

BACK TO SCHOOL REPORT 2024

BACK TO SCHOOL

LES TWENTYMAN
FOUNDATION

→ WWW.LTFOUNDATION.COM.AU

REPORT

23/24



BACK TO SCHOOL REPORT 2024

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BACKGROUND

Since 1989, our Back-to-School program has been committed to removing financial barriers to education for students and families experiencing economic difficulties. By providing essential resources such as textbooks, stationery, laptops, and calculators, we aim to ensure every child has the opportunity to succeed academically. This report highlights the impact, trends, and key statistics of our program for the 2023-2024 period.

REFERRAL PATHWAY

A student can only be referred to the program by the wellbeing team of the school they attend or a major recognised welfare agency. Additionally, they must meet specific eligibility criteria outlined by the program.



PROGRAM OFFERS

The Back-to-School Program supports young people facing financial hardships and unstable living conditions by providing essential educational resources. Here's what the program offers:

Textbooks: We provide new or gently used textbooks, ensuring students have the necessary materials for their studies. Availability is based on our current resources.

Stationery: Basic supplies like notebooks, pens, and other stationery are available while our stock lasts, helping students stay prepared for school.

Repurposed Technology: Limited quantities of tech devices, such as laptops and calculators, are available to assist with digital learning needs. These are offered as long as supplies last.

PROACTIVE SUPPORT

In our commitment to supporting young people and families facing financial challenges, we have undertaken proactive measures to ensure that no child is left behind in accessing education. Through targeted guidance and direct assistance, we have aimed to extend aid to as many families as possible, fostering long-term resilience within our communities. By providing clear information and resources, we have empowered families to make informed decisions about their children's education, instilling a sense of agency and self-reliance.

KEY STATISTICS



Students Supported

(40.18% increase from 555 in 2022/23)



251

ATSI Students

(32.26% of total referrals were Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander students)



\$79,921

Total Expenditure

(42.72% increase from \$56,000 in 2022/23)



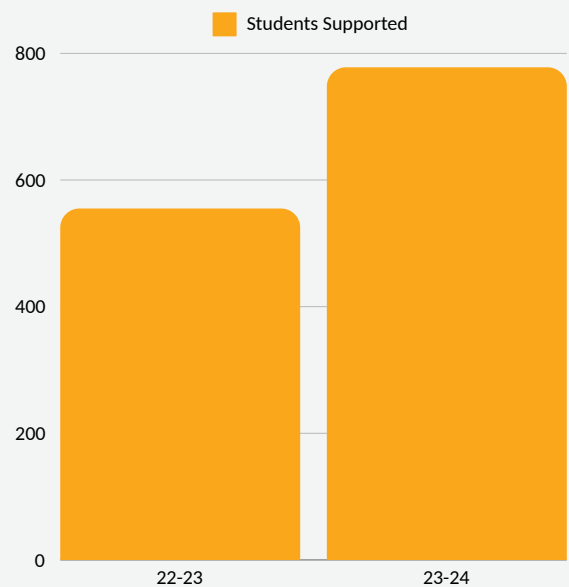
\$174,310

Total Savings

(includes repurposed textbooks, stationery, and technology)

Student Supported

In the 2023/24 our Back-to-School program supported 778 students, marking a 40.18% increase from the previous year's 555 students. This substantial growth underscores our commitment to broadening our reach and providing critical educational resources to more students each year, further reinforcing the program's increasing demand in the current economic environment.



Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander Students

This year, 251 students, or 32.26% of those we supported, identified as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander (ATSI). This is consistent with our mission to prioritise Indigenous communities, maintaining over 30% representation, as seen in previous years.

Financial Spending

In the 2023/24 financial year during a national cost-of-living crisis, our program proudly invested **\$79,921.40** in essential educational materials, marking a significant **42.72% increase** from the \$56,000 spent in the 2022/23 period. This considerable rise in expenditure highlights the remarkable generosity of our donors and corporate sponsors, whose contributions have been crucial in addressing the growing needs of our educational community. The funds were targeted to acquire new textbooks, basic calculators, and other necessary supplies, ensuring our students are well-equipped for academic success.

Average Spend per Student

On average, we spent \$103.00 per student this year, a slight increase of 1.98% from \$101 in the previous year. This consistency in per-student expenditure reflects our efficiency and ability to manage resources effectively, even as the total number of students we support continues to grow.

KEY STATISTICS

Savings Achieved

In the 2023/24 financial year, we achieved **\$174,310 in total savings**, thanks to the generous donations from individuals and schools. These savings primarily came from contributions of secondhand textbooks, novels, calculators, and other essential supplies. Our strategic procurement and strong partnerships played a key role in maximizing these savings, emphasising our commitment to making education more accessible and cost-effective. This milestone underscores the importance of our partnerships and the community's support.



