbourne. The results provided information to assist in the development and rollout of Ultranet in schools.³⁷¹

In August 2007, the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development put out a request for tender to develop Ultranet system.³⁷² The staged rollout to all government primary, secondary, language and special schools was scheduled to begin in 2008 for completion by the end of term 3, 2010. However, the rollout was delayed when the original tender process was unsuccessful and a decision was made to re-tender. In June 2009, CSG Limited, an IT services company, was awarded the contract.³⁷³

The Auditor-General Office’s Annual Plan for 2009-10 includes ‘*learning technologies in government schools, including the status of the implementation of Ultranet*’ as an area of audit interest in 2010-11.³⁷⁴ The Committee welcomes the conduct of such a review.

The amount of funding to be provided each year for the implementation of the Ultranet project in all Victorian schools is outlined in Table 13.4.

Table 13.4: Funding for implementation of Ultranet

Labor’s Financial Statement 2006 asset initiative	2008-09 (\$ million)	2009-10 (\$ million)	2010-11 (\$ million)	Total
Ultranet	42.0	15.5	3.0	60.5

Source: 2009-10 Budget Paper No. 3, p.277

³⁷⁰ Council of Australian Governments’ National Reform Agenda, Victorian’s Plan to improve literacy and numeracy outcomes, p.43; and Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, Ultranet Coaches 2009 Handbook: Improving Student Outcomes enabled by ICT, (2009), p.1

³⁷¹ Assessment Research Centre, The University of Melbourne, Griffin, P., & Woods, K. (2005) Evaluation of the pilot implementation of the Student@centre Ultranet in Victorian schools: Baseline results

³⁷² Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, 2007-08 Annual Report, October 2008, p.38

³⁷³ CSG Limited, CSG Ltd to deliver Ultranet to Victorian Government Schools, Media Release, 29 June 2009

³⁷⁴ Victorian Auditor-General’s Office, Annual Plan 2009-10, p.21

During the Budget Estimates hearings, the Committee was advised that the \$42 million allocated up to June 2009 includes expenditure of \$5 million in procurement, and that the total allocation for 2008-09 had not been fully expended. The Minister for Education also stated that despite project delays, the original 2010 timeline and budget would still be met.³⁷⁵ The Committee considers that the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development will need to closely monitor the development and implementation of Ultranet to ensure the planned completion date of the project is met.

In examining this issue, the Committee acknowledges the challenges involved in implementing an ICT project of this scale and encourages the Department to refer to the Auditor-General’s good practice guide, *Investing Smarter in Public Sector ICT: Turning Principles into Practice* to assist in this process.³⁷⁶

13.4.1 Ultranet Coaches

The Ultranet Coaches initiative commenced in January 2008. This was the first phase of the Ultranet Coaches initiative.³⁷⁷ Ultranet coaches make up part of the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development’s third largest largest budget initiative, which will provide \$57.7 million over three years, commencing in January 2010 for the second phase of the Ultranet rollout. The funding will extend the 50 Ultranet Coaches as well as employ 200 Teaching and Learning Coaches over the next three years.³⁷⁸

Table 13.5: Funding for Teaching and Learning and Ultranet Coaches

	2009-10 (\$ million)	2010-11 (\$ million)	2011-12 (\$ million)	Total (\$ million)
Teaching and Learning and Ultranet Coaches	13.9	29.0	14.7	57.7

Source: 2009-10 Budget Paper No. 3, p.306

There is \$12 million provided for in the 2009-10 Budget for Ultranet Coaches.³⁷⁹ This information is provided in text format in Chapter 1 of Budget Paper No. 3, however under output initiatives for Education and Early Childhood Development, the Teaching and Learning and Ultranet Coaches are displayed as one line item.³⁸⁰ The Committee considers that given the amount of funding being spent on this output initiative, there would be merit in showing the amount being provided for Ultranet Coaches and Teaching and Learning Coaches separately.

Recommendation 40: The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development include the cost of Ultranet Coaches as a separate line item in its annual reports and Budget Papers.

³⁷⁵ Hon. B Pike MP, Minister for Education, 2009-10 Budget Estimates hearing, transcript of evidence, 13 May 2009, p.28;

³⁷⁶ Victorian Auditor-General’s Office, *Investing Smarter in Public Sector ICT: Turning Principles into Practice*, July 2008

³⁷⁷ Hon. B Pike MP, *Clarification of the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development’s response to the Public Accounts and Estimates Committee’s questionnaire on the 2009-10 Budget Estimates*, letter to the Committee, received 2 September 2009, p.1

³⁷⁸ *ibid.*

³⁷⁹ Department of Treasury and Finance, Budget Paper No. 3, *2009-10 Service Delivery*, May 2009, p.29

³⁸⁰ *ibid.*, p.306

As part of the introduction of Ultranet, 50 Ultranet Coaches have been employed to assist schools to prepare and work with schools in preparation for the introduction of the Ultranet system. The Ultranet Coaches have been tasked with preparing schools for the Ultranet rollout, specifically making sure that:³⁸¹

- teachers will be able to plan and deliver curriculum and assess students using Ultranet;
- there is strong leadership in schools ready to lead the change;
- that those using Ultranet are capable of doing so and are integrating the technology into their teaching and learning;
- the current infrastructure in schools is robust and can support Ultranet
- the community is willing to use Ultranet; and
- the data is ready for the system.

To measure the work of the Ultranet coaches, the Department has developed outcomes for the Ultranet Coach Initiative. The outcomes are:³⁸²

- improved teacher knowledge and skills related to integrating ICT for improved learning and teaching
- improved teacher capacity in the use of ICT for curriculum planning and delivery
- improved school capacity to support Ultranet implementation.

The Department has made a positive step forward in developing outcomes for the Ultranet coaches. Outcomes will assist the Department to ensure that the effectiveness of Ultranet coaches can be measured. The Committee considers that it may be beneficial to review the outcomes as the Ultranet system is rolled out as more emphasis will be placed on other tasks, such as engaging the school community to use Ultranet.

The Committee considers that, given the budget allocation for both the Ultranet system and Coaches, the Department should measure its progress against anticipated outcomes. Performance indicators could measure attributes such as time, cost, quality and quantity associated with the Ultranet Coach outcomes.

Recommendation 41:

The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development should take steps to measure progress against anticipated outcomes for the Ultranet Coach initiative.

³⁸¹ Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, *Ultranet Coaches 2009 Handbook*, 2009, pp.4-5
³⁸² *ibid.*, p.2