



## OFFICIAL MINISTERIAL OVERSEAS TRAVEL Outcomes Report

The provision of the information below is consistent with the *Guidelines for Official Ministerial Overseas Travel*. This report must be sent to the Premier within 40 working days of return, and published on the relevant department website within 60 working days of the Minister's return. The published version of the report does not need to include the 'next steps / follow up' section or the Premier's signature.

<b>Name of Department / Agency</b>	Department of Education and Training	
<b>Departmental / Agency Contact</b>	Mr Joel Backwell, Executive Director, International Education Division	
<b>Telephone Number</b>	7022 2457	
<b>TRAVEL DETAILS</b>		
<b>Minister's Name</b>	The Hon James Merlino MP	
<b>Portfolio/s</b>	Deputy Premier; Education	
<b>Did the Minister's spouse accompany the Minister in an official capacity?</b>	<b>YES (official capacity)</b> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>YES (private capacity)</b> <input type="checkbox"/>	<b>NO</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>Accompanying Ministerial staff</b>	Mr Chris Carpenter, Deputy Chief of Staff	
<b>Countries visited</b>	India, Singapore and Indonesia	
<b>Date of travel</b>	14-21 September 2019	
<b>Number of official travel days (include day of departure and day of return)</b>	8	
<b>Funding source (list Department/s or Agency)</b>	Department of Education and Training	

<b>EXPENSES</b> <i>Include combined expenses for Minister, accompanying staff and spouse (if accompanying in an official capacity)</i>	
<b>Air fares (including taxes and fees)</b>	\$25,011
<b>Accommodation (including taxes and fees)</b>	\$4,154
<b>Other expenses (including surface travel and travel allowances)</b>	\$5,893
<b>Travel cost for Minister and ministerial staff (<i>and spouse or de facto partner if applicable</i>)</b>	\$35,058
<b>Are the above costs final and complete?</b>	YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

### **Purpose of travel**

I undertook travel to India, Singapore and Indonesia from 14-21 September 2019, visiting the cities of New Delhi, Singapore and Yogyakarta.

Travel to these countries aligned with the Victorian Government's international engagement priorities, including *Victoria's India Strategy: Our Shared Future*, *Victoria's Southeast Asia Trade and Investment Strategy*, *International Education Sector Strategy*, and broader global learning and engagement objectives.

In my capacity as Deputy Premier of Victoria and Minister for Education, I set out to:

- Celebrate and promote the inaugural Victorian Young Leaders (VYL) to India and Indonesia pilot programs, and the Women in School Leadership (WISL) pilot program in India
- Together with the Department's Global Learning and Engagement programs, these pilots are helping prepare a generation of active global citizens that will contribute to both Victoria's economic prosperity in a global economy, and our social cohesion in a multicultural society
- Reinforce the importance of Victoria's education, people-to-people, trade and investment relationships with India, Singapore and Indonesia, and support whole-of-Victorian Government international engagement priorities
- Engage with Singapore on policy approaches to teacher education and training and workforce reform to inform the Department's policy development in these areas
- Reinforce Victoria's reputation as the Education State, a high-quality and globally engaged education system and study destination.

My travel program addressed these objectives through the following activities:

- High-level meetings with Indian and Indonesian government officials, including the Governor of Yogyakarta
- Participation in the inaugural VYL India and Indonesia and WISL programs, including engaging with students, teachers and principals through cultural activities, school visits and celebration events
- Participation in an expert roundtable discussion in Singapore focusing on teacher workforce reform, initial teacher education and career pathways

- School visits in all three countries, including a high-rise school in Singapore, a Victoria-Indonesia sister school and a school in Yogyakarta positively impacted by the Victorian education system-inspired Joyful Learning Movement
- Meetings with overseas Australian and Victorian Government representatives, including the Australian High Commissioner to India and the Victorian Commissioners to South and Southeast Asia.