\$128,960

**Saved on Textbooks
and Stationery**

(31.59% increase from the \$98,000
saved in the previous year)



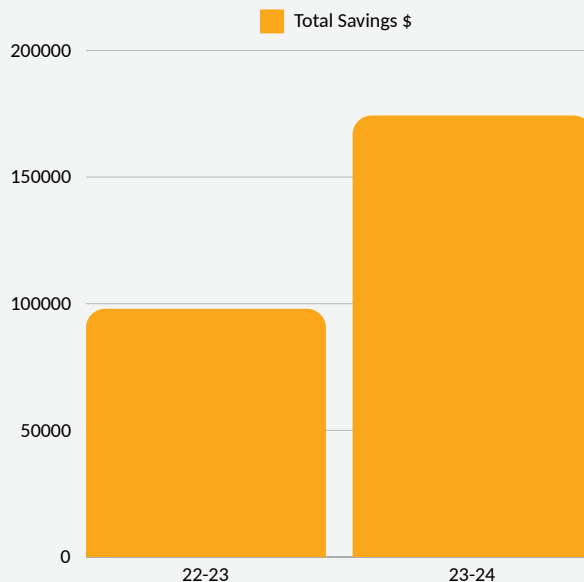
\$45,350

Saved on Laptops

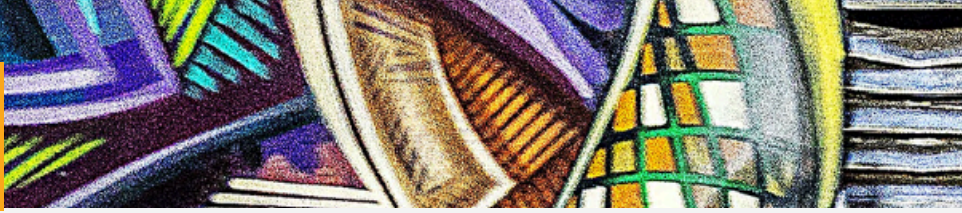
(142 laptops, averaging
\$319.37 saved per laptop)

Average Savings per Student

The average savings per student amounted to **\$224.05** in 2023/24, reflecting a **26.58% increase** from \$177 in 2022/23. This figure highlights our commitment to maximizing the impact of our resources on a per-student basis.



KEY STATISTICS



Laptops and Graphics Calculators

In addition to our savings on textbooks and stationery, we distributed 142 laptops, which contributed significantly to our cost savings. We also provided 37 graphic calculators, ensuring students have access to essential technological tools for their studies.



142

Laptops Distributed



37

Graphics Calculators Distributed

Grand total (Savings & Spending)

Combining our expenditure and savings, the overall value of support provided to our students in 2023/24 was \$254,231, representing a 65.09% increase from the previous year's total of \$154,000. This dramatic rise in total support value underscores our expanding impact and the effectiveness of our resource allocation strategies.

Gratitude to Our Donors and Supporters

Our achievements this year would not have been possible without the unwavering support of our donors and partners. We extend our heartfelt thanks to individuals, corporate sponsors, institutions, schools and individuals who have contributed generously to our cause. Your support has been instrumental in enabling us to provide critical resources to students and to expand our reach further than ever before and we are beyond grateful.

We acknowledge that success in education encompasses both technical preparedness and emotional well-being. This year, our efforts extended beyond traditional school supplies. Thanks to generous donors, we provided families with essential items such as clothing and shoes, affirming their self-worth and resilience.

We believe that appearance plays a significant role in self-confidence. By ensuring students look and feel their best, we aim to foster a sense of pride and empowerment. These contributions not only equip our students for academic success but also uplift their spirits, inspiring confidence with every stride they take.

TRENDS

Increased Demand for Technology

Laptop and Calculator Requests

- Trend: There has been a noticeable increase in requests for laptops and calculators. This is largely due to the growing integration of digital technology in educational settings and everyday tasks.
- Drivers: Since the COVID-19 pandemic, schools have adopted digital tools more extensively for online classes, learning tasks, and assessments. This shift towards digital education is expected to continue.
- Barrier: Ensuring access to up-to-date technology for all students and individuals can be challenging, particularly for low-income families or those affected by economic instability.



Frequent Textbook Updates

Challenges with Second-hand Donations:

- Trend: Publishers are updating textbooks more frequently, complicating the use of second-hand books.
- Drivers: Rapid updates in curriculum and educational materials drive this trend, making it difficult to maintain an affordable stock of usable secondhand books.
- Barrier: Families and support organizations face increased costs and challenges in providing current educational resources, exacerbating financial strain.

Impact of Increased Cost of Living:

The cost of living crisis is making it difficult for all students to access educational resources equally. Many families are struggling to afford essential school supplies such as textbooks, laptops, and stationery. This financial strain places students from lower-income households at a significant disadvantage, as they lack the necessary tools to succeed academically. Consequently, the gap between well-resourced students and those struggling to meet basic educational needs is widening, hindering the principle of equal opportunity in education. However, the Les Twentyman Foundation's Back to School program is helping to bridge this gap. By providing necessary supplies and support, the program ensures that all students, regardless of their financial situation, have access to the resources they need to thrive academically.

**“Keep kids in classrooms and out of courtrooms” -
*Les Twentyman***



TECHNOLOGY



Graphics Calculator

Graphics calculators are crucial for young people's education. Without these devices, students cannot complete their required assessments.



Laptops

This year, the demand for laptops has increased even further compared to the previous year. Laptops and desktops have become essential tools in the education system, playing a vital role in young people's education.

