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## SETTING THE PACE FACT SHEET 3.

### The Year 12 Completion Target

- Victoria has made the most progress of any State so far towards ensuring that 90 per cent of young people complete Year 12 or a vocational equivalent. It has fewer early school-leavers than any other State.
- In 2003 83.5 per cent of Victorian 20 to 24 year olds had completed Year 12 or a Certificate III qualification, compared to 79.9 per cent in NSW, 77.8 per cent in Queensland and 78.9 per cent nationally.
- Projecting ahead, given rising school retention rates, it is reasonable to suggest that 90 per cent of young Victorians will complete these qualifications by 2010.
- However this will not automatically be achieved. There is little room for complacency because:
  - recent improvements in Victoria's retention rate are strongly related to the increasing number of international students in senior school education. If international students are removed from enrolment data, the increase between 1999 and 2004 in Year 12 retention is 2.8% rather than 4.9%;
  - Year 8 student achievement in mathematics and science, and the achievement of Victorian 15 year-olds in mathematics, science and reading are below the national average, and substantially below the national leaders, Western Australia and the ACT; and
  - Victoria uses Certificate II qualifications as its official measure of vocational equivalence to Year 12, when other States such as Queensland are using more demanding thresholds such as Certificate III qualifications.
- Given the strong correlation between student achievement and early school-leaving, literacy and numeracy levels must be addressed.
- Victoria developed alternative pathways, especially the introduction of the Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL) and opportunities to do VCE through TAFE and Adult and Community Education (ACE). These pathways equate to about 11 per cent of school VCE enrolments. As *Setting the Pace* states, maintaining the momentum and resources for these initiatives will be crucial in coming years.