

National Report on Schooling in Australia

2015



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National Report on Schooling in Australia 2015
ISSN 1036-0972

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Executive summary



Introduction

The *National Report on Schooling in Australia 2015* is the annual report on Australia's school education sector. It has been produced by the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) on behalf of the Education Council.

The report highlights progress in 2015 towards the [Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians](#) agreed by Australian education ministers in 2008.

The *National Report on Schooling in Australia 2015* addresses the eight areas of commitment to action specified in the Melbourne Declaration. It describes the national policy and reporting context for school education in Australia and reports against the nationally agreed key performance measures (KPMs) for schooling, covering student participation, student achievement in national assessments and student transitions to further education and work. A selection of other statistical information on Australian schooling in 2015 and for the six-year period 2009–2015 is included in the report, with more extensive data sets accessible through the National Report on Schooling data portal.

The data portal provides readers with interactive access to a wide range of data on schooling in Australia, including general statistics on enrolments and funding, and data on the agreed KPMs. In most cases, the portal allows readers to download data by state and territory, by school sector, by calendar year and by other breakdowns, such as gender and Indigenous status, as well as at the national level.



NATIONAL REPORT
ON SCHOOLING
DATA PORTAL

This is the seventh annual National Report on Schooling in Australia to address the Melbourne Declaration and the twenty-seventh annual report overall.

Editions of the report for the years 2009–2014 are available on the [ACARA website](#). Editions prior to 2009 are available on the [SCSEEC website](#).

Overview of the report

Part 1, 'Schools and schooling', provides information on the status of Australian schooling in 2015, including school, student and teacher numbers, school structures and funds used for school education.

In Australia, responsibility for school education rests mainly with the six state and two territory governments¹.

All states and territories provide for 13 years of formal school education. Primary education, including a preparatory year, lasts for either seven or eight years and is followed by secondary education of six or five years respectively. Typically, schooling commences at age five, is compulsory from age six until age 17 (with provision for alternative study or work arrangements in the senior secondary years), and is completed at age 17 or 18. School structures and age requirements in states and territories are summarised in part 1.4.

The majority – 71 per cent – of schools are government schools, established and administered by state and territory governments through their education departments or authorities. The remaining 29 per cent are non-government schools, mostly associated with religious organisations. Non-government schools are established and operated under conditions determined by state and territory governments through their registration authorities. School numbers are shown in part 1.1.

Around two-thirds (65 per cent) of school students are enrolled in government schools and approximately one-third (35 per cent) in non-government schools. Part 1.2 reports on numbers of students by school sector, state and territory, and Indigenous status.

Staff numbers² closely reflect enrolments, with 64 per cent of school teachers employed by the government school sector and 36 per cent by non-government schools. Part 1.3 reports on staff numbers and student/teacher ratios.

School, student and teacher numbers in 2015 are shown for Australia, and by state and territory in figure 1.

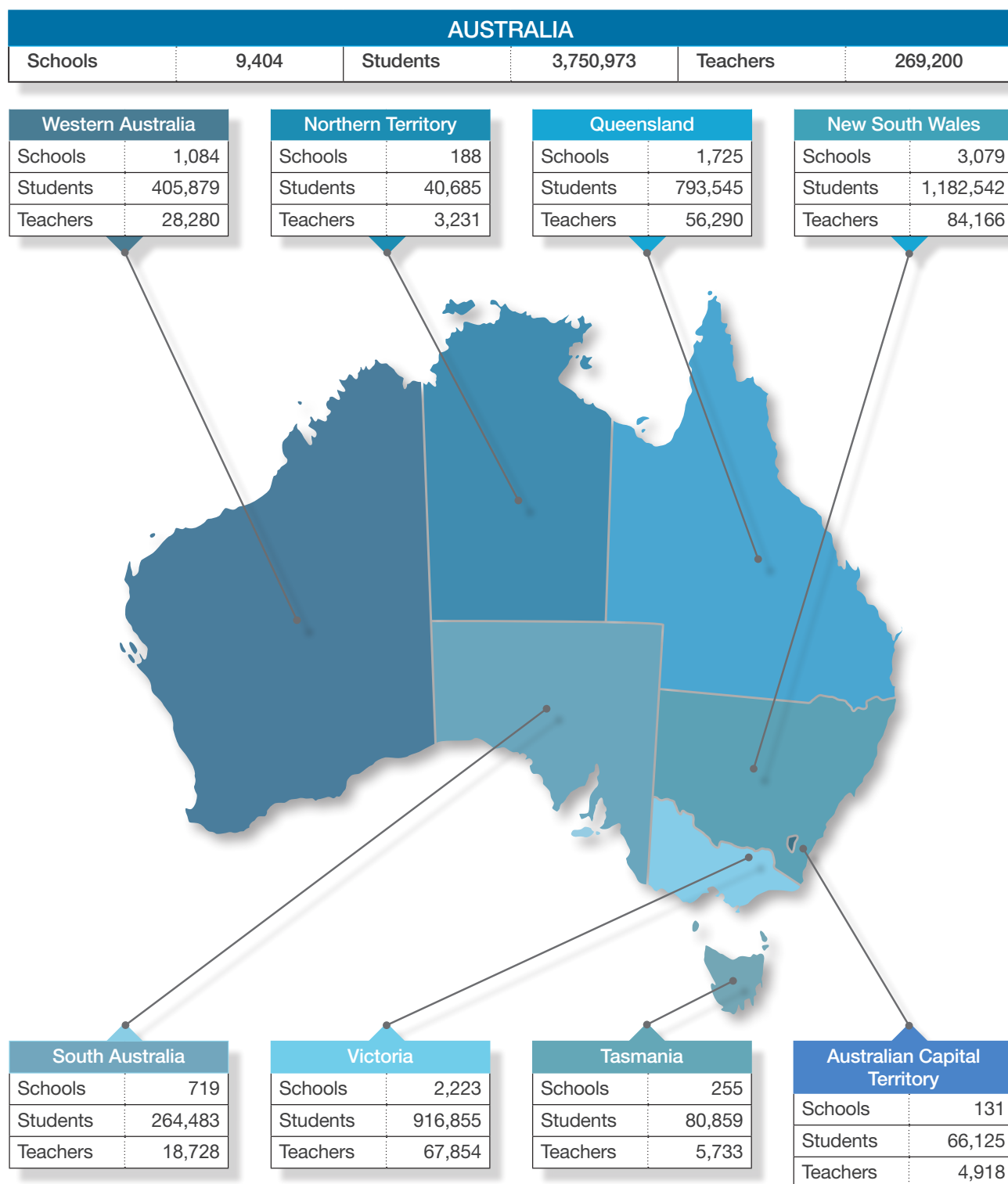
Schools are funded through a combination of state/territory government funding, Australian government funding, fees and charges and other parental/private contributions. School funding arrangements and data are reported in part 1.5.

1 New South Wales (NSW), Victoria (Vic.), Queensland (Qld), South Australia (SA), Western Australia (WA), Tasmania (Tas.), Northern Territory (NT) and Australian Capital Territory (ACT).

2 Full-time equivalent teaching staff.

Figure 1.

Numbers of schools, students and teachers by state and territory, Australia, 2015



Notes

Student numbers are individuals (full-time students plus part-time students). Teacher numbers are full-time equivalent (FTE) teaching staff.

Source: ABS, Cat. No. 4221.0, *Schools, Australia*, 2015.

Part 2, 'Policies and priorities', outlines the national policy context for Australian schooling in 2015 and reports against the commitments to action agreed by Australian education ministers in the Melbourne Declaration on the Educational Goals for Young Australians.

Part 2.1 of this report summarises the national policy context for schooling including the roles of the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) and the Education Council in deciding agreed national policy and initiatives for education. It also provides examples of state and territory policy initiatives for school education in 2015.

Part 2.2 outlines the goals and commitments contained in the Melbourne Declaration and the COAG targets for education.

Parts 2.3–2.10 report on progress in implementing the Melbourne Declaration commitments to action with a focus on developments in 2015.

Progress towards the commitments to action reported for 2015 include:

- Revised standards for teacher training courses (initial teacher education) were endorsed by the Education Council.
- A number of states and territories implemented new initiatives for early childhood education, for the middle years of schooling and for senior secondary schooling.
- Queensland and Western Australia completed the move of Year 7 from a primary school year to a secondary school year, increasing the national consistency of school structures.
- Extensive work was undertaken to revise the Australian Curriculum, Foundation – Year 10 (F–10), addressing themes endorsed by the Education Council. The revised curriculum was published in October 2015.
- Annual tests in literacy and numeracy for Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 were conducted through the National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) for the eighth time.
- Work was progressed on the transition of NAPLAN testing to an online assessment platform, as agreed by education ministers in 2014.
- The fifth three-yearly NAP sample assessment in Science Literacy for Year 6 students was conducted online.
- Sample groups of Australian students participated in the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) and the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS), which were both conducted in 2015.
- The Education Council endorsed the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Strategy.
- The sixth release of the [My School website](#) occurred.

- The Education Council endorsed the [*Measurement Framework for Schooling in Australia 2015*](#).
- Data on a new key performance measure on the level of student attendance, with a particular focus on attendance by Indigenous students, were collected and reported for the first time.

Part 3, 'Measuring and reporting performance', reports on the performance of Australian schooling in 2015, using the nationally agreed key performance measures (KPMs) for schooling specified in the *Measurement Framework for Schooling in Australia 2015*.

Part 3 reports on 23 of the 26 agreed KPMs³ along with, in some cases, associated COAG targets. The measures are reported at the national level, and by various breakdowns, such as school sector, state and territory, school year and Indigenous status. For selected KPMs, time series for the six years 2009–2015 since the Melbourne Declaration are also included. Where relevant breakdowns or time series are not reported in part 3, they are provided in the National Report on Schooling data portal.

Data reported for 2015 include that:

- The average national attendance rate for students in Years 1–10 was 92.6 per cent. Average attendance rates were lower for Years 8, 9 and 10 than for Years 1–7.
- At 83.7 per cent, the average attendance rate for Indigenous students was 9.4 percentage points lower than for non-Indigenous students (93.1 per cent). There was a decrease in this gap of 0.3 percentage points in 2015.
- Based on data collected for 2015, which excluded NSW government school students, 77.8 per cent of Australian students in Years 1–10 attended school for at least 90 per cent of school days. However, only 49.2 per cent of Indigenous students met this benchmark.
- NAPLAN participation rates for reading, writing and literacy were over 90 per cent for each of Years 3, 5, 7 and 9, but were lower in each domain for Year 9 than for Years 3, 5 and 7.
- The proportion of students achieving at or above the minimum standard in NAPLAN tests was over 90 per cent for all year groups tested in reading and numeracy, and for Years 3 and 5 in writing. In writing, the proportion of students achieving at or above the minimum standard was 87.3 per cent for Year 7 and 80.5 per cent for Year 9.
- There was an increase from 51.4 per cent to 55.1 per cent in the proportion of students achieving at or above the proficient standard in science literacy since this sample assessment was last conducted in 2012.

³ The remaining three KPMs, covering student achievement in the NAP international assessment PIRLS and in NAP sample assessments in ICT Literacy and Civics and Citizenship do not apply to the 2015 reporting year.

- KPMs for NAP international assessments in 2015 showed little or no improvement:
 - The proportion of 15-year-old Australian students achieving at or above the national proficient standard in PISA was lower in all three domains (reading, mathematical and scientific literacy) than for the previous PISA assessment in 2012.
 - The proportions of Australian Year 4 and Year 8 students achieving at or above the national proficient standard in TIMSS mathematics were similar to the previous TIMSS assessment in 2011, as was the proportion of Year 8 students achieving at or above the national proficient standard in TIMSS science. The proportion of Year 4 students achieving the proficient standard in TIMSS science was higher than in 2011.
- The proportion of students proceeding to Year 12 (as measured by the apparent retention rate from Year 10 to Year 12) rose by 0.2 percentage points to 82.7 per cent. The apparent retention rate from Year 10 to Year 12 for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students rose by 0.2 percentage points to 60.6 per cent, with the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous rates remaining at 23.2 percentage points.
- The proportion of the 20–24-year-old population that has attained at least Year 12 or equivalent or AQF Certificate III or above increased significantly from 84.9 per cent in 2014 to 87.1 per cent in 2015, improving the prospects for achieving the COAG target for this measure of 90 per cent by 2020.

Table 1 summarises the KPMs for 2015 in comparison with 2014 (or the most recent previous year for which comparable data exist).

Table 1

Key performance measures for schooling, Australia, 2014–15

| Key performance measures | 2014 | 2015 | Comparison |
|---|--------|--------|------------------|
| 1. Student participation | | | |
| (a) Enrolment Proportion of children aged 6–15 years who are enrolled in school | 100.5% | 100.6% | N/A ¹ |
| (b) Attendance rate The number of actual full-time equivalent student-days attended by full-time students in Years 1–10 as a percentage of the total number of possible student-days attended over the period | 92.7% | 92.6% | ↔ |
| (c) Attendance level The proportion of full-time students in Years 1–10, whose attendance rate in Semester 1 is equal to or greater than 90 per cent | N/A | 77.8% | N/A ² |
| (d) NAPLAN participation Proportion of students participating in NAPLAN for Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 for reading, writing and numeracy: | | | |
| Reading | | | |
| Year 3 | 94.9% | 94.9% | ↔ |
| Year 5 | 95.6% | 95.5% | ↔ |
| Year 7 | 95.1% | 94.5% | ↓ |
| Year 9 | 91.7% | 91.4% | ↔ |
| Writing | | | |
| Year 3 | 94.7% | 94.8% | ↔ |
| Year 5 | 95.4% | 95.4% | ↔ |
| Year 7 | 95.2% | 94.7% | ↔ |
| Year 9 | 91.8% | 91.7% | ↔ |
| Numeracy | | | |
| Year 3 | 94.6% | 94.6% | ↔ |
| Year 5 | 95.2% | 95.1% | ↔ |
| Year 7 | 94.7% | 94.2% | ↔ |
| Year 9 | 91.1% | 91.0% | ↔ |

| Key performance measures | 2014 | 2015 | Comparison |
|--|-------|-------|------------|
| (e) Apparent retention rates from Year 10 to Year 12 (Indigenous school students cf. non-Indigenous school students) | | | |
| Indigenous school students | 60.4% | 60.6% | ↔ |
| Non-Indigenous students | 83.6% | 83.8% | ↔ |
| All students | 82.5% | 82.7% | ↔ |
| (f) Participation of young people in VET including VET in Schools Proportion of the population aged 15 to 19 years who, in the calendar year, successfully completed at least one unit of competency as part of a VET qualification at AQF Certificate II or above | | | |
| | 33.6% | 32.6% | ↓ |
| (g) Proportion of 15 to 19-year-olds in full-time education or training, in full-time work, or both in part-time work and part-time education or training | | | |
| | 87.2% | 87.4% | ↔ |
| (h) Proportion of 20 to 24-year-olds in full-time education or training, in full-time work, or both in part-time work and part-time education or training | | | |
| | 74.1% | 73.6% | ↔ |
| (i) Proportion of 17–24-year-olds who have left school that are in full-time education or training, in full-time work, or both in part-time work and part-time education or training | | | |
| | 73.2% | 72.9% | ↔ |

2. Student achievement: National Assessment Program – literacy

| | | | |
|--|-------|-------|---|
| (a) Proportion of students achieving at or above the national minimum standard for reading: | | | |
| Year 3 – Band 2 | 93.5% | 94.6% | ↔ |
| Year 5 – Band 4 | 92.9% | 93.3% | ↔ |
| Year 7 – Band 5 | 94.9% | 95.4% | ↔ |
| Year 9 – Band 6 | 92.1% | 92.3% | ↔ |
| (b) NAPLAN mean scale scores for reading | | | |
| Year 3 | 418.3 | 425.5 | ↔ |
| Year 5 | 500.6 | 498.5 | ↔ |
| Year 7 | 546.1 | 546 | ↔ |
| Year 9 | 580.4 | 580.2 | ↔ |

| Key performance measures | 2014 | 2015 | Comparison |
|--|------------|-------|------------------|
| (c) Proportion of students achieving at or above the national minimum standard for writing: | | | |
| Year 3 – Band 2 | 93.8% | 95.5% | ↑ |
| Year 5 – Band 4 | 90.2% | 92.3% | ↔ |
| Year 7 – Band 5 | 88.5% | 87.3% | ↔ |
| Year 9 – Band 6 | 81.8% | 80.5% | ↔ |
| (d) NAPLAN mean scale scores for writing | | | |
| Year 3 | 402.2 | 416.3 | ↑ |
| Year 5 | 468.3 | 478.1 | ↔ |
| Year 7 | 511.6 | 510.6 | ↔ |
| Year 9 | 550.3 | 546.5 | ↔ |
| (e) Proportion of students achieving at or above the proficient standard (level 3) on the OECD PISA combined reading scale | 64% (2012) | 61% | N/A ³ |

3. Student achievement: National Assessment Program – numeracy

| | | | |
|--|------------|-------|------------------|
| (a) Proportion of students achieving at or above the national minimum standard for numeracy: | | | |
| Year 3 – Band 2 | 94.6% | 94.4% | ↔ |
| Year 5 – Band 4 | 93.5% | 95.1% | ↔ |
| Year 7 – Band 5 | 95.1% | 95.9% | ↔ |
| Year 9 – Band 6 | 94.1% | 95.7% | ↑ |
| (b) NAPLAN mean scale scores for numeracy | | | |
| Year 3 | 401.8 | 397.8 | ↔ |
| Year 5 | 487.6 | 492.5 | ↔ |
| Year 7 | 545.9 | 542.5 | ↔ |
| Year 9 | 587.8 | 591.7 | ↔ |
| (c) Proportion of students achieving at or above the proficient standard (level 3) on the OECD PISA combined mathematics scale | 59% (2012) | 55% | N/A ³ |

| Key performance measures | 2014 | 2015 | Comparison |
|---|------------|------|------------------|
| (d) Proportion of students achieving at or above the proficient standard (intermediate international benchmark) on the TIMSS mathematics scales | | | |
| Year 4 | 70% (2011) | 70% | N/A ³ |
| Year 8 | 63% (2011) | 64% | N/A ³ |

4. Student achievement: National Assessment Program – science literacy

(a) Proportion of students achieving at or above the proficient standard (level 3.2) in science literacy

| | | | |
|--------|--------------|-------|---|
| Year 6 | 51.4% (2012) | 55.1% | ↔ |
|--------|--------------|-------|---|

(b) Proportion of students achieving at or above the proficient standard (level 3) on the OECD PISA combined scientific literacy scale

| | | | |
|----------------------|------------|-----|------------------|
| 15-year-old students | 66% (2012) | 61% | N/A ³ |
|----------------------|------------|-----|------------------|

(c) Proportion of students achieving at or above the proficient standard (intermediate international benchmark) on the TIMSS science scales

| | | | |
|--------|------------|-----|------------------|
| Year 4 | 71% (2011) | 75% | N/A ³ |
| Year 8 | 71% (2011) | 69% | N/A ³ |

7. Student attainment

(a) Proportion of the 20 to 24-year-old population having attained at least Year 12 or equivalent or AQF Certificate II or above

86.1%

88.4%



(b) Proportion of the 20 to 24-year-old population having attained at least Year 12 or equivalent or AQF Certificate III or above

84.9%

87.1%



Notes:

Comparisons in Table 1 have been tested for statistical significance:

| | |
|------------------|---|
| | means the increase in the measure was statistically significant |
| | means the decrease in the measure was statistically significant |
| | means that the change in the measure was not statistically significant |
| N/A | means not applicable |
| N/A ¹ | the methodology for KPM 1 (a), which uses different data sources for the numerator and denominator, may allow the measure to exceed 100 per cent. The increase in this measure above 100 per cent is not represented as an increase |
| N/A ² | KPM 1 (c) is reported at the national level for the first time for 2015 |
| N/A ³ | measures of statistical significance are not available for changes to KPMs relating to PISA and TIMSS |

Part 1

Schools and schooling



Part 1 provides information on the status of Australian schooling in 2015, including school, student and teacher numbers, school structures, and funds used for school education.

1.1 School numbers

In 2015 there were 9,404 schools in Australia.⁴ This total included primary, secondary, combined (primary and secondary) and special schools, across government and non-government school sectors. (See Part 4: Glossary for definitions of school levels, school types and school sectors.)

Of the total number of schools, 71 per cent were administered by state and territory governments⁵, 18 per cent identified as having Catholic affiliation⁶, and 11 per cent were classified as independent. Most independent schools are affiliated with religious denominations or promote a particular educational philosophy.

The number and proportion of schools by school type and school sector in 2015 are shown in table 1.1. The proportion of schools by school sector in 2015 is illustrated in figure 1.1.



4 As at the National Schools Statistics Collection (NSSC) schools census, August 2015.

5 Independent public schools established in Western Australia and Queensland are counted as government schools in the NSSC and in this report.

6 Non-systemic Catholic schools are counted as Catholic.

Table 1.1

Number and proportion of schools by school type and school sector, Australia, 2015

| | Government | | Catholic | | Independent | | Total | | All schools | |
|------------------|--------------|-------------|--------------|-------------|--------------|-------------|--------------|-------------|--------------|--------------|
| | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % |
| Australia | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % |
| Primary | 4,774 | 76.7 | 1,235 | 19.8 | 215 | 3.5 | 1,450 | 23.3 | 6,224 | 66.2 |
| Secondary | 1,032 | 73.2 | 324 | 23.0 | 53 | 3.8 | 377 | 26.8 | 1,409 | 15.0 |
| Combined | 504 | 38.1 | 139 | 10.5 | 680 | 51.4 | 819 | 61.9 | 1,323 | 14.1 |
| Special | 329 | 73.4 | 39 | 8.7 | 80 | 17.9 | 119 | 26.6 | 448 | 4.8 |
| Total | 6,639 | 70.6 | 1,737 | 18.5 | 1,028 | 10.9 | 2,765 | 29.4 | 9,404 | 100.0 |

Notes:

Primary education comprises a pre-Year 1 grade followed by Years 1–6 in New South Wales (NSW), Victoria (Vic.), Queensland (Qld), Western Australia (WA), Tasmania (Tas.), Northern Territory (NT) and Australian Capital Territory (ACT). In South Australia (SA), primary education comprises a pre-Year 1 grade followed by Years 1–7. Secondary education consists of the first year of secondary school (Year 8 in SA; Year 7 in all other jurisdictions) to Year 12. In 2015, Year 7 in Qld and WA was moved from a primary school year to a secondary school year.

Categories used in tables and graphs showing 'School type' are:

- Primary – school delivers primary education
- Secondary – school delivers secondary education
- Combined – school delivers both primary and secondary education
- Special – students may include primary students, secondary students, ungraded students or a combination of primary, secondary and ungraded students.

Percentage columns for each sector show the proportion of schools of each type in that sector. The total row shows the total number and overall proportion of all schools in each sector. The total percentage column shows the overall proportions of schools of each type. Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding.

See Glossary for definition of school sector

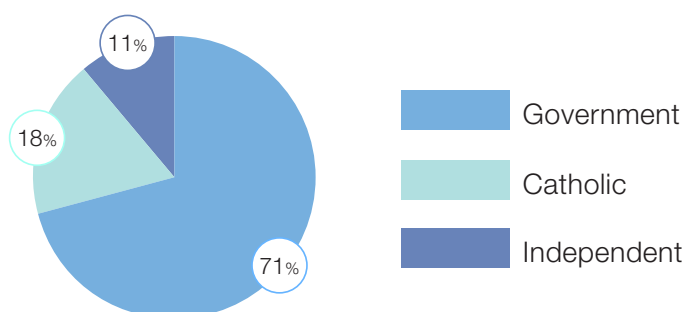
See Glossary for definition of special school

Source: ABS, Cat. No. 4221.0, Schools, Australia, 2015.

See also National Report on Schooling data portal.

Figure 1.1.

Proportion of schools by school sector, Australia, 2015



Source: ABS, Cat. No. 4221.0, Schools, Australia, 2015.

The total number of schools by state and territory in 2015 is shown in table 1.2.

Table 1.2

Number of schools by school type and state/territory, Australia, 2015

| School type | State/territory | | | | | | | | Australia |
|--------------|-----------------|--------------|--------------|------------|--------------|------------|------------|------------|--------------|
| | NSW | Vic. | Qld | SA | WA | Tas. | NT | ACT | |
| Primary | 2,101 | 1,551 | 1,133 | 463 | 661 | 154 | 81 | 80 | 6,224 |
| Secondary | 512 | 334 | 257 | 82 | 137 | 41 | 22 | 24 | 1,409 |
| Combined | 304 | 237 | 264 | 152 | 209 | 55 | 80 | 22 | 1,323 |
| Special | 162 | 101 | 71 | 22 | 77 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 448 |
| Total | 3,079 | 2,223 | 1,725 | 719 | 1,084 | 255 | 188 | 131 | 9,404 |

Source: ABS Cat. No. 4221.0, *Schools, Australia*, 2015.

See also National Report on Schooling Data Portal.

The number of schools in each state and territory is largely determined by the size and geographical distribution of the school-aged population in each jurisdiction.

For a breakdown by school sector of schools by school type in each state and territory in 2015, see the National Report on Schooling data portal.

The total number of schools in Australia rose from 9,389 in 2014 to 9,404 in 2015. There was a net fall of 125 (1.3 per cent) in the total number of schools over the period 2009–2015. The numbers and proportions of schools in the three school sectors over this period are shown in table 1.3.

Table 1.3

Number and proportion of schools by school sector, Australia, 2009–2015

| | Government | | Catholic | | Independent | | Total |
|------|------------|------|----------|------|-------------|------|-------|
| | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. |
| 2009 | 6,802 | 71.4 | 1,705 | 17.9 | 1,022 | 10.7 | 9,529 |
| 2010 | 6,743 | 71.2 | 1,708 | 18.0 | 1,017 | 10.7 | 9,468 |
| 2011 | 6,705 | 71.1 | 1,710 | 18.1 | 1,020 | 10.8 | 9,435 |
| 2012 | 6,697 | 71.0 | 1,713 | 18.2 | 1,017 | 10.8 | 9,427 |
| 2013 | 6,661 | 70.9 | 1,717 | 18.3 | 1,015 | 10.8 | 9,393 |
| 2014 | 6,651 | 70.8 | 1,722 | 18.3 | 1,016 | 10.8 | 9,389 |
| 2015 | 6,639 | 70.6 | 1,737 | 18.5 | 1,028 | 10.9 | 9,404 |

Note: Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding.

Source: ABS Cat. No. 4221.0, *Schools, Australia*, 2015.

See also National Report on Schooling data portal.

Changes in school numbers from year to year may be due to administrative or structural changes in school systems or individual schools as well as to changes in school populations. The decrease in total school numbers in the period 2009–2015 did not reflect a decrease in total student numbers.

1.2 Student numbers

Enrolments by school level and sector

In total, 3.75 million individual students were enrolled in Australian schools in 2015. Of these, 2.14 million (57.1 per cent) were primary school students, and 1.61 million (42.9 per cent) were secondary school students. This difference is mainly due to the structure of schooling, in which primary schooling comprises more year groups/cohorts than secondary schooling.⁷ Another contributing factor is that not all students go on to Years 11 and 12.

The proportion of secondary students increased by 1.6 percentage points in 2015, in line with decisions in Queensland and Western Australia to move Year 7 from a primary school year to a secondary school year.

The numbers of students by school level and school sector for 2015 are summarised in table 1.4.

Table 1.4

Number and proportion of students (full-time plus part-time) enrolled in schools by school level and school sector, Australia, 2015

| School level | School sector | | | | | | | |
|------------------|------------------|-------------|----------------|-------------|----------------|-------------|------------------|--------------|
| | Government | | Catholic | | Independent | | Total | |
| | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % |
| Primary | 1,489,181 | 69.6 | 404,119 | 18.9 | 247,271 | 11.6 | 2,140,571 | 57.1 |
| Junior secondary | 654,065 | 59.2 | 250,774 | 22.7 | 199,321 | 18.1 | 1,104,160 | 29.4 |
| Senior secondary | 301,884 | 59.6 | 110,646 | 21.9 | 93,712 | 18.5 | 506,242 | 13.5 |
| Total secondary | 955,949 | 59.4 | 361,420 | 22.4 | 293,033 | 18.2 | 1,610,402 | 42.9 |
| Total | 2,445,130 | 65.2 | 765,539 | 20.4 | 540,304 | 14.4 | 3,750,973 | 100.0 |

Notes:

Primary education comprises a pre-Year 1 grade, followed by Years 1–6 in NSW, Vic., Qld, WA, Tas., NT and ACT. In SA, primary education comprises a pre-Year 1 grade followed by Years 1–7. In 2015, Year 7 in Qld and WA was moved from a primary school year to a secondary school year. This has an effect on the proportions of primary and secondary students in those states and a minor effect nationally from 2015.

Junior secondary comprises the years from commencement of secondary school to Year 10, including ungraded secondary. Senior secondary comprises Years 11 and 12.

Students attending special schools are allocated to either primary or secondary school on the basis of school year or school level, where identified. Where the school year or school level is not identified, students are allocated to primary or secondary school level according to the typical age level in each state or territory. See part 4 Glossary for definition of special schools.

Percentage columns for each sector show the proportion of Australian students at each level enrolled in that sector. The total row shows the number and proportion of Australian students enrolled in each sector. The total percentage column shows the proportions of Australian students enrolled at each level. Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding.

Source: ABS, Cat. No. 4221.0, *Schools, Australia, 2015*.

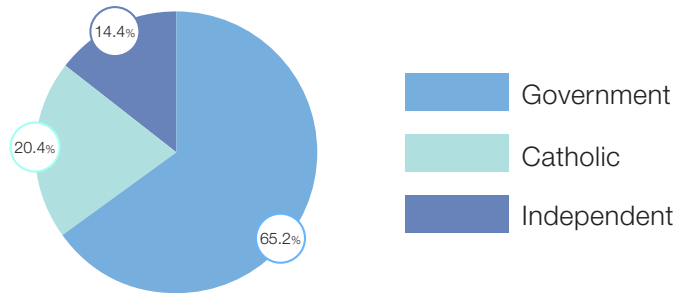
See also National Report on Schooling data portal.

⁷ From 2015, there are seven primary school year levels and six secondary school year levels except in SA, where there are eight primary and five secondary year levels.

As shown in table 1.4 and figure 1.2, 65.2 per cent of Australian school students in 2015 were enrolled in government schools, and 20.4 per cent of students were enrolled in Catholic schools, with the remaining 14.4 per cent enrolled in independent schools.

Figure 1.2

Proportion of students (full-time plus part-time) enrolled in schools by sector, Australia, 2015 (per cent)



Source: ABS, Cat. No. 4221.0, *Schools, Australia, 2015*.

The proportions of students enrolled in each school sector differed between levels of education.

The proportion of students enrolled in government schools was higher for primary (69.6 per cent) than for secondary education (59.4 per cent). This suggests a movement of students from government to non-government schools, particularly between primary and secondary school. However, as the movement of individual students between sectors and between states and territories is not tracked, it is not currently possible to accurately measure the extent or timing of student movements between the three school sectors.

Part-time students accounted for only 0.5 per cent of total enrolments. They were concentrated in Years 11 and 12 (55.2 per cent), and in government schools (93.1 per cent).

Enrolments by school level, and state and territory

Total enrolments (full-time plus part-time) by state and territory in 2015 are shown in table 1.5.