### **Benefits of travel to the State of Victoria**

My travel benefited the State of Victoria through the following key outcomes and activities in each country:

#### *India*

1. The VYL India and WISL pilot programs were celebrated, promoted and officially launched.
2. Relationships with key Indian education stakeholders, including school leaders and strategic thought leaders, were built and fostered.

Specifically, I participated in a number of activities as part of the VYL India pilot program, a three-week immersion experience for 40 Year 9 students and eight teachers from Victorian Government schools, and the WISL pilot program, a reciprocal professional development program for six Victorian and six Indian principals, both outlined in Victoria's 10-year India Strategy.

I visited Delhi's Gurudwara Bangla Sahib, a place of Sikh worship, where I had the opportunity to learn about the Sikh religion and serve food to patrons in the food hall with the Victorian students and teachers, witnessing first-hand the cultural immersion opportunities that the Victorian students experienced through this program. This visit was also an opportunity to celebrate the people-to-people links between Victoria and India, including through Victoria's significant Sikh community.

I attended the Victoria-India Education Celebration, a formal event to celebrate and showcase the VYL India and the WISL pilot programs, thank and congratulate all program participants and partners, and strengthen the growing education ties between Victoria and India as part of the overall Victoria-India strategic relationship.

I visited Springdales School, which hosted the Delhi component of the VYL India program, where I had the opportunity to meet the Springdales principal and staff, interact with Victorian students and their Indian student buddies and take a tour of the school including its innovation lab.

I participated in a working dinner with the WISL program participants, including hearing from influential female leaders in India's education system and engaging with participating Victorian and Indian principals on leading social change through schools and how to enhance student health and wellbeing.

These activities highlighted the importance of the global learning and engagement experience for all Victorian learners and school leaders, so that they can develop the essential skillset necessary to succeed in a complex, interconnected and competitive world.

#### *Singapore*

3. I gained valuable insights into how a high performing jurisdiction builds the capability of its teaching workforce.

The main purpose of my visit to Singapore was to participate in the Victoria-Singapore Education roundtable, an expert roundtable discussion with representatives from Singapore's National Institute of Education, Academy of Teachers and Ministry of Education. The roundtable was an opportunity for the Victorian Government to hear directly from subject matter experts, policymakers and teachers about Singapore's innovative approach to the teaching workforce, and included discussions of initial teacher education, graduate induction, mentoring of undergraduates and in-service teachers, teacher performance assessment and pay, early talent identification, and career pathway streaming. The roundtable will continue to enable the Department to learn from a high performing education system and, where applicable, explore the implementation of some of these learnings in Victoria.

I also visited Singapore's School of the Arts, an example of an innovative, high-rise school in an urbanised environment. This visit provided lessons for Victoria's own vertical school projects, which will address the needs of Victoria's growing populations in established areas where land is scarce. The visit was also an opportunity to learn about a specialist school and its alternative curriculum pathway, as School of the Arts is Singapore's first pre-tertiary specialised arts school.

#### *Indonesia*

4. The VYL Indonesia pilot program was celebrated and promoted, and renewed funding was announced to implement the program in 2020.
5. Government to government relationships, particularly with the Governor of Yogyakarta and the Yogyakarta Provincial Government, were reinforced.

In Yogyakarta, I participated in a number of VYL Indonesia program activities, including a visit to one of the host schools, SMA Budi Utama, where I announced an extra \$545,000 in funding for the program to continue for a second year. The funding will give another 40 Year 9 students and accompanying teachers the opportunity to take part in the six-week language and cultural immersion program in 2020, contributing to the development of more young Victorians who have a deep understanding of one of our closest neighbours and a future Top 10 Global Economy.

As part of my visit, I met with the Sultan and Governor of Yogyakarta, His Excellency Hamengku Buwono the Tenth, where I reinforced the importance of the Victoria-Yogyakarta relationship as part of the broader Victoria-Indonesia strategic relationship. A key point of discussion was the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the Victorian Government and the Yogyakarta Special Region Government, signed in May 2017 to increase cultural, educational and innovative industry exchanges between the two jurisdictions. The VYL Indonesia program is an example of a successful initiative under the MoU's purview. The importance of this program and broader Victoria-Indonesia education relationship was reinforced at an evening event hosted by the Palace of Yogyakarta in celebration of the VYL Indonesia program, which I attended together with the participating Victorian students and teachers.