We send our sincerest thanks to the following organizations for their laptop donations and refurbishments:



XAVIER COLLEGE



ST JOSEPH'S
COLLEGE GEELONG

3

intech



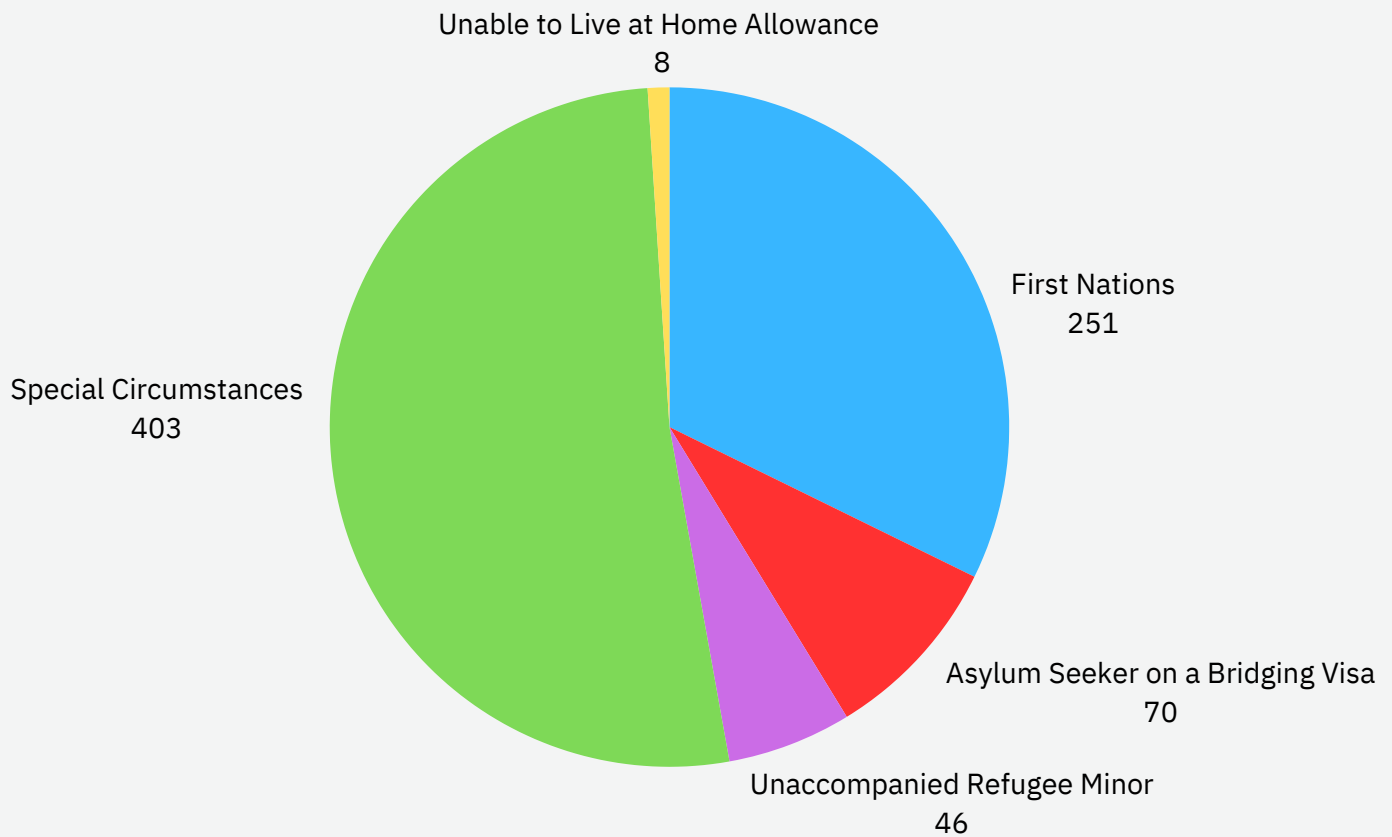
MACKILLOP
WERRIBEE



Your generosity helps us provide essential technology to students in need, ensuring they have the tools necessary for a successful education. Your support is invaluable.

ELIGIBILITY

The following graph indicates the eligibility criteria for 778 students referred to the program in the 2023-2024 period.

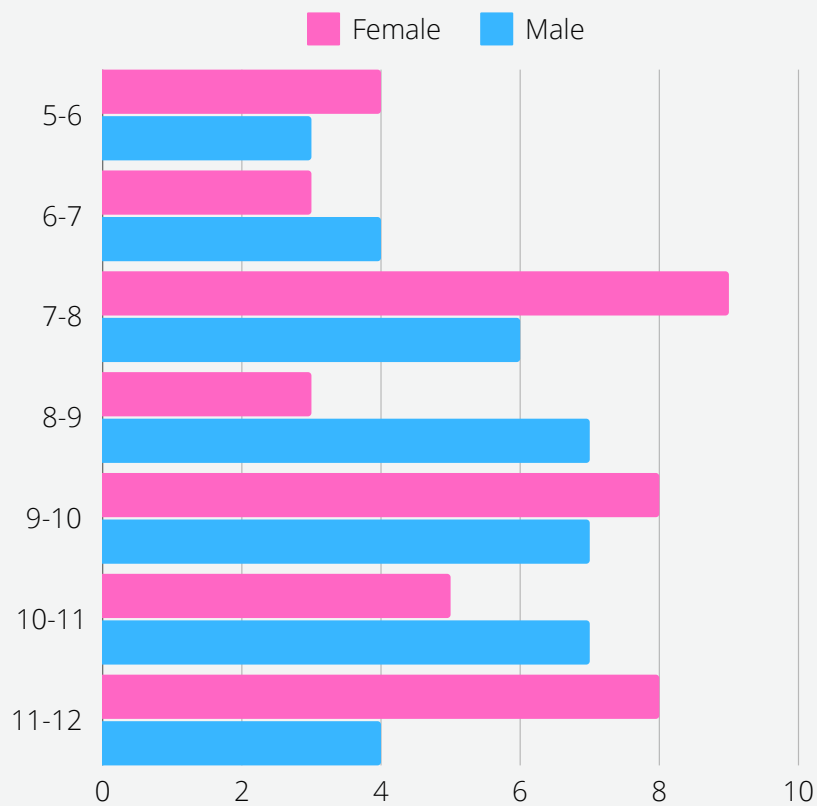


As the previous school year came to an end, it became clear that many students and families faced significant challenges requiring special support. These included dealing with low income, unemployment, homelessness, and the trauma of domestic violence. Many families struggled with mental health issues, substance abuse, disabilities, or were caught in the grip of rising living costs and unexpected crises. Each of these situations highlighted the resilience of those affected and the critical need for a caring community to provide the necessary resources and support.