Table 1.5

Number of students (full-time plus part-time) enrolled in schools by state/territory and school level, Australia, 2015

| School level | State/territory | | | | | | | | Australia |
|------------------------------------|-----------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|--------|--------|--------|-----------|
| | NSW | Vic. | Qld | SA | WA | Tas. | NT | ACT | |
| Primary | 670,753 | 515,431 | 456,429 | 161,557 | 231,181 | 44,565 | 24,315 | 36,340 | 2,140,571 |
| Junior secondary | 363,024 | 277,540 | 223,686 | 60,997 | 121,428 | 25,452 | 12,232 | 19,801 | 1,104,160 |
| Senior secondary | 148,765 | 123,884 | 113,430 | 41,929 | 53,270 | 10,842 | 4,138 | 9,984 | 506,242 |
| Total secondary | 511,789 | 401,424 | 337,116 | 102,926 | 174,698 | 36,294 | 16,370 | 29,785 | 1,610,402 |
| Total | 1,182,542 | 916,855 | 793,545 | 264,483 | 405,879 | 80,859 | 40,685 | 66,125 | 3,750,973 |
| Proportion of Australian total (%) | 31.5 | 24.4 | 21.2 | 7.1 | 10.8 | 2.2 | 1.1 | 1.8 | 100.0 |

Notes: See table 1.4 for notes on school level.

In 2015, Year 7 in Qld and WA was moved from a primary to a secondary school year, increasing the proportions of secondary students in those states and nationally.

Source: ABS, Cat. No. 4221.0, Schools, Australia, 2015.

See also National Report on Schooling data portal.

Enrolments by state and territory and school level reflect the school-age population and its age distribution in each jurisdiction.

Growth in enrolments

The numbers of students enrolled in Australian schools grew by 56,872 (1.5 per cent) between 2014 and 2015 and by 266,169 (7.6 per cent) between 2009 and 2015. Enrolments in all three school sectors have risen over the past six years, with the majority of growth (56.5 per cent) occurring in government schools. However, growth was proportionately higher in non-government schools, producing small shifts in the proportions of total enrolments per school sector over the period. Table 1.6 and figure 1.3 summarise these data.

Table 1.6

Number and proportion of students (full-time plus part-time) by school sector, Australia, 2009–2015

| Year | School sector | | | | | | |
|------|---------------|------|----------|------|-------------|------|-----------|
| | Government | | Catholic | | Independent | | Total |
| | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. |
| 2009 | 2,294,638 | 65.8 | 704,837 | 20.2 | 485,329 | 13.9 | 3,484,804 |
| 2010 | 2,304,259 | 65.6 | 713,911 | 20.3 | 492,705 | 14.0 | 3,510,875 |
| 2011 | 2,315,253 | 65.4 | 724,594 | 20.5 | 501,962 | 14.2 | 3,541,809 |
| 2012 | 2,342,379 | 65.2 | 736,595 | 20.5 | 511,012 | 14.2 | 3,589,986 |
| 2013 | 2,375,024 | 65.1 | 749,059 | 20.5 | 521,436 | 14.3 | 3,645,519 |
| 2014 | 2,406,495 | 65.1 | 757,749 | 20.5 | 529,857 | 14.3 | 3,694,101 |
| 2015 | 2,445,130 | 65.2 | 765,539 | 20.4 | 540,304 | 14.4 | 3,750,973 |

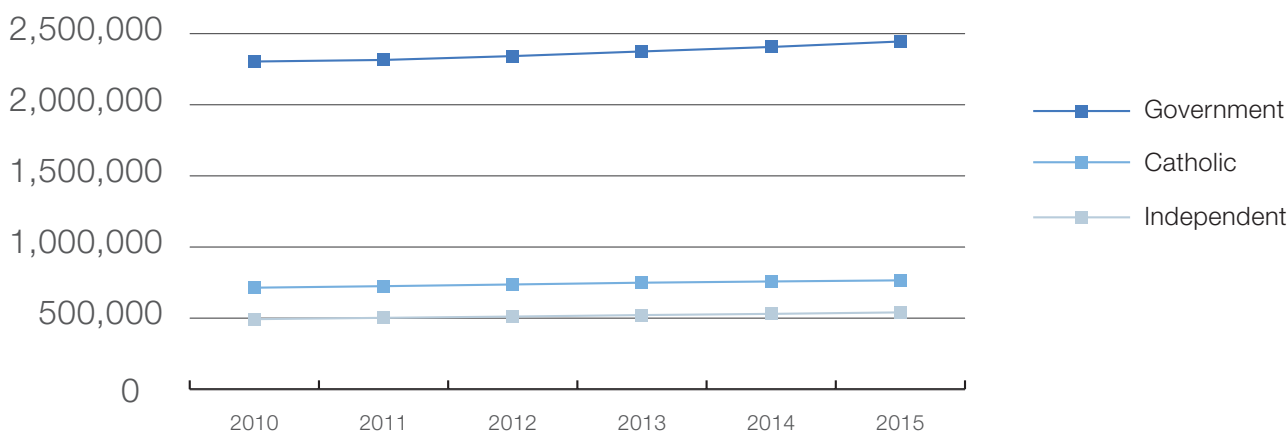
Note: Percentages may not add to 100 per cent due to rounding

Source: ABS, Cat. No. 4221.0, Schools, Australia, 2015.

See also National Report on Schooling data portal.

Figure 1.3

Number of students enrolled (full-time plus part-time) by school sector, Australia, 2009–2015



Source: ABS, Cat. No. 4221.0, Schools, Australia, 2015.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students

In 2015 there were a record 200,563 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (Indigenous)⁸ students enrolled in Australian schools, making up 5.3 per cent of the total school population. Table 1.7 shows the number and proportion of Indigenous students by school level and sector.

Table 1.7

Number and proportion of Indigenous students (full-time and part-time) enrolled in schools by school level and sector, Australia, 2015

| School level | School sector | | | | | | | |
|------------------|----------------|-------------|---------------|-------------|---------------|------------|----------------|--------------|
| | Government | | Catholic | | Independent | | Total | |
| | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % |
| Primary | 105,719 | 87.2 | 11,052 | 9.1 | 4,532 | 3.7 | 121,303 | 60.5 |
| Junior secondary | 47,554 | 79.9 | 7,280 | 12.2 | 4,686 | 7.9 | 59,520 | 29.7 |
| Senior secondary | 15,237 | 77.2 | 2,591 | 13.1 | 1,912 | 9.7 | 19,740 | 9.8 |
| Total secondary | 62,791 | 79.2 | 9,871 | 12.5 | 6,598 | 8.3 | 79,260 | 39.5 |
| Total | 168,510 | 84.0 | 20,923 | 10.4 | 11,130 | 5.5 | 200,563 | 100.0 |

Notes:

See table 1.4 for notes on school level.

Percentage columns for each sector show the proportion of Indigenous students at each level enrolled in that sector. The total row shows the number and proportion of all Indigenous students enrolled in each sector. The total percentage column shows the proportions of Indigenous students enrolled at each level. Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding.

Source: ABS, Cat. No. 4221.0, *Schools, Australia, 2015*.

See also National Report on Schooling data portal.

Compared to total enrolments (table 1.4), Indigenous enrolments were more highly concentrated in government schools, with 84.0 per cent of Indigenous enrolments in government schools compared to 65.2 per cent of total enrolments.

Indigenous students were under-represented in senior secondary years: 13.5 percent of all enrolments were in Years 11 and 12, but only 9.8 per cent of Indigenous students were enrolled in Years 11 and 12. However, this proportion rose by 0.7 percentage points in 2015 from 9.1 per cent in 2014. These figures reflect Year 10 to Year 12 apparent retention rates amongst Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, which are lower than in the overall school population, but which have risen in absolute and relative terms in recent years.⁹

8 The Melbourne Declaration uses the term 'Indigenous' to refer to Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. This report uses both the terms 'Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander' and 'Indigenous' to describe students identifying as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander, with 'Indigenous' or 'Indigenous status' used in tables and graphs.

9 Apparent retention rates are discussed in part 3: Measuring and reporting performance.

Table 1.8

Number and proportion of Indigenous students (full-time plus part-time) enrolled in schools by school level and state/territory, Australia, 2015

| School level | State/territory | | | | | | | | Australia |
|---|-----------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|--------------|---------------|--------------|----------------|
| | NSW | Vic. | Qld | SA | WA | Tas. | NT | ACT | |
| Primary (No.) | 38,220 | 8,118 | 36,511 | 7,503 | 15,850 | 3,893 | 10,162 | 1,046 | 121,303 |
| Secondary (No.) | 25,957 | 5,785 | 23,477 | 4,227 | 9,954 | 2,788 | 6,297 | 775 | 79,260 |
| Total (No.) | 64,177 | 13,903 | 59,988 | 11,730 | 25,804 | 6,681 | 16,459 | 1,821 | 200,563 |
| Proportion of Indigenous students per state (%) | 32.0 | 6.9 | 29.9 | 5.8 | 12.9 | 3.3 | 8.2 | 0.9 | 100.0 |
| Proportion of total enrolments (%) | 5.4 | 1.5 | 7.6 | 4.4 | 6.4 | 8.3 | 40.5 | 2.8 | 5.3 |

Source: ABS, Cat. No. 4221.0, *Schools, Australia*, 2015.

See also National Report on Schooling data portal.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students are not evenly or proportionately distributed among states and territories.

With 64,177 Indigenous students in 2015, NSW had both the highest number of Indigenous enrolments and the highest proportion (32.0 per cent) of the national total. This represented 5.4 per cent of the state's students, slightly more than the national average and corresponding to the NSW share of total enrolments nationally.

Victoria, with 24.4 per cent of all school students, had 6.9 per cent of all Indigenous students, representing 1.5 per cent of students in that state. Western Australia, with 10.8 per cent of total enrolments Australia-wide, accounted for 12.9 per cent of Indigenous students.

The highest concentration of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students is in the Northern Territory, which accounted for only 1.1 per cent of total school enrolments in 2015, but for 8.2 per cent of Indigenous enrolments. The 16,459 Indigenous students enrolled in Northern Territory schools made up 40.5 per cent of the Territory's school population. As such, data on Indigenous students have a much greater impact on overall statistics (including performance measures) for the Northern Territory than for any other state or territory.

More detailed data on full-time, part-time and full-time equivalent (FTE) enrolments by state and territory and school sector, Indigenous status and sex, are available in the National Report on Schooling data portal.



1.3 Staff numbers

In 2015, there were 269,200 full-time equivalent (FTE)¹⁰ teaching staff across primary and secondary schooling in Australia. The number of FTE teaching staff by school sector, school level and sex in 2015 is shown in table 1.9.

Table 1.9

Full-time equivalent (FTE) of teaching staff by school sector, school level and sex, Australia, 2015

| Sector | Primary | | | | Secondary | | | | Total | | | |
|----------------------|---------------|----------------|----------------|-------------|---------------|---------------|----------------|-------------|---------------|----------------|----------------|--------------|
| | M | F | Total | % | M | F | Total | % | M | F | Total | % |
| Government | 17,696 | 79,332 | 97,028 | 70.1 | 29,169 | 45,567 | 74,736 | 57.2 | 46,865 | 124,898 | 171,763 | 63.8 |
| Catholic | 4,026 | 19,894 | 23,920 | 17.3 | 11,475 | 16,765 | 28,240 | 21.6 | 15,501 | 36,659 | 52,160 | 19.4 |
| Independent | 3,913 | 13,585 | 17,498 | 12.6 | 12,096 | 15,683 | 27,779 | 21.2 | 16,010 | 29,267 | 45,277 | 16.8 |
| Total non-government | 7,940 | 33,479 | 41,418 | 29.9 | 23,572 | 32,447 | 56,019 | 42.8 | 31,511 | 65,926 | 97,437 | 36.2 |
| All schools | 25,636 | 112,810 | 138,446 | 51.4 | 52,741 | 78,014 | 130,755 | 48.6 | 78,376 | 190,824 | 269,200 | 100.0 |

Notes:

M = male, F = female

Staff employed in special schools are allocated to either primary or secondary education on a pro-rata basis. Components may not add to totals due to rounding.

Source: ABS, Cat. No. 4221.0, Schools, Australia, 2015.

See also National Report on Schooling data portal for data on teaching and non-teaching staff.



Australia's teaching workforce continued to be predominantly female, with women making up 70.9 per cent of FTE teachers, and men making up 29.1 per cent. This difference was more pronounced at the primary level (81.5 per cent female) than at secondary level (59.7 per cent female).

Across Australia, 63.8 per cent of FTE teachers were employed by the government school sector, 19.4 per cent by the Catholic school sector and 16.8 per cent by the independent sector. This is consistent with the distribution of students across school sectors.

The number of FTE teaching staff by state/territory in 2015 is shown in table 1.10.

¹⁰ In the calculation of numbers of full-time equivalent (FTE) teaching staff, a part-time teacher is counted as a proportion of a full-time teacher according to the time spent in teaching activities compared to a full-time teacher in the same school system or school. (See part 4 Glossary for definitions of FTE and teaching staff.)

Table 1.10

Full-time equivalent (FTE) of teaching staff by state and school level, Australia, 2015

| | State/territory | | | | | | | | Australia |
|--------------|-----------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|----------------|
| | NSW | Vic. | Qld | SA | WA | Tas. | NT | ACT | |
| Primary | 42,098 | 34,204 | 29,747 | 10,581 | 14,737 | 2,878 | 1,800 | 2,402 | 138,446 |
| Secondary | 42,068 | 33,650 | 26,544 | 8,147 | 13,544 | 2,855 | 1,431 | 2,516 | 130,755 |
| Total | 84,166 | 67,854 | 56,290 | 18,728 | 28,280 | 5,733 | 3,231 | 4,918 | 269,200 |

Source: ABS, Cat. No. 4221.0, *Schools, Australia*, 2015.

See also National Report on Schooling data portal.

Between 2009 and 2015, the total number of FTE teaching staff grew by 20,005 (8.0 per cent). This was slightly more than the growth in student enrolments (7.6 per cent) over the same period.

Table 1.11

Full-time equivalent (FTE) of teaching staff by school sector, Australia, 2009–2015

| Sector | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 |
|----------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| Government | 162,566 | 163,697 | 165,272 | 167,152 | 167,903 | 169,199 | 171,763 |
| Catholic | 46,807 | 47,391 | 48,393 | 49,427 | 50,527 | 50,936 | 52,160 |
| Independent | 39,823 | 40,333 | 41,445 | 42,407 | 43,154 | 43,930 | 45,277 |
| Total non-government | 86,630 | 87,724 | 89,838 | 91,834 | 93,682 | 94,866 | 97,437 |
| All schools | 249,196 | 251,422 | 255,110 | 258,986 | 261,585 | 264,065 | 269,200 |

Source: ABS, Cat. No. 4221.0, *Schools, Australia*, 2015.

See also National Report on Schooling data portal.

Student–teacher ratios

The student–teacher ratio is calculated as the number of full-time equivalent (FTE) students per FTE teaching staff. Table 1.12 summarises average student–teacher ratios in Australia in 2015 across the three school sectors.

Table 1.12

Full-time equivalent (FTE) student–teacher ratios, by school sector and school level, Australia, 2015

| School sector | Primary | Secondary | All schools |
|--------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Government | 15.3 | 12.7 | 14.2 |
| Non-government | 15.7 | 11.7 | 13.4 |
| Catholic | 16.9 | 12.8 | 14.7 |
| Independent | 14.1 | 10.5 | 11.9 |
| All schools | 15.4 | 12.3 | 13.9 |

Source: ABS, Cat. No. 4221.0, *Schools, Australia*, 2015.

See also National Report on Schooling data portal.

For all Australian schools, the average FTE student–teacher ratio in 2015 was 13.9:1, with no net change since 2009. The average ratio for government schools (14.2:1) was higher than for non-government schools overall (13.4:1), but lower than the average ratio for Catholic schools (14.7:1).

At the primary level, the average FTE student–teacher ratio was 15.4:1 compared to 12.3:1 at the secondary level. Student–teacher ratios are consistently higher for primary education than for secondary education in all school sectors.

Lower student–teacher ratios mean there is a smaller number of students per teacher and, therefore, potentially, smaller class sizes. However, ratios by themselves are not reliable indicators of class size because they do not take into account different requirements of different age groups, of special needs students, or of different school subjects, especially in secondary schools. These may include smaller maximum class sizes for practical subjects such as Technology, for senior secondary classes, and for special needs students. Nor do they take account of other administrative or specialist duties undertaken by teaching staff, such as non-teaching principals and deputy principals, teacher librarians, careers advisers and counsellors, and subject head teachers in secondary schools. These factors help to explain the consistently higher average student–teacher ratios in primary than secondary schooling.

Time series data on student–teacher ratios by school sector and level are available through the National Report on Schooling data portal.

1.4 School structures

Differences between Australian states and territories in school structures and in age requirements for student enrolment have been substantially reduced in recent years. In 2015, differences were further reduced with the implementation of decisions in Queensland and Western Australia to move Year 7 from a primary school year to a secondary school year.

From 2015, primary education consists of a preparatory year followed by Years 1–6 in all states and territories except South Australia. Secondary education consists of Years 7–12. In South Australia, primary education consists of a preparatory year followed by Years 1–7, and secondary education consists of Years 8–12.¹¹ The preparatory year has different names in the various jurisdictions.¹²

The age at which schooling becomes compulsory is six years in most states and territories. In Tasmania, it is five years. In practice, most children start the preparatory year of primary school at between four and a half and five and a half years old.

All states and territories require young people to participate in schooling until they complete Year 10 and to participate full time in education, training or employment, or a combination of these activities, until at least the age of 17.¹³

11 In 2015, Year 7 became the first year of secondary school in Queensland and Western Australia.

12 These are listed in table 1.13. The Australian Curriculum uses the term 'Foundation' for this year of schooling.

13 Up until 2010, the minimum school leaving age in most jurisdictions was 15 or 16. In 2010, the National Youth Participation Requirement, agreed by the Council of Australian Governments (COAG), came into effect across all states and territories, effectively lengthening the period of compulsory education. From 2014, the age requirement in Western Australia was lifted to 'until the end of the year in which the child reaches the age of 17 years and 6 months or the child reaches the age of 18, whichever happens first'.

Table 1.13 summarises school structures and requirements for school enrolment by jurisdiction.

Table 1.13

Primary and secondary school structures – minimum age of commencement for Year 1 and minimum school leaving age by state and territory, Australia, 2015

| State/territory | Preparatory year (first year of school) | Month of and minimum age at commencement for Year 1 | Primary schooling | Secondary schooling | Minimum school leaving age(a) |
|------------------------------|---|---|---------------------------|---------------------|---|
| New South Wales | Kindergarten | January, 5 turning 6 by 31 July | Kindergarten Years 1–6 | Years 7–12 | 17 years |
| Victoria | Preparatory | January, 5 turning 6 by 30 April | Preparatory Years 1–6 | Years 7–12 | 17 years |
| Queensland | Preparatory | January, 5 turning 6 by 30 June | Preparatory Years 1–6 | Years 7–12 | 17 years |
| South Australia | Reception | January, 5 years 6 months by 1 January | Reception Years 1–7 | Years 8–12 | 17 years |
| Western Australia | Pre-primary | January, 5 turning 6 by 30 June | Pre-primary Years 1–6 | Years 7–12 | 17 years 6 months – 18 years ^(b) |
| Tasmania | Preparatory | January, turning 6 by 1 January | Preparatory Years 1–6 | Years 7–12 | 17 years |
| Northern Territory | Transition | January, 5 turning 6 by 30 June | Transition Years 1–6 | Years 7–12 | 17 years |
| Australian Capital Territory | Kindergarten | January, 5 turning 6 by 30 April | Kindergarten Years 1–6 | Years 7–12 | 17 years |

(a) All students are required to complete Year 10 or equivalent. After Year 10, students must be in school, in approved education or training, in full-time employment or in a combination of training and employment until they turn 17 years of age or, in some jurisdictions, gain a Senior Secondary Certificate of Education or equivalent.

(b) In Western Australia (from 2014), the requirement to remain at school or undertake an approved combination of training and employment extends to the end of the year in which a student turns 17 years 6 months of age or until they turn 18 years of age, whichever happens first.

Sources: ABS, Schools Australia, 2015; state and territory education authorities.

Within the overall structure of primary and secondary education, there is further variation. Individual schools may be primary only, secondary only or combined primary and secondary. Secondary schools may accommodate the full age range of secondary students or be divided into junior and senior campuses (sometimes known as ‘senior colleges’).

There are also both government and non-government special schools for students with disabilities and other special needs. In some states and territories, most students with special needs are integrated into mainstream schools. (See Part 4: Glossary for definition of special schools).

Students who are geographically isolated, or who are otherwise unable to attend a local school, may study through distance education schools or centres. Boarding facilities are available at some schools, mainly in the non-government sectors.¹⁴

Each state and territory also has an early childhood education sector that is separate from primary and secondary schooling¹⁵, although early childhood centres are often attached to, or accommodated in, primary schools. Statistical data on early childhood education are excluded from this report.

Data on secondary education provided by adult learning institutions such as institutes of technical and further education (TAFE) are also excluded from this report, except for vocational education and training (VET) programs undertaken by secondary school students.

1.5 School funding

Overview

Part 1.5 provides information on five main areas:

1. funding arrangements
2. funding for government schools
3. funding for non-government schools
4. capital expenditure
5. *My School* financial information for the 2014 calendar year.



The first four sections provide an outline of government (state/territory and Australian government) funding arrangements for both government and non-government schools.

In line with state and territory government budgets, government school funding is historically reported on a financial year basis. The financial year reported is the period 1 July 2014 – 30 June 2015. This is referred to as 2015 funding in this part of the report.

Non-government school funding is reported on a calendar year basis and reflects funding and expenditure for the 2015 calendar year except for data sourced from the Report on Government Services (ROGS), which are calculated for the 2014–15 financial year.¹⁶

14 Students of compulsory school age may also be home-schooled if they have met the criteria set down by the relevant state or territory education authority. However, as these students are not enrolled in a school, they are outside the scope of the National Schools Statistics Collection (NSSC); therefore, data on them are not included in this report.

15 In some jurisdictions, part-time programs that precede the preparatory year and are conducted in primary schools (for example, Kindergarten in Western Australia) are considered to be a part of schooling. However, these programs are outside the scope of the National Schools Statistics Collection (NSSC); therefore, data on them are not included in this report.

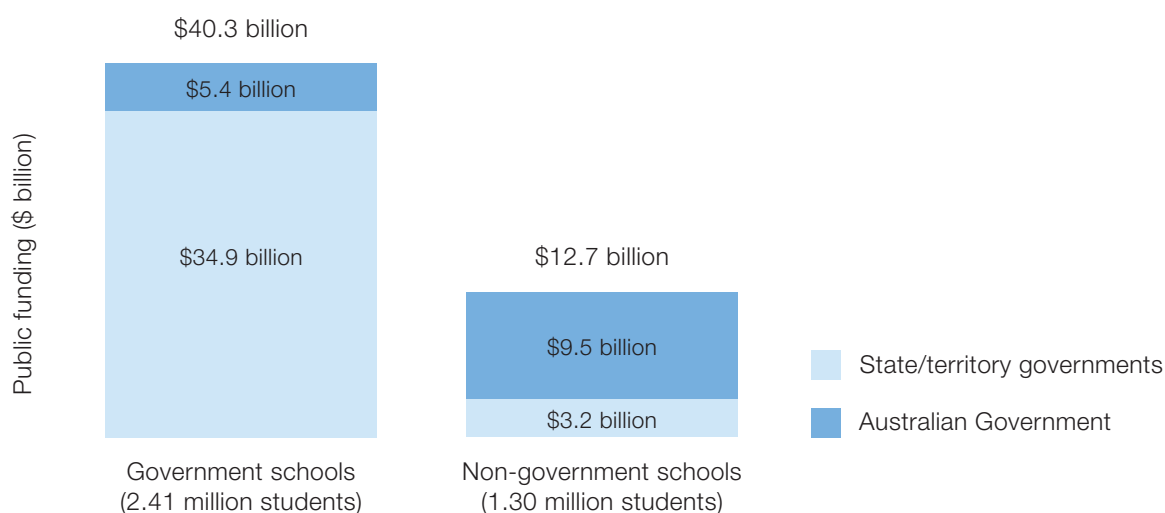
16 The cost per full-time equivalent student derived from these financial year figures uses the average of the full-time equivalent student numbers for the 2014 and 2015 calendar years.

The final section of this part of the report provides high-level profiles of recurrent funding information for the 2014 calendar year published for individual schools on the *My School* website. These data were released at the same time (March 2016) as *My School* non-finance data for the 2015 school year. Due to reporting timeframes, *My School* calendar year finance data will always lag by one year relative to most *My School* non-finance data.

Australian, and state and territory government recurrent expenditure on school education in Australia for 2015 was \$53.0 billion. Of this amount, \$38.1 billion (71.9 per cent) was provided through state and territory budgets, and \$14.9 billion (28.1 per cent) was provided through the Australian Government budget. The majority of state and territory funds was applied to government schools; the majority of Australian Government funds was applied to non-government schools. This is illustrated in figure 1.4.

Figure 1.4

Recurrent government funding for school education, Australia, 2014–15 (accrual basis)



Notes:

Components may not add to totals due to rounding.

Depreciation and user cost of capital expenses relating to government schools have been attributed to states/territories based on ownership of the underlying assets. A portion of these assets will be acquired through Australian Government capital contributions, with states and territories responsible for maintenance costs. Australian Government expenditure data in this table include only Australian Government specific purpose payments. Other Australian Government funding for schools and students is not included.

Student numbers are 2014–15 average full-time equivalent (FTE) student populations. As such, they differ from the number of individual (full-time plus part-time) students for 2015 reported in part 1.2.

Sources: SCRGSP (Steering Committee for the Review of Government Service Provision) 2017, *Report on Government Services 2017*, Productivity Commission, Canberra. Table 4A.6, 4A.8; Education Council, National Schools Statistics Collection (Finance), 2015.

See also National Report on Schooling data portal.

In overview, from 2013–14 to 2014–15, total (nominal) government recurrent expenditure on:




-  All schools increased by 5.2 per cent, rising from \$50.4 billion in 2013–14 to \$53.0 billion in 2014–15, an increase of \$2.6 billion.
-  Government schools increased by 4.7 per cent, rising from \$38.5 billion in 2013–14 to \$40.3 billion in 2014–15, an increase of \$1.8 billion.
-  Non-government schools increased by 7.6 per cent, rising from \$11.9 billion in 2013–14 to \$12.8 billion in 2014–15, an increase of \$0.9 billion.
- The government school sector received 76.0 per cent of recurrent government funding, while the non-government sector received 24.0 per cent.
- Total recurrent school education funding, on a student per capita basis, was on average \$16,670 for the government sector and \$9,843 for the non-government sector.

Table 1.14 below shows the total recurrent government funding and student per capita funding from Australian and state/territory levels of government to the government and non-government sectors.

Table 1.14

Recurrent government funding for school education, Australia, 2014–15 financial year (accrual basis)

| 2015 government funding to schools | Government | | Non-government | | Total | |
|---|--------------|--------------------|----------------|--------------------|--------------|--------------------|
| | (\$ billion) | \$ per FTE student | (\$ billion) | \$ per FTE student | (\$ billion) | \$ per FTE student |
| State and territory governments | 34.864 | 14,439 | 3.247 | 2,505 | 38.111 | 10,271 |
| Australian Government | 5.388 | 2,231 | 9.510 | 7,338 | 14.898 | 4,015 |
| Total Australian/state/territory government funding | 40.251 | 16,670 | 12.757 | 9,843 | 53.009 | 14,286 |
| Average FTE students ^(a) | 2,414,574 | | 1,296,021 | | 3,710,596 | |

(a) Average number of full-time equivalent (FTE) students, 2014 and 2015 calendar years. See part 4: Glossary for definition of FTE.

Note: Components may not add to totals due to rounding.

Sources: SCRGSP (Steering Committee for the Review of Government Service Provision) 2017, *Report on Government Services 2017*, Productivity Commission, Canberra, tables 4A.6, 4A.8, 4A.12, 4A.15, 4A.17; and Education Council, National Schools Statistics Collection (NSSC) (Finance), 2015.

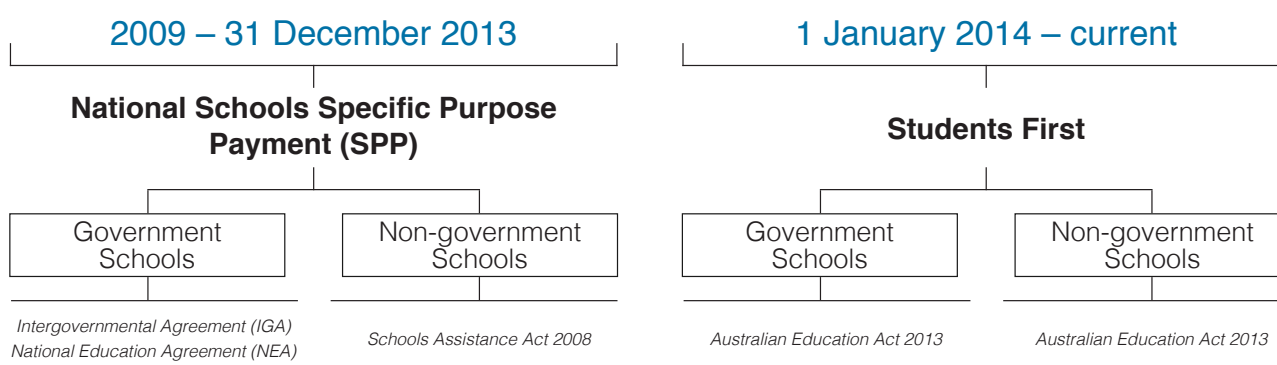
See also National Report on Schooling data portal.

1.5.1 Government funding arrangements

States and territories continue to fund specific school education initiatives and the bulk of government school costs of their jurisdictions under their own legislation.

Australian Government funding arrangements applying from 2009 to 31 December 2013 were agreed by all governments under the Council of Australian Governments (COAG); funding was provided through the National Schools Specific Purpose Payment (SPP) under the *Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) on Federal Financial Relations*. State and territory governments had discretion as to how to apply the National Schools SPP to achieve the agreed outcomes. The non-government schools funding component of the National Schools SPP was determined by the *Schools Assistance Act 2008*. States and territories funded school education under their own legislation.

From 1 January 2014, Australian Government funding for government and non-government schools is determined by the *Australian Education Act 2013*. The Act sets out the funding arrangements, including recurrent funding for both government and non-government schools, capital funding for non-government schools, special circumstances funding and funding in prescribed circumstances. This funding is provided through the Students First funding arrangements, which replaced the National Schools SPP.



The key components of Australian Government funding in 2013–14 were provided through the National Schools Specific Purpose Payment (SPP) (until 31 December 2013), and the Students First program (from 1 January 2014).

In 2014, Australian Government recurrent funding for schools transitioned under the *Australian Education Act 2013* from levels under the previous funding arrangements towards the Schooling Resource Standard (SRS) funding arrangement levels. SRS funding is calculated with reference to a base-per-student amount plus additional loadings aimed at addressing disadvantage.

