

Fostering innovation and creative excellence

The Victorian Government recognises innovation as the essential ingredient for success in the 1990s and beyond.

Melbourne is the national leader in research and development, and home to many notable institutions of learning. Together with the city's cultural resources and ethnic diversity, these attributes give metropolitan Melbourne its distinctive creative milieu.

To encourage the transfer of knowledge and diffusion of technology across metropolitan Melbourne, the Government will:

- promote and publicise Melbourne's research and development infrastructure both to attract investment and to make new ideas and technologies more accessible to Victorian enterprise
- support stronger links between research and development institutions and the business community to facilitate the cooperative pursuit and dissemination of knowledge (see Figure 2).

Expanded education and training opportunities will give Melburnians the learning, skills and initiative they will need if the city is to excel in the rapidly growing knowledge-based sectors of the global economy.

The Outer Eastern College of Training and Further Education campus in Wantirna South – one of many new suburban TAFE facilities built in recent years.



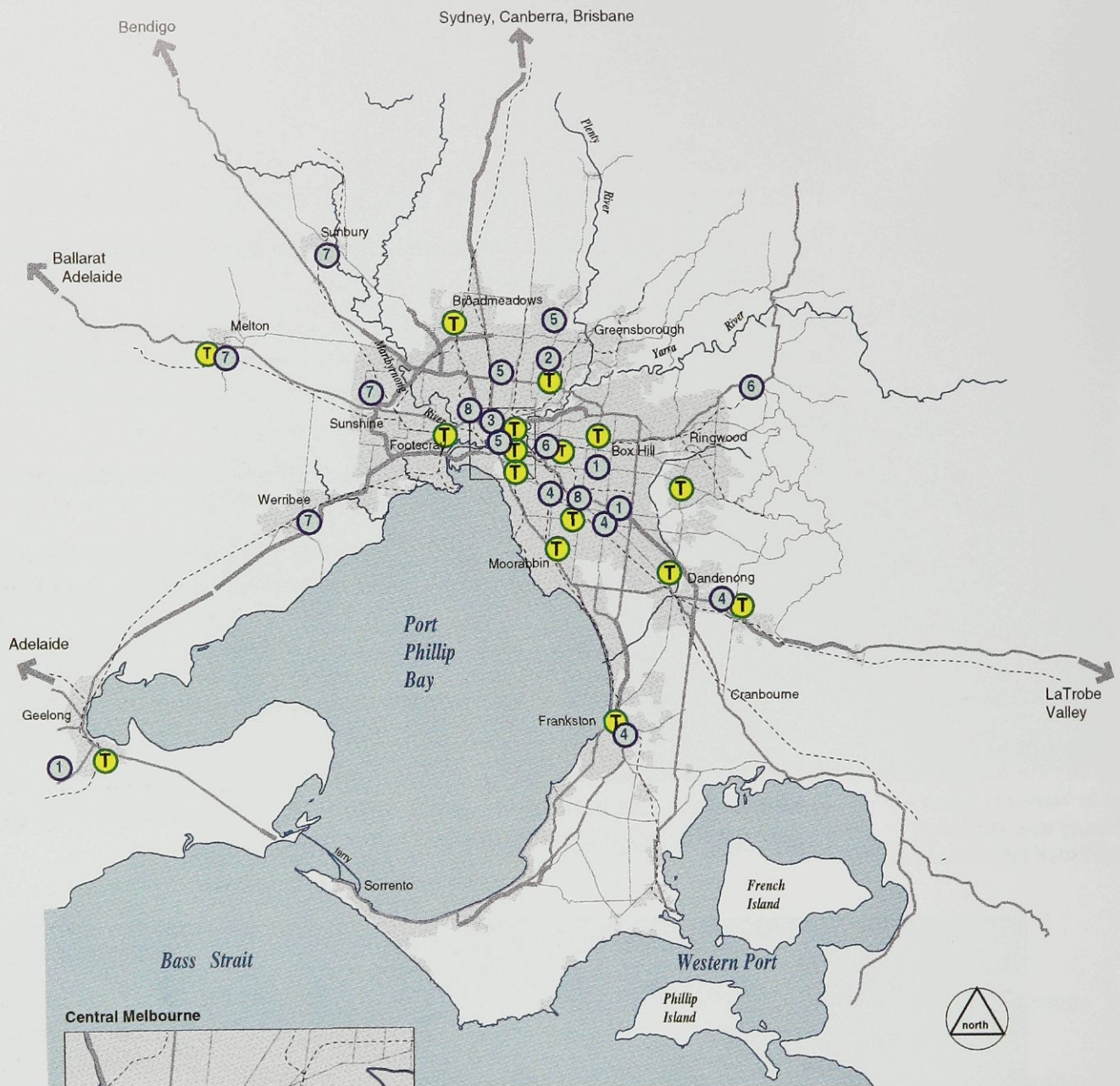


Figure 2 - TERTIARY EDUCATION FACILITIES

- ① Deakin University
- ② La Trobe University
- ③ Melbourne University
- ④ Monash University
- ⑤ RMIT
- ⑥ Swinburne University of Technology
- ⑦ Victoria University of Technology
- ⑧ Australian Catholic University
- T TAFE College

- Established urban areas
- Freeways and main roads
- Railways

0 5 10 20 40
scale of kilometres

/u3/mpe3/stat-policy/STRAT-TERTIARY

The new Hallam Valley Primary School under construction. All Victorian Government schools are connected to an interactive satellite learning network called SOFNET.



The Victorian Government's approach to vocational education and training has a strong industry focus, with the emphasis on lifting the skills of the workforce, developing training markets and improving the quality of training services.

Funds for vocational education and training are being awarded to the providers who are most responsive to industry needs, be they TAFE colleges, private providers or enterprises themselves. Accreditation, registration and funding are being used to bring more providers into the State training system. Training is now delivered in many settings. For example, four Manufacturing Industry Training Centres have been established at Geelong, Heidelberg, Moorabbin and Sunshine.

Melbourne's schools, colleges and universities provide world-class educational services which already draw students from overseas and generate export earnings, and which offer open learning and distance education programs to students around the State and beyond. Offshore teaching programs conducted by tertiary institutions will be used as a springboard for developing other kinds of social and economic interaction.

Much of Melbourne's research and development is conducted at the city's universities, each of which also provides research training. The Government and the universities are working closely with industry and national research bodies, particularly the CSIRO, to help Melbourne obtain the full economic advantage of its research expertise in fields such as agriculture, advanced manufacturing and biomedicine (see Figure 3).