In this context, First Nations individuals were particularly impacted, as were asylum seekers and unaccompanied refugee minors, who faced their own set of unique challenges. A smaller but equally important group included those who couldn't live at home and required specialized care. These varied needs underscored the importance of ensuring all students had access to educational opportunities and support essential for their success. Reflecting on the past school year, it was clear that a compassionate approach, paired with a commitment to providing equitable resources, was vital in helping every student embark on their academic journey with hope and confidence.

PRIMARY SCHOOL

The following graph indicates the ages and genders of Primary School student referrals.



During the recent back-to-school period, our program provided essential support to 78 primary school-aged children, which constituted 10% of the total referrals we received. This assistance was crucial in ensuring these young students had the necessary resources to start their academic year successfully.

Breakdown by Year Level & Gender

- **Prep:** Supported 7 students (4 boys, 3 girls).
- **Year 1:** Assisted 7 students (3 boys, 4 girls).
- **Year 2:** Provided for 15 students (9 boys, 6 girls).
- **Year 3:** Helped 10 students (3 boys, 7 girls).
- **Year 4:** Supported 15 students (8 boys, 7 girls).
- **Year 5:** Assisted 12 students (7 boys, 5 girls).
- **Year 6:** Provided for 12 students (8 boys, 4 girls).

Key Outcomes

Comprehensive Reach: The program covered all primary school year levels from Prep to Year 6, addressing the needs of children at various stages of their early education.

Resource Provision: By equipping these 78 students with essential educational supplies, we aimed to foster an environment conducive to their academic success and personal growth.

SECONDARY SCHOOL

Our Back-to-School Program had a significant impact on secondary students returning to school for the 2023-24 academic year. We provided essential support to a total of 700 high school students, effectively assisting about 90% of the students referred to our program.

Breakdown by Year Level & Gender

- **Year 7:** Supported 140 students (75 boys, 64 girls, 1 non-binary student).
- **Year 8:** Assisted 116 students (60 boys, 55 girls, 1 non-binary student).
- **Year 9:** Provided for 134 students (69 boys, 65 girls)
- **Year 10:** Helped 119 students (63 boys, 55 girls, 1 non-binary student).
- **Year 11:** Supported 108 students (47 boys, 57 girls, 4 non-binary students).
- **Year 12:** Assisted 83 students (34 boys, 48 girls, 1 non-binary student).

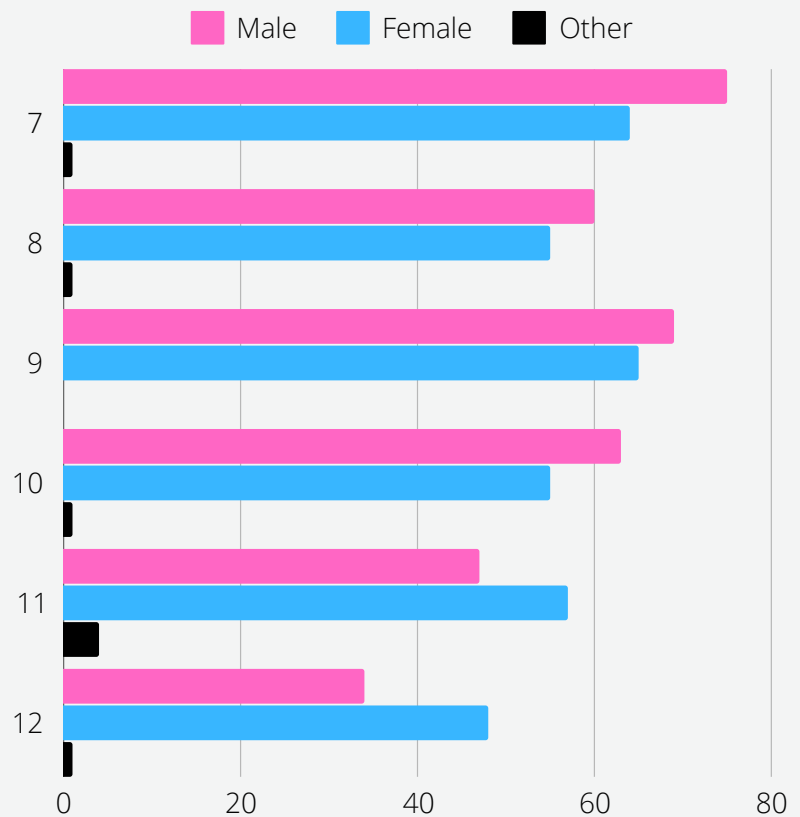
Key Outcomes

Wide Reach: The program ensured that students across all year levels from Year 7 to Year 12 received the necessary supplies to start the school year prepared.

Inclusive Support: Our assistance was provided inclusively, catering to boys, girls, and non-binary students, ensuring no one was left out.

Successful Preparation: The comprehensive support aimed at equipping students with what they needed for a successful return to school, fostering an environment for academic and personal growth.