The total base amount for a school reflects:

- the number of students at the school
- the schooling resource standard (SRS) funding amount for a student at the school

- the capacity of the school's community to contribute financially to the school. A school's capacity to contribute is determined by their socio-economic score (SES) on a sliding scale, where a higher SES score is translated into a lower public funding proportion of the SRS. Government schools, special schools, special assistance schools, majority Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander schools and sole provider¹⁷ schools have a zero capacity to contribute.

The areas of student and school disadvantage addressed through the loadings are:

- students with disability
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students
- students from low socio-economic backgrounds
- students with low English proficiency
- location of the school
- size of the school.

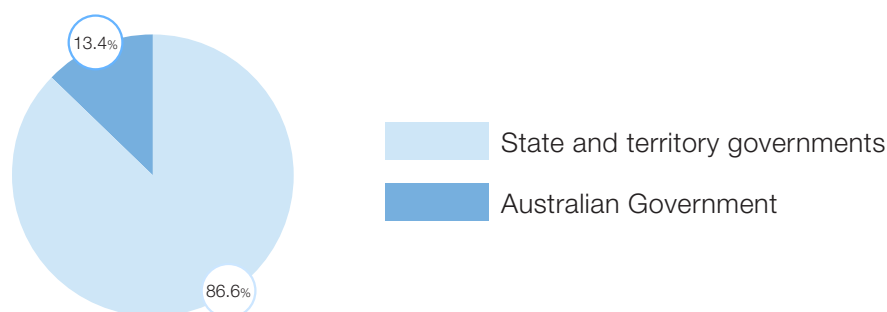
Australian Government recurrent funding is provided to approved authorities of government and non-government schools for the purpose of providing school education. Although calculated to reflect the need of each student and school, the approved authority for the school is not required to spend that funding on any particular student or group of students; approved authorities have the flexibility to allocate the funding for the purpose of providing school education that best meets the needs of their students, taking into account other revenue sources and budgetary restrictions.

1.5.2 Funding for government schools

State and territory governments are the major funders of government schools: in 2014–15 they contributed 86.6 per cent (\$34.9 billion) of total recurrent funding, with the Australian Government contributing the remaining 13.4 per cent (\$5.4 billion).

Figure 1.5

Total government recurrent expenditure per student, government schools, Australia, 2014–15 (per cent)



Source: SCRGSP (Steering Committee for the Review of Government Service Provision) 2017, *Report on Government Services 2017*, Productivity Commission, Canberra, table 4A.12.

¹⁷ A 'sole provider' school is one that is remote from others delivering the same level of education.

Government school recurrent expenditure

Finance data for the National Schools Statistics Collection (NSSC) – Finance are provided by the various state and federal education departments.

The NSSC – Finance is a financial year, annual collection of total government funded expenditure data (expenditure on salary and non-salary costs) on government schools only.

The collection provides a true audited perspective of government systems and is used to inform education ministers about government expenditure on school education on a consistent and progressive basis.

Table 1.15 shows a national overview of expenditure levels by states in 2014–15 in key operational areas such as the relative levels of salary and non-salary costs. The user cost of capital reflects the opportunity cost of being able to utilise capital funding for recurrent purposes (based on eight per cent of the written down value of capital assets).

- Excluding user cost of capital, teacher salaries expenditure accounts for 61.1 per cent of in-school expenditure.
- Excluding user cost of capital, in-school non-salary costs account for 24.5 per cent of in-school expenditure. These expenditures include school materials, maintenance, cleaning and student transport costs.
- Out-of-school expenditure for government systems includes state office, regional and local functions supporting schools.
- In-school expenditure includes teaching, learning, school administration, and library functions within schools.
- Expenditure on out-of-school support functions represents approximately 4.8 per cent of total government funding on state and territory government schools. The major component of funding, some 95.2 per cent, goes to fund schools directly.

Table 1.15

Expenditure by government education systems, by level of education and area of expenditure by state and territory, 2014–15, (\$'000)

| | NSW | Vic. | Qld | SA | WA | Tas. | NT | ACT | Australia |
|---|-------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|-------------------|
| IN-SCHOOL, PRIMARY EDUCATION | | | | | | | | | |
| Salaries (teaching) | 3,570,327 | 2,392,845 | 2,340,978 | 855,063 | 1,417,625 | 261,981 | 180,416 | 186,143 | 11,205,378 |
| Salaries (non-teaching) | 797,496 | 441,303 | 661,925 | 231,013 | 427,087 | 78,170 | 40,046 | 59,075 | 2,736,115 |
| Redundancies | 4,786 | 732 | 71 | 0 | 4951 | 0 | 392 | 0 | 10,931 |
| Non-salary costs | 1,642,508 | 808,289 | 762,194 | 289,957 | 526,425 | 111,677 | 122,998 | 74,820 | 4,338,868 |
| User cost of capital | 975,621 | 767,590 | 761,586 | 187,714 | 538,756 | 44,406 | 48,268 | 67,513 | 3,391,453 |
| Subtotal (excluding User Cost of Capital) | 6,015,116 | 3,643,168 | 3,765,168 | 1,376,033 | 2,376,088 | 451,829 | 343,852 | 320,038 | 18,291,292 |
| Total incl. User Cost of Capital | 6,990,737 | 4,410,757 | 4,526,754 | 1,563,747 | 2,914,844 | 496,235 | 392,120 | 387,550 | 21,682,745 |
| IN-SCHOOL, SECONDARY EDUCATION | | | | | | | | | |
| Salaries (teaching) | 3,109,409 | 1,942,529 | 1,777,321 | 550,099 | 863,194 | 219,754 | 118,791 | 166,062 | 8,747,159 |
| Salaries (non-teaching) | 571,510 | 377,155 | 434,429 | 135,809 | 259,448 | 72,275 | 27,462 | 52,703 | 1,930,791 |
| Redundancies | 3,650 | 522 | 84 | 0 | 5175 | 0 | 360 | 0 | 9,790 |
| Non-salary costs | 1,351,120 | 764,219 | 641,496 | 221,053 | 408,757 | 107,936 | 83,203 | 69,820 | 3,647,604 |
| User cost of capital | 704,318 | 569,936 | 496,674 | 110,606 | 527,255 | 45,804 | 26,919 | 65,598 | 2,547,110 |
| Subtotal (excluding User Cost of Capital) | 5,035,689 | 3,084,424 | 2,853,330 | 906,961 | 1,536,574 | 399,965 | 229,816 | 288,585 | 14,335,344 |
| Total incl. User Cost of Capital | 5,740,007 | 3,654,360 | 3,350,004 | 1,017,567 | 2,063,829 | 445,769 | 256,735 | 354,182 | 16,882,454 |
| OUT-OF-SCHOOL | | | | | | | | | |
| Salaries (teaching) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Salaries (non-teaching) | 234,725 | 104,227 | 284,872 | 120,592 | 132,648 | 21,166 | 38,786 | 20,647 | 957,663 |
| Redundancies | 264 | 3,969 | 1,888 | 5,219 | 1,773 | 0 | 71 | 0 | 13,184 |
| Non-salary costs | 29,021 | 158,766 | 281,034 | 67,814 | 84,097 | 8,352 | 24,310 | 15,734 | 669,127 |
| User cost of capital | 24,474 | 8,886 | 3,292 | 5,139 | 1,610 | 717 | 0 | 2,146 | 46,264 |
| Subtotal (excluding User Cost of Capital) | 264,010 | 266,962 | 567,794 | 193,625 | 218,518 | 29,517 | 63,167 | 36,382 | 1,639,974 |
| Total incl. User Cost of Capital | 288,484 | 275,848 | 571,086 | 198,764 | 220,128 | 30,234 | 63,167 | 38,528 | 1,686,238 |
| TOTAL - primary, secondary and out-of-school | | | | | | | | | |
| Total excl. User Cost of Capital | 11,314,815 | 6,994,554 | 7,186,292 | 2,476,619 | 4,131,180 | 881,311 | 636,835 | 645,005 | 34,266,610 |
| Total incl. User Cost of Capital | 13,019,228 | 8,340,965 | 8,447,844 | 2,780,078 | 5,198,801 | 972,238 | 712,022 | 780,260 | 40,251,437 |

Notes:

Salary related expenses include notional payroll tax for WA, Tas, Qld and the ACT, as these jurisdictions are exempted from paying payroll tax.

Non-salary costs include other operating expenses, grants and subsidies and depreciation.

A notional user cost of capital based on 8 per cent of total written down value of capital assets as at 30 June 2015 is applied to all jurisdictions.

Users wishing to publish these data should provide suitable explanatory notes and be aware that the data do not represent total government expenditure on school-level education.

They specifically exclude items such as:

- Commonwealth direct payments to parents and/or students, e.g. AUSTUDY
- preschools and TAFE establishments
- sinking fund payments and interests on Commonwealth loans
- teacher housing and student hostel provisions
- funds raised by schools, school councils or community organisations.

Source: Education Council, *National Schools Statistics Collection (NSSC) Finance*, 2015

See also National Report on Schooling data portal.

Government schools – in-school and out-of-school expenditure

Table 1.16 below shows funding going to in-school and out-of-school activities for the past five years.

- Teaching salary costs represented 78.0 per cent of total salary costs in 2014–15 and 49.6 per cent of total expenditure.
- Teaching staff salaries changed marginally from 78.4 per cent of total salary costs in 2013–14 to 78.0 per cent of total salary costs in 2014–15.
- Non-teaching staff salaries increased marginally from 21.6 per cent of total salary costs in 2013–14 to 22.0 per cent of total salary costs in 2014–15.
- Non-salary costs changed marginally from 21.4 per cent of total government sector expenditure in 2013–14 to 21.5 per cent in 2014–15.

Table 1.16

Operating expenditure by government education systems, Australia, from 2010–11 to 2014–15 financial years (accrual basis) (actual \$'000)

| Area of expenditure | 2010–11 | 2011–12 | 2012–13 | 2013–14 | 2014–15 |
|--|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| In-school expenditure | | | | | |
| Salaries (teaching) | 17,096,556 | 18,178,507 | 18,260,491 | 19,247,180 | 19,952,537 |
| Salaries (non-teaching) | 3,601,442 | 3,906,268 | 4,065,443 | 4,325,360 | 4,666,906 |
| Redundancies | 16,038 | 18,327 | 39,721 | 11,240 | 20,721 |
| Non-salary costs | 6,922,245 | 6,996,004 | 7,145,009 | 7,552,443 | 7,986,472 |
| User cost of capital | 5,170,725 | 5,623,590 | 5,565,745 | 5,644,723 | 5,938,563 |
| Subtotal incl. User Cost of Capital | 32,807,006 | 34,722,696 | 35,076,409 | 36,780,945 | 38,565,199 |
| Out-of-school expenditure | | | | | |
| Salaries (non-teaching) | 1,037,481 | 1,099,922 | 1,021,658 | 981,953 | 957,663 |
| Redundancies | 5,397 | 17,692 | 50,933 | 31,650 | 13,184 |
| Non-salary costs | 587,948 | 664,627 | 669,869 | 666,456 | 669,127 |
| User cost of capital | 32,798 | 27,961 | 33,932 | 32,120 | 46,264 |
| Subtotal incl. User Cost of Capital | 1,663,624 | 1,810,202 | 1,776,393 | 1,712,179 | 1,686,238 |
| Total | 34,470,630 | 36,532,898 | 36,852,802 | 38,493,124 | 40,251,437 |

Notes:

Amounts include Australian Government non-capital-related specific purpose payments and other grants made to states/territories. Depreciation and user cost of capital expenses included in the figures are based on assets owned by states/territories, some of which will have been acquired with Australian Government capital grants.

Totals may not add due to rounding.

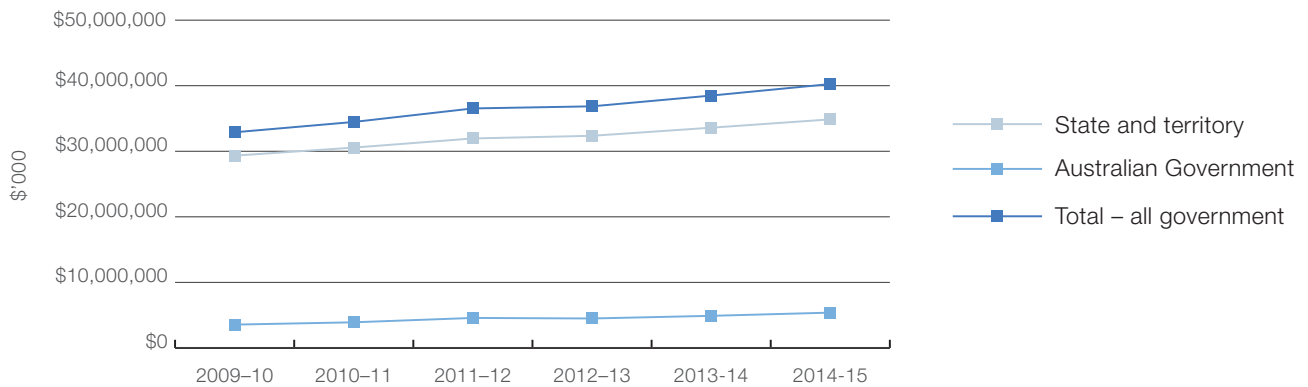
Sources: Education Council, National Schools Statistics Collection(NSSC)–(Finance), 2015; *National Report on Schooling in Australia* (previous years).

See also National Report on Schooling data portal.

The total recurrent expenditure by government education systems over the past five years is provided at figure 1.6. It shows government school recurrent expenditure has increased from \$34.5 billion to \$40.3 billion from 2010–11 to 2014–15, an increase of 17 per cent or an annual average increase of about 4.0 per cent a year in actual terms.

Figure 1.6

Australian, state and territory government recurrent expenditure (actual \$'000), government schools, from 2010–11 to 2014–15



| | 2010–11 | 2011–12 | 2012–13 | 2013–14 | 2014–15 |
|-------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| State and territory | 30,558,097 | 31,954,218 | 32,357 724 | 33,593,493 | 34,863,839 |
| Australian Government | 3,912,533 | 4,578,680 | 4,495 078 | 4,899,631 | 5,387,597 |
| Total – all government | 34,470,630 | 36,532,898 | 36,852 802 | 38,493,124 | 40,251,436 |

Sources: SCRGSP (Steering Committee for the Review of Government Service Provision) 2017, *Report on Government Services 2017*, Productivity Commission, Canberra., table 4A.8; MCEECDYA/SCSEEC, National Schools Statistics Collection (NSSC)–Finance, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, Education Council, NSSC, 2015.

See also National Report on Schooling data portal.



Primary and secondary school recurrent per capita expenditure

Table 1.17

Per-capita expenditure on government schools, by level of education, by state, 2014–15 financial year (\$ per student)

| | Primary | Secondary | Total |
|------------------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| New South Wales | 15,475 | 19,204 | 16,956 |
| Victoria | 13,294 | 16,614 | 14,612 |
| Queensland | 14,795 | 18,625 | 16,198 |
| South Australia | 15,926 | 17,811 | 16,616 |
| Western Australia | 17,673 | 23,723 | 19,745 |
| Tasmania | 15,824 | 19,024 | 17,188 |
| Northern Territory | 23,023 | 26,876 | 24,394 |
| Australian Capital Territory | 18,677 | 23,067 | 20,532 |
| Australia | 15,249 | 18,960 | 16,670 |

Source: Education Council, National Schools Statistics Collection – Finance, 2015.

The per capita expenditure information provided in table 1.17 gives a nationally consistent basis for comparison of the levels of expenditure across states in government schools in 2014–15.

Nominal per capita recurrent expenditure in government schools has steadily increased over the past decade, apart from a slight dip from 2011–12 to 2012–13 for secondary students. Table 1.18 shows that nationally in 2014–15, this expenditure reached \$15,249 for primary students and \$18,960 for secondary students. This is 24.3 per cent more for a secondary student than for a primary student.

Table 1.18

Recurrent per capita expenditure on government schools, by level of education, Australia, from 2010–11 to 2014–15 financial years (accrual basis) (actual \$)

| Financial year | Primary | Secondary | Total |
|----------------|---------|-----------|--------|
| 2010–11 | 13,895 | 16,720 | 15,002 |
| 2011–12 | 14,515 | 17,746 | 15,768 |
| 2012–13 | 14,520 | 17,608 | 15,703 |
| 2013–14 | 14,868 | 18,327 | 16,177 |
| 2014–15 | 15,249 | 18,960 | 16,670 |

Note: Amounts include state/territory and Australian Government contributions.

Sources: Education Council, National Schools Statistics Collection (NSSC), 2015; *National Report on Schooling in Australia* (previous years); SCRGSP (Steering Committee for the Review of Government Service Provision) 2016, *Report on Government Services 2016*, Productivity Commission, Canberra, table 4A.13.

See also National Report on Schooling data portal.

Table 1.18 also shows a growth of 3.0 per cent in total per capita funding over 2013–14 to 2014–15 from \$16,177 to \$16,670.

Nationally, recurrent per capita expenditure for primary schools increased by 2.6 per cent from 2013–14 to 2014–15, while funding over the same period increased by 3.5 per cent for secondary schools.

Secondary schools have a higher rate of per capita expenditure than primary schools, mainly because of the complexity and range of the education services provision and lower student–teacher ratios, especially in the last two years of schooling.

1.5.3 Funding for non-government schools

Per capita income

Non-government schools derive their income from Australian Government and state/territory government grants, and fees and fundraising, including donations.

The income shown in table 1.19 funds both recurrent and capital applications.

Table 1.19

Non-government school per-capita incomes, by source, Australia, 2015 calendar year

| Income source | Catholic schools | | Independent schools | |
|------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------|-------------------------|-------------------|
| | Per- capita amount (\$) | % of total income | Per- capita amount (\$) | % of total income |
| Australian Government grants | 8,088 | 53.8% | 6,503 | 32.0% |
| State/territory grants | 2,562 | 17.0% | 2,191 | 10.8% |
| Total government grants | 10,651 | 70.9% | 8,695 | 42.9% |
| Private income | 4,378 | 29.1% | 11,597 | 57.2% |
| Total | 15,029 | | 20,291 | |

Notes:

Excludes amounts related to boarding facilities and direct payments by the Australian Government to students and/or parents. Where figures have been rounded, discrepancies may occur between the sums of component items and totals.

Source: Australian Government Department of Education and Training unpublished data.

See also National Report on Schooling data portal.

Per capita expenditure

Table 1.20 below summarises total per capita expenditure. The per capita figures reflect recurrent expenditure calculations, which are a mixture of cash and accrual based expenditures, including debt servicing of loans for capital and operating purposes.

Non-government school per capita expenditure differs from government school per capita determinations as it includes some capital-related expenditure such as interest subsidies for the debt servicing of loans, and excludes user cost of capital, loan principal repayments and government subsidies for transport-related costs, which, historically, are not applicable to the non-government sector.

Table 1.20

Non-government schools per capita expenditure, by affiliation, Australia, 2015 calendar year

| Affiliation | Per capita expenditure (\$) |
|--------------------|-----------------------------|
| Catholic | |
| Primary | 11,594 |
| Secondary | 17,218 |
| Combined | 18,484 |
| Independent | |
| Primary | 15,392 |
| Secondary | 23,604 |
| Combined | 20,447 |

Notes:

Excludes amounts related to boarding facilities and direct payments by the Australian Government to students and/or parents. Includes debt-servicing of loans for capital and operating purposes.

Where applicable, expenditure of system offices is allocated across the schools in proportion to enrolments.

Where figures have been rounded, discrepancies may occur between the sums of component items and totals.

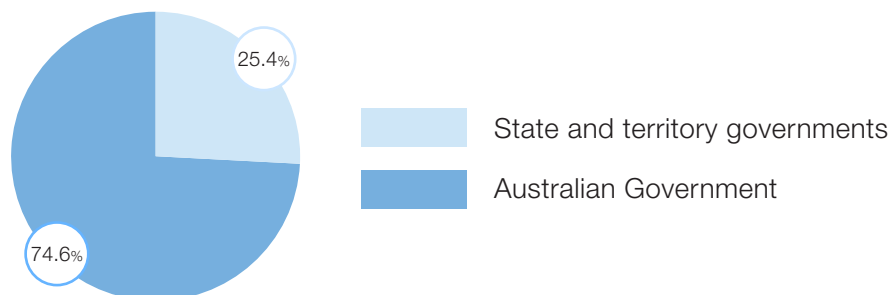
Source: Australian Government Department of Education and Training unpublished data.

See also National Report on Schooling data portal.

Total recurrent expenditure on non-government school education from the Australian Government, and state and territory governments in 2014–15 was approximately \$9,843 per student. Australian Government expenditure was \$7,338 per student, or 74.6 per cent of this total. State and territory recurrent expenditure was \$2,505 per student, or 25.4 per cent of the total. This is depicted in figure 1.7.

Figure 1.7

Total government recurrent expenditure per student, non-government schools, Australia, 2014–15 (per cent)



| | 2014–15 | Percentage |
|---------------------------------|--------------|--------------|
| State and territory governments | 2,505 | 25.4 |
| Australian Government | 7,338 | 74.6 |
| Total – all government | 9,843 | 100.0 |

Source: SCRGSP (Steering Committee for the Review of Government Service Provision) 2017, *Report on Government Services 2017*, Productivity Commission, Canberra, table 4A.15.

State and territory government recurrent funding for non-government schools

As well as providing recurrent grants to government schools, all states and territories contribute to funding for non-government schools. State/territory governments used a variety of mechanisms for allocating funding to non-government schools in 2015.

Table 1.21 below outlines total Australian, state and territory recurrent expenditure on non-government schools in 2014–15.

Total recurrent expenditure on non-government school education from the Australian Government, and state and territory governments in 2014–15 was approximately \$11.9 billion. Australian Government expenditure was \$9.5 billion, or 74.5 per cent of this total. State and territory recurrent expenditure was \$3.2 billion or 25.5 per cent of the total.

Table 1.21

Australian, state and territory government recurrent expenditure, non-government schools (\$'000), 2014–15

| | Australia |
|--|------------|
| Australian Government specific purpose payments (excluding capital grants and including national partnership payments – literacy and numeracy) | 9,509,984 |
| State and territory government recurrent expenditure | 3,247,119 |
| Australian, state and territory government recurrent expenditure | 12,757,103 |

Note: Australian Government specific purpose payments include recurrent, targeted and Indigenous program expenditure until 2008–09. From 2009–10 onwards, these categories are not separately reported but funds expended on these purposes are included in the total specific purpose payment provision.

Source: SCRGSP (Steering Committee for the Review of Government Service Provision) 2017, *Report on Government Services 2017*, Productivity Commission, table 4A.8.

1.5.4 Capital expenditure

Government schools

State and territory governments provide the majority of funding for capital expenditure in government schools. States and territories may also use Commonwealth recurrent funding for capital purposes in government schools.

As shown in table 1.22, capital expenditure by state and territory governments in government schools was \$1.6 billion in 2015 (the 2014–15 financial year). This table combines funding provided from the Australian Government, and state and territory sourced funding.

The level of capital expenditure rose to unusually high levels in 2009–10 and 2010–11 due mainly to the injection of significant Australian Government funding under the former Building the Education Revolution (BER) program¹⁸ and other capital expenditure associated with national partnerships. This has reverted to reflect longer-term average capital expenditure more closely, following the completion of projects funded through these programs. The variations in capital expenditure reflect specific initiatives by various state and territory governments to invest in school infrastructure.

Capital funding and expenditure will, by their nature, reflect the need for capital infrastructure development and building programs associated with growth cycles in enrolments generally, and more specifically, in growth regions and corridors in a state or territory, as well as having regard to the age and condition of existing capital stock. By contrast, changes in recurrent expenditure will reflect the ongoing teaching and curriculum costs associated with schools and be relatively smoother in nature.

18 The National Partnership Agreement on the Nation Building and Jobs Plan – Building the Education Revolution was a part of the Australian Government's economic stimulus package in response to the Global Financial Crisis of 2008.

Table 1.22

Capital expenditure by state and territory governments in government schools, Australia, from 2009–10 to 2014–15 financial years (accrual basis) (\$'000)

| Financial year | NSW | Vic. | Qld | SA | WA | Tas. | NT | ACT | Australia |
|----------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|-----------|
| 2009–10 | 2,567,386 | 1,269,900 | 1,977,011 | 488,650 | 690,849 | 223,232 | 154,695 | 199,437 | 7,571,161 |
| 2010–11 | 1,799,683 | 1,835,015 | 1,437,641 | 440,642 | 820,969 | 200,907 | 106,052 | 198,547 | 6,839,455 |
| 2011–12 | 584,824 | 720,258 | 434,002 | 144,570 | 668,824 | 36,746 | 54,187 | 96,735 | 2,740,147 |
| 2012–13 | 426,911 | 444,307 | 345,810 | 106,720 | 465,354 | 8,356 | 19,416 | 74,055 | 1,890,928 |
| 2013–14 | 399,794 | 387,953 | 428,176 | 134,026 | 520,537 | 20,071 | 33,589 | 61,418 | 1,985,564 |
| 2014–15 | 345,547 | 300,479 | 313,414 | 84,209 | 404,317 | 15,530 | 20,465 | 69,922 | 1,553,883 |

Notes:

Amounts include components of Australian Government funding used for capital purposes.

Components may not add to totals due to rounding.

Sources: Education Council, National Schools Statistics Collection (Finance), 2015; *National Report on Schooling in Australia*, 2011–2014.

See also National Report on Schooling data portal.

Non-government schools

Commonwealth funding for nongovernment school capital expenditure is provided by the Australian Government through the Capital Grants Program (CGP) for non-government schools. The CGP provides supplementary funding to assist non-government primary and secondary school communities to improve capital infrastructure where these schools otherwise may not have access to sufficient capital resources. Special schools, special assistance schools, majority Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander schools and sole provider schools may also use Commonwealth recurrent funding for capital purposes.

State and territory governments also contribute to non-government school capital projects in their jurisdictions; however, the majority of capital spending in non-government schools is from private sources, such as fees, donations and fundraising activities.

1.5.5 My School financial information

Important note: As indicated below, there are key differences between the [My School website](#) finance data and National Schools Statistics Collection (NSSC) (Finance) and other finance data reported in previous sections of this part. The income-based finance data from My School should not be compared to the expenditure-based finance data quoted in previous subsections.

This part provides high-level profiles of recurrent funding information for the 2014 calendar year, aggregated from school financial details published on the *My School* website in March 2016.

The key financial measure reported on *My School* is school net recurrent income and net recurrent income per student (NRIPS). Government and non-government schools and systems that allocate some of their gross income to capital purposes have these amounts shown and deducted from their gross income. Gross income that is allocated to capital expenses in the reporting year is included in the school's capital expenditure report.

The methodology and other associated material related to *My School* finance data classification may be obtained from the [My School website](#).

My School finance data were developed to show the income available to a school over a calendar year (not financial year), to deliver education services to students. *My School* income data include private funding that supports a school but exclude user cost of capital (a notional opportunity cost), payroll tax and the cost of transporting students to and from school.

In addition, private funding, as reported on *My School* for the government sector, is excluded from the NSSC (Finance) collection, whereas payroll tax, student transport and user cost of capital are included in NSSC expenditure information. Also, the NSSC finance data are reported on a financial year basis. Therefore, recurrent income information contained within this section and recurrent expenditure in the preceding sections are not directly comparable.

For government and systemic schools, where a 'system' or 'managing organisation' (such as a district, region or state office) other than the school itself incurs expenditure and manages finances for the school, each school's income is composed of all such funds used for, and on behalf of, the school plus any cash income received at the school level, as if each school were accounted for as a stand-alone entity. This approach is consistent with the principles of Australian Accounting Standard AASB 1004 – Contributions.

It also is important to note that the definitions and counting rules for schools and enrolments used for the *My School* website differ, in some respects, to those of the National Schools Statistics Collection (Non-finance)¹⁹ used for the reporting of school and student data elsewhere in this report.

Recurrent income

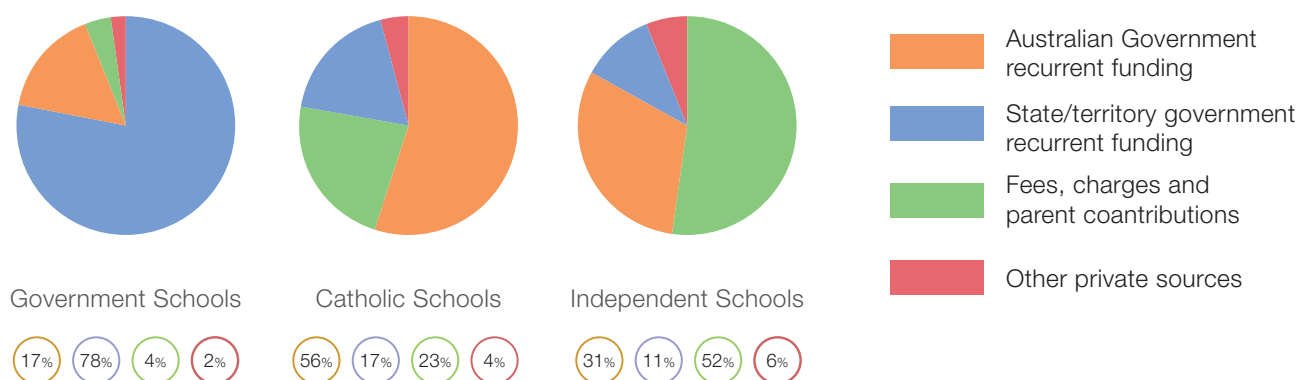
For 2014, the Australian Government funding comprised 17 per cent of the total gross recurrent income for government schools with the majority, 78 per cent, being funded by state and territory governments.

For non-government schools, the Australian Government contributed 56 per cent of Catholic sector gross recurrent income and 31 per cent of independent sector gross recurrent income. Income from fees, charges and parent contributions contributed 52 per cent of independent sector recurrent income and 23 per cent of Catholic sector recurrent income.

¹⁹ The National Schools Statistics Collection (NSSC) (Non-finance) is the source of school number and student enrolment data reported elsewhere in this report. Data included in this section on a per-school, per-student or per-school-sector basis cannot be directly compared to data reported elsewhere in this report. In particular, in the NSSC, Catholic non-systemic schools are classified as Catholic schools. In the *My School* data collection, a number of Catholic non-systemic schools in NSW, SA and WA are currently classified as independent schools. This affects comparisons between school sectors for those states and nationally. Further information on the NSSC (Non-finance) is included in part 4: Glossary.

Figure 1.8

Gross recurrent income by funding source, Australia, 2014 (per cent)



Source: ACARA, National Report on Schooling data portal, *My School* finance data
See also National Report on Schooling data portal.

Table 1.23 below shows the movements in recurrent income between 2013 and 2014 by funding source.

