

2020

advance

Advance is a school-based program that supports students to remain engaged in education through an experiential learning model to gain practical skills and experience working on projects with the local community. The goal of Advance is to enable opportunities for young people to participate in their local community.

The essential elements are that young people participate in community life, in partnership with a community organisation based on their choice.

Through participation in the program young people:

- Develop transferable vocational skills to participate in their communities.
- Are engaged in and connected to community activities.
- Are supported by their communities.

School campuses delivering Advance

- Advance was delivered by **425** Victorian Government secondary school campuses in 2020 via a range of school settings including:
- English as a Second Language campuses targeting culturally and linguistically diverse young people (**1.4%**)
- Special, Special Developmental or other schools that target young people with an intellectual and/or physical disability (**13%**) and
- Campuses located in rural and regional Victoria (**43%**).

Young people involved in Advance

In 2020, **29,260** young people enrolled in Advance, including:

- Indigenous young people (**3.1%**)
- Young people identified as having a disability (**15.1%**)
- Young people identified as having culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds (**18.0%**).
- Young people identified as LGBTQI+ (**1.3%**)
- Young people identified as refugee or asylum seeker (**4.2%**)

In 2020, **26,891** young people completed their school's Advance program, a retention rate of **92%**.

- The average number of young people participating per school campus was **63**.
- There were more young males participating in Advance with **54.4%** of participants being male and **45.6%** female with **0.2%** identifying as other.
- Year 9 recorded the most number of participants with **36%** of the total number of participants being Year 9 students.
- Year 10 was the second most common year level, with **18.5%** of participants being year 10 students.

Advance contributes to educational pathways

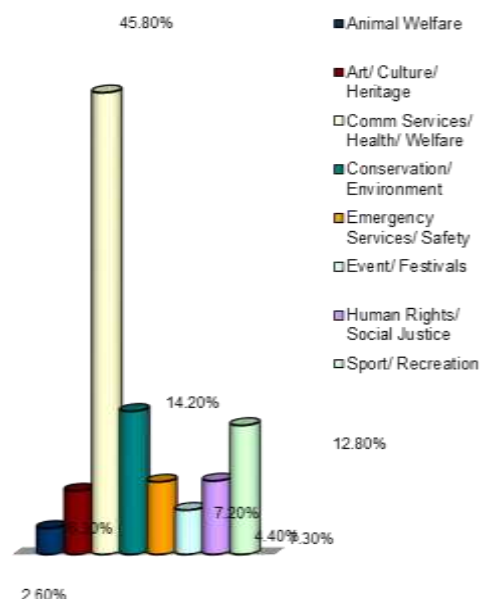
- Schools indicated that Advance contributed to the fulfilment of Essential Learning Standards (VELS / AusVELS) (**31%**).
- Schools indicated that Advance contributed to the fulfilment of the Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL) (**22%**).

- Schools indicated that Advance contributed to Vocational and Educational Training (VET) attainment (**1.9%**).
- Schools indicated that Advance contributed to a combination of education links (**37.6%**).

Partnerships in Advance

Undertaking volunteering projects and developing community partnerships are a key focus of Advance.

- Young people and schools formed over **970** community partnerships.



Benefits of working in partnership

- Schools reported that **39%** partner organisations reported improvement in their organisation's value of young people and improved knowledge of youth issues as a result of working in partnership with the Advance schools.
- **29%** of partner organisation reduced barriers for young people's involvement as a benefit of working in partnership with the Advance schools.

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Recognised Training

Recognised Training is an important component of Advance in which young people build confidence and skills while undertaking training and certificates in a diverse range of areas such as food handling, first aid, construction, fire safety and animal husbandry.

In 2020:

- Over **600** Recognised Training Courses were provided.
- Over **280** organisations provided training to young people in Advance.
- **43%** of recognised training was identified by schools as being nationally recognised.

Advance provides opportunities

Additional benefits for young people from their involvement in Advance include:

- Increased interpersonal confidence including team work and networking skills **(89%)**
- Increased healthy/safe life choices and behaviours **(74%)**
- Identification of potential career pathways **(69%)**
- Continuation of involvement in volunteering activities **(59%)**
- Mentoring opportunities **(56%)**
- Re-engagement in education **(61%)**.

Achievements in Advance

Celebrating young people's achievements in a public forum provides important recognition of what they have accomplished through their partnerships. The majority of schools reported that young people were recognised by more than one type of celebration, including:

- Awarding of certificates.
- Holding a formal event and presentation.
- Being profiled in the local media
- Participating in a celebratory camp.
- Presentations at school assembly.

COVID-19 Impact on the delivery of Advance

Schools were asked to report on the impacts of COVID-19. In 2020:

- **98%** of schools indicated COVID-19 impacted or limited their ability to deliver some parts of Advance. However, these schools also reported being able to adapt their project delivery model in response and provide online opportunities for their students.
- Most schools completed the core parts of the program including undertaking volunteering projects with local community partners in Term 4.
- The only area that was significantly impacted due to remote learning was the number of community partnerships established. The total number of community partnerships developed were less than half compared to the previous year.

Case Studies

Alexandra Secondary College

At Alexandra Secondary College, the Advance students undertook a First Aid course in 2020 to provide them with important vocational skills to use within the school and local community. The first aid skills are expected to be applied at school events, when students join local volunteer organisations such as the SES and when they gain employment locally for example at the swimming pool. It also helped them prepare for and safely participate in a range of outdoor ecology projects throughout the semester. Students researched and interviewed a variety of community organisations including the SES, local sporting groups and the Alexandra and District Hospital. They also visited local waterways and assessed their health as part of their freshwater ecology studies.

Yarville Special Development School

At Yarville Special Development School, students participated in horticultural training program at Ceres Environment Park in Brunswick East in Term 1 of 2020. During their weekly sessions with a Ceres Trainer, students worked on developing the skills, knowledge and understanding needed to establish, maintain, and care for a school vegetable garden. They also learnt a great deal about sustainability practices which they brought back to implement at school. Classroom waste is now sorted into compostable waste, recycling waste and general waste. In Term 2, when the school moved to online and remote learning, the Advance program was delivered by way of projects with purpose. Students were provided with hands on learning packs and activities that they could undertake at home. They made bath and hand scrubs, cards, created artwork and were also provided with recipes and supplies to bake. Students shared and distributed these products to the local community. This was also a way of checking in on others and spreading kindness in their community during a difficult time.

(Adapted from the school's 2020 Advance end of year report).