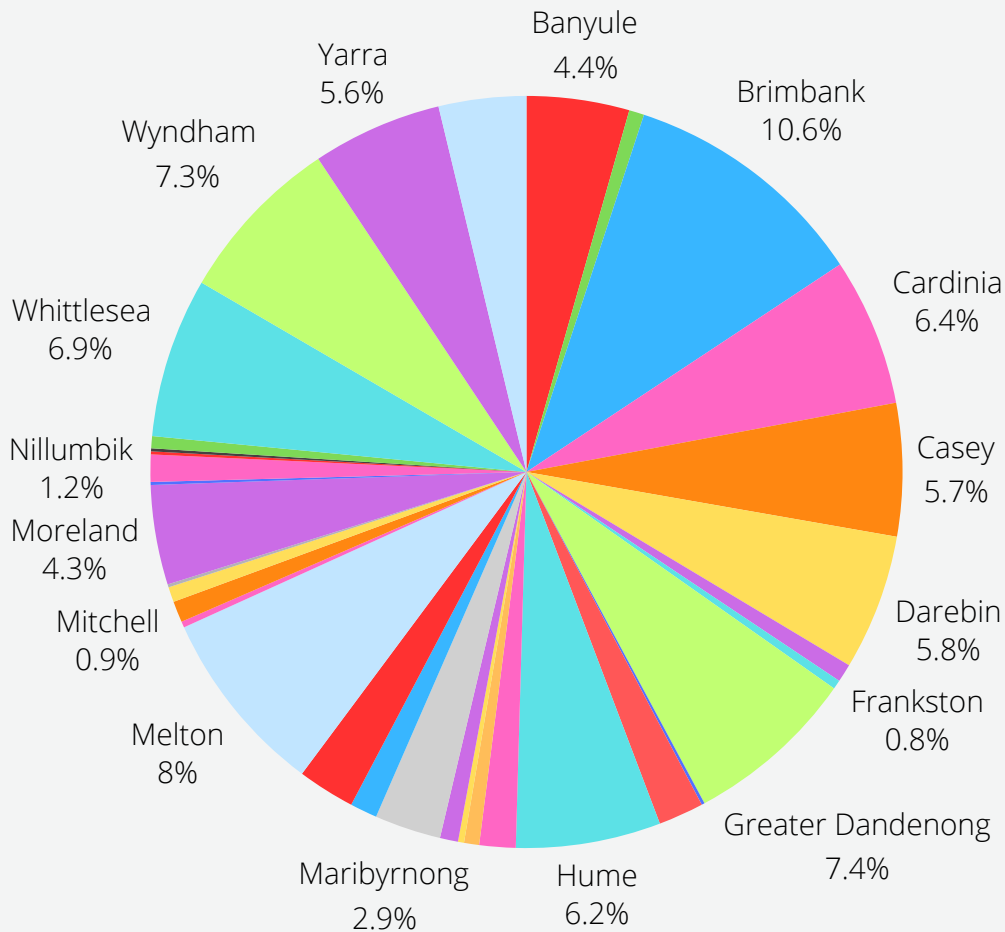
The following graph indicates the ages and genders of Secondary School student referrals.



COUNCIL AREAS SUPPORTED

The following graph indicates the regions in which Back To School recipients reside.

33 council areas supported



Our Back To School Program is making a significant impact across 33 council areas in Victoria. With a focused approach, we are supporting a total of 177 schools, ensuring that students in areas such as Brimbank, Cardinia, Casey, Darebin, Greater Dandenong, Hume, Melton, Whittlesea, Wyndham, and Yarra, among others, have access to essential educational resources.

Through strategic partnerships and targeted interventions, we're addressing educational disparities and fostering an environment where every student can thrive. Our program operates on the principle of inclusivity, ensuring that no student is left behind due to socio-economic barriers. By focusing on areas with identified educational needs, we're strategically allocating resources to maximize impact.



BTS SUPPORTED STUDENTS FROM 177 DIFFERENT SCHOOLS

In comparison to the previous year, we have supported 45 new schools in the 2023-24 program.