Table 1.23

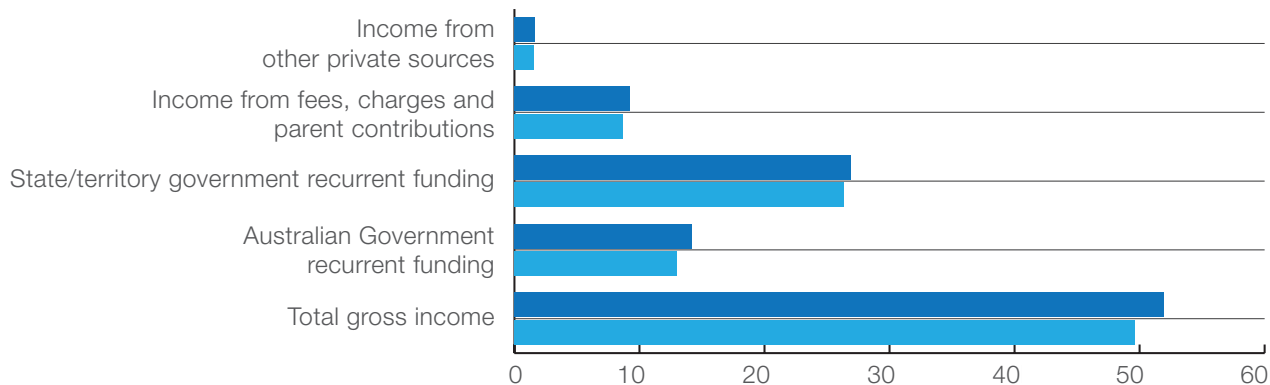
Movements in recurrent income between 2013 and 2014

| Source | 2013 (\$ billion) | 2014 (\$ billion) | Change (\$ billion) | Movement |
|---|----------------------|----------------------|------------------------|----------|
| Australian Government | 12.988 | 14.162 | 1.174 | ↑ |
| State/territory government | 26.328 | 26.938 | 0.61 | ↑ |
| Fees, charges and parental contributions | 8.711 | 9.252 | 0.541 | ↑ |
| Other private sources | 1.594 | 1.628 | 0.034 | ↑ |
| Total gross income | 49.622 | 51.981 | 2.359 | ↑ |
| Deductions (from recurrent to capital services) | 1.851 | 1.866 | 0.015 | ↑ |
| Total net recurrent income | 47.77 | 50.115 | 2.345 | ↑ |

These data are depicted graphically in Figure 1.9.

Figure 1.9

Total gross recurrent income between 2013 and 2014, by funding source (\$ billion)



| | Income from other private sources | Income from fees, charges and parent contributions | State/territory government recurrent funding | Australian Government recurrent funding | Total gross recurrent income |
|---------|-----------------------------------|--|--|---|------------------------------|
| \$ '000 | | | | | |
| 2014 | 1,627,662 | 9,252,238 | 26,938,478 | 14,162,290 | 51,980,668 |
| 2013 | 1,594,469 | 8,711,031 | 26,328,104 | 12,987,981 | 49,621,584 |

Source: ACARA, National Report on Schooling data portal, *My School* finance data

See also National Report on Schooling data portal.



Net recurrent income per student (NRIPS)

As the number of students varies across years, showing income per student allows for a more informative comparison, particularly between sectors. Table 1.24 below depicts income per student.

In 2014, the net recurrent income per student (NRIPS) was \$13,552. This is an increase of 3.4 per cent over 2013.

Between 2013 and 2014, there was 1.90 per cent increase for the government sector (to \$12,788), a 5.53 per cent increase for the Catholic sector (to \$12,851), and a 6.11 per cent increase for the independent sector (to \$17,615).

Table 1.24

Movements in income per student between 2013 and 2014

| Source | 2013 | 2014 | Change (%) | Movement |
|--|-----------|-----------|------------|----------|
| Australian Government | 3,563 | 3,830 | 7.49% | ↑ |
| State/territory government | 7,223 | 7,285 | 0.86% | ↑ |
| Fees, charges and parental contributions | 2,390 | 2,502 | 4.69% | ↑ |
| Other private sources | 437 | 440 | 0.69% | ↑ |
| Total gross Income | 13,614 | 14,056 | 3.25% | ↑ |
| Deductions ²⁰ | 508 | 504 | -0.79% | ↓ |
| Total NRIPS ²¹ | 13,106 | 13,552 | 3.40% | ↑ |
| FTE student numbers | 3,644,953 | 3,698,054 | 1.46% | ↑ |
| NRIPS (government) | 12,549 | 12,788 | 1.90% | ↑ |
| NRIPS (Catholic) | 12,178 | 12,851 | 5.53% | ↑ |
| NRIPS (independent) | 16,601 | 17,615 | 6.11% | ↑ |

Source: ACARA, National Report on Schooling data portal, *My School* finance data.

See also National Report on Schooling data portal.

²⁰ Deductions from recurrent to capital services.

²¹ NRIPS (net recurrent income per student) = total gross income per student minus deductions per student.

Part 2

Policies and priorities



Part 2 outlines the national policy context for Australian schooling in 2015 and reports against the commitments to action agreed by Australian education ministers in the *Melbourne Declaration on the Educational Goals for Young Australians*.

2.1 National policy context

Within Australia's federal system of government, constitutional responsibility for school education rests mainly with the Australian states and territories. The six state and two territory governments and the Australian Government have cooperated to work towards agreed goals and commitments expressed in the [Melbourne Declaration on the Educational Goals for Young Australians](#).

In Australia, joint decisions on agreed national policy and shared priorities are made through intergovernmental policy councils. For education and training in 2015, these councils are the Council of Australian Governments (COAG), the COAG Education Council and the COAG Industry and Skills Council.



COAG

COAG is the peak intergovernmental forum in Australia. Its members are the Prime Minister, state premiers, territory chief ministers and the president of the Australian Local Government Association.

COAG Education Council



The COAG Education Council replaced the Standing Council on School Education and Early Childhood (SCSEEC) as the ministerial council with responsibility for schooling in July 2014.²²

Membership of the Education Council consists of state, territory, Australian Government and New Zealand ministers with responsibility for the portfolios of school education, higher education and/or early childhood education.

The Education Council's scope of responsibility covers:

- early childhood education and care
- primary and secondary education, including vocational education and training in schools
- higher education
- international education.

The Education Council provides a forum through which strategic policy on education can be coordinated at the national level. By connecting early childhood, school education and higher education, the Council aims to ensure that integrated Australian education systems promote high achievement for all students regardless of circumstances. The Council oversees progress towards the Melbourne Declaration.

In 2014–15, the Council's priority actions included²³:

1. Implement priority reform activities for early childhood
2. Australian Curriculum and National Assessment
3. Teacher Quality and School Leadership
4. Indigenous education
5. School funding
6. Reducing regulatory burden.

²² In this report, contemporary references to the council of Australian education ministers are to the Education Council. Historical references are to SCSEEC or to its predecessors, the Ministerial Council for Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs (MCEECDYA) and the Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA).

²³ COAG Education Council 2014 Terms of Reference.

The COAG Industry and Skills Council has responsibility for national collaboration in vocational education and training (VET).

State and territory policy initiatives²⁴

State and territory governments retain the responsibility for implementing agreed national policy in education and for initiating and carrying out their own programs of innovation and reform.

In 2015, state and territory policy initiatives included:

- All NSW public schools undertook their first planning and reporting cycle informed by the School Excellence Framework. Every public school self-assessed its practices using the School Excellence Framework, the results of which are reported to school communities in their annual reports.
- Victoria began implementing its Education State reform agenda, which covers the whole life cycle of education, from early childhood through to schools and adulthood. This agenda, which seeks to build an education system that produces excellence and reduces the impact of disadvantage, reflects the underlying principles and goals of the Melbourne Declaration.
- Queensland and Western Australia continued to expand state-based initiatives in the establishment of independent public schools with 441 schools operating as independent public schools in Western Australia. Six Northern Territory schools commenced operation as independent public schools in 2015.
- A new, student-centred funding model, introduced into Western Australian government schools in 2015, provided greater equity, transparency and flexibility in school resourcing. Also in Western Australia, a Quality Catholic Schooling school improvement model was introduced in all Catholic schools.
- The *Northern Territory Education Act* was updated following extensive consultation and commenced 1 January 2016. The *A Share in the Future* Indigenous Education Strategy 2015–2024 commenced implementation, to improve outcomes of remote and very remote Indigenous students.
- The Aspiring Leaders Program was instituted to provide an opportunity for ACT deputy principals and current or aspiring executive teachers to build a broad range of leadership skills and to be better prepared to support student, school and system improvement.

²⁴ Information on state and territory initiatives reported in part 2 are drawn from contributions received from state and territory education authorities.

2.2 Educational goals

The [*Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians*](#)²⁵ sets the directions for Australian schooling for the ten-year period from 2009 to 2018, as agreed to by all Australian education ministers.

The Melbourne Declaration has two overarching educational goals²⁶ for young Australians:

Goal 1: Australian schooling promotes equity and excellence

Goal 2: All young Australians become successful learners, confident and creative individuals, and active and informed citizens.

Commitment to Action

The Melbourne Declaration includes a Commitment to Action in eight interrelated areas in order to support the achievement of the educational goals:

- developing stronger partnerships
- supporting quality teaching and school leadership
- strengthening early childhood education
- enhancing middle years development
- supporting senior years of schooling and youth transitions
- promoting world-class curriculum and assessment
- improving educational outcomes for Indigenous youth and disadvantaged young Australians, especially those from low socio-economic backgrounds
- strengthening accountability and transparency.

Progress in 2015 in addressing the areas for action is outlined in the following sections.

25 The Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians (2008) replaced the National Goals for Schooling in the Twenty-First Century (the Adelaide Declaration, agreed in 1999), which itself superseded the original National Goals for Schooling in Australia (Hobart Declaration, agreed in 1989).

26 For a full explanation of the goals, see the Melbourne Declaration, pp. 6–9.

COAG targets

In 2008, COAG set targets to lift educational attainment overall and to close the gap between the educational outcomes of Indigenous and non-Indigenous students. These are to:

- lift the Year 12 or equivalent or Certificate II attainment rate to 90 per cent by 2015
- lift the Year 12 or equivalent or Certificate III attainment rate to 90 per cent by 2020
- halve the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students in reading, writing and numeracy by 2018
- at least halve the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students' Year 12 or equivalent attainment rates by 2020.

In May 2014, COAG agreed to a new target to close the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students in school attendance by the end of 2018.

Progress against COAG targets for school education is reported in Part 3: Measuring performance.

In December 2015, COAG agreed to a new early childhood education target of 95 per cent of all Indigenous four-year-olds enrolled in early childhood education (by 2025).²⁷

2.3 Developing stronger partnerships

Following the commitment to develop stronger partnerships made in the Melbourne Declaration, the Australian Government, and state and territory governments entered into a set of formal national partnership agreements in education through COAG. Under these agreements, Australian Government funding was provided to states and territories. States and territories contributed to the implementation of the agreements in money terms and in kind.

National partnership agreements for:

- improving teacher quality
- education in low socio-economic status school communities
- literacy and numeracy
- school construction and refurbishment
- information and communication technology (ICT) resources in secondary schools
- youth attainment and transitions

were implemented over four or five years from 2009, concluding in 2012 or 2013. Detailed

²⁷ Reporting on this target is outside the scope of this report.

information on these partnerships is included in previous editions of this report.

Information on national partnerships for early childhood education that continued in 2015 is included in Part 2.5: Strengthening early childhood education.

In line with the commitment to stronger partnerships, states and territories have worked on an individual basis to establish:

- school-based partnerships with parents, carers and families, with local community groups, with Indigenous communities and between schools
- system-based partnerships with business, higher education, government agencies and others.

2.4 Supporting quality teaching and school leadership

Australian governments are committed to working with all school sectors to attract, develop, support and retain a high-quality teaching and school leadership workforce in Australian schools (*Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians* 2008).

Among the key strategies in this area, agreed by education ministers in 2008, were:

- creation of new professional standards
- a framework to guide professional learning for teachers and school leaders
- national consistency in the registration of teachers
- engagement with higher education to provide improved pre-service teacher education.

Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership



The [Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership \(AITSL\)](#) is a public company owned and funded by the Australian Government. AITSL has responsibility for promoting professional standards for teachers and school leaders, and for supporting high-quality professional practice. AITSL works collaboratively with governments, school sectors, professional associations and unions and teacher educators.

The [Australian Professional Standards for Teachers](#), endorsed by education ministers in 2010, underpin national approaches to accreditation of initial teacher education programs, registration of teachers and formal recognition of highly accomplished and lead teachers. All states and territories are implementing the standards as a part of a nationally consistent approach to teacher registration. In 2015, AITSL supported the use of the standards through a range of tools to support teacher improvement and professional collaboration including a My Standards



app, illustrations of practice focusing on building capacity in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) subjects and an online self-assessment tool. An evaluation of the implementation of the standards was undertaken during 2013–2015.

The [Australian Professional Standard for Principals](#), introduced in 2011, complement the professional standards for teachers and are intended to build the capacity of school principals across Australia. AITSL has also developed leadership profiles, which provide greater detail about actions and behaviours recommended for effective school leadership. The standard for principals and the leadership profiles were supported in 2015 by the online School Leadership eCollection.

Further information on the work AITSL is undertaking to support the teaching profession is available on the [AITSL website](#).

Initial teacher education

In 2014, a Teacher Education Ministerial Advisory Group was established to provide advice on changes needed to improve teacher preparation courses, with particular focus on pedagogical approaches, subject content and teaching practice. The group's report, *Action Now: Classroom Ready Teachers*, and the Australian Government's response to it were released in February 2015. The report and the response are available on the [Students First website](#).

In response to the report's recommendations, the national [Accreditation of Initial Teacher Education Programs in Australia: Standards and Procedures](#) were revised and endorsed by the Education Council in December 2015. The revised standards and procedures aim to strengthen the course accreditation process, in order to lift the quality of initial teacher education programs and the capabilities of graduates. They include more rigorous entry requirements for teacher education courses, specific assessment requirements including the use of a national literacy and numeracy test, and new requirements relating to primary teaching specialisation.

AITSL will work with state and territory regulatory authorities to provide guidance and support to initial teacher education providers and assessment panels in the implementation of the revised standards.

Teacher workforce data

Developments in the collection of teacher workforce data in 2015 are outlined in Part 2.10: Strengthening accountability and transparency.

The More Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Teachers Initiative

The [More Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Teachers Initiative](#) (2011–2016), delivered through the University of South Australia, seeks to increase the number and retention of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers working in schools across Australia. Australian Government funding of \$7.5 million was provided for this project in 2011. Strategies to enhance the professional and leadership capabilities of experienced Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers form a key component of the initiative.

2.5 Strengthening early childhood education²⁸

Australian governments have committed to supporting the development and strengthening of early childhood education, to provide every child with the opportunity for the best start in life ([Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians](#) 2008).

National Partnership Agreement on Early Childhood Education

Since 2008, the Australian Government has provided funding to states and territories for universal access to preschool programs through a series of national partnership agreements. These agreements include a focus on improved participation of Indigenous, and vulnerable and disadvantaged children. The objective of universal access is to provide quality early childhood education for all children in the year before full-time school for 600 hours per year.

The National Partnership Agreement on Early Childhood Education distributed \$955 million to states and territories in the period from 2009 to 2013. In 2013 a new National Partnership Agreement on Universal Access to Early Childhood Education was agreed for the period from 1 July 2013 to 31 December 2014. A further \$655.6 million was allocated to states and territories to support universal access to a quality early childhood education program. In September 2014, the Australian Government announced \$404.5 million would be available to states and territories over 2015 as a one-year extension.



National Partnership on the National Quality Agenda for Early Childhood Education and Care

[The National Partnership on the National Quality Agenda for Early Childhood Education and Care 2015–16 to 2017–18](#) supports the National Quality Framework (NQF), introduced in 2012, which drives continuous improvement in the quality of early childhood and child care services and national consistency in service quality. The NQF applies to most long day care, family day care, kindergarten/preschool and outside school-hours care services in Australia.

The [Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority \(ACECQA\)](#) is a national body that supports regulatory authorities in states and territories in implementing the NQF.

State and territory initiatives

In 2015, the NSW Government allocated \$20 million to support children accessing early childhood education through long day care centres in their year before school. Also in 2015, the Early Action for Success strategy, which helps improve literacy and numeracy of students in the early school years, was expanded to 310 NSW schools.

²⁸ Early childhood education refers to programs that children may undertake in the years before they commence full-time schooling. In general, statistical information on early childhood education in Australia is not reported in this report on school education.

The Victorian Government introduced a number of supports in preparation for a new educator to child ratio of 1:11 to apply to children aged three years and older from 2016. This included additional funding to kindergarten²⁹ services, capital grants to extend licensed capacity and materials and support to services.

The Queensland Government provided subsidies (Queensland Kindergarten Funding Scheme) to approved kindergarten³⁰ providers to ensure affordable access, for children in the year before full-time school, to a 15-hour-per-week program delivered by an early childhood teacher. Kindergarten programs were delivered predominantly by non-government providers, but with government provision in remote areas and through distance education (eKindy).

The Queensland Government also provided funding to support the inclusion of vulnerable and disadvantaged children, including through the Disability Inclusion Support for Queensland Kindergartens (DISQK) and Specialised Equipment and Resources for Kindergartens (SERK) programs, which enable kindergartens to provide inclusive programs for children with disability.

Western Australia continued to educate Kindergarten³¹ (preschool) children in schools, providing a cohesive, continuous learning program in the early years of school. A new, student-centred funding model was introduced into Western Australian government schools, delivering more funding in the early years of school. Catholic Education WA provided programs for 3-year-olds in 78 schools across the state. Also in Western Australia, 16 state-funded child and parent centres provided health, early learning and parent support programs and services in vulnerable communities.

Early childhood teachers in the Western Australian independent school sector were supported to reflect on their pedagogy and practice, provided with professional learning support, consultant support and opportunities for involvement in focused projects.

The Northern Territory continued to operate the Families as First Teachers program in 21 sites and planned for the expansion of a further five sites in 2016. A new child and family centre and a childcare centre was constructed. The assessment and rating of care services under the National Quality Framework, including preschools, continued.

The Early Childhood Degree Program provided 25 early childhood degree scholarships to students in the ACT.

Further information on early childhood education is available on the [Australian Government Department of Education website](#).

2.6 Enhancing middle years development

Australian governments commit to working with all school sectors to ensure that schools provide programs that are responsive to students' developmental and learning needs in the middle years, and which are challenging, engaging and rewarding ([Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians](#) 2008).

29 In Victoria, Kindergarten is the name used for pre-school early childhood education.

30 In Queensland, Kindergarten is the name given to the year two years before Year 1 of schooling.

31 In Western Australia, Kindergarten is the name given to the year two years before Year 1 of schooling.

States and territories continue to progress work in this area on an individual basis:

In 2015, the NSW Government released the Wellbeing Framework for Schools and announced the Supported Students, Successful Students initiative, which provides a comprehensive package of support to enhance the wellbeing of students. This package is supported by an increased investment of \$167 million over four years that will provide an additional 236 school counselling positions, as well as scholarships to boost recruitment of counselling staff, and resources to help support the wellbeing of students.



Victoria implemented a number of initiatives to better support primary to secondary school transitions, including commissioning research into successful transition strategies, developing resources and support materials for schools, improving administrative processes and developing new data transfer arrangements.

In 2015, Queensland and Western Australia completed the move of Year 7 from a primary to a secondary school year, accommodating the structure of the Australian Curriculum and increasing national consistency in school structures

In South Australia, the survey of wellbeing and student engagement collects information from students in Year 6–9 about non-academic factors relevant to learning and participation. The survey gives schools, the community and government an insight into what needs to occur to ensure students experience success and are provided with resources and opportunities to reach their potential. In 2015, over 29,000 students from 368 schools completed the survey.

In Western Australia, 1,905 government school students were offered positions in Primary Extension and Challenge courses, and 17 government secondary schools hosted Gifted and Talented programs.

In 2015, Catholic Education Western Australia (CEWA) launched its Gifted and Talented Policy, and support documents and resources for Catholic schools. All CEWA schools are required to provide differentiated learning for all students. The Scaffolding Adolescent Literacy professional learning program was developed and offered to independent schools through the Association of Independent Schools, Western Australia.

The Northern Territory Department of Education developed the Work Like the Best: Middle Years Teaching and Learning Strategy 2016–2018, from key recommendations of the independent review of middle years schooling conducted in 2014. The strategy is aimed at driving policy and programs in the areas identified as having the greatest positive impact on the quality of middle school education. Visible Learning, and Direct Instruction programs are being implemented to provide structure and continuity of learning for students across all NT government schools.

Twenty-five of ACT's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students participated in the Student Aspirations Year 6 leadership day.

In December 2015, the Education Council endorsed the National Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) School Education Strategy 2016–2026. The strategy supports a long-term change agenda aiming to ensure that students have a stronger foundation in STEM and are inspired to take on more challenging STEM subjects. The strategy

acknowledges that while there is significant effort already underway within all jurisdictions to lift student outcomes in STEM, a renewed national focus on STEM education will provide fresh momentum to improve performance in this area.

The development and implementation of the Foundation – Year 10 (F–10) Australian Curriculum have also catered for the provision of challenging, engaging and rewarding programs in the middle years.

Further information on the Australian Curriculum is provided in part 2.8: Promoting world-class curriculum and assessment and on ACARA's [Australian Curriculum website](#).

2.7 Supporting senior years of schooling and youth transitions

Australian governments are committed to working with all school sectors to support the senior years of schooling and provision of high-quality pathways to facilitate effective transitions between further study, training and employment ([Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians](#) 2008).

Within the Melbourne Declaration, education ministers agreed that:

The senior years of schooling should provide all students with the high-quality education necessary to complete their secondary school education and make the transition to further education, training or employment. Schooling should offer a range of pathways to meet the diverse needs and aspirations of all young Australians, encouraging them to pursue university or postsecondary vocational qualifications that increase their opportunities for rewarding and productive employment.

In addition, COAG established targets to lift the Year 12 or equivalent attainment rate.

In 2010, the minimum school (or approved equivalent) leaving age was raised, by national agreement, to 17 years of age. In the period 2010–2015, there were overall increases in apparent retention rates to senior years of schooling in the proportion of 15–19-year-olds participating in education and training and in Year 12 or equivalent attainment rates. These data are reported in Part 3: Measuring and Reporting Performance.

Preparing Secondary Students for Work

[Preparing Secondary Students for Work – A framework for vocational learning and VET delivered to secondary students](#) was released by the Education Council in December 2014.

The framework clarifies the distinction between vocational learning (career education and general work-related curriculum such as Work Studies) and vocational education and training (VET) (nationally recognised training described within an industry-developed training package or an accredited course). It emphasises that VET delivered to secondary students is the same as all other VET, and that the same quality standards apply. For this reason, the framework

uses the term 'VET' (delivered to secondary students) in preference to the existing term 'VET in Schools' (VETiS).³²

Government departments, school sector authorities, and industry and training sector bodies are working together to strengthen collaboration between schools, training providers and employers, raise awareness and encourage best practice, and use evidence and research to inform future policy and actions to improve the quality of vocational learning and VET delivered to secondary students.

VET delivered to secondary students

Programs for the delivery of VET to secondary students, including school-based apprenticeships and traineeships, operate in all states and territories. Under these programs, school students can combine school study with training towards an accredited Australian Qualifications Framework³³ (AQF) VET qualification. The achievement of a VET qualification signifies that a student has demonstrated competency against the skills and knowledge required to perform effectively in the workplace. All VET qualifications must be issued by registered training organisations (RTOs).

The participation of school-aged students, including secondary students, in VET in 2015 is reported in part 3: Measuring performance and in the National Report on Schooling data portal. VET course enrolments and VET qualifications completed by senior secondary students are reported at the school level on the [My School website](#).

Trade Training Centres in Schools Program

The Trade Training Centres in Schools Program, which commenced in 2008, provides secondary students with access to modern facilities to undertake VET. Funding of \$1.4 billion has been provided for industry standard facilities in 511 projects, benefiting 1,289 schools.

By 2015, 410 of these projects were operational with over 35,000 enrolments. The food/hospitality, building/construction, engineering and automotive training streams had the greatest number of enrolments.

Career education resources and initiatives

[myfuture](#) is Australia's national online career information and exploration service, created to assist career planning, career pathways and work transitions. It is accessed by a range of users including secondary school students, school leavers, parents, teachers, career practitioners and adults.



32 In 2015, the term 'VET in Schools' (VETiS) continued to be used in the VET sector to identify VET delivered to senior secondary students/as part of a Senior Secondary Certificate of Education, including for data collection and reporting purposes. 'VET in Schools' continues to be the term used within the Australian Vocational Educational and Training Management Information Statistical Standard (AVETMISS).

33 The AQF is the national framework of qualifications in the school, vocational education and training (VET), and higher education sectors in Australia. The Senior Secondary Certificate of Education, Certificate II and Certificate III are qualifications within the AQF.

The myfuture website is jointly funded by the Australian Government, and state and territory governments through the Education Council and is managed by Educational Services Australia.

The [Job Guide](#) publication has also helped young people to explore entry level occupations and to make subject choices. The 2015 Job Guide was published as the final edition.

State and territory initiatives

Victoria continued to provide a comprehensive range of programs and initiatives targeted to the senior years of schooling, including a new careers education pilot to support the work readiness of students in rural and remote government schools, and a state-wide forum for sharing best practice for trade training centres (TTCs).

In Western Australia, a revised Western Australian Certificate of Education (WACE)³⁴ was implemented. The new WACE introduced a requirement to achieve a minimum standard of literacy and numeracy, and was designed to ensure students study senior secondary school courses that will improve their ability to successfully undertake further study post-school. Support was provided for all senior secondary students with the new WACE. School- and region-based teams assisted students not engaged in, or at risk of disengaging from, school to improve their attendance or transition into approved education, training or employment options.

The Western Australian Catholic and independent school sectors have established a total of 15 curriculum and reengagement in education (CARE) schools (some with multiple campuses) to cater for the education of secondary-aged students who have significant difficulty in accessing mainstream education.

In the Northern Territory, a transition support unit was established to provide a complete transition service and support to students as they move from their home communities to engage in education at a regional high school or boarding facility. The Employment Pathways Program has also been established to deliver secondary educational options that meet the needs of students from remote communities.

The implementation of the Learn Anywhere program provided ACT students with access to world leading, cloud-based learning platforms to enable students to create, learn and collaborate anywhere and anytime on their device of choice.

2.8 Promoting world-class curriculum and assessment

Australian governments are committed to working together with all school sectors to ensure world-class curriculum and assessment for Australia at national and local levels ([Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians](#) 2008).

The Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority

The [Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority \(ACARA\)](#) is an independent statutory authority responsible to the Education Council.



34 The WACE is the name of the Senior Secondary Certificate of Education issued by Western Australia.

In terms of curriculum and assessment, the functions of ACARA³⁵ are to:

- develop and administer a national school curriculum, including content of the curriculum and achievement standards, for school subjects specified in the charter³⁶
- develop and administer national assessments
- provide school curriculum resource services
- provide information, resources, support and guidance to the teaching profession.

The ACARA Charter specifies strategic directions for the authority in the key areas of curriculum and assessment at the national level as:

1. A national curriculum from Foundation³⁷ to Year 12 (F–12) in specified learning areas
2. A national assessment program aligned to the national curriculum, that measures students' progress.

2.8.1 The Australian Curriculum



Since 2009, state and territory governments, the Australian Government and all school sectors have worked with ACARA to develop and refine a world-class national school curriculum for Australia.

There are eight learning areas in the Australian Curriculum, corresponding to those listed by education ministers in the Melbourne Declaration:

- English
- Mathematics
- Science
- Humanities and Social Sciences
- The Arts
- Technologies
- Health and Physical Education
- Languages.

35 *Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority Act (2008)*, Section 6. (ACARA's functions in data collection and reporting are outlined in part 2.10: Policies and priorities – strengthening accountability and transparency.)

36 Education Council determines the ACARA Charter. In 2015, ACARA operated under the 3 August 2012 version of the charter.

37 The Foundation Year (first year of full-time schooling) is known as Preparatory in Victoria, Queensland and Tasmania; Kindergarten in New South Wales and the Australian Capital Territory; Reception in South Australia; Pre-primary in Western Australia; and Transition in the Northern Territory.

In addition to its focus on learning areas, the Australian Curriculum includes seven general capabilities: literacy, numeracy, information and communication technology capability, critical and creative thinking, personal and social capability, ethical understanding and intercultural understanding. These are addressed where relevant to the learning area.

The Australian Curriculum also focuses on three cross-curriculum priorities: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures; Asia and Australia's Engagement with Asia; and Sustainability. As with the general capabilities, these are addressed where relevant to the learning area.

By the end of 2015, the range of subjects for the Foundation – Year 10 (F–10) Australian Curriculum was almost complete, with 28 subjects across all learning areas developed, endorsed and published. All states and territories had commenced implementation of the F–10 Australian Curriculum.

In addition, 15 senior secondary Australian Curriculum subjects across English, Mathematics, Science, History and Geography had been developed, approved and published. State and territory curriculum, assessment and certification authorities are responsible for determining how the senior secondary Australian Curriculum content and achievement standards are to be integrated into their courses.

Curriculum review

Following a review of the Australian Curriculum commissioned by the Australian Government in 2014, extensive work was undertaken in 2015 to revise the Australian Curriculum Foundation – Year 10 (F–10), addressing themes endorsed by the Education Council.

In September 2015, the Education Council endorsed the Foundation – Year 10 Australian Curriculum, including changes to content descriptions and achievement standards for English, Mathematics, Science, Humanities and Social Sciences, the Arts, Technologies and Health and Physical Education. These changes address two key themes from the Australian Curriculum Review - 'resolving the overcrowded curriculum' and 'rebalancing the curriculum'.

The Education Council also endorsed the Foundation – Year 10 Australian Curriculum: Languages for Arabic, Chinese, French, German, Indonesian, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Modern Greek, Spanish and Vietnamese, and Work Studies Years 9-10.

The revised curriculum was published on the ACARA Australian Curriculum website in October 2015. State and territory school and curriculum authorities will determine the implementation timelines for their schools.

In December 2015, the Education Council endorsed the Foundation – Year 10 Australian Curriculum Languages: Framework for Aboriginal Languages and Torres Strait Islander Languages and the Foundation – Year 10 Australian Curriculum Languages: Hindi and Turkish. Both documents were published on the Australian Curriculum website in December 2015.

In response to the Review of the Australian Curriculum, ACARA also developed information sheet materials that support improved parental access to the Australian Curriculum. The materials were published on the Australian Curriculum website in December 2015.

2.8.2 The National Assessment Program

The National Assessment Program (NAP) is an ongoing program of national assessments run at the direction of the Education Council. The NAP includes:

- annual national literacy and numeracy tests (NAPLAN)
- three-yearly sample assessments in science literacy, civics and citizenship, and information and communication technology (ICT) literacy
- Australia's participation in international assessments.

NAP provides the measure through which governments, education authorities and schools can determine whether or not young Australians are achieving expected educational outcomes.

National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN)

The National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) is an annual national assessment for all students in Years 3, 5, 7 and 9. All students in these year levels are expected to participate in tests in reading, writing, language conventions (spelling, grammar and punctuation) and numeracy.

NAPLAN tests were first conducted in 2008, replacing former state- and territory-based literacy and numeracy tests. ACARA has been responsible for the development and oversight of the delivery of the NAPLAN tests since 2010.

For national reporting purposes, key performance measures (KPMs) have been approved by ministers for reading, writing, numeracy and participation. These KPMs are reported for NAPLAN 2015 in Part 3: Measuring performance.

The [2015 NAPLAN National Report](#) provides nationally comparable data on the 2015 national and state/territory results for each test domain. It provides comparisons of performance by student characteristics such as gender, Indigeneity, language background other than English, parental occupation, parental education and school characteristics such as location.

The [2015 NAPLAN National Report](#) was released in December 2015. NAPLAN result data are also available in interactive form on the results page of the ACARA [National Assessment Program website](#).