I visited Olifant K-12 School, one of Warrnambool College's sister schools, and participated in a Skype call between Olifant and Warrnambool during which students on both sides discussed environmental issues and made a joint pledge to reduce waste and leave a lighter footprint. The visit highlighted the benefits of sister school partnerships and the global learning and engagement opportunities they offer in both jurisdictions.

I visited SMPN 2 Sleman school to observe the impact of the 'Joyful Learning Movement', a movement inspired by Victorian schools' engaging approach to teaching and learning and a strong example of how the Education State is recognised as best practice by foreign jurisdictions. SMPN 2 Sleman has been positively impacted by the movement and the influence

of Victorian approaches, including group work, colourful classrooms and interactive student-teacher discussions was displayed clearly in the happy faces of the Indonesian students.

Overall, my travel reinforced to our key Indian, Singaporean and Indonesian partners and stakeholders, the value that Victoria places on international educational collaboration. There were over 20 local media articles generated in India and Indonesia, which positively outlined my participation in the VYL India and Indonesia school activities, my meeting with the Sultan of Yogyakarta and my engagement with the Joyful Learning Movement. This advances the Victorian Government's broader international engagement objectives.

### **Next Steps / Follow Up**

A number of opportunities and follow-up actions have emerged from my travel:

#### *India*

There are opportunities to refresh Victoria's India Strategy in response to India's forthcoming National Education Policy, and explore avenues to evaluate and expand upon Victoria's India-focused education initiatives, including the VYL India and WISL programs, as well as the third initiative for which the Department of Education and Training (the Department) has delivery responsibility – the Connecting Schools with Indian Communities program.

In particular, the Department is exploring a collaborative partnership with India's National Progressive Schools Conference in order to provide further opportunities for reciprocal school leadership professional development in both Victorian and Indian schools.

The Department will invite some of India's strategic thought leaders in education to either visit Victoria or reconnect via teleconference to engage with senior Department staff and school leaders and deepen two-way knowledge exchange on issues relevant to the Education State agenda and India's draft National Education Policy.

I intend to reconnect with Indian Government consular officials based in Victoria and Australia to further discuss common challenges and opportunities for Victoria and India in education policy.

#### *Singapore*




The Department will explore avenues for further collaboration with Singapore, which could involve reconnecting with the participants of the Victoria-Singapore Education Roundtable or additional experts in teacher workforce reform, for the purposes of deeper knowledge exchange with senior Department leaders and school leaders.

#### *Indonesia*

Following my return, I had the opportunity to reconnect with the Sultan of Yogyakarta during his visit to Victoria in October 2019, where he participated in a 'Creative Economy Forum' with a delegation of creative industry professionals. During this visit, the Sultan met with the Premier of Victoria and reconfirmed our shared desire to continue Victoria and Yogyakarta's special partnership into the future, including through the themes of education, innovation and cultural exchange.

Following my visit to SMPN 2 Sleman, one of the schools in Yogyakarta that has benefited from the Victorian-inspired Joyful Learning Movement, I intend to engage with Clayton North Primary School and/or Ringwood North Primary School – the schools that inspired the movement – to congratulate them on the success of the Joyful Learning Movement and discuss the positive influence of Victoria's teaching and learning approaches in Indonesia.

I have written to the hosts thanking them for their participation and support of the activities I undertook during my travel, and to continue ongoing dialogue in these key areas.

<b>Noted by Department Secretary</b> (Signature) 	
<b>Name</b> 	Jenny Atta
<b>Date</b> 24/10/19	/ / 2019
<b>Approved by Minister</b> (Signature) 	
<b>Name</b> JAMES MERLINO	The Hon James Merlino MP
<b>Date</b> 30.10.19	/ / 2019