AIAE Australia International Academy

Aitken Hill Primary School

Al Taqwa College

Alexander Avenue Kindergarten

Altona College

Ames Education - Werribee

Ascot Vale Heights School

Assumption College

Ballarat High School

Banyan Fields Primary School

Baxter Primary School

Bayside 9-12 - Altona North Campus

Bayside P-12 College

Bellarine Secondary College

Bellbridge Primary School

Bendigo TAFE

Berwick College

Black Hill Primary School

Blackburn High School

Box Hill Institute

Braybrook College

Braybrook Primary

Brentwood Park Primary School

Brinbeal Secondary College

Brunswick East Primary School

Brunswick Secondary College

Bundoora secondary College

Camberwell High School

Carey Grammar School

Caroline Chisholm Catholic College

Catholic Regional College - Caroline Springs

Catholic Regional College - North Keilor

Catholic Regional College - St Albans

Charles La Trobe College

Cheltenham Secondary College

CIRE Community School - Monbulk

Clyde Creek Primary School

Coburg High School

Collingwood College

Collingwood College - Wurun Senior Campus

Copperfield College

Cranbourne Secondary College

Cranbourne West Secondary College

Creekside College

Dandenong High School

Davis Creek Primary School

Diamond Valley College

Doncaster Secondary College

Drouin Secondary College

Edenbrook Secondary College

Edgars Creek Secondary College

Elevation Secondary College

Eltham High School

Epping Secondary Collage

Eynesbury Public School

Fawkner Primary School

Footscray High School

Fountain Gate Secondary College

Francis Xavier College

Gisborne Secondary College

Gladstone Park Secondary College

Glen Eira College

Glen Waverley Secondary College

Gleneagles Secondary College



SCHOOLS – CONTINUED

Glenroy Secondary College
Greensborough College
Hallam Secondary College
Hampton Park Secondary College
Healesville High School
Heathdale Christian College
Heathmont College
Holmesglen Institute - Glen Waverley Campus
Hoppers Crossing Secondary College
Hume Central Secondary College
John Fawcner College
Kambrya Secondary College
Keilor Downs College
Keilor Views Primary School
Kew High School
Keysborough Secondary College
Kolbe Catholic College
Koo Wee Rup Secondary College
Kurunjang Secondary College
La Trobe University
Lake View Senior College
Lakeside College
Lalor Secondary College
Laverton College
Lilydale Heights College
Lilydale High School
Lucas Primary School
Lyndale Secondary College
Lyndhurst Secondary College
Manor Lakes P-12 College
Manorvale Primary School
Maribyrnong College
McClelland College
Melton Secondary College
Mentone Girls' Secondary College
Mercy College
Mernda Central College
Mickleham Secondary College
Mill Park Heights Primary School
Mill Park Secondary College
Minaret College - Officer campus
Mooroolbark College
Mother of God Primary School
Mount Alexander College
Mount Ridley College
Narre Warren P-12 College
Neerim District Secondary College
Noble Park Secondary College
Norwood Secondary College
Officer Secondary College
Pakenham Secondary College
Parade College
Parkmore Primary School
Pascoe Vale Girls College
Penola Catholic College
Phoenix P-12 Community College
Plenty River College
Preston High School
Preston Northeast Primary school
Quarters Primary School
Reservoir High School
Ringwood Secondary College
Rosamond Special School
Rowville Secondary College
Sacred Heart College Newtown
Seabrook Primary School
Seymour College
Simmonds Catholic College
Sirius College
South Oakleigh College

SCHOOLS – CONTINUED

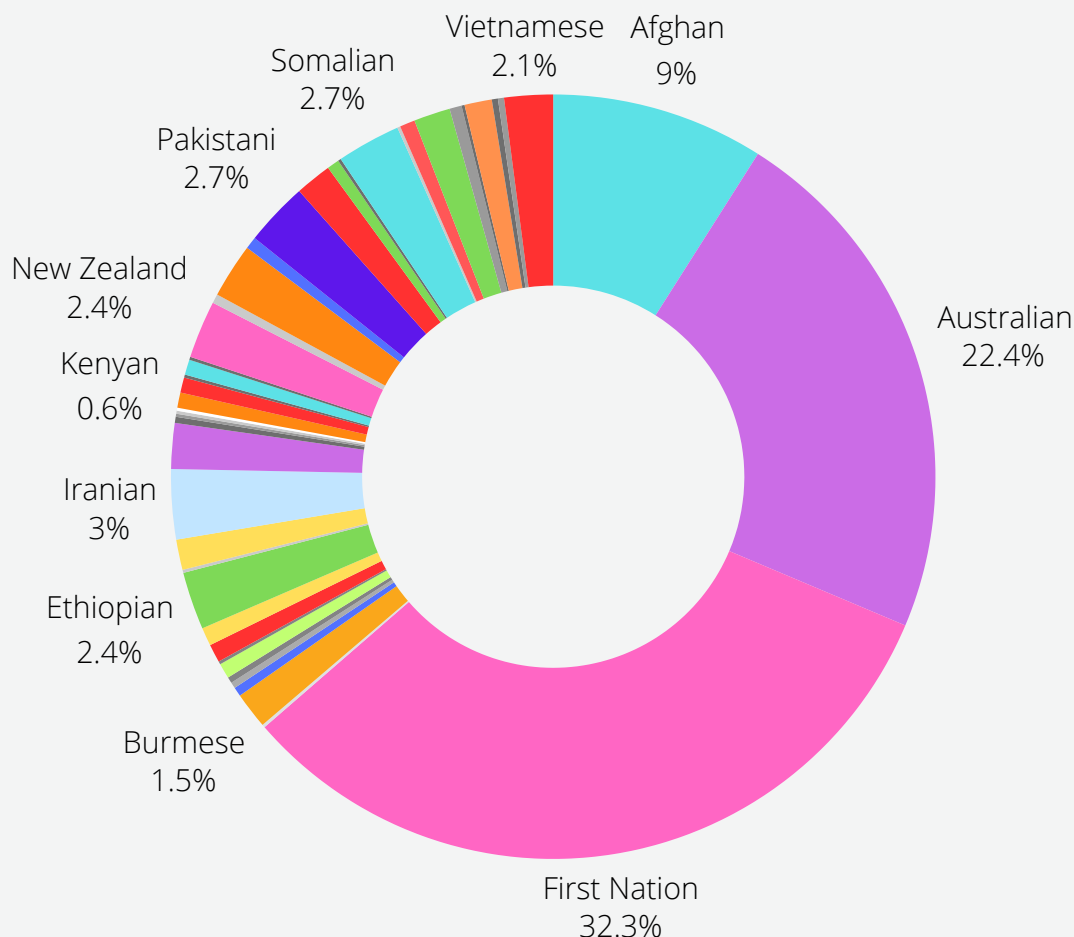
Southmoor Primary School
Spring Side West Secondary College
St Albans Secondary College
St Francis Xavier - Beaconsfield
St Kevin's - Hampton Park
St Monica's College Epping
St. Mary's Coptic Orthodox College
St. Joesph's Flexible Learning
Staughton College
Strathmore North Primary School
Strathmore Secondary College
Sunbury Downs College
Sunshine College
Sunshine Harvester Primary School
Swinburne Senior High School
Sydenham Hillside Primary School
Tarneit College
Taylors Lakes Secondary College
Templestowe College
The Grange P-12 College
The Oakwood School