The National Assessment Program – sample assessments

The national sample assessments test students' skills and understanding in science literacy (Year 6), civics and citizenship literacy (Years 6 and 10) and information and communication technology (ICT) literacy (Years 6 and 10). Sample groups of students participate in these assessments, which are held on a rolling three-yearly basis. Sample assessments began in 2003.

The fifth cycle of the NAP – Science Literacy sample assessment was administered online between October and November 2015. Approximately 12,000 students from over 600 schools participated in the assessment. The KPM for NAP– Science Literacy 2015 is reported in Part 3: Measuring performance.

National Assessment Program – international assessments

There are now three NAP sample assessments conducted by international organisations, which are used as a basis for key performance measures in the Measurement Framework for Schooling in Australia: the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS), and Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS).

PISA is conducted every three years by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and involves assessment of a sample of 15-year-old students in reading, mathematical and scientific literacy. PISA was conducted in 2015, involving around 540,000 students across 35 OECD countries and 37 ‘partner’ countries or economies. Information on the KPMs for the 2015 PISA assessment is reported in Part 3: Measuring performance. Reports and key findings for Australia from PISA 2015 are available on the [Australian Council for Educational Research \(ACER\) website](#).

TIMSS is a four-yearly international sample assessment of student achievement in mathematics and science at Years 4 and 8, administered by the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA). The sixth TIMSS assessment was conducted in 2015, with 57 countries and seven regional entities (such as states or provinces) participating. In Australia, more than 16,000 students from 572 schools took part. Information on the KPMs for the 2015 TIMSS assessment is reported in Part 3: Measuring performance. Further information on the performance of Australian students in TIMSS 2015 is available on the [ACER website](#).

PIRLS is a five-yearly international assessment of reading literacy for students at Year 4, also administered by the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA). A KPM for performance in PIRLS was added to the [Measurement Framework for Schooling in Australia 2015](#). The next PIRLS assessment is scheduled for 2016 and results for Australian students participating will be reported for the first time as a KPM for schooling for 2016.

National online assessment

Education ministers have agreed that NAPLAN testing online will be implemented from 2017 on an opt-in basis over two–three years (no later than 2019). Jurisdictions, school systems and schools will determine the timeframe for implementation, based on readiness, to ensure an effective and efficient transition. NAPLAN Online is expected to provide better assessment, more precise results and faster turnaround of information.

Online assessment will be introduced using a new national platform being built by Education Services Australia, with funds from the Australian Government. The platform will be used to trial online assessment both through a practice environment and through the NAP – Civics and Citizenship sample assessment program in 2016. ACARA is continuing to develop national protocols and the associated operational policy for NAPLAN Online.



To assist in the transition to online assessment, a project management office has been established to manage the development of an integrated national implementation plan, risk assessment and mitigation strategies and the establishment of the systems and processes to report on progress.

This work, along with the development and implementation of a national communications strategy, will continue until the start of NAPLAN Online in 2017.

A key concept in the move to online assessment is the adoption of tailored test design. The ‘tailored test’ is a multistage computer adaptive test design that delivers different sets of questions (‘testlets’) to students, depending on their achievement on previous questions. Online delivery of assessments allows the use of adaptive testing to better match questions to an individual student’s achievement level in a way that is not feasible for paper-based testing.

Online assessment research

ACARA is responsible for developing the NAPLAN tests and for research to support the move online. This includes a comprehensive research and development program that will assist the preparation for delivery of NAPLAN online tests from 2017.

ACARA’s online assessment research and development work includes a range of studies around device effects, readability and layout, proficiency levels, writing assessment, automated essay scoring and the impact of accessibility adjustments on performance. During 2015, the following research and development studies were progressed:

- **Trialling study.** One hundred and twenty schools nationally participated in the trialling study in August 2015. This study evaluated test item and testlet performance, testlet construction and targeting of items, and helped to finalise the parameters for the tailored test design. Psychometric data from this study will be used to inform test construction and other research studies in 2016 and will contribute to the development of final tests in 2017.
- **Device effect study.** Seventy-three schools nationally participated in a device effect study in August 2015. This study was conducted to ensure that NAPLAN can be equitably administered across all devices that meet the minimum technical requirements. The study revealed that NAPLAN Online can be taken on a range of devices (laptops and tablets), without device effects across content domains, item types and year levels. The key factor influencing students’ interaction with online items and tests is their familiarity with the device they are using to complete the tests.
- **Readability and layout study.** This study investigated how students perceive, and react to, a range of different online item configurations and displays. Its purpose was to evaluate different item display and navigation options relative to onscreen layouts.

Earlier research, conducted by ACARA and funded by the Australian Government, found that the tailored test design is sound, feasible and more engaging for students. Further information on online assessment is available on ACARA’s [NAP website](#).

2.9 Improving educational outcomes for Indigenous youth and disadvantaged young Australians, especially those from low socio-economic backgrounds

The first goal of the [Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians](#) is that Australian schooling promotes equity and excellence.

Within the Melbourne Declaration, education ministers acknowledged that:

Educational outcomes for Indigenous children and young people are substantially behind those of other students in key areas of enrolment, attendance, participation, literacy, numeracy, retention and completion.

Students from low socio-economic backgrounds, those from remote areas, refugees, homeless young people, and students with disabilities often experience educational disadvantage.

Australian governments must support all young Australians to achieve not only equality of opportunity, but also more equitable outcomes.

Ministers committed Australian governments to working with all school sectors to:

- 'close the gap' for young Indigenous Australians
- provide targeted support to disadvantaged students
- focus on school improvement in low socio-economic communities.

COAG also set targets to lift educational attainment overall and to close the gap between the educational outcomes of Indigenous and non-Indigenous students. Progress towards these targets is reported in Part 3: Measuring performance.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth

State and territory governments, non-government education authorities and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities are working in collaboration to close the gap between the outcomes of schooling for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous students.

National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Strategy

In September 2015, the Education Council endorsed the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Strategy. The strategy maintains a strong national focus on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education, while enabling jurisdictions and communities to determine and implement localised approaches. The strategy includes national collaborative actions grouped under five key themes for collective implementation by the Australian Government, states and territories – Attendance and Engagement, Transition Points (including pathways to post-school options), Early Childhood Transitions, Workforce, and Australian Curriculum.



Funding for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, provided for schools through the Australian Government, included³⁸:

- an estimated \$221.75 million in 2015 for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student loading to assist schools to provide additional support for students through needs-based school funding arrangements
- \$11.6 million over three years from 2014 to specific non-government schools for the additional costs associated with boarding and educating Indigenous students from remote communities
- \$22 million over four years (2013–14 to 2016–17) under the Flexible Literacy for Remote Primary Schools Programme to address the disparity in literacy outcomes between metropolitan and rural and remote schools.

Student attendance data

In 2014, COAG agreed to a new target to close the gap in school attendance between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students by the end of 2018. Progress towards this target in 2015 is reported in part 3 of this report.

In 2015, improvements to the national collection and reporting of student attendance data were implemented through ACARA. This included the collection of data for a new Key Performance Measure (KPM) on the level of student attendance, with a particular focus on attendance by Indigenous students. This KPM is reported for the first time in part 3 of this report and on the National Report on Schooling data portal.

Attendance rates at the school level, disaggregated by Indigenous status, were also published (for the second year) on the [My School website](#).

Remote School Attendance Strategy

The Remote School Attendance Strategy (RSAS) was developed in partnership with communities to lift school attendance levels in remote communities, where attendance rates are often very low. RSAS employs local people to work with parents and carers, the community and schools to support children to go to school every day they possibly can. In 2014 and 2015, it operated in 73 schools across 69 communities.

From Semester 1, 2013, to Semester 1, 2015, attendance rates rose in 49 of the 73 RSAS schools.³⁹

In 2015, the Northern Territory began the first phase of implementation of A Share in the Future Indigenous education strategy 2015–2024. Supplementary Commonwealth funding of \$119.8 million for this reform has been provided to the Northern Territory Government for the period 2015–2017.

The NT Employment Pathways Program also delivers secondary educational options that meet the needs of students from remote communities in the territory.

More information on initiatives for Indigenous youth is available on the Australian Government's [Indigenous website](#), and in the annual [Closing the Gap Prime Minister's reports](#).

38 Closing the Gap Prime Minister's Report 2016 p. 21.

39 Data drawn from the *My School* website quoted in the Closing the Gap Prime Minister's Report 2016 p.18.

Low socio-economic status school communities

All governments have agreed that they have mutual interest in, and shared responsibility for, improving educational outcomes in low socio-economic status (SES) school communities and in supporting reforms in the way schooling is delivered to those communities.

2.10 Strengthening accountability and transparency

The [*Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians*](#) emphasises transparency in reporting educational information to the community and accountability for the use of public resources for education.

This includes access to national reporting on the performance of all schools, contextual information and information about individual schools' enrolment profile.

The Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority

In terms of data collection and reporting, the functions of ACARA are to:

- collect, manage and analyse student assessment data and other data relating to schools and comparative school performance
- facilitate information-sharing arrangements between Australian government bodies in relation to the collection, management and analysis of school data
- publish information relating to school education, including information relating to comparative school performance.

ACARA's reporting priorities under its charter⁴⁰ include:

- the monitoring and review of the Measurement Framework for Schooling in Australia, which sets out agreed national key performance measures (KPMs) for schooling
- producing a comprehensive and authoritative National Report on Schooling in Australia related to the Melbourne Declaration and national KPMs
- developing, or supporting the development of, national definitions
- managing the collection, quality assurance and reporting of school information through the *My School* website.

40 ACARA Charter, 3 August 2012.

Measurement Framework for Schooling in Australia

In May 2015, the Education Council endorsed the [Measurement Framework for Schooling in Australia 2015](#)⁴¹. The Measurement Framework specifies the agreed national key performance measures (KPMs) for schooling, and is the basis for reporting of statistical information by Australian education ministers to the community on progress towards the Melbourne Declaration. The revised framework includes additional KPMs for student attendance and PIRLS.

National reporting on schooling for 2015, in this report and in the National Report on Schooling data portal, reflects the Measurement Framework for Schooling in Australia 2015.

National Report on Schooling in Australia

In 2015, ACARA prepared the [National Report on Schooling in Australia 2013](#) in consultation with representatives of state and territory education authorities, other government agencies, and non-government school sectors. ACARA also developed a proposal for the presentation of the report in a different, more interactive format, including the National Report on Schooling data portal, in addition to a written report, to take effect from the 2014 reporting year.

Student attendance data reporting

In 2015, nationally comparable student attendance data were collected, as set out in the [National Standards for Student Attendance Data Reporting](#), for non-government schools in all jurisdictions, and for government schools in all jurisdictions except NSW.⁴²

The KPM for the rate of student attendance for Years 1–10 is reported (for the second year that it has been available at the national level) in part 3 of this report and in the National Report on Schooling data portal.

In 2015, data for reporting new national and school measures for the level of student attendance were also collected. The new national KPM and school level measure for student attendance level record the proportion of Year 1–10 students attending school for 90 per cent or more of the time, disaggregated by Indigenous status. These measures, approved by the Education Council, are reported for the first time, for the 2015 reporting year, in part 3 of this report, on the National Report on Schooling data portal and, at the school level, on the *My School* website.

Revised [National Standards for Student Attendance Data Reporting](#) to reflect the changes in reporting student attendance data were published on the ACARA website in October 2015.

41 Replacing the *Measurement Framework for Schooling in Australia 2012*.

42 NSW government schools are working towards implementing the standards.

My School

ACARA is responsible for the national data collection on individual schools housed on the [My School website](#). The sixth version of *My School* was released on 5 March 2015, attracting a 50 per cent increase in visits compared to figures for the 2014 release date.

The 2015 *My School* release contained:

- the latest profile and population data on each school
- outcomes from the 2014 round of NAPLAN testing
- seven years of NAPLAN performance data for comparison
- the latest financial figures on each school, including capital expenditure and sources of funding
- additional data on student attendance, disaggregated by Indigenous status.

Student attendance data for Semester 1 2015 were published on *My School* in November 2015, including the new measure for student attendance level (the proportion of students in Years 1–10 attending school for 90 per cent or more of the time). ACARA released Term 3 2015 data on school level attendance data on the *My School* website in December 2015. Both attendance data releases were disaggregated by Indigenous status.

Australian Schools List

In January 2015, ACARA launched the initial Australian Schools List (ASL) (beta) site. The ASL site is available to government agencies, departments, education services, system developers, vendors and the public. The ASL site sourced its data from the 2014 ACARA *My School* schools list. Work on refining the list continued during 2015.

Teacher workforce data

The Teacher Education Ministerial Advisory Group (TEMAG) report to the Australian Government Minister for Education, *Action Now: Classroom Ready Teachers*, released in February 2015, called for a commitment to the collection of comprehensive national initial teacher education and workforce data.

In response, the Australian Government engaged the Mitchell Institute at Victoria University to undertake the development of a blueprint for initial teacher education and teacher workforce data. The blueprint was delivered at the end of 2015 and will form the basis of further work on a national data strategy to inform future teacher workforce planning.

In May 2015, the Australian Government confirmed that Australia would participate in the OECD Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS) 2018. TALIS collects comparable international data on the learning environment and working conditions of teachers. The results of Australia's participation in [TALIS 2013](#) were released in August 2014.

Part 3

Measuring and reporting performance



Part 3 reports on the performance of Australian schooling in 2015, using the nationally agreed key performance measures (KPMs) for schooling specified in the *Measurement Framework for Schooling in Australia 2015*.

3.1 Measurement Framework for Schooling in Australia

The [*Measurement Framework for Schooling in Australia 2015*](#) provides the basis for national reporting on the performance of schooling in 2015, as agreed by education ministers, and is the main focus of the statistical data included in this report.

The measurement framework defines 26 national key performance measures (KPMs) for schooling, specifies the data sources for these KPMs and outlines the reporting cycle for the period 2014–2018.⁴³

By intent, the KPMs contained in the measurement framework are:

- strategic measures that provide nationally comparable data on aspects of performance critical to monitoring progress against the Melbourne Declaration
- focused on student participation, achievement, attainment and equity
- based on sound and reliable assessment practice
- supportive of open and transparent reporting
- relevant and of interest to the public
- cost-effective, practical to collect, and take account of the burden and impact that data collection may place on students, schools and schooling systems.

⁴³ Most KPMs are reported annually, but some are collected and reported on a cyclical basis of three, four or five years.

For national reporting purposes, KPMs for student participation, achievement and attainment are disaggregated by equity measures: Indigenous status, sex, geolocation, socio-economic status and language background, where it is possible and appropriate to do so.⁴⁴

The 2015 edition of the Measurement Framework includes three new KPMs: for the level of attendance, for participation in post-school education and work by 17–24-year-olds, and for achievement in the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS). The first two of these are reported for the first time in this report.

3.2 Student participation

Part 3.2 reports on KPMs for student enrolment and attendance specified in the *Measurement Framework for Schooling in Australia 2015*. It also reports on apparent retention from Year 10 to Year 12, including the KPM for retention to Year 12 for Indigenous students.

3.2.1 Enrolment

Part 1.2 of this report provides data on the number of students enrolled by school sector, by school level, by state and territory, and over time. This section reports on the number of students enrolled as a proportion the Australian population in the relevant age group, as specified as a KPM for schooling. This is a measure of the coverage of Australian schooling and of the extent to which young people have access to school education. The KPM is specified as the number of students aged 6–15 years enrolled in school, expressed as a proportion of the 6–15-year-old population. This approximates the age range of students for whom schooling is compulsory.

Key Performance Measure 1(a)

Proportion of children aged 6–15 years who are enrolled in school

The numerator for this measure is school enrolment data drawn from the National Schools Statistics Collection (NSSC). The denominator for the 6–15-year-old population is drawn from the Estimated Residential Population (ERP) for this age group, which is estimated by projection by the Australian Bureau of Statistics from the five-yearly Australian Census of Population and Housing.

KPM 1(a) is reported by state and territory for 2015 in table 3.1.

⁴⁴ With the exception of retention to Year 12 by Indigenous students, which relates to COAG targets for Closing the Gap, equity measures are not listed separately in the schedule of KPMs contained in the measurement framework.

Table 3.1

Number and proportion of the population aged 6–15 years enrolled in school, by state and territory, 2015

| | NSW | Vic. | Qld | SA | WA | Tas. | NT | ACT | Australia |
|---|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|--------|--------|--------|-----------|
| Number of children aged 6–15 years enrolled in school(a) | 927,450 | 710,428 | 629,538 | 199,975 | 316,682 | 63,371 | 32,798 | 50,370 | 2,930,612 |
| Total 6–15-year-old population(b) | 928,217 | 700,466 | 622,267 | 197,395 | 321,177 | 63,819 | 34,463 | 45,550 | 2,913,696 |
| Proportion of 6–15-year-old population enrolled in school (%) | 99.9 | 101.4 | 101.2 | 101.3 | 98.6 | 99.3 | 95.2 | 110.6 | 100.6 |

(a) Enrolment data are drawn from the National Schools Statistics Collection (NSSC) published in ABS, Cat. No. 4221 *Schools Australia*. Includes students enrolled full-time or part-time. Jervis Bay enrolments are included with ACT; Norfolk Island enrolments are included with NSW. 'Other territory' enrolments are excluded. Data include students who cross state and territory boundaries to attend school. In the case of the ACT, this causes the proportion to significantly exceed 100 per cent.

(b) Estimates for the total population are at 30 June each year and are sourced from the most recent release of ABS, Cat. No. 3101.0, *Australian Demographic Statistics*. As estimates, ERP figures are subject to error and to periodic revision. The Australian totals include 'other territories' including Jervis Bay and Norfolk Island. However, Jervis Bay and Norfolk Island are excluded from ACT and NSW totals. Therefore, state and territory Estimated Resident Population numbers will not add to Australian totals

Note: When developing an indicator using data from different sources, significant data comparability issues can emerge that will affect the accuracy of the indicator. These differences can have unexpected effects such as producing an estimate greater than 100 per cent of the population. Differences in this KPM should be interpreted with care.

Sources: ABS, Cat. No. 4221.0, *Schools, Australia, 2015*; ABS, Cat. No. 3101.0, *Australian Demographic Statistics, Australian States and Territories, Sep 2015*. (released 24/03/2016)

KPM 1(a) for the period 2009–2015 is reported in table 3.2.



Table 3.2

Number and proportion of the population aged 6–15 years enrolled in school, Australia, 2009–2015

| | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 |
|--|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| School enrolments, Australia (6–15 years) ^(a) | 2,748,736 | 2,755,893 | 2,768,177 | 2,801,751 | 2,844,983 | 2,889,292 | 2,930,612 |
| Population, Australia (6–15 years) ^(b) | 2,746,766 | 2,755,102 | 2,769,311 | 2,803,166 | 2,837,100 | 2,875,953 | 2,913,696 |
| Proportion of 6–15-year-olds enrolled in school, Australia (%) | 100.1 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 99.9 | 100.3 | 100.5 | 100.6 |

(a) Enrolment data is administrative data drawn from the National Schools Statistics Collection (NSSC) collected through the annual schools census in August each year. Includes children enrolled full time or part time. Jervis Bay enrolments and Norfolk Island enrolments are included. 'Other territory' enrolments are excluded.

(b) Estimates of the resident population (ERP) for this age group are as of 30 June each year sourced from the most recently available release of ABS, Cat. No. 3101.0, *Australian Demographic Statistics*. These are estimated by projection from the five-yearly Australian Census of Population and Housing. As estimates, ERP figures are subject to error and to periodic revision. ERP data may differ from data in previous editions of this report and in other publications. The Australian total includes 'other territories' including Jervis Bay and Norfolk Island.

Note: When developing an indicator using data from different sources, significant data comparability issues can emerge that will affect the accuracy of the indicator. These differences can have unexpected effects such as producing an estimate greater than 100 per cent of the population. Changes to this KPM should be interpreted with care.

Sources: ABS, Cat. No. 4221.0, *Schools, Australia, 2015*; ABS, Cat. No. 3101.0, *Australian Demographic Statistics, Australian States and Territories, Sep 2015*. (released 24/03/2016)

The rate of enrolment in schooling of 6–15-year-olds as measured by KPM 1(a) is very close to 100 per cent in most jurisdictions in 2015 and across Australia for each of the seven years 2009–2015, reflecting the compulsory nature of and universal access to schooling for this age group.

Participation rates below or above 100 per cent may be due to a number of factors:

- The numerator and denominator for KPM 1(a) are drawn from different data sources. When developing an indicator using data from different sources, significant data comparability issues can emerge that, which will affect the accuracy of the indicator. These differences can have unexpected effects such as producing an estimate greater than 100 per cent of the population. These effects are particularly apparent where a cohort is small or where the rate being measured is close to 100 per cent of the population.
- It is possible that some students who move between schools during the year are counted at more than one school. This is particularly relevant in remote and very remote areas where the population is highly mobile.⁴⁵ This may partly account for enrolment rates exceeding 100 per cent.
- As estimates, ERP figures are subject to error and to periodic revision. Periodic revisions to ERP data are reflected in revisions of time series for this KPM in different editions of this report.

⁴⁵ The Northern Territory reports that some students may be counted more than once in school data if enrolled at more than one school.

- Enrolment rates for states and territories are also affected by the inclusion of students who cross state and territory boundaries to attend school. These students are counted in the school population of one state but in the residential population of another. This occurs in many areas close to state and territory boundaries but, in most cases, movement occurs in both directions or is too small to noticeably influence the overall rate for a state. However, in the case of the ACT, the number of students from interstate (and children of embassy staff)⁴⁶ attending ACT schools causes the proportion of 6–15-year-olds enrolled in school to significantly exceed 100 per cent.

Because of these factors, further disaggregation of this KPM is unreliable and jurisdictions have agreed that it will be reported at state and national levels only.

3.2.2 Attendance

As with enrolment, the national KPMs for attendance specified in the [Measurement Framework for Schooling in Australia 2015](#) relate to students in the compulsory years of schooling.

Key Performance Measure 1(b)

Attendance rate: The number of actual full-time equivalent student-days attended by full-time students in Years 1–10 as a percentage of the total number of possible student-days attended in Semester 1

Key Performance Measure 1(c)

Attendance level: The proportion of full-time students in Years 1–10 whose attendance rate in Semester 1 is equal to, or greater than, 90 per cent

From 2013, a common reference period of Semester 1 in each school year has been adopted by all school sectors in all states and territories for the collection of attendance data for national reporting.

This is consistent with the [National Standards for Student Attendance Data Reporting](#),⁴⁷ which came into operation for the 2014 data collection period and onwards.

In 2015, nationally comparable student attendance data were collected, as set out in the national standards, for non-government schools in all jurisdictions, and for government schools in all jurisdictions except NSW. NSW government schools are working towards implementing the standards.

KPM 1(c) attendance level is a new KPM in the 2015 edition of the Measurement Framework. To address this, the [National Standards for Student Attendance Data Reporting](#) were revised in 2015

⁴⁶ Children of embassy staff attending Canberra schools are counted in ACT school enrolments but are not included in ERP.

⁴⁷ The standards include full definitions and counting rules for the collection and reporting of attendance data. In interpreting data, it is important to note that attendance rates and levels take into account explained absences, such as for illness, as well as unexplained absences/absenteeism.

⁴⁸ As at August 2015, 42.0 per cent of full-time students in Years 1–10 in the Northern Territory were identified as Indigenous, compared to 5.5 per cent of these students across Australia. (ABS, *Schools Australia, 2015*)

to include standards for the collection and reporting of attendance level data. KPM 1(c) is reported for the first time in this report (for the 2015 reporting year).

The implementation of the national standards will enable consistent and comparable reporting of attendance rates and levels, at the national level, for students in Years 1–10 across all sectors and jurisdictions.

Attendance rates

Table 3.3 reports KPM 1(b) as a national rate by school sector for 2014 and 2015. Table 3.4 reports this KPM by state and territory for 2015.

Table 3.3

Student attendance rates, Years 1–10, by school sector, Australia, 2014–15 (per cent)

| School sector | 2014 | 2015 |
|--------------------|-------------|-------------|
| Government | 91.9 | 92.0 |
| Catholic | 93.9 | 93.6 |
| Independent | 94.3 | 93.9 |
| All sectors | 92.7 | 92.6 |

Notes

Excludes part-time students. For data definitions, see the [National Standards for Student Attendance Data Reporting](#). For caveats supplied by jurisdictions, see Glossary.

Source: ACARA, National Student Attendance Data Collection; ACARA, National Report on Schooling data portal

Table 3.4

Student attendance rates, Years 1–10, by state and territory Australia, 2015 (per cent)

| School sector | NSW | Vic. | Qld | SA | WA | Tas. | NT | ACT | Australia |
|--------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Government | 92.4 | 93.0 | 91.6 | 91.0 | 91.2 | 91.1 | 81.6 | 92.0 | 92.0 |
| Catholic | 93.5 | 94.1 | 93.9 | 93.2 | 93.0 | 93.3 | 85.5 | 93.6 | 93.6 |
| Independent | 93.7 | 94.4 | 93.8 | 93.9 | 93.9 | 93.9 | 90.9 | 93.8 | 93.9 |
| All sectors | 92.8 | 93.4 | 92.3 | 91.9 | 92.0 | 91.8 | 83.5 | 92.7 | 92.6 |

Note

In 2015, NSW government school data were not collected on a comparable basis with other states and territories. See Glossary for details. Therefore, comparisons with other jurisdictions should be made with caution. NSW government schools are working towards implementing the standards.

Source: ACARA National Student Attendance Data Collection, National Report on Schooling data portal

In summary:

- The average school attendance rate for Years 1–10 across Australia in 2015 was 92.6 per cent. The fall from 92.7 per cent in 2014 was not significant.

- There was little difference in the national average attendance rate for girls (92.7 per cent) and boys (92.5 per cent).
- The average attendance rate for Years 1–10 exceeded 90 per cent in all states and territories except the Northern Territory, where a low average attendance rate (70.9 per cent) for (the high proportion⁴⁸ of) Indigenous students caused the territory average to fall to below 90 per cent.
- The average attendance rate in the government school sector was 1.6 percentage points lower than in the Catholic sector and 1.9 percentage points lower than in the independent sector.
- A common characteristic across all states and territories is lower average attendance rates in Years 8, 9 and 10 than in earlier years of schooling. At the national level, the average attendance rate for Years 1–6 was 93.5 per cent compared to 91.2 per cent for Years 7–10.
- Average attendance rates were higher in metropolitan and provincial areas than in remote areas and lowest in very remote areas. However, this was much more marked for Indigenous students than for non-Indigenous students. For non-Indigenous students, the average attendance rate in metropolitan schools was 93.3 per cent, in remote schools 91.9 per cent and in very remote schools 91.5 per cent. But for Indigenous students, these rates were 86.5 per cent (metropolitan), 78.6 per cent (remote) and 67.4 per cent (very remote), a difference of 19 percentage points between Indigenous students in metropolitan and in very remote schools, and a gap of 24.1 percentage points between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students in schools in very remote areas.

In 2014, COAG agreed to a new target to close the gap in school attendance between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students by the end of 2018. 2014 is the base year for this target.

Table 3.5 shows comparative attendance rates for Indigenous and non-Indigenous students in Years 1–10 by state and territory and the gaps between them in 2014 and 2015.

Table 3.5

Student attendance rates, Years 1–10, by state and territory and Indigenous status, Australia, 2014 and 2015 (per cent)

| State/territory | NSW | Vic. | Qld | SA | WA | Tas. | NT | ACT | Australia |
|---|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|------------|-------------|------------|-------------|-------------|
| 2014 | | | | | | | | | |
| Indigenous | 87.5 | 86.8 | 85.2 | 81.1 | 77.4 | 88.5 | 70.2 | 85.2 | 83.5 |
| Non-Indigenous | 93.9 | 93.1 | 92.8 | 92.6 | 92.7 | 92.4 | 90.9 | 92.5 | 93.2 |
| Gap (percentage points) | 6.4 | 6.3 | 7.6 | 11.5 | 15.3 | 3.9 | 20.7 | 7.3 | 9.7 |
| 2015 | | | | | | | | | |
| Indigenous | 86.9 | 87.8 | 85.7 | 81.4 | 77.1 | 88.5 | 70.9 | 86.5 | 83.7 |
| Non-Indigenous | 93.2 | 93.5 | 92.9 | 92.4 | 93.1 | 92.1 | 92.3 | 92.9 | 93.1 |
| Gap (percentage points) | 6.3 | 5.7 | 7.2 | 11.0 | 16.0 | 3.6 | 21.4 | 6.4 | 9.4 |
| Change in gap 2014–15 (percentage points) | -0.1 | -0.6 | -0.4 | -0.5 | 0.7 | -0.3 | 0.7 | -0.9 | -0.3 |

Note: Please refer to table 3.4 note.

Source: ACARA National Student Attendance Data Collection, National Report on Schooling data portal.

- There was little change in the average Indigenous school attendance rate from 2014 (83.5 per cent) to 2015 (83.7 per cent).
- In 2015, at the national level, there was 9.4 percentage point gap between the average attendance rates for Indigenous and non-Indigenous students. This was a reduction of 0.3 percentage points from 9.7 points in 2014. In Western Australia and in the Northern Territory, the gap rose by 0.7 percentage points. Above average gaps in attendance rates were again recorded in the Northern Territory, Western Australia and South Australia, particularly in very remote areas, where attendance rates for Indigenous students were between 62 and 68 per cent.
- The average attendance rate for Indigenous students was lower for older year groups: 86.1 per cent for Years 1–6 but 79.3 per cent for Years 7–10. Attendance rates for Indigenous students in remote and very remote areas fell off more sharply for older students than in other groups, with an average national attendance rate of only 52 per cent for Year 10 Indigenous students in very remote areas. As a result, the attendance gap is larger at higher year levels.

Without substantial improvements in attendance rates for Indigenous students in the near future, the COAG target for closing the gap in attendance rates by the end of 2018 is unlikely to be met.

Further data on student attendance rates, including disaggregation by jurisdiction, school sector, sex, Indigenous status, school year level and geolocation, are available on the National Report on Schooling data portal.

Attendance levels

By measuring the proportion of full-time students in Years 1–10, whose attendance rate in Semester 1 is equal to or greater than 90 per cent, KPM 1 (c) aims to identify populations or groups for whom attendance is generally satisfactory and, conversely, groups whose lower levels of attendance may put them at a disadvantage in terms of learning outcomes and educational achievement overall.

Table 3.6 shows KPM 1(c) by state and territory, by school sector, for 2015.

Table 3.6

Student attendance levels: proportion of students in Years 1–10, whose attendance rate is equal to or greater than 90 per cent, by state and territory and school sector, Australia, 2015 (per cent)

| State/territory | NSW ^a | Vic. | Qld | SA | WA | Tas. | NT | ACT | Australia |
|----------------------|-------------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|-----------|
| Sector | | | | | | | | | |
| Government | - | 79.3 | 73.0 | 72.7 | 73.9 | 74.1 | 50.9 | 75.3 | 75.0 |
| Catholic | 80.1 | 82.9 | 82.1 | 78.1 | 79.1 | 79.8 | 55.9 | 79.6 | 80.9 |
| Independent | 81.1 | 85.1 | 82.3 | 81.6 | 82.8 | 80.0 | 70.3 | 81.5 | 82.3 |
| Total non-government | 80.5 | 83.7 | 82.2 | 79.9 | 80.9 | 79.9 | 63.8 | 80.5 | 81.5 |
| All | 80.5 ^a | 80.8 | 75.9 | 75.2 | 76.2 | 75.7 | 54.5 | 77.5 | 77.8 |

Notes

- a. Data on student attendance levels for 2015 could not be collected for NSW government schools. As a result, the level of attendance (KPM 1 (c)) reported for NSW is for non-government school students only. The omission of NSW government school data also affects the national KPM for all schools and for the government sector.