The Government will build on these strengths by:

- ☐ encouraging the establishment of further science and technology centres in strategic locations, including the central city and areas near metropolitan university campuses
- ☐ introducing a dual recognition program involving secondary schools and tertiary institutions for students seeking careers in science and technology
- ☐ extending the range of programs available through the two channels of the SOFNET interactive satellite television network
- ☐ investigating the options for expanding programs such as VICNET to increase community access to information networks.



Melbourne has always been an important centre of learning. Today, its educational institutions also earn export dollars and build bridges to the Asia-Pacific region.



Increased skills and lower costs will make Melbourne more internationally competitive.

As all Victorian Government schools are connected to the Internet through the Directorate of School Education's SOFWEB, additional leading-edge computer hardware and software will be installed.

The undertakings outlined here will be complemented by the Government's multimedia and telecommunications strategy, which will improve business, education and community access to information in all its forms.

Making Melbourne more internationally competitive

Melbourne already has the most advanced manufacturing sector in the country. It also has particular strengths in high-growth industries like information technology, communications and clean food production. It has internationally competitive costs in areas such as skilled labour, office rents, industrial construction and energy. Melbourne's infrastructure is excellent by world standards. The city's highly skilled workforce and strong network of corporate headquarters have established it as a source of knowledge-based professional and business services to the Asia-Pacific region.

These strengths are being reinforced by ongoing reductions in the size and cost of government. Specific reforms to government business enterprises and the workers' compensation system have also significantly lowered business input costs in Victoria over the past three years. The Government's aim is to continue cutting costs while maintaining the quality of services. It will do this by:

- exposing government business enterprises and agencies to open competition (consistent with National Competition Policy) with a view to increasing efficiency and making the operation of infrastructure and services more market-oriented
- bringing State taxes and charges into line with the Australian average over time
- delivering further reforms in industrial relations and workers' compensation.

The Government will also give Melbourne businesses a better chance to capture opportunities by extending the range of enterprise and export development programs and helping firms obtain Commonwealth assistance; for example, through AusIndustry. Special attention will be paid to improving management skills and access to finance, especially for small and medium sized enterprises. Small business development will be facilitated through initiatives like First Place, a one-stop resource centre for small and medium sized enterprises recently opened in Spring Street in central Melbourne. The Government is considering extending facilities like First Place to the suburbs.