Thomas Carr College
Thomastown Secondary College
Thomastown West Primary School
Thornbury High School
Timbarra
Traralgon College
Upper Yarra Secondary College
Victoria University Secondary College
Virtual School Victoria
Wallan Secondary College
Wangaratta High School
Wellington Secondary College
Werribee Secondary College
Western Port Secondary College
Whittlesea Secondary College
William Ruthven Primary School
William Ruthven Secondary College
Williamstown High School
Woodland Primary School
Wyndham Central College
Wyndham Vale Primary School
Yarramen Oaks Primary School



CULTURAL BACKGROUNDS

The following graph indicates the cultural backgrounds of Back To School recipients. Only a random selection are shown on the graph, a full list is provided on the next page.



In the 23/24 Back to School year, our program proudly extended support to students from an impressive 44 different cultural backgrounds. From Afghan to Vietnamese and beyond, we stood beside students representing a rich tapestry of nationalities. Among these, our top 5 supported nationalities were Afghan, Australian, First Nation, Somali, and Pakistani students. Our commitment to inclusivity remains unwavering, ensuring that we address the unique needs of each community we serve, irrespective of cultural background.

By embracing diversity as our cornerstone and celebrating the cultural richness it brings, we cultivate an educational environment where every student feels cherished and supported. Through our collective efforts, we empower students from diverse cultural backgrounds not only to excel academically but also to thrive in all facets of their lives. Together, we contribute to the creation of a more inclusive, equitable, and compassionate society.

CULTURAL BACKGROUNDS CONTINUED



44

**cultural backgrounds
supported**

Afghan (70 Students)
Australian (174 Students)
First Nation (251 Students)
Brazilian (1 Student)
Burmese (12 Students)
Burundi (3 Students)
Cambodian (2 Students)
Chinese (2 Students)
Congolese (5 Students)
Cyprus (1 Student)
Egyptian (6 Students)
Eritrea (6 Students)
Ethiopian (19 Students)
Greek (1 Student)
Indian (10 Students)
Iranian (23 Students)
Iraqi (15 Students)
Italian (2 Students)
Israeli (1 Student)
Japanese (1 Student)
Jordan (1 Student)
Kenyan (5 Students)

Lebanese (5 Students)
Macedonian (1 Student)
Malaysian (5 Students)
Mexican (1 Student)
New Zealand (19 Students)
Nigerian (3 Students)
Not Stated (18 Students)
Other (4 Students)
Pakistani (21 Students)
Samoan (12 Students)
Saudi Arabian (4 Students)
Serbian (1 Student)
Somalian (21 Students)
South African (1 Student)
Sri Lankan (5 Students)
Sudanese (12 Students)
Syrian (4 Students)
Tongan (1 Student)
Turkish (9 Students)
Ugandan (2 Students)
Ukrainian (2 Students)
Vietnamese (16 Students)



REFERRERS INCLUDED:



62 Referring organisations

AAFRO
Aboriginal Advancement League
Anglicare Victoria
Asylum Seeker Resources Centre
Austin Health
Banksia Gardens Community Services
Baptcare
Bass Coordination
Berry Street
Boorndawan William Aboriginal Healing Service
Casey Aboriginal Gathering Place
Community Information and Support Merri-bek
CoHealth
Cooee Bunji Indigenous Corporation
Department of Education
Department of Families, Fairness and Housing
Diamond Vally Community Support
Djirra
Drummond Street Services
Elizabeth Morgan House
Foundation House
Gen WEST
Goolum Goolum Aboriginal Co-Operative
Hosanna Community Care
IPC Health
ITIKI
Innovation Youth Centre
Jesuit Social Services
Key Assets
Kids First Australia
Launch Housing

Leisure Networks
Life Without Barriers
Les Twentyman Foundation
MacKillop Family Services
Margaret Tucker Hostel
McAuley Community Services for Women
Melton City Council Family Services
MiCare
Nafsiya Wellbeing Clinic
New Hope Foundation
Northern Community Legal Centre
Office of Steve McGhie MP
The Orange Door
OzChild
Reaching Out Inner West
Red Cross
The Salvation Army
South East Community Links
Spectrum Victoria
St Vincent de Paul Society
The Smith Family
Uniting - Asylum Seeker Welcome Centre
Uniting VIC. TAS.
Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency
Victorian Aboriginal Community Services Association
Victorian Aboriginal Health Service
Very Special Kids
Victorian Aboriginal Education Association Inc
Whittlesea Community Connection
WRISC Family Violence
Youth Support + Advocacy Service

DONATING SCHOOLS

- Brighton Secondary College
- Camberwell Grammar School
- Carey Baptist Grammar School
- Caulfield Grammar School
- Genazzano FCJ College
- Mackillop Catholic College
- Loreto Mandeville Hall - Toorak
- Marcellin College
- Melbourne Grammar School
- Parkdale Secondary College
- Preshil Secondary
- Sacre Coeur Catholic Girls School
- Scotch College
- St Bede's College
- St Bernard's College
- St Catherine's School
- St Joseph's - Geelong Campus
- St Leonard's College
- Strathmore Secondary College
- Trinity Grammar School
- Wesley College - Glen Waverely Campus
- Wesley College - City Campus
- Xavier College

DONATING ORGANISATIONS

- Cambridge University
- Chemist Warehouse
- Edrolo
- Intech3
- Jacaranda
- JP Books
- Lilydale Valley Views Retirement Village
- Officeworks
- The Computer Company
- OZLF (4CG)



VOLUNTEERS

A huge thank you to all our awesome volunteers! Without you, our programs wouldn't be able to run (and definitely wouldn't be as fun). We are beyond grateful for your dedication and enthusiasm.