Based on data collected for 2015, 77.8 per cent of Australian students in Years 1–10 attended school for at least 90 per cent of school days. However, the data do not include NSW government school students⁴⁹, who made up the largest single group by state and school sector, representing 21.0 per cent of full-time students in students in Years 1–10.⁵⁰

The proportion of students whose attendance rate was at least 90 per cent ranged between 75 and 81 per cent across states and territories except for the Northern Territory, where it was 54.5 per cent. As for KPM 1(b), this is a result of significantly lower levels of attendance by Indigenous students in remote and very remote areas of the Territory. The proportions in states and territories were consistently higher for non-government than for non-government school students.

In particular, this new KPM is intended to monitor progress in COAG's priority to close the gaps in educational outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people. The measure for 2015 confirms that a much higher proportion of Indigenous than non-Indigenous students were present at school for less than 90 per cent of the expected number of days. Table 3.7 shows KPM 1(c) by state and territory, by Indigenous status, for 2015 and the gap in this measure for Indigenous and non-Indigenous students.

Table 3.7

Student attendance levels: proportion of students in Years 1–10 whose attendance rate is equal to, or greater than, 90 per cent, by state and territory and Indigenous status, Australia, 2015 (per cent)

| State/territory | NSW ^a | Vic. | Qld | SA | WA | Tas. | NT | ACT | Australia |
|-------------------------|------------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|-----------|
| 2015 | | | | | | | | | |
| Indigenous | 61.5 | 61.8 | 53.3 | 44.7 | 38.9 | 65.5 | 28.2 | 54.9 | 49.2 |
| Non-Indigenous | 81.0 | 81.2 | 77.8 | 76.6 | 78.9 | 76.7 | 73.4 | 78.2 | 79.3 |
| All students | 80.5 | 80.8 | 75.9 | 75.2 | 76.2 | 75.7 | 54.5 | 77.5 | 77.8 |
| Gap (percentage points) | 19.5 | 19.4 | 24.5 | 31.9 | 40.0 | 11.2 | 45.2 | 23.3 | 30.1 |

Notes

- a. Data on student attendance levels for 2015 could not be collected for NSW government schools. As a result, the level of attendance (KPM 1 (c)) by Indigenous status reported for NSW is for non-government school students only. The omission of NSW government school data also affects the national KPM by Indigenous status for all schools and the national gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students.

Based on the data collected for 2015 (excluding NSW government schools), less than half of Australia's Indigenous students attended school for 90 or more per cent of the time, with a gap of 30.1 percentage points between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students. The gap was above the national average in the Northern Territory, Western Australia and South Australia, particularly in remote and very remote areas.

49 Data on student attendance levels (KPM 1c) for 2015 could not be collected for NSW government schools. NSW government schools are working towards collecting nationally consistent data for this KPM.

50 As at August 2015 (ABS, *Schools Australia*, 2015).

3.2.3 Apparent retention

Apparent retention rates estimate the progression of students through school over several years through several grades/year levels.

This section reports on the apparent retention of students from Year 10 to Year 12, with a focus on comparative rates for Indigenous and non-Indigenous students.

Retention rates are designated as ‘apparent’ and are estimates only, as they are based on aggregate enrolment data and do not record the progression of individual students.⁵¹ They do not take into account that some students may repeat a grade or be promoted, thus moving between cohorts; that students may choose to adopt flexible study patterns in senior years; or that new students may join a cohort through immigration.

Table 3.8 and figure 3.1 show national apparent retention rates from Year 10 to Year 12 for full-time students by school sector over the period 2009–2015.

Table 3.8

Apparent retention rates, Year 10 to Year 12, by school sector, Australia, 2009–2015 (per cent)

| School sector | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 |
|---------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Government | 71.4 | 74.1 | 75.0 | 74.8 | 76.7 | 78.6 | 79.2 |
| Catholic | 80.5 | 81.8 | 83.9 | 84.2 | 85.4 | 86.8 | 86.3 |
| Independent | 91.0 | 89.8 | 90.1 | 89.0 | 88.9 | 90.9 | 90.0 |
| All sectors | 76.7 | 78.5 | 79.5 | 79.3 | 80.7 | 82.5 | 82.7 |

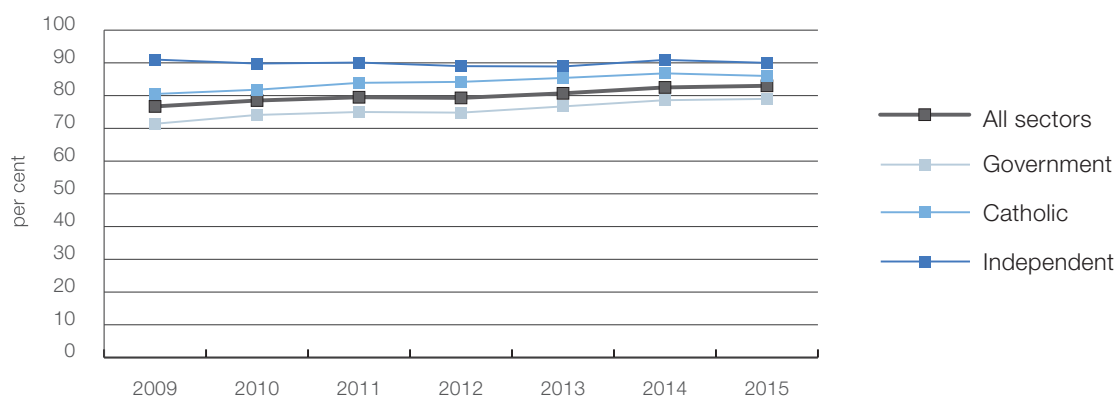
Notes

The apparent retention rate measures the number of full-time school students in a designated level/year of schooling as a percentage of their respective cohort group in a base year. The base year for apparent retention rates Year 10 to 12 is Year 10, two years before. Part-time students are not included. Ungraded students are not included.

Source: ABS, Cat. No. 4221.0, *Schools, Australia*, 2015.

Figure 3.1

Apparent retention rates, Year 10 to Year 12 by school sector, Australia, 2009–2015



Source: ABS, Cat. No. 4221.0, *Schools, Australia*, 2015.

⁵¹ Unit record enrolment data by student is not currently collected at the national level.

The national apparent retention rate from Year 10 to Year 12 increased for the third successive year between 2014 and 2015. The 0.2 percentage point rise in 2015 contributed to a net rise of 6.0 percentage points from 76.7 per cent in 2009 to 82.7 per cent in 2015. This is a substantial rise in this measure.

As noted in previous reports, this series records upward movements in apparent retention from Year 10 to Year 12, following the implementation of strengthened education participation requirements for 15- and 16-year-olds.⁵²

Apparent retention rates from Year 10 to Year 12 rose by 7.8 percentage points for the government school sector and by 5.8 percentage points for the Catholic sector in the period 2009–2015. The gap between apparent retention from Year 10 to Year 12 for government and independent schools narrowed from 19.6 percentage points in 2009 to 10.8 percentage points in 2015.

The convergence of rates between school sectors over the six-year period suggests there has been a rise in the proportion of government and Catholic school students continuing to Year 12, and/or a reduction in students transferring from government and Catholic to independent schools for Years 11 and 12. However, this cannot be confirmed, because, as individual students are not tracked, the rates do not distinguish between progression of students within a sector, students moving between sectors and entry of students from overseas. Sector-specific retention rates should therefore be interpreted with caution.

When apparent retention rates are disaggregated by state and territory, they are also less meaningful, as they do not take into account movements of students between jurisdictions, net migration for the age cohort or numbers of overseas students enrolling in senior secondary schooling.

Table 3.9 shows apparent retention rates from Year 10 to 12 for full-time students by state and territory.

Table 3.9

Apparent retention rates, Year 10 to Year 12 by state and territory, Australia, 2015, 2014 and 2010 (per cent) and changes 2014–15 and 2010–2015 (percentage points)

| Calendar year | NSW | Vic. | Qld | SA | WA | Tas. | NT | ACT | Australia |
|------------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|-----------|
| 2015 | 77.5 | 84.8 | 86.7 | 92.2 | 81.0 | 72.1 | 63.8 | 95.1 | 82.7 |
| 2014 | 77.5 | 84.1 | 85.9 | 89.9 | 85.9 | 69.4 | 68.1 | 92.4 | 82.5 |
| 2010 | 74.5 | 82.1 | 81.0 | 80.6 | 76.5 | 70.7 | 61.4 | 91.8 | 78.5 |
| Change 2014–15 | 0.0 | 0.7 | 0.8 | 2.3 | -4.9 | 2.7 | -4.3 | 2.7 | 0.2 |
| Change 2010–2015 | 3.0 | 2.7 | 5.7 | 11.6 | 4.5 | 1.4 | 2.4 | 3.3 | 4.2 |

Notes

The apparent retention rate measures the number of full-time school students in a designated level/year of schooling as a percentage of their respective cohort group in a base year. The base year for apparent retention rates Year 10 to 12 in 2015 is Year 10 in 2013. Part-time students are not included. Ungraded students are not included.

For a more detailed time series of apparent retention rates by state and territory, see the National Report on Schooling data portal.

Source: ABS, Cat. No. 4221.0, *Schools, Australia*, 2015.

⁵² The National Youth Participation Requirement includes the mandatory requirement for all young people to participate in schooling until they complete Year 10, and the requirement to participate full time in education, training or employment, or a combination of these activities, until the age of 17. These were implemented in Queensland, South Australia, Western Australia and Tasmania between 2006 and 2008; and in New South Wales, Victoria, the Northern Territory and the Australian Capital Territory in 2010. From 2014, the age requirement in Western Australia was lifted to 'until the end of the year in which the child reaches the age of 17 years and 6 months or the child reaches the age of 18, whichever happens first'.

All states and territories have recorded rises in this rate over the period 2010–2015 with the largest increase, of 11.6 percentage points, in South Australia. Two jurisdictions, Western Australia and the Northern Territory, recorded decreases in the rate in 2015.

However, as noted above, apparent retention rates are less reliable as measures of retention when disaggregated by jurisdiction than nationally. A number of factors may contribute to differences between states and territories in apparent retention rates from Year 10 to Year 12:

- Rates at the state and territory level can be inflated or deflated by interstate migration, including students transferring from one state to another to undertake senior secondary schooling. These changes are not taken into account in calculating apparent retention rates.
- Differential rates of international immigration, including the temporary entry of overseas students for Years 11 and 12, will also inflate apparent retention rates in those jurisdictions where these incoming students are concentrated.
- The age distribution of the school population affects the year level (Year 11 or Year 12) to which most students must remain at school (or in alternative participation pathways) in order to meet participation requirements. This varies between states and territories because of historical difference in enrolment requirements and practices. States and territories with younger year cohorts will tend to have higher Year 10 to Year 12 retention rates, as a higher proportion of their student population is required to remain at school until the second half of Year 12.⁵³
- State and territory retention rates will also be affected by factors that are independent of schooling, such as differences in prevailing economic circumstances, including youth employment, and the availability and promotion of training and employment pathways that are recognised as approved alternatives to senior secondary schooling. States with more employment and training opportunities for 16- and 17-year-olds may record lower rates of retention to Year 12.

The overall increase in retention from Year 10 to Year 12 over the last six years is in line with the policy intent of governments in strengthening requirements for 15–16-year-olds to participate full time in education and/or training and/or employment.

However, retention to Year 12 is not, by itself, a KPM for schooling for the full student population, because progressing to Year 12 is one of several acceptable means by which students can meet participation requirements.

⁵³ These students will be included in the annual schools census conducted in August and therefore in the numerator of the apparent Year 10 to 12 retention rate. The higher age participation requirement in Western Australia will also tend to raise the apparent Year 10 to 12 retention rate in that state.

Key Performance Measure 1(e) Apparent retention rates from Year 10 to Year 12

(Indigenous school students cf. non-Indigenous school students)

This KPM relates to the COAG target to at least halve the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous 20–24-year-olds in Year 12 or equivalent attainment rates by 2020, but is not, by itself, a direct measure of progress towards the target.⁵⁴

Table 3.10 and figure 3.2 report this KPM for the period 2009–2015.

Table 3.10

Apparent retention rates, Year 10 to Year 12, by Indigenous status (per cent) and gap Indigenous/non-Indigenous (percentage points) Australia, 2009–2015

| | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 |
|---------------------------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Indigenous | 50.1 | 52.5 | 53.5 | 53.3 | 55.8 | 60.4 | 60.6 |
| Non-Indigenous | 77.7 | 79.5 | 80.6 | 80.4 | 81.9 | 83.6 | 83.8 |
| Gap (Indigenous/non-Indigenous) | 27.6 | 27.0 | 27.1 | 27.1 | 26.1 | 23.2 | 23.2 |

Notes

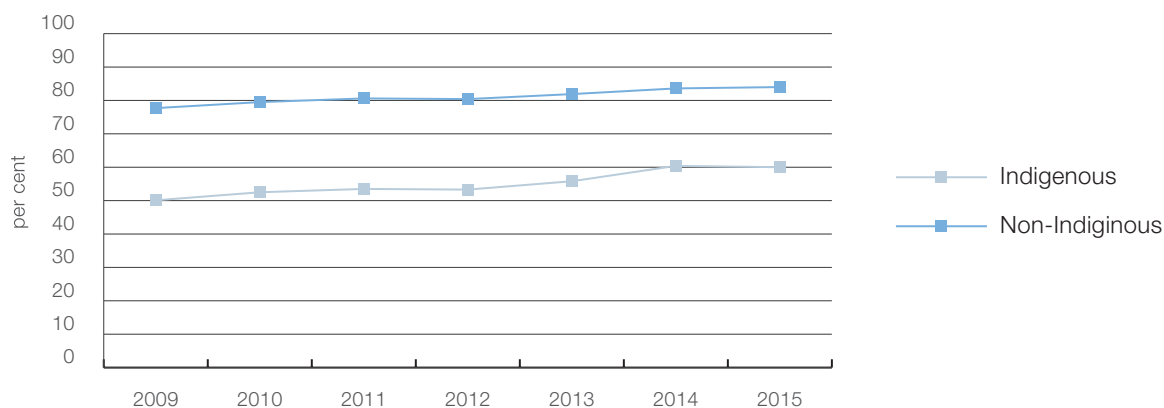
Refer to notes for table 3.9

Apparent retention rates for Indigenous students can be affected by changes over time in whether individuals identify (or are identified) as Indigenous.

Source: ABS, Cat. No. 4221.0, *Schools, Australia, 2015*.

Figure 3.2

Apparent retention rates, Year 10 to Year 12, by Indigenous status, Australia, 2009–2015 (per cent)



⁵⁴ Measures for Year 12 or equivalent attainment for 20–24-year-olds are reported in part 3.4: Senior schooling and youth transitions.

Based on these data, retention from Year 10 to Year 12 for Indigenous students has increased substantially – by 10.5 percentage points since 2009, from 50.1 per cent in 2009 to 60.6 per cent in 2015. This exceeds the rise for non-Indigenous students of 6.1 percentage points over this period, leading to a narrowing of the gap by 4.4 percentage points. However, at 23.2 percentage points, the gap remains considerable, with Indigenous students still significantly less likely to proceed to Year 12 than other students. There was no change in the gap in 2015.

Apparent changes in 2015 were more marked in individual states and territories. In most jurisdictions, Indigenous apparent retention continued to rise and the gaps between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students continued to narrow. But in Western Australia, Tasmania and the Northern Territory apparent retention from Year 10 to 12 for Indigenous students decreased from a peak in 2014 and the gap with apparent retention rates for non-Indigenous students widened by 0.9, 7.1 and 4.0 percentage points respectively.

Table 3.11 reports KPM 1 (e) by state and territory for 2014 and 2015.

Table 3.11

Apparent retention rates, Year 10 to Year 12, by Indigenous status, by state and territory (per cent), and gap Indigenous/non-Indigenous (percentage points) 2014 and 2015

| 2014 | NSW | Vic. | Qld | SA | WA | Tas. | NT | ACT | Australia |
|----------------------------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|-----------|
| Indigenous | 48.9 | 60.3 | 70.5 | 84.2 | 61.7 | 56.3 | 48.0 | 79.6 | 60.4 |
| Non-Indigenous | 78.9 | 84.4 | 87.0 | 90.1 | 87.2 | 70.3 | 78.5 | 92.6 | 83.6 |
| Gap (Indigenous/ non-Indigenous) | 30.0 | 24.1 | 16.5 | 5.9 | 25.5 | 14.0 | 30.5 | 13.0 | 23.2 |
| 2015 | NSW | Vic. | Qld | SA | WA | Tas. | NT | ACT | Australia |
| Indigenous | 49.3 | 66.8 | 72.4 | 87.6 | 56.1 | 52.6 | 42.1 | 87.4 | 60.6 |
| Non-Indigenous | 78.9 | 85.0 | 87.7 | 92.4 | 82.5 | 73.7 | 76.6 | 95.3 | 83.8 |
| Gap (Indigenous/ non-Indigenous) | 29.6 | 18.2 | 15.3 | 4.8 | 26.4 | 21.1 | 34.5 | 7.9 | 23.2 |
| Change in gap 2014–15 | -0.4 | -5.9 | -1.2 | -1.1 | 0.9 | 7.1 | 4 | -5.1 | 0 |

Notes

Refer to notes for table 3.9

Apparent retention rates for Indigenous students can be affected by changes over time in whether individuals identify (or are identified) as Indigenous.

Small numbers of Indigenous students can affect results at the state and territory level.

For a longer time series of comparative apparent retention rates by state and territory, see the National Report on Schooling Data Portal.

Source: ABS, Cat. No. 4221.0, *Schools, Australia*, 2015.

Table 3.11 displays variation between states and territories, both in apparent retention rates for Indigenous students and in the percentage point gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous rates.

Along with factors affecting the state-by-state comparison of apparent retention rates for all students, noted above, a number of factors may contribute to these variations. These include:

- the number and proportion of Indigenous students within each population
- changes over time in whether individuals identify (or are identified) as Indigenous
- movement of Indigenous students between states and territories (for example, through scholarship programs for senior schooling)
- the age profile of the Indigenous student population in relation to age participation requirements
- the extent of training and employment programs that provide alternative options to senior schooling
- different rates between states of (non-Indigenous) international immigration including overseas students
- the geographic distribution of the Indigenous population, in particular its concentration in rural and remote communities.

In all states and territories apparent retention from Year 10 to Year 12 in 2015 was higher for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander girls than for boys.

A number of other major reports provide information on Indigenous disadvantage and gaps in outcomes between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders and non-Indigenous Australians, including reporting progress towards COAG Closing the Gap targets for education. These include:

- [Closing the Gap – Prime Minister’s Report 2016; 2017](#)
- [Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage: Key Indicators 2016](#)
- [National Indigenous Reform Agreement: Performance Assessment 2013–14](#)

3.3 Student achievement – National Assessment Program

Part 3.3 reports on the KPMs for student achievement in the National Assessment Program (NAP) specified in the [Measurement Framework for Schooling in Australia 2015](#).

For 2015, this includes KPMs for the NAP – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN), for the sample assessment in science literacy and for the international sample assessments, the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) and the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS).

3.3.1 NAP – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN)

In 2015, the eighth year of national literacy and numeracy testing, Year 3, 5, 7 and 9 students in Australia were assessed on reading, writing, language conventions (spelling, grammar and punctuation) and numeracy.

The [2015 NAPLAN National Report](#) and the [NAPLAN results](#) page of the NAP website provide nationally comparable information about the achievements of the cohort of students that sat the reading and numeracy tests in Year 3 in 2009, through to 2015, when students in this cohort sat their final NAPLAN tests in Year 9 (cohort gain).

NAPLAN participation rates, mean scale scores and proportions of students achieving at or above the national minimum standard in reading, writing and numeracy at each year level are specified as key performance measures (KPMs) in the [Measurement Framework for Schooling in Australia 2015](#). These are reported for 2015 in the tables below.

Data are presented for the years 2009–2015 by state and territory, sex, Indigenous status, language background other than English, geolocation, parental education and parental occupation at each year level and for each domain of the test on the results page of the [NAP website](#).

Information about how to interpret scales and standards is also available on the [NAP website](#).

Reading

Key performance measure 2(a)

Proportion of students achieving at or above the national minimum standard for reading

Key performance measure 2(b)

NAPLAN mean scale scores for reading

Table 3.12 reports KPMs 2(a) and 2(b) for Years 3, 5, 7 and 9, 2015.

Table 3.12

Summary for reading for Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 for Australia (proportion at or above national minimum standards (per cent); mean scale scores), 2015

| | Year 3 | Year 5 | Year 7 | Year 9 |
|--|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| Proportion of students at or above national minimum standard (%) | 94.6 | 93.3 | 95.4 | 92.3 |
| CI \pm | 0.2 | 0.2 | 0.3 | 0.3 |
| Mean scale score | 425.5 | 498.5 | 546.0 | 580.2 |
| (standard deviation) | (86.8) | (78.2) | (67.3) | (67.5) |

Notes:

Exempt students were not assessed and are deemed not to have met the national minimum standard.

CI = Confidence interval. Confidence intervals reflect the level of uncertainty associated with the measurement of achievement. They define a range of values within which the true level of achievement is likely to lie. This table shows 95 per cent confidence intervals for percentages of students at or above the national minimum standard. This means, for example, that where the percentage shown is 90% \pm 0.5 it can be said with 95 per cent confidence the true value lies between 89.5 per cent and 90.5 per cent.

Confidence intervals cited should be used to compare data within 2015 only.

Sources: ACARA, *National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy, Achievement in Reading, Persuasive Writing, Language Conventions and Numeracy, National Report for 2015*; ACARA (unpublished data).

At the national level between 2014 and 2015, there was no statistically significant change in the proportion of students achieving at or above the national minimum standard for reading across all year levels. There was also no statistically significant change in the NAPLAN mean scale scores for reading.

Summary of trends in reading

- Nationally, there have been significant improvements in Year 3 reading achievement from 2008 to 2015.
- Among Indigenous students in Year 3, 5 and 7, there was a significant increase in the percentage of students attaining the national minimum standard between 2008 and 2015.
- For Year 5, there was no overall improvement in mean reading achievement or in percentage of students at or above the national minimum standard from 2008 to 2015. Improvements were evident in mean reading scores in Queensland, Western Australia, Tasmania and the ACT. There was also an increase between 2008 and 2015 in the percentage of students working at or above the national minimum standard in Queensland from 86.9 to 93.8 per cent, and in Western Australia from 89.1 to 91.9 per cent.
- Although there was no overall improvement in the national mean reading achievement for Year 7, there were increases in the percentage of students working at or above the national minimum standard in Queensland and Western Australia between 2008 and 2015. In these jurisdictions, this improvement may be partly attributed to a flow through of improvements for Year 5 and Year 3 in earlier cycles of NAPLAN.

- At Year 9, reading achievement has been stable from 2008 to 2015 in the mean score and the percentage of students working at or above the national minimum standard. There was an increase of 15 score points in the mean reading achievement scores for Year 9 students in Western Australia. However, there were no other examples of changes in mean reading achievement scores for Year 9.

Writing

Key performance measure 2(c)

Proportion of students achieving at or above the national minimum standard for writing

Key performance measure 2(d)

NAPLAN mean scale scores for writing

Table 3.13 reports on KPM 2(c) and 2(d) for Years 3, 5, 7 and 9, 2015

Table 3.13

Summary for persuasive writing for Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 for Australia: (proportion of students achieving at or above the national minimum standard (per cent); mean scale scores, 2015

| | Year 3 | Year 5 | Year 7 | Year 9 |
|--|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| Proportion of students at or above national minimum standard (%) | 95.5 | 92.3 | 87.3 | 80.5 |
| CI \pm | 0.2 | 0.3 | 0.5 | 0.7 |
| Mean scale score | 416.3 | 478.1 | 510.6 | 546.5 |
| (standard deviation) | (67.4) | (66.1) | (76.0) | (85.2) |

Notes:

Exempt students were not assessed and were deemed not to have met the national minimum standard.

CI = Confidence interval. Confidence intervals reflect the level of uncertainty associated with the measurement of achievement. They define a range of values within which the true level of achievement is likely to lie. This table shows 95 per cent confidence intervals for percentages of students at or above the national minimum standard. This means, for example, that where the percentage shown is 90% \pm 0.5, it can be said with 95 per cent confidence the true value lies between 89.5 per cent and 90.5 per cent.

Confidence intervals cited should be used to compare data within 2015 only.

Results for the persuasive writing task are reported on a separate persuasive writing scale that is not comparable with the original narrative writing scale. Student performances in writing 2011–2015 should not be compared with those from 2008–2010.

Sources: ACARA, *National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy, Achievement in Reading, Persuasive Writing, Language Conventions and Numeracy, National Report for 2015*; ACARA (unpublished data)

In the first three years of testing (2008–2010), writing was assessed by testing students' ability to respond to a narrative writing task. In 2011, a change of genre was introduced, and the narrative task was replaced with a persuasive writing task. Results for the persuasive writing task are reported on a separate persuasive writing scale that is not comparable with the original narrative

writing scale. As a consequence, student performance in writing 2011–2015 cannot be compared with that for 2008–2010.

2014 was the first year that teachers were not advised in advance of the writing genre; that is, persuasive or narrative. The writing genre assessed in NAPLAN 2014 and 2015 was persuasive writing.

In 2015, two writing prompts were introduced in the NAPLAN writing assessment: one prompt for Years 3 and 5, and a different prompt of the same text type for Years 7 and 9. Previously, there was one prompt for all year levels.

This change was made following consultation with content and assessment experts as well as with state and territory representatives and other educators and researchers.

The use of two prompts should have no impact on how teachers prepare their students for NAPLAN writing tests, with students still required to write the same sorts of responses. Both writing prompts are on the same type of text – either narrative or persuasive – and students cannot choose the text type. The text type is revealed on the day of assessment.

Summary of trends in writing:

- There has been a significant increase in persuasive writing mean achievement relative to 2014 for Year 3 students.
- There has been a significant decrease in persuasive writing mean achievement relative to 2011 for Years 7 and 9 students.

Numeracy

Key performance measure 3(a)

Proportion of students achieving at or above the national minimum standard for numeracy

Key performance measure 3(b)

NAPLAN mean scale scores for numeracy

Table 3.14 reports KPMs 3(a) and 3(b) for Years 3, 5, 7 and 9, 2015

Table 3.14

Summary for numeracy for Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 for Australia: proportion of students at or above national minimum standard (per cent); mean scale scores, 2015

| | Year 3 | Year 5 | Year 7 | Year 9 |
|--|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| Proportion of students at or above the national minimum standard (%) | 94.4 | 95.1 | 95.9 | 95.7 |
| CI \pm | 0.2 | 0.2 | 0.2 | 0.2 |
| Mean scale score | 397.8 | 492.5 | 542.5 | 591.7 |
| (standard deviation) | (74.3) | (68.0) | (68.6) | (67.8) |

Notes:

Exempt students were not assessed and are deemed not to have met the national minimum standard.

CI = Confidence interval. Confidence intervals reflect the level of uncertainty associated with the measurement of achievement. They define a range of values within which the true level of achievement is likely to lie. This table shows 95 per cent confidence intervals for percentages of students at or above the national minimum standard. This means, for example, that where the percentage shown is 90% \pm 0.5 it can be said with 95 per cent confidence the true value lies between 89.5 per cent and 90.5 per cent.

Confidence intervals cited should be used to compare data within 2015 only.

Sources: ACARA, *National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy, Achievement in Reading, Persuasive Writing, Language Conventions and Numeracy, National Report for 2015*; ACARA (unpublished data).

Summary of trends in numeracy

- Numeracy achievement at the national level in Years 3, Year 7 and Year 9 has remained largely unchanged from 2008 to 2015.
- There was an improvement in mean numeracy achievement at Year 5 for all groups of students considered and across six jurisdictions – Queensland, Western Australia, Tasmania, South Australia, the ACT and Victoria – between 2008 and 2015.
- There were instances of change in some jurisdictions at other year levels. In Queensland, there were statistically significant improvements in numeracy in Year 3 and 9, and in Western Australia there were statistically significant improvements in numeracy in Year 9 between 2008 and 2015.

NAPLAN participation

Key performance measure 1(d)

Proportion of students participating in NAPLAN for Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 for reading, writing and numeracy

Table 3.15 reports KPM 1(c) for 2015.

Table 3.15

Proportion of students participating in NAPLAN for Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 for reading, persuasive writing and numeracy, 2015 (per cent)

| | Year 3 | Year 5 | Year 7 | Year 9 |
|--|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| Proportion of students participating in reading tests | 94.9 | 95.5 | 94.5 | 91.4 |
| Proportion of students participating in persuasive writing tests | 94.8 | 95.4 | 94.7 | 91.7 |
| Proportion of students participating in numeracy tests | 94.6 | 95.1 | 94.2 | 91.0 |

Notes:

Participation rates are calculated as all assessed and exempt students as a percentage of the total number of students in the year level, as reported by schools, which includes those absent and withdrawn.

Exempt students were not assessed and are deemed not to have met the national minimum standard.

Sources: ACARA, *National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy, Achievement in Reading, Persuasive Writing, Language Conventions and Numeracy, National Report for 2015*.

In summary:

- Nationally, there has been a small but steady decrease in participation rates in NAPLAN over the period from 2008 to 2015, with the average total decrease across the four year levels and two domains approximately 1.8 percentage points, or an average of 0.3 percentage points per year.
- Since 2010, when withdrawals were first reported, there has been an increase in the withdrawn rate. However, the large percentage (more than 90 per cent) of students participating each year in all domains ensures that results are reliable and valid at all levels.
- In 2015, participation rates were similar across Years 3, 5 and 7, but lower in Year 9 by 3–4 percentage points. In all year levels, participation rates in reading were slightly higher than in numeracy.
- For Year 9, compared to other year levels, absence is a substantial contribution to non-participation, with absence rates at 6.2 per cent in reading and 6.6 per cent in numeracy.⁵⁵
- As with previous years, participation rates in NAPLAN in 2015 were lower for Indigenous students than for non-Indigenous students across all cohorts and key domains.

⁵⁵ This is consistent with lower average school attendance rates in Years 8, 9 and 10 than in earlier years of schooling reported in Part 3.2.2 Attendance.

Detailed data on NAPLAN 2015 are available in the [2015 NAPLAN National Report](#), and in interactive form and for previous years on the 'Results' page of the [NAP website](#).

NAPLAN results are also reported at the school level on the [My School website](#), and parents receive an individual report on their child's achievement in the NAPLAN tests. A student report shows student performance against the national average and relative to the achievement band scale.

Closing the gap in literacy and numeracy

COAG Closing the Gap targets for education include the following target for literacy and numeracy.

Closing the Gap target

Halve the gap in reading, writing and numeracy achievement between Indigenous students and non-Indigenous students by 2018

The gap for this target is measured as the difference between the proportion of Indigenous and non-Indigenous students at or above the national minimum standard in reading and numeracy at Years 3, 5, 7 and 9. Writing results from 2011 onwards cannot be directly compared to the writing results from previous years so are not used to measure progress towards this target.

The [Closing the Gap Prime Minister's Report 2016](#) states that in 2015, results in Year 7 reading and Year 5, 7 and 9 numeracy were consistent with, or above, the required trajectory points to meet the target for halving the gap in meeting minimum standards at the national level. In the other four measures used for this target, 2015 results were below the required trajectory points, which means that further progress is needed for this target to be met.

In summary:

- Nationally, there were some statistically significant improvements in Indigenous reading and numeracy since 2008: Year 3, 5 and 7 reading and Year 5 and 9 numeracy. There has been no significant improvement in Year 9 reading or Year 3 and Year 7 numeracy since 2008.
- Across the eight measures used for this target (reading and numeracy for Years 3, 5, 7 and 9), the proportion of Indigenous students achieving national minimum standards is on track in four.
- Female Indigenous students are performing better than males.
- NAPLAN results for Indigenous students vary considerably according to geolocation; that is, remoteness, with significantly poorer results in remote and very remote schools.

For further information on Closing the Gap targets, see the [Closing the Gap Prime Minister's Report 2016](#).

NAPLAN results disaggregated by Indigenous status are provided on the [NAP results](#) page and in the NAP national report.

3.3.2 NAP Sample – Science Literacy

The National Sample Assessment – Science Literacy (NAP–SL) commenced in 2003, and assesses Year 6 students only. Every three years, samples of Year 6 students from across Australia are tested on their scientific literacy. This is defined as the application of broad conceptual understandings of science to make sense of the world, understanding natural phenomena and interpreting media reports about scientific issues. The assessment also includes asking investigable questions, conducting investigations, collecting and interpreting data, and making decisions.

Five cycles of the NAP–SL have now been completed (2003, 2006, 2009, 2012 and 2015). The 2015 NAP–SL sample assessment was delivered to 12,410 Year 6 students from 599 government, Catholic and independent schools across all states and territories in October–November 2015.

Proficient standard in science literacy

The national proficient standard in science literacy was established after the 2003 sample testing to provide a clear picture of the knowledge, skills and understanding that students are expected to demonstrate in science by the end of Year 6. This standard has informed the development of the tests for subsequent sample assessments.

Five levels of proficiency (levels 2, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 4) have been defined for NAP – Science Literacy. Level descriptors are available on ACARA's [NAP website](#).

The national proficient standard in science literacy has been determined to be at Level 3.2. The proficient standard is a challenging level of performance with students needing to demonstrate more than minimal or elementary skills to be regarded as reaching it.

Year 6 students who reach the proficient standard are able to: interpret information in a contextualised report by application of relevant science knowledge; interpret data and identify patterns in – and/or relationships between – elements of the data; collate and compare data sets of collected information; and give reasons for controlling a single variable.



Key performance measure 4(a)

Proportion of students achieving at or above the proficient standard (Level 3.2) in science literacy

KPM 4(a) for 2015 and for the years 2006, 2009 and 2012 is reported in table 3.16. The proportions of Year 6 students achieving at each proficiency level are also reported for 2015.

Table 3.16

Proportion of students achieving at each proficiency level and at or above the proficient standard (Level 3.2) in science literacy, 2015 (per cent); proportion of students achieving at or above the proficient standard, 2006–2015 (per cent).

| | Proficiency level 2015 | | | | | At or above the proficient standard |
|----------------------|------------------------|------|------|------|-------------------|-------------------------------------|
| | Level 2 or below | 3.1 | 3.2 | 3.3 | Level 4 and above | |
| Year 6 Australia (%) | 9.7 | 35.2 | 42.9 | 11.7 | 0.6 | 55.1 |
| CI ± | 1.0 | 1.6 | 1.5 | 1.2 | 0.3 | 1.8 |

| | At or above the proficient standard | | | | |
|----------------------|-------------------------------------|------|------|------|------|
| | 2003 | 2006 | 2009 | 2012 | 2015 |
| Year 6 Australia (%) | N/A | 54.3 | 51.9 | 51.4 | 55.1 |
| CI ± | N/A | 2.1 | 2.2 | 2.0 | 1.8 |

Notes:

CI = Confidence interval. Confidence intervals reflect the level of uncertainty associated with the measurement of achievement. They define a range of values within which the true level of achievement is likely to lie. This table shows 95 per cent confidence intervals for percentages of students at or above the national minimum standard. This means, for example, that where the percentage shown is 90% ± 0.5 it can be said with 95 per cent confidence the true value lies between 89.5 per cent and 90.5 per cent.

N/A: Not applicable. Due to a change in the structure of the assessment and the sampling in 2006, results from 2003 are not shown.

Source: ACARA, *NAP Sample Assessment Science Literacy 2015 public report*.

In summary:

- In 2015, at the national level, 55.1 per cent of Year 6 students attained the proficient standard or above in Science Literacy (KPM 4(a)). This was higher, but not significantly higher, than in the previous three assessments.
- Table 3.16 shows that KPM 4(a) decreased by 2.4 percentage points from 2006 to 2009 and by 0.5 percentage points from 2009 to 2012. From 2012 to 2015 it increased by 3.7 percentage points. However, these differences were not statistically significant.
- Analysis conducted for states and territories shows that the percentage of Western Australian students achieving at or above the proficient standard increased significantly from 2006 to 2015. Other differences in KPM 4(a) between assessment cycles for all other states and territories are not statistically significant.
- There was no statistically significant difference between 2012 and 2015 results in terms of mean scores either nationally or for any state or territory. There were significant increases in the mean scores of Western Australian students between 2006 and 2015 and of Tasmanian students between 2009 and 2015.

Further information on NAP Science Literacy is provided in the [NAP Sample Assessment Science Literacy 2015 Public Report](#).

3.3.3 Programme for International Student Assessment

The Organisation of Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) compares the performance of 15-year-old students internationally. PISA aims to measure how well a sample of 15-year-old students are able to apply their knowledge and skills in the three domains of reading, mathematical and scientific literacy.

PISA assessments are triennial. In each cycle of PISA, one domain is selected as the main focus on a rotating basis. In PISA 2015, scientific literacy was the major domain. Scientific literacy was also the major domain in 2006. Once a domain has been a main focus, reliable comparisons can be made between the results in the first focus year and results in subsequent testing years.

PISA data on student achievement can be disaggregated by a number of factors, including sex, Indigenous status, geographic location, and language and immigrant background.

Information about the background of PISA, the framework that is used to design the assessments, the implementation of PISA and further technical information is available from the [OECD PISA website](#).

More than 540,000 students from 35 OECD countries and 37 'partner' countries or economies⁵⁶ participated in PISA 2015, and 14,530 Australian students took part.

PISA is one of the international assessments in Australia's National Assessment Program and provides data for the following key performance measures specified in the *Measurement Framework for Schooling in Australia, 2015*.

KPM 2(e)

Proportion of students achieving at or above the proficient standard (level 3) on the OECD PISA combined reading scale

KPM 3(c)

Proportion of students achieving at or above the proficient standard (level 3) on the OECD PISA combined mathematics scale

KPM 4(b)

Proportion of students achieving at or above the proficient standard (level 3) on the OECD PISA combined scientific literacy scale

KPMs 2(e), 3(c) and 4(b) for PISA 2015 and for relevant previous assessments are reported in table 3.17. The table also includes the OECD averages for PISA 2015 for the proportion of students achieving above the proficient standard in each domain, and the proportions of Australian students achieving in each band of the PISA scales in 2015.

⁵⁶ 'Partner countries' are countries that are not members of the OECD. 'Partner economies' are areas/districts in China that do not represent China as a whole.

Table 3.17

Achievement in PISA: proportion of students achieving at each proficiency level and at or above the proficient standard (per cent) Australia, 2015; proportion of students at or above the proficient standard, OECD average (per cent), 2015; proportion of students achieving at or above the proficient standard (per cent), Australia, 2000–2015

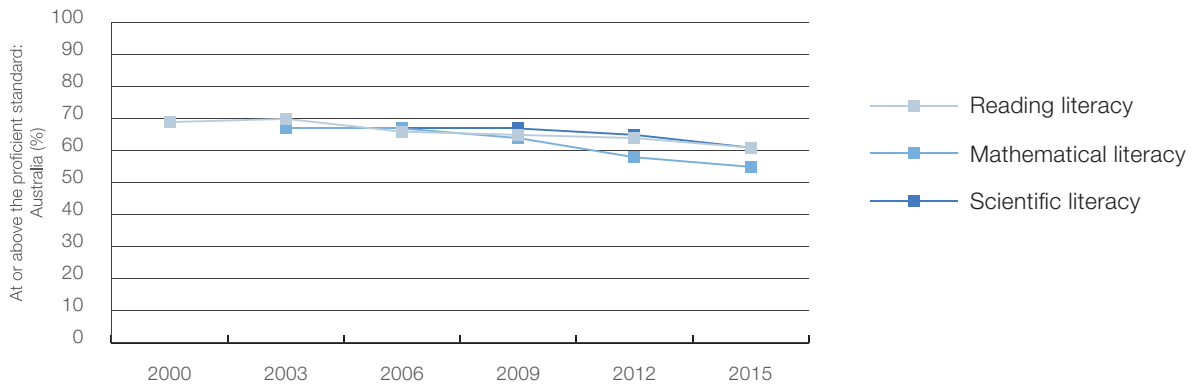
| | Proficiency level 2015 (%) | | | | | | | At or above the proficient standard: Australia 2015 | At or above the proficient standard: OECD average 2015 |
|---|----------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|---|---|--|
| | Below 1 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | (%) | (%) |
| Reading literacy | | | | | | | | KPM 2(e) | |
| Australian students | 5 | 12 | 21 | 28 | 22 | 9 | 2 | 61 | 57 |
| Mathematical literacy | | | | | | | | KPM 3(c) | |
| Australian students | 8 | 14 | 23 | 25 | 19 | 9 | 3 | 55 | 54 |
| Scientific literacy | | | | | | | | KPM 4(b) | |
| Australian students | 4 | 13 | 22 | 27 | 22 | 9 | 2 | 61 | 54 |
| Proportion of students at or above the proficient standard, Australia, 2000–2015 (%) | | | | | | | | | |
| | 2000 | 2003 | 2006 | 2009 | 2012 | 2015 | | | |
| Reading literacy | 69 | 70 | 66 | 65 | 64 | 61 | | | |
| Mathematical literacy | NA | 67 | 67 | 64 | 58 | 55 | | | |
| Scientific literacy | NA | NA | 67 | 67 | 65 | 61 | | | |

Source: Thomson, S., De Bortoli, L. and Underwood, C. (2017) PISA 2015: Reporting Australia's results. ACER.

Figure 3.3 shows the movements of the three PISA KPMs over relevant PISA assessment cycles.

Figure 3.3

Proportion of students achieving at or above the proficient standard (Level 3), all domains, Australia, PISA 2000 – PISA 2015



In summary:

- In PISA 2015, 61 per cent of Australian students (15-year-olds) met or exceeded the national proficient standard for reading literacy (KPM 2(c)) and for scientific literacy (KPM 4(b)) adopted by Australia.
- 55 per cent of Australian students met or exceeded the national proficient standard for mathematical literacy (KPM 3(c)).
- At the national level, there has been an overall downwards trend in all three KPMs for PISA, but the proportions of Australian students meeting the national proficient standard (Level 3) in 2015 were above the OECD average in all domains.
- Australian students achieved an average score of 503 points in reading literacy, of 494 points in mathematical literacy and of 510 points in scientific literacy. Australia's average scores in all three domains declined between 2012 and 2015 but were significantly higher than the OECD average in all three domains.

Further detailed information on PISA results for 2015, including international and interstate comparisons are provided in [PISA 2015: Reporting Australia's results](#).

3.3.4 National Assessment Program – Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS)

The Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) measures the mathematics and science achievement of students in their fourth and eighth years of schooling. TIMSS assessments are supported with data about country, home, school and classroom learning environments.

TIMSS was first conducted in 1995. Australia has participated in all six cycles. Although the study is referred to as 2015, in Australia the assessment took place in 2014, because of differences in the timing of the school year in the northern and southern hemispheres.

In TIMSS 2015, 49 countries and seven benchmarking participants participated in the Year 4 TIMSS assessment, and 39 countries and seven benchmarking participants participated in the Year 8 TIMSS assessment. In Australia, 287 schools (Year 4) and 285 schools (Year 8) were involved, with over 16,000 students sitting the test.

Information about the background of TIMSS, the framework that is used to design the assessments, the management of the assessment and further technical information is available from ACER.

TIMSS is specified as a component of the National Assessment Program (NAP) in the [Measurement Framework for Schooling in Australia 2015](#). The proportions of students achieving at or above the proficient standard (Intermediate international benchmark) in TIMSS mathematics and science are key performance measures in the measurement framework.

Key performance measure 3(d)

Proportion of students achieving at or above the proficient standard (Intermediate international benchmark) on the TIMSS Mathematics scales

The proportions of students achieving at or above the proficient standard and mean scale scores for each subject are reported in tables 3.18 and 3.19.

Table 3.18

Proportion of students achieving at or above the proficient standard on the TIMSS Mathematics scale (per cent) and mean scale score, Australia, 2015; Proportion of students at or above the proficient standard, 2003 to 2015

| TIMSS Mathematics 2015 | Year 4 | Year 8 | | |
|--|--------|--------|------|------|
| Proportion of students at or above the proficient standard (%) | 70 | 64 | | |
| Mean scale score | 517 | 505 | | |
| (standard error) | (3.1) | (3.1) | | |
| Proportion of students at or above the proficient standard (%) | | | | |
| | 2003 | 2007 | 2011 | 2015 |
| Year 4 Australia | 64 | 71 | 70 | 70 |
| Year 8 Australia | 65 | 61 | 63 | 64 |

Source: Sue Thomson, Nicole Wernert, Elizabeth O'Grady and Sima Rodrigues, *TIMSS 2015: Reporting Australia's results*. Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) 2017.

Key performance measure 4(c)

Proportion of students achieving at or above the proficient standard (Intermediate international benchmark) on the TIMSS Science scales

Table 3.19

Proportion of students achieving at or above the proficient standard on the TIMSS Science scale (per cent) and mean scale score, Australia, 2015; Proportion of students at or above the proficient standard, 2003 to 2015

| TIMSS Science 2015 | Year 4 | Year 8 |
|--|--------|--------|
| Proportion of students at or above the proficient standard (%) | 75 | 69 |
| Mean scale score | 524 | 512 |
| (standard error) | (2.9) | (2.7) |

| Proportion of students at or above the proficient standard (%) | | | | |
|--|------|------|------|------|
| | 2003 | 2007 | 2011 | 2015 |
| Year 4 Australia | 74 | 76 | 72 | 75 |
| Year 8 Australia | 76 | 70 | 70 | 69 |

Source: Sue Thomson, Nicole Wernert, Elizabeth O'Grady and Sima Rodrigues, *TIMSS 2015: Reporting Australia's results*. Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) 2017.

In summary:

- TIMSS 2015 results for mathematics show that 70 per cent of Year 4 students and 64 per cent of Year 8 students achieved the national proficient standard (intermediate international benchmark).
- TIMSS 2015 results for science show that 75 per cent of Year 4 students and 69 per cent of Year 8 students achieved the national proficient standard (intermediate international benchmark).
- Results from TIMSS 2015 show that Australian student achievement in mathematics and science is largely unchanged, but that Australia is slipping backwards relative to other countries.
- A national report, which provides information about the performance of Australian students, including interstate and international comparisons, is published for the TIMSS assessment. Key findings from the 2015 report are available on the [ACER website](#).

Caution should always be used when making direct comparisons between countries. As with all data, PISA and TIMSS must be viewed in context. Education systems within each country are heavily influenced by their culture, socio-economic makeup, demographics and political systems.

In the case of PISA, partner 'economies' are not representative of an entire country. Also, not all information relating to educational performance is collected; for example, private investment in education, parental support and after-school education. Therefore, the degree to which various factors relate to student performance cannot be definitively quantified.

3.4 Senior schooling and youth transitions

Part 3.4 reports on key performance measures (KPMs) for schooling for:

- the participation of young people, including secondary students, in vocational education and training (VET), and in education, training and work
- the attainment of young people in senior schooling and/or post-school education and training.

These measures reflect the intent of the Melbourne Declaration to define educational goals, not only for school students, but for all young Australians, and the role of the *National Report on Schooling in Australia* to report on the outcomes of schooling.

They also reflect the Melbourne Declaration commitment to 'support the senior years of schooling and the provision of high-quality pathways to facilitate effective transitions between further study, training and employment.' As such, these are indicators of the success of schooling in preparing students for further education and work.

3.4.1 Participation of young people in VET, including VET in Schools

The Australian vocational education and training (VET) sector provides nationally consistent training and qualifications for those entering or already engaged in the workforce. Competency standards (units of competency) for VET qualifications in different industries and occupations are included in national training packages, which also define qualifications in each industry.

The requirements for each level of VET qualification are set out in the [Australian Qualifications Framework \(AQF\)](#)⁵⁷, which also provides guidelines for senior secondary certificates of education (Year 12 qualifications) and qualifications in the higher education sector.

Secondary school students in all states and territories can undertake accredited VET courses as part of their school program (VET in Schools⁵⁸ courses), usually in the senior years of schooling as a part of the Senior Secondary Certificate of Education in each jurisdiction.

57 The AQF is the national framework of qualifications in the school, vocational education and training (VET), and higher education sectors in Australia. The Senior Secondary Certificate of Education, Certificates II, III and IV, Diploma and Bachelor Degree are examples of qualifications within the AQF.

58 [Preparing Secondary Students for Work – A framework for vocational learning and VET delivered to secondary students](#) released by the Education Council (December 2014) adopts the term 'VET (delivered to secondary students)' to replace the term VET in Schools (VETiS) used for these programs. However, for 2015, the term 'VET in Schools' (VETiS) continued to be used in the VET sector to identify VET delivered to senior secondary students and for data collection and reporting purposes. 'VET in Schools' continues to be the term used within the Australian Vocational Educational and Training Management Information Statistical Standard (AVETMISS).

Secondary students enrolled in VET include school-based apprentices and trainees. These are students who, as well as undertaking an accredited VET qualification as a part of their school studies, have entered into a formal contract of part-time paid employment and training with an employer. Typically, these students undertake part of their traineeship or apprenticeship while at school, and complete it once they have left school.

Enrolments in VET and school-based apprenticeships and traineeships, and VET qualifications issued, are reported at the school level on the [My School website](#) for schools with senior secondary enrolments.

Senior secondary students can also take VET courses in addition to their school studies, or leave school to take up full-time VET study, or a combination of part-time VET and work, as alternative pathways to meet requirements for young people to participate in education, training or employment.

The KPM for participation in VET includes all 15–19-year-old VET students (whether or not they are enrolled in school) as a proportion of the 15–19-year-old population. The specification for participation is the completion of at least one unit of competency in a VET qualification at AQF Certificate II or above.⁵⁹

Key performance measure 1(f)
Participation in VET including VET in Schools

Proportion of the population aged 15–19 years who, in the calendar year, successfully completed at least one unit of competency as part of a VET qualification at AQF Certificate II or above

Table 3.20 and figure 3.4 show national data for this KPM for the period 2009–2015. There is a break in the series between 2013 and 2014, when reporting requirements for VET providers were extended to include privately funded accredited VET training. This change contributes to the higher numbers and proportions of 15–19-year-olds reported as participating in VET in 2014 and 2015 than in previous years.

⁵⁹ The specification of the successful completion of a unit of competency in the KPM is a marker for genuine participation in a VET course (as opposed to an initial enrolment, which may not be followed through). It is not intended that the KPM be regarded as a measure of attainment. AQF Certificate II is regarded as entry level training for employment.

Data for KPM 1(f) by state and territory are provided in the National Report on Schooling data portal.

Table 3.20

Number and proportion of 15–19-year-olds who successfully completed at least one unit of competency as a part of a VET qualification at AQF Certificate II or above, Australia, 2009–2015

| Australia | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 |
|---|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Number of 15–19-year-olds successfully completing at least one unit of competency at AQF II or above ('000) | 359.1 | 374.0 | 399.2 | 418.5 | 395.5 | 494.8 | 480.8 |
| 15–19-year-old population ('000) | 1,462.4 | 1,460.0 | 1,453.5 | 1,459.7 | 1,466.7 | 1,474.7 | 1,477.1 |
| Proportion of 15–19-year-olds successfully completing at least one unit of competency at AQF II or above (per cent) | 24.6 | 25.6 | 27.5 | 28.7 | 27.0 | 33.6 | 32.6 |

Notes:

A successfully completed unit of competency/module includes competencies with an outcome of competency achieved/pass/recognition of prior learning granted.

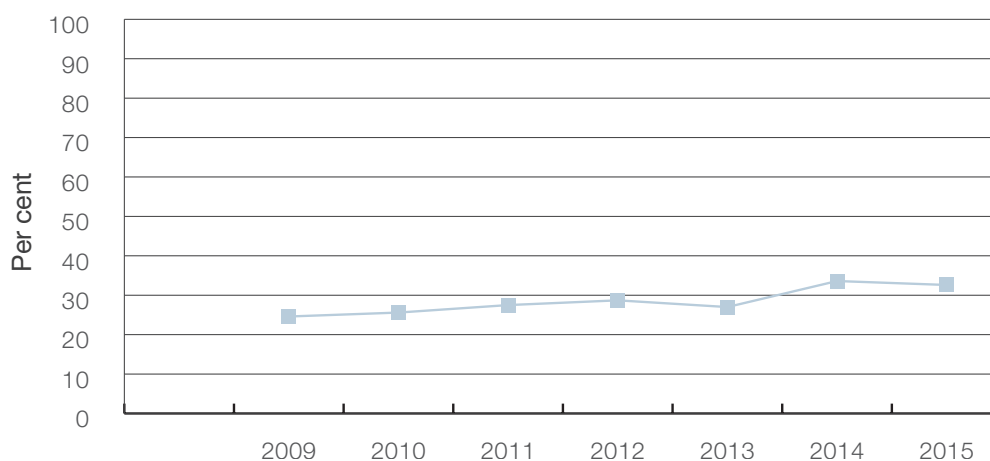
The KPM is derived by calculating student numbers in the 15–19-year age group as a percentage of the estimated residential population in the corresponding group.

From January 2014, all registered training organisations (RTOs), including private providers, were required to collect and report full AVETMISS⁶⁰ data on all nationally accredited training. This represents a break in the series.

Sources: NCVER, National VET in Schools Collection 2009–15; NCVER, National VET Provider Collection 2009–15; ABS, Cat. No. 3101.0, *Australian demographic statistics*.

Figure 3.4

Proportion of 15–19-year-olds successfully completing at least one unit of competency at AQF II or above (per cent)



In addition to KPM 1(e), education ministers have approved two program measures for young people's participation and attainment in VET, disaggregated by industry area and by qualification level.

VET program measure 1

Occupation and industry profile of VET engagement for 15–19-year-olds who in the calendar year successfully completed at least one unit of competency/module as a part of a VET qualification at AQF Certificate II or above

Table 3.21 reports VET program measure 1 for 2015 using the Australian standard classifications for field of education as a proxy for occupation/industry profile. Other disaggregations, by industry skills council and by occupational category, are provided in the National Report on Schooling data portal along with state and territory data.

Table 3.21

Number of 15–19-year-olds participating in VET at AQF Certificate II or above, by field of education^a of major course^b, Australia, 2015

| Field of education | Number of students |
|---|--------------------|
| 01 - Natural and physical sciences | 2,374 |
| 02 - Information technology | 19,224 |
| 03 - Engineering and related technologies | 70,199 |
| 04 - Architecture and building | 44,925 |
| 05 - Agriculture, environmental and related studies | 15,276 |
| 06 - Health | 20,834 |
| 07 - Education | 6,526 |
| 08 - Management and commerce | 86,569 |
| 09 - Society and culture | 80,915 |
| 10 - Creative arts | 33,843 |
| 11 - Food, hospitality and personal services | 75,878 |
| 12 - Mixed field programmes | 24,279 |
| Total | 480,842 |

Notes:

- a. Field of education is according to ABS 1272.0 – Australian Standard Classification of Education (ASCED), 2001
- b. Major course relates to the highest qualification attempted by a student in the reporting year.

Sources: NCVER, National VET in Schools Collection 2015; NCVER, National VET Provider Collection 2015.

VET program measure 2

Level of AQF certification for 15–19-year-olds who in the calendar year successfully completed a VET qualification

Table 3.22

VET qualifications completed by 15–19-year-olds, by qualification level of major course^a, Australia, 2015

| Qualification level | Number |
|---------------------|----------------|
| Certificate I | 30,188 |
| Certificate II | 96,646 |
| Certificate III | 62,310 |
| Certificate IV | 14,629 |
| Diploma or higher | 12,712 |
| Non-AQF | 1,209 |
| Total | 217,694 |

Notes

a. Major course relates to the highest qualification attempted by a student in the reporting year.

Numbers of enrolments and numbers of qualifications should not be compared. Enrolments include students in their first, second or third year of a VET course and from multiple cohorts, whereas qualifications completed are most likely to be issued in the final year of school. In addition, a student may intend to complete only a partial qualification while at school.

Sources: NCVER, National VET in Schools Collection 2015; NCVER, National VET Provider Collection 2015.

State and territory data for VET qualifications completed by 15–19-year-olds are provided in the National Report on Schooling data portal.

Enrolments and qualifications in VET by secondary students are reported at the school level, by field of education and qualification level, on the [My School website](#).

KPM 1(f) and the VET program measures include all 15–19-year-old students undertaking VET. The information below refers to VET delivered to 15–19-year-old secondary school students. For the purposes of the national VET in Schools data collection⁶¹, these are students who are undertaking accredited VET as a part of a Senior Secondary Certificate of Education.⁶² These data are not restricted to Certificate II or above, or to students who have successfully completed at least one unit of competency.

61 The national VET in Schools data collection is compiled by the National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER) from data provided by states and territories.

62 In some jurisdictions, students who have left school but are receiving credit for a VET course towards a senior secondary certificate may be included in these counts.

Table 3.23 shows the number of 15–19-year-old students undertaking VET in Schools programs each year 2009–2015 with school-based apprentices and trainees disaggregated.

Table 3.23

Number of 15–19-year-old students undertaking VET in Schools programs, Australia, 2009–2015

| | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 |
|---|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| School-based apprentices and trainees ^a ('000) | 20.9 | 17.3 | 18.1 | 22.5 | 21.7 | 20.5 | 19.7 |
| Other VET in Schools program students ('000) | 195.8 | 203.6 | 218.3 | 219.8 | 218.1 | 216.1 | 226.8 |
| Total VET in Schools students ('000) | 216.7 | 220.9 | 236.4 | 242.3 | 239.7 | 236.6 | 246.5 |

a. School-based apprentices and trainees include students who undertook at least one module/unit of competency in a school-based apprenticeship or traineeship.

Sources: NCVET, National VET in Schools Collection, 2015; NCVET *Australian vocational education and training statistics: Young people in education and training 2015*.

In the 2015 calendar year, there were 236,600 students aged 15–19 years enrolled in VET in Schools programs. Of these students:

- 53.7 per cent were male and 46.2 per cent were female.
- 54.9 per cent were enrolled in Certificate II qualifications and a further 31.6 per cent were enrolled in Certificate III qualifications.
- 8.0 per cent were undertaking a school-based apprenticeship or traineeship.

The most popular fields of education were society and culture (17.5 per cent), followed by management and commerce (16.8 per cent), and food, hospitality and personal services (15.9 per cent).

Between 2014 and 2015, the number of VET in Schools students aged 15–19 years increased by 4.2 per cent and the number enrolled in Certificate II or above qualifications increased by 5.9 per cent. This is in line with a policy emphasis on encouraging participation in higher level qualifications.

Due to time constraints, VET in Schools courses do not necessarily lead to the achievement of a full AQF VET qualification. Where they do not, students assessed as competent in one or more units of competency receive a statement of attainment towards a certificate or other qualification and are eligible to complete the full qualification post-school.

Further detailed information, including data disaggregated by state and territory, data definitions and data quality issues, are provided in the NCVET publication [Australian vocational education and training statistics: Young people in education and training 2015](#).

3.4.2 Participation in education and work

KPMs 1(g) and 1(h) measure the full-time participation in education, training and employment of two groups of young people:

- 15–19-year-olds, including school students and those who have left school and have moved into tertiary study or the workforce
- 20–24-year-olds, who may be undertaking vocational education and training (VET) or university study, working, or a combination of these activities.

Full-time participation is defined as participation in full-time education or training, or full-time work, or a combination of both part-time education or training and part-time work. The measures are based on the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) [Survey of Education and Work](#) (SEW), which is conducted in May each year.

Key performance measure 1(g)

Proportion of 15 to 19-year-olds in full-time education or training, in full-time work, or both in part-time work and part-time education or training

Key performance measure 1(h)

Proportion of 20 to 24-year-olds in full-time education or training, in full-time work, or both in part-time work and part-time education or training

KPMs 1(g) and 1(h) are shown for the period 2009–2015 in table 3.24.

Table 3.24

Proportions of 15–19-year-olds and 20–24-year-olds in full-time education or training, in full-time work, or both in part-time work and part-time education or training, Australia, 2009–2015 (per cent)

| Calendar year | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 |
|---|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| | % | % | % | % | % | % | % |
| Full-time participation rates for 15–19-year-olds | 84.1 | 84.8 | 85.3 | 86.5 | 86.3 | 87.2 | 87.4 |
| CI± | 1.4 | 1.5 | 1.4 | 1.0 | 1.2 | 1.1 | 0.3 |
| Full-time participation rates for 20–24-year-olds | 77.1 | 77.2 | 77.0 | 76.6 | 73.8 | 74.1 | 73.6 |
| CI± | 2.0 | 1.6 | 1.5 | 1.7 | 1.1 | 1.6 | 1.7 |

Notes:

CI = Confidence interval

The percentages reported in this table include 95 per cent confidence intervals. Confidence intervals are a way of expressing the degree of sampling and measurement error associated with survey estimates. For example, an estimate of 80 with a 95 per cent confidence interval of ± 2 means that if the total population was surveyed rather than a sample, there

is a 95 per cent chance that the result would lie between 78 and 82.

Full-time participation is defined as participation in full-time education or training or full-time work, or a combination of both part-time education or training and part-time work.

From 2012, participation data published by ABS to report the results of the Survey of Education and Work have been limited to study for a qualification only, instead of all study.

The sample in the Survey of Education and Work was expanded in 2013 to include people who were permanently unable to work. This may result in slightly lower participation rates than would otherwise be the case.

Source: ABS, Cat. No. 6227.0, *Education and Work*, May 2015.