TESTIMONIALS

“Hi Les Twentyman Foundation! I would like to thank the Les Twentyman Foundation for this laptop. It will help me out more than you can imagine through my final year of high school. I can't thank you enough as I have a really old laptop and my parents couldn't afford a new one. My old one has glitches and shuts down and loses my work every few days, so I haven't been able to rely on it at all. My mum and dad are dealing with my severely sick sister and so it's been hard for them to afford a laptop. Dad can't work full time because my sister needs 24/7 care. My mum stays home to make sure my sister is looked after by her and dad all the time. My brother and I love my sister so much and she is the light of our family. I just want to thank you for what you have done for me. It will make year 12 so much easier! Thanks to all of you at Les Twentyman.”

- 'Back To School' Student

Name changed due to privacy

“Troy has received his 'Back to School' package, he wanted me to send you his photo with the package, and to convey his appreciation and thanks for supporting him via your Back-to-School program. Thank you again for your on-going support for young people in need, especially with their education goals.”

-Father of 'Back to School' Student.

Name changed due to privacy

Herald Sun 28th March 2024

All prepped for school year

More than a million Victorian students heading into the classroom

Suzan Delibasic
Rebecca Borg

Tens of thousands of students will start school for the first time across Victorian schools this week.

It comes as 14 new public primary and secondary campuses across the state will welcome their first students for term 1.

The new schools will provide students with access to modern learning facilities, specialist teachers and support staff.

More than one million students are enrolled in Victorian government, Catholic and independent schools for 2024.

This includes about 78,400 prep students and an estimated 78,900 students who will start year 7.

La Trobe University education expert Dr Kate Lafferty said there were many ways families could prepare for their child's first day of school.

"Start setting the alarm a little earlier, particularly if holiday sleep-ins have become the norm. This can lessen the shock of the early wake-up on the first day of school," Dr Lafferty said.

"Have books, equipment, uniforms, lunch boxes, ready to go. Involve your child in this

process so they know what they have."

Dr Lafferty said if parents were feeling nervous, their children would pick up on this.

"The first day can be emotional for parents and children. Know that teachers are experienced in dealing with this, and will have staff in place to support your child," she said.

"If your child is upset on the first day, it is often best to not linger. In my experience, once the parent leaves, the child settles relatively quickly."

Dr Lafferty said it was beneficial to establish a study plan for secondary students.

"Planning when they will work on homework and setting learning goals for what they want to focus on ... is helpful.

"It is helpful for students to mark key dates on a calendar so they know what is coming up and to plan accordingly. This is particularly important for students commencing year 11 and 12."

The Les Twentyman Foundation has been providing supplies and support to assist families struggling to cope with the cost of school items.

Mr Twentyman said: "Each year we are facing greater and greater demand for services

with an enormous growth in working families requiring support to provide their children with the critical supplies that they need as they struggle to cope with the rapidly rising cost of living."

Taylor's Lakes Secondary College year 10 student Valerie Fogata said she was extremely grateful after receiving textbooks, stationery and a laptop from the foundation.

"Without the books and laptop, I would struggle at school and would need to rely on other people so I can do my schoolwork," she said.

Melbourne High School

principal Dr Tony Mordini said he had sent out a notification to all students and their families before school begins to get them ready for term 1.

"This is to ensure their transition is smooth and that we welcome them to a new academic year," Dr Mordini said.

"We encourage students to participate widely in the activities and take opportunities that come their way."

FOR THE LATEST NEWS
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Herald Sun 2nd February 2024

Friday February 2, 2024

Painful lessons as kids go without

Jack Quail

More students are going to school without lunches and parents are unable to afford stationery, laptops and textbooks for their children this year, a parliamentary committee has heard.

A Senate committee scrutinising the impact of high inflation on consumers and the government's response on Thursday heard about the pressure families, schools and charity organisations are facing to cover education expenses.

Donagh Freestun, chairwoman of Parents and Citizens Queensland, the peak body for school councils and associations, said schooling costs had ballooned in recent years, demanding additional contributions from parents.

"It used to be a uniform and a stationery pack — now it's a computer, it's an iPad, it's all of these other things," Ms Freestun said.

"You can find that in high school if a child, for example, does an outdoor recreation program, it's an additional \$300."

Witnesses appearing before the committee said school camps and excursions had become prohibitively expensive for many families.

"They're the things that parents can't afford, and they're the ones that get students to start dropping out," Queensland Association of State School Principals president Patrick Murphy said.

"We get to such a point where it actually becomes not viable for a school to offer those because we're seeing 60 per cent of kids not going on camps and excursions."

Les Twentyman Foundation chief executive Paul Burke said he was seeing more working families on multiple incomes seeking help.

He said requests for support to assist with stationery, textbooks, laptops and other supplies was "going through the roof" — with almost a 50 per cent increase in demand this year.

HAVE YOUR SAY
heraldsun.com.au

THANK YOU

As we conclude this year's Back-to-School report, we reflect on the profound impact we have made together in the lives of at-risk youth. Your support has enabled us to provide essential resources, guidance, and opportunities to those who need it most.

We thank you for your continued willingness to contribute to the education of at-risk youth. With your help, we can continue to build brighter futures and foster a community where every young person has the chance to succeed.



LES TWENTYMAN FOUNDATION

Embracing Young People's Futures



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