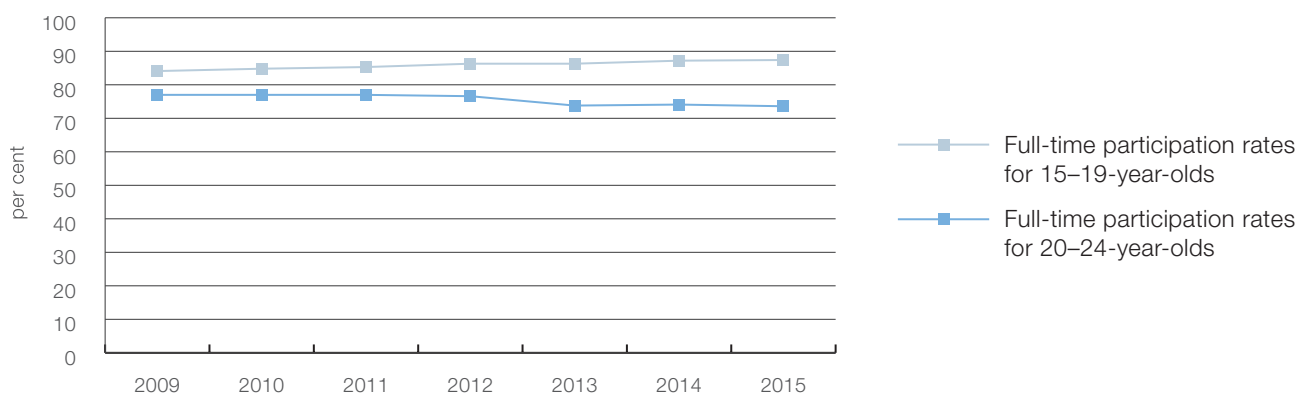
As shown in table 3.24, full-time participation rates for young people in their mid-late teens were consistently higher than for those in their early to mid-20s. This is to be expected, as the 15–19-year age group includes a high proportion of full-time school students for whom full-time participation in education, training or work is compulsory.

Since 2009, there has been an increase in full-time participation for 15–19-year-olds from 84.1 per cent to 87.4 per cent but a fall in the participation rate for 20–24-year-olds from 77.1 per cent to 73.6 per cent, despite a rise over this period in participation in full-time education.⁶³ Full-time participation rates for 20–24-year-olds are more sensitive to changes in employment conditions than those for 15–19-year-olds.

Figure 3.5 illustrates KPMs 1(g) and 1(h) over the period 2009–2015.

Figure 3.5

Proportions of 15–19-year-olds and 20–24-year-olds in full-time education or training, in full-time work, or both in part-time work and part-time education or training, Australia, 2009–15 (per cent)



Source: ABS, Cat. No. 6227.0, *Education and Work*, May 2015.

Data on KPMs 1(g) and 1(h) by state and territory are provided on the National Report on Schooling data portal. However, because of sample size and other factors, SEW data for particular age groups are less reliable when disaggregated by state and territory, especially for smaller jurisdictions. SEW data cannot be disaggregated by Indigenous status.

Based on SEW data, 83.2 per cent of 15–19-year-olds in 2014 were engaged in formal study, a rise from 81.7 per cent in 2013 and from 76.4 per cent in 2009.⁶⁴

⁶³ This fall is partly due to the expansion of the sample population of the Survey of Education and Work from 2013 to include people who were permanently unable to work.

⁶⁴ ABS, Cat. No. 6227.0, *Education and Work*, May 2015.

Using a range of administrative data sources, the National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER) has calculated that 83.4 per cent of the 1.5 million Australians aged 15–19 years were participating in education and training as at August 2015. This included school students (56.8 per cent), higher education students (16.1 per cent), apprentices and trainees⁶⁵ (4.5 per cent) and other VET students (5.9 per cent). This proportion rose from 82.7 per cent in 2013.⁶⁶

A new key performance measure for participation was added to the *Measurement Framework for Schooling in Australia 2015*. This measure, KPM 1(i), is for the participation in post-school education and training and/or work of 17–24-year-olds who are not at school. This measure is informative as an indicator of the transition of young people from school to further education and/or work. It excludes people who were still at school from both the numerator and the denominator.

Although this KPM is a new reporting requirement for this report for 2015, data for previous years are available from SEW. These are reported for the period 2009–2015 in Table 3.25 and Figure 3.6.

Key performance measure 1(i)

Proportion of 17–24-year-olds who have left school that are in full-time education or training, in full-time work, or both in part-time work and part-time education or training

Table 3.25

Proportion of 17–24-year-olds who have left school in full-time education or training, in full-time work, or both in part-time work and part-time education or training, Australia, 2009–2015 (per cent)

| Calendar year | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 |
|--|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| | % | % | % | % | % | % | % |
| Full-time participation rates for 17-24-year-olds who have left school | 74.6 | 75.0 | 75.1 | 75.5 | 72.7 | 73.2 | 72.9 |
| CI± | 1.7 | 1.5 | 1.4 | 1.3 | 1.1 | 1.4 | 1.4 |

Notes:

CI = Confidence interval

The percentages reported in this table include 95 per cent confidence intervals. Confidence intervals are a way of expressing the degree of sampling and measurement error associated with survey estimates. For example, an estimate of 80 with a 95 per cent confidence interval of ± 2 means that if the total population was surveyed rather than a sample, there is a 95 per cent chance that the result would lie between 78 and 82.

Full-time participation is defined as participation in full-time education or training or full-time work, or a combination of both part-time education or training and part-time work.

From 2012, participation data published by ABS to report the results of the Survey of Education and Work have been limited to study for a qualification only, instead of all study.

The sample in the Survey of Education and Work was expanded in 2013 to include people who were permanently unable to work. This may result in slightly lower participation rates than would otherwise be the case.

Source: ABS, Cat. No. 6227.0, *Education and Work*, May 2015 (Table 34 Fully engaged in employment or study: by age, Persons not in school study aged 15–24 years)

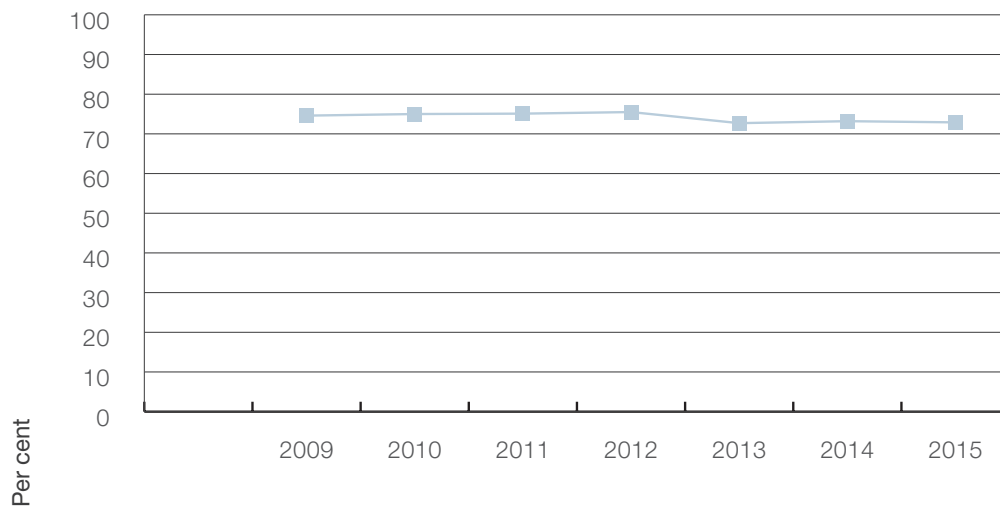
65 Excluding school-based traineeships and apprenticeships.

66 NCVER, *Australian Vocational Education and Training Statistics: young people in education and training 2015*.

While stable at around 75 per cent from 2009 to 2012, this measure dropped by 2.8 percentage points in 2013 and has remained at that level. This fall was at least partly due to the expansion of the sample population of the Survey of Education and Work, from 2013, to include people who were permanently unable to work. (This change is also reflected in KPM 1(h) above.)

Figure 3.6

Proportion of 17–24-year-olds who have left school in full-time education or training, in full-time work, or both in part-time work and part-time education or training, Australia, 2009–2015 (per cent)



3.4.3 Student attainment

The attainment key performance measures (KPMs) specified in the [Measurement Framework for Schooling in Australia 2015](#) measure the level of educational attainment achieved by young Australians by the time they have reached their early– mid-twenties. These measures reflect the COAG targets for youth attainment in education and training:

Key performance measure 7(a)

Proportion of the 20–24-year-old population having attained at least Year 12 or equivalent or AQF Certificate II or above

Key performance measure 7(b)

Proportion of the 20–24-year-old population having attained at least Year 12 or equivalent or AQF Certificate III or above

Table 3.26 reports KPMs 7(a) and 7(b) at the national level for the period 2009–2015.

For comparison purposes, the table also reports the proportion of the 20–24-year-old population in each of these years, that had completed Year 12 or equivalent. This is not, by itself a KPM for schooling, but is the main component of both KPMs 7(a) and 7(b).

Table 3.26

Proportion of the 20–24-year-old population that has attained at least Year 12 or equivalent or AQF Certificate II or above; proportion of the 20–24-year-old population that has attained at least Year 12 or equivalent, or AQF Certificate III or above; proportion of the 20–24-year-old population that has attained at least Year 12 or equivalent; Australia, 2009–2015 (per cent)

| Year | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 |
|---|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| | % | % | % | % | % | % | % |
| Proportion of the 20–24-year-old population that has attained at least Year 12 or equivalent, or AQF Certificate II or above | 84.5 | 85.6 | 84.1 | 85.9 | 86.7 | 86.1 | 88.4 |
| CI± | 1.6 | 1.3 | 1.3 | 1.3 | 1.5 | 1.5 | 1.1 |
| Proportion of the 20–24-year-old population that has attained at least Year 12 or equivalent, or AQF Certificate III or above | 83.5 | 84.5 | 82.7 | 84.6 | 85.7 | 84.9 | 87.1 |
| CI± | 1.7 | 1.5 | 1.3 | 1.3 | 1.5 | 1.5 | 1.1 |
| Proportion of the 20–24-year-old population that has attained at least Year 12 or equivalent | 77.1 | 78.0 | 74.9 | 76.3 | 77.2 | 76.8 | 78.7 |
| CI± | 1.7 | 1.7 | 1.7 | 1.6 | 1.6 | 1.8 | 1.6 |

Notes:

CI = Confidence interval

The percentages reported in this table include 95 per cent confidence intervals. Confidence intervals are a way of expressing the degree of sampling and measurement error associated with survey estimates. For example, an estimate of 80 with a 95 per cent confidence interval of ± 2 means that if the total population were surveyed rather than a sample, there is a 95 per cent chance that the result would lie between 78 and 82.

The sample population in the Survey of Education and Work was expanded in 2013 to include people who were permanently unable to work. This may result in slightly lower attainment rates in 2013 and 2014 than would otherwise be the case.

Year 12 or equivalent includes AQF senior secondary certificates of education issued by Australian state and territory accreditation authorities and equivalent qualifications such as the International Baccalaureate, matriculation certificates and school leaving qualifications obtained outside Australia. It also includes respondents who indicated that their highest level of education is Year 12.

AQF Certificate II is a VET qualification regarded as entry level training for employment (or a similar qualification gained outside Australia).

AQF Certificate III is a VET qualification regarded as intermediate level training for employment (or a similar qualification gained outside Australia).

Source: ABS, Cat. No. 6227.0, *Education and Work*, May 2015 See also National Report on Schooling data portal.

The proportion of 20–24-year-olds, who had attained Year 12 or equivalent or AQF Certificate II or above – KPM 7(a), rose from 84.5 per cent in 2009 to 88.4 per cent in 2015. The COAG target for this measure of 90 per cent by 2015 was, therefore, not met.⁶⁷

However, since 2009, increases have occurred in both retention to Year 12⁶⁸ and in participation in education, training and work by 15–19-year-olds.⁶⁹ These rises are likely to translate to increased attainment levels for these students as they move into the 20–24-year-old age bracket from 2015.

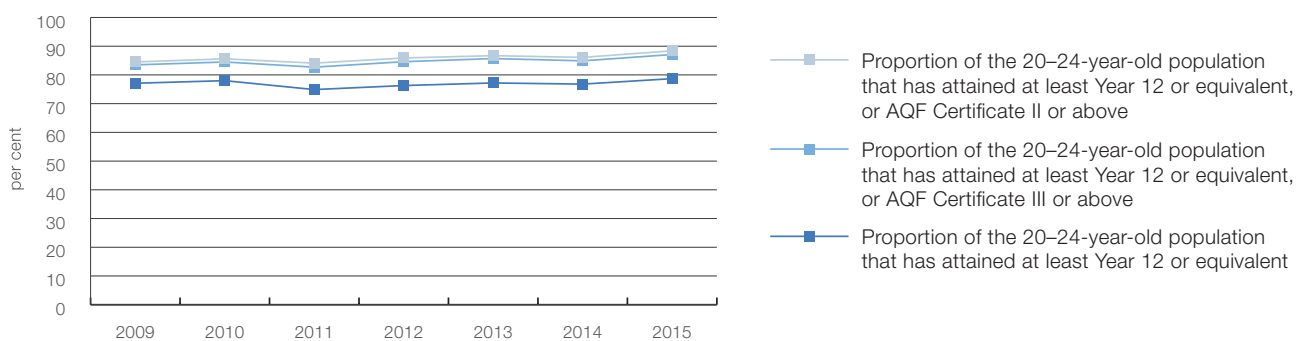
The proportion of 20–24-year-olds, who had attained Year 12 or equivalent, or AQF Certificate III or above – KPM 7(b), rose from 83.5 per cent to 87.1 per cent between 2009 and 2015, with a rise of 2.2 percentage points in 2015.

The COAG target for this measure is 90 per cent by 2020. Based on 2009–2015 data, it is not clear whether this target will be achieved at the national level by 2020. However, it is likely that increased retention to Year 12, and increased participation in education and training by 15–19-year-olds since 2009 will lead to higher levels of attainment for these students as 20–24-year-olds in 2020. This will have a positive impact on this measure, enhancing the likelihood that the target is achieved by 2020.

Figure 3.7 depicts the movement in the two attainment measures from 2009 to 2015, along with the proportion of 20–24-year-olds having attained at least Year 12 or equivalent.

Figure 3.7

Proportions of 20–24-year-olds having attained at least Year 12 or equivalent, or AQF Certificate II or above; 20–24-year-olds having attained at least Year 12 or equivalent, or AQF Certificate III or above; and proportion of the 20–24-year-olds having attained at least Year 12 or equivalent; Australia, 2009–2015 (per cent)



Note

Refer to table 3.18 for confidence intervals

Source: ABS, Cat. No. 6227.0, *Education and Work*, May 2015. See also National Report on Schooling data portal

67 The inclusion in the Survey of Education and Work, from 2013, of people permanently unable to work may have resulted in slightly lower attainment rates than would otherwise have been the case.

68 As reported in Part 3.2.3: Student participation – retention.

69 As reported in Part 3.4.2: Senior schooling and youth transitions – participation in education and work.

In each of the years 2009–2015, there is little difference between the two attainment KPMs (a maximum difference of 1.4 percentage points), and there is parallel movement of the KPMs over the period.⁷⁰

Both KPMs closely parallel movements in the proportion of 20–24-year-olds that has attained at least Year 12 or equivalent. In 2015, 78.7 per cent of 20–24-year-olds had attained at least Year 12 or equivalent. A further 8.4 per cent, who had not attained Year 12, had attained Certificate III or above, and a further 1.3 per cent had attained Certificate II or above, but not Year 12 or Certificate III.

The proportion of young people completing Year 12 or equivalent is not itself a KPM for schooling, as pursuing a VET qualification post-Year 10 is a legitimate alternative to Years 11 and 12 as a pathway to further education and work.

However, as shown in figure 3.5, it is the main component of KPMs 7(a) and 7(b), with variations in the two KPMs closely following variations in Year 12 or equivalent attainment.

This has implications for predicting and influencing the COAG measures, as the rate of Year 12 completion for current secondary students can be used as an indicator for the future attainment rates for Year 12 or Certificate II/Certificate III or above among 20–24-year-olds.

Data for KPMs 7(a) and 7(b) by state and territory are provided on the National Report on Schooling data portal. However, because of sample size and other factors, SEW data for particular age groups (such as 20–24-year-olds) are less reliable when disaggregated by state and territory, especially for smaller jurisdictions.

SEW data cannot be disaggregated by Indigenous status, so cannot, on its own, be used to report on the COAG target to at least halve the gap in Year 12 or equivalent⁷¹ attainment between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous 20–24-year-olds by 2020.

Using the ABS National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey (NATSISS) to supplement data from SEW and the Census of Population and Housing⁷², the [Closing the Gap – Prime Minister’s Report](#) 2017 reports that this target is on track:

According to the NATSISS, between 2008 and 2014–15 rates of Year 12 or equivalent attainment for Indigenous 20 to 24-year-olds increased from 45.4 per cent to 61.5 per cent, while rates for non-Indigenous Australians of the same age did not change significantly (from 85.0 per cent to 86.4 per cent). This has resulted in the gap in Year 12 or equivalent attainment rates narrowing by 14.7 percentage points (from 39.6 percentage points to 24.9 percentage points) over this period. All states and territories have had increases in Indigenous Year 12 or equivalent attainment. (Closing the Gap – Prime Minister’s Report 2017 p. 43)

70 For the three data sets shown in table 3.17 and figure 3.5, the falls in 2011 data are not statistically significant and may reflect sampling variability in the Survey of Education and Work. Decreases in KPMs 7a and 7b in 2014 are not statistically significant.

71 The measure used for Year 12 or equivalent for this target is the attainment of Year 12 or AQF Certificate II or above.

72 Sources: Indigenous data are from the ABS National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey 2008 and 2014–15. Non-Indigenous data are from the Survey of Education and Work. The main data source used to assess progress against this target is the ABS Census.

While the attainment KPMs 7(a) and 7(b) refer to the completion of Year 12 or equivalent or an AQF VET Certificate, this does not imply equivalence between the award of a Senior Secondary Certificate of Education on the completion of Year 12 and either AQF Certificate II or AQF Certificate III. Senior Secondary Certificate of Education qualifications are not located at a particular level in the Australian Qualifications Framework.⁷³

⁷³ The volume of learning required to attain an AQF Certificate II is typically 0.5–1 year; for Certificate III it is typically 1–2 years, and for a Senior Secondary Certificate of Education it is typically 2 years (AQF Second edition p. 14). In some instances, VET in Schools students have the opportunity to complete several Certificate II qualifications as a part of a Senior Secondary Certificate of Education.



Part 4 Glossary



Note on data sources and terms: A main source of data reported in the *National Report on Schooling in Australia 2015* and through the National Report on Schooling Data Portal is the National Schools Statistics Collection (NSSC) (non-finance). The NSSC includes statistics on students, schools, and staff involved in the provision or administration of primary and secondary education, in government and non-government schools, for all Australian states and territories. The school census date for the collection, for all states and territories and all school sectors (affiliations), is the first Friday in August each year.

The NSSC is a joint undertaking of the Australian state and territory departments of education, the Australian Government Department of Education and Training, the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) and the COAG Education Council.

The methodologies used in compiling government school sector data vary between the different state and territory departments of education. Data may be accessed from central administrative records or collected directly from schools. Data are provided to the ABS, generally in aggregated form, for the compilation of statistics. The Australian Government Department of Education and Training collects data directly from schools in the non-government sector for all states and territories.

Data from the collection are published by the ABS in [Schools, Australia](#) (cat. no. 4221.0). Definitions of terms in this glossary are, for the most part, quoted or adapted from the *Schools, Australia* glossary and explanatory notes; and from the *Notes, Instructions and Tabulations* document, which is available on request from the ABS.

Other major data sources for the 2015 report and the National Report on Schooling Data Portal include the National Student Attendance Data collection (ACARA), the Survey of Education and Work (ABS), Australian Demographic Statistics (ABS), the NSSC (finance) collection (states and territories), National Assessment Program (NAP) national reports (ACARA) and National VET Provider and National VET in Schools collections (National Centre for Vocational Education Research – NCVER).

Apparent retention rates

Apparent retention rates are indicative measures of student progression through secondary school. To calculate actual rates for all students in a given population, information on the status of every student between years would be needed to determine whether they progressed as expected, repeated a school year, transferred to another school in a different school sector or state, or left school entirely. At present, linking individual student enrolment information between different years and across states and territories is not possible. Apparent measures, based on aggregate student data, have been developed to provide indicative measurements of student progress through secondary education.

An apparent retention rate is an indicative measure of the number of full-time school students who have stayed at school, as at a designated year level and calendar year. It is calculated by dividing the number of students in a cohort in a specific calendar year by the number of students in the same cohort in a previous reference year and is expressed as a percentage. For example, an apparent retention rate for Year 10 to 12 in 2015 measures the proportion of Year 10 students in 2013 that continued to Year 12 in 2015. See [Schools, Australia explanatory notes](#) for further information.

Schools, Australia also publishes data on apparent progression rates, apparent continuation rates and school participation rates.

Estimated resident population

The Estimated Resident Population (ERP) series is used as a denominator to calculate students as a proportion of the population. The ERP is an estimate of the population of Australia, based on data from the quinquennial ABS Census of Population and Housing, and is updated quarterly using information on births, deaths, and overseas and interstate migration provided by state, territory and Australian government departments. For further details see ABS, Cat. No. 3101.0, [Australian Demographic Statistics, June 2015](#).

Full-time equivalent student

A full-time student is one who undertakes a workload equivalent to, or greater than, what is prescribed for a full-time student of that year level. This may vary between states and territories and from year to year. The prescribed minimum workload for a full-time student would ensure that a student could complete a given year level in a calendar year.

A part-time student is one who undertakes a workload less than that specified as full-time. The full-time equivalent (FTE) value of a part-time student is calculated by dividing a student's workload into what is prescribed by the state or territory to be the minimum full workload for a full-time student. Methods for estimating the FTE value of part-time students vary between states and territories due to different policy and administrative arrangements. The recorded FTE value for a student is capped at 1. The FTE of students is calculated by adding the number of full-time students and the FTE value of part-time students.

Full-time equivalent student teacher ratios

Full-time equivalent (FTE) student/teacher ratios are calculated by dividing the FTE student figure by the FTE teaching staff figure. Student/teacher ratios are an indicator of the level of staffing resources used and should not be used as a measure of class size. They do not take account of teacher aides and other non-teaching staff who may also assist in the delivery of school education or of non-teaching duties of teaching staff.

Full-time equivalent teaching staff

The full-time equivalent (FTE) value of staff is a measure of the level of staffing resources. Staff who are employed full-time and engaged solely on activities that fall within the scope of the NSSC have an FTE value of 1.0. All FTE values are rounded to one decimal place.

For staff not employed on a full-time basis, and/or engaged in a combination of in-scope and out-of-scope activities, the FTE value is calculated on the basis of the proportion of time spent on in-scope activities compared with staff who would be considered full-time.

Indigenous status

For the purposes of the NSSC, a student is classified as being of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander origin, based on information provided by the student, or their parent/guardian, on the school enrolment form. The Melbourne Declaration uses the term 'Indigenous' to refer to Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. This report uses both the terms 'Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander', and 'Indigenous' to describe students identifying as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander, with 'Indigenous' or 'Indigenous status' used in tables and graphs.

The Measurement Framework for Schooling in Australia

The [*Measurement Framework for Schooling in Australia 2015*](#), as agreed by education ministers, provides the basis for national reporting on the performance of schooling in 2015, and is the main focus of the statistical data included in this report.

The measurement framework defines national key performance measures (KPMs) for schooling, specifies the data sources for these KPMs, and outlines the reporting cycle for the period 2014–2018.

The framework is maintained by the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) on behalf of the Education Council and is published on the ACARA website. It is periodically revised by ACARA in consultation with jurisdictions and sectors.

National Assessment Program (NAP)

The NAP, as specified in the *Measurement Framework for Schooling in Australia 2015*, encompasses all assessments endorsed by education ministers for participation by students nationally:

- the National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) – annual, full student cohort literacy and numeracy assessments in Years 3, 5, 7 and 9
- NAP sample assessments – triennial domestic sample student population assessments in science literacy (Year 6), information and communication technology literacy (Years 6 and 10) and civics and citizenship (Years 6 and 10)
- Australia's participation in international sample student population assessments: the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA); the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS); and the and Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS).

ACARA is delegated to manage the development and oversee the delivery of assessments and reporting for NAPLAN, and for domestic NAP sample assessments, as directed by the Education Council. PISA is conducted by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). TIMSS and PIRLS are conducted by the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA).

National Schools Statistics Collection

The scope of the National Schools Statistics Collection (NSSC) consists of all establishments that have as their major activity the administration or provision of full-time day primary, secondary and/or special education, or primary or secondary education by distance education. Major activity is based on the activity of students, or where this is not appropriate, for example, in administrative offices, on the activity of staff. The statistics in this publication do not include establishments, students or staff engaged in school-level education conducted by other institutions, in particular Technical and Further Education (TAFE) establishments.

The NSSC consists of government and non-government statistics. Government comprises all establishments (as defined), administered by departments/ministries of education under directors-general of education (or equivalent). Non-government comprises all such establishments not administered by the departments of education, including those establishments administered by any other government authority.

The two main sections of the NSSC are:

- non-finance statistics (numbers of schools, students and staff) collected for both government and non-government schools and published by the Australian Bureau of Statistics in its annual *Schools, Australia* (Cat. No. 4221.0) publication
- finance statistics (expenditure on salaries and non-salary costs collected for government schools) and published by ACARA in this report and through the National Report on Schooling Data Portal.

Primary education

See *School level and school year*.

School

A school is an education establishment that satisfies all of the following criteria:

- Its major activity is the provision of full-time day primary or secondary education or the provision of primary or secondary distance education.
- It is headed by a principal (or equivalent) responsible for its internal operation.
- It is possible for students to enrol and be active in a course of study for a minimum of four continuous weeks, excluding breaks for school vacations.

The term 'school' in this publication includes schools in institutions and hospitals, mission schools and similar establishments.

The term 'school' in this publication excludes preschools, kindergarten centres, pre-primary schools or pre-primary classes in, or attached to, non-special schools, senior technical and agricultural colleges, evening schools, continuation classes and institutions such as business or coaching colleges.

Multi-campus arrangements are counted as one school. Changes to school counts in this publication can occur when multiple schools amalgamate into a single multi-campus school, or multi-campus schools divide into separate schools.

School level and school year

All states and territories provide for 13 years of formal school education. Typically, schooling commences at age five, is compulsory from age six until at least the completion of Year 10, and is completed at age 17 or 18. Primary education, including a preparatory year⁶⁸, lasts for either seven or eight years and is followed by secondary education of six or five years respectively.

For national reporting purposes, primary education comprises a pre-Year 1 year followed by Years 1–6 in New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland, Western Australia, Tasmania, the Northern Territory and the Australian Capital Territory. Primary education comprises a pre-Year 1 year followed by Years 1–7 in South Australia.⁶⁹

68 The preparatory year (first year of full-time schooling) is known as Preparatory in Victoria, Queensland and Tasmania, Kindergarten in New South Wales and the Australian Capital Territory, Reception in South Australia, Pre-primary in Western Australia and Transition in the Northern Territory. In some jurisdictions, part-time programs that precede the preparatory year are conducted in primary schools (for example, Kindergarten in Western Australia). However, these programs are outside the scope of the NSSC and of data sets included in this report.

69 Year 7 became part of secondary education in Queensland and Western Australia from 2015. This change affects some comparisons with previous years of student and staff data by school level.

Junior secondary education includes the years from commencement of secondary schooling to Year 10, including ungraded secondary.

Senior secondary education comprises Years 11 and 12 in all states and territories.

Categories used in tables and graphs showing 'School level' are 'Primary' and 'Secondary'. In some tables, the categories 'Primary', 'Junior secondary', 'Senior secondary' and 'Total secondary' are used.

Students attending special schools are allocated to either primary or secondary education on the basis of school year or school level where identified. Where the school year or school level is not identified, students are allocated to primary or secondary level of education according to the typical age level in each state or territory.

See also *Special School*.

Schools, Australia uses the term 'grade' to denote school year. Ungraded students (ungraded primary and ungraded secondary) are those who have not been placed in a specific year level.

See also *School type*.

School sector

This report and the National Report on Schooling Data Portal use the term 'school sector' to distinguish between government schools, which are established and administered by state and territory governments through their education departments or authorities, and non-government schools, usually with some religious affiliation, which are established and operated under conditions determined by state and territory governments through their registration authorities.

'School sector' is also used to further distinguish between non-government schools as Catholic or independent. Catholic schools make up the largest group of non-government schools. Independent schools may be associated with other religions, other denominations, particular educational philosophies, or operate as single entities.

Schools, Australia uses the term 'affiliation' rather than the term 'school sector' to make these distinctions.

A further distinction is sometimes made between systemic and non-systemic non-government schools. Systemic schools are formally affiliated with a group or system of schools. Non-systemic non-government schools do not belong to a system.

In *Schools, Australia* and in this report, Catholic non-systemic schools are counted as Catholic rather than as independent.

Categories used in tables and graphs showing 'School sector' are 'Government', 'Catholic' and 'Independent'. In some tables, the category 'Total non-government' (total of Catholic and independent data) is also used.

School type

Categories used in tables and graphs showing 'School type' are:

- 'Primary' – school delivers primary education
- 'Secondary' – school delivers secondary education
- 'Combined' – school delivers both primary and secondary education
- 'Special' – students may include primary students, secondary students, ungraded students or a combination of primary, secondary and ungraded students.

See also *Special School*.

Secondary education

See *School level and school year*.

Special school

A special school satisfies the definition of a school and requires one or more of the following characteristics to be exhibited by the student before enrolment is allowed:

- mental or physical disability or impairment
- slow learning ability
- social or emotional problems
- in custody, on remand or in hospital.

Special schools include special assistance schools, as defined under the *Australian Education Act, 2013*. These are non-government schools that are:

- likely to be recognised by the state minister as a special assistance school, and
- primarily established to cater for students with social, emotional or behavioural difficulties.

Staff

Staff are people engaged in the administration and/or provision of day primary, secondary or special school education, or primary or secondary education by distance education at in- scope education establishments.

The functional categories for school staff are as follows:

(a) Teaching staff are staff who spend the majority of their time in contact with students. They support students either by direct class contact or on an individual basis, and are engaged to impart school curriculum. For the purposes of this report, teaching staff includes principals, deputy principals, campus principals and senior teachers mainly involved in administration.

(b) Specialist support staff are staff who perform functions to support students or teaching staff. While these staff may spend the majority of their time in contact with students, they are not employed or engaged to impart the school curriculum.

(c) Administrative and clerical staff are staff whose main duties are generally of a clerical/administrative nature. Teacher aides and assistants are included in this category, as they are seen to provide services to teaching staff rather than directly to students.

(d) Building operations, general maintenance and other staff are staff involved in the maintenance of buildings and grounds. Also included are staff providing associated technical services, other janitorial staff and staff who service equipment. School cleaners, whether salaried or employed on contract, are excluded.

For further details on the definition of staff, see [Schools, Australia 2015 Glossary](#).

States and territories

Australia has a federal system of government comprising a national government, and the governments of the six states and two territories. In this report, the national government is generally referred to as 'the Australian Government'. In tables and graphs in this report and the National Report on Schooling Data Portal, states and territories are listed in the order of New South Wales (NSW), Victoria (Vic.), Queensland (Qld), South Australia (SA), Western Australia (WA), Tasmania (Tas.), the Northern Territory (NT) and the Australian Capital Territory (ACT). This is the order used in ABS publications, including *Schools, Australia*.

Student

A student is a person who, on the school census date, is formally enrolled at a school and is active in a primary, secondary and/or special education program at that school. Students may be enrolled at more than one school; however, jurisdictions employ strategies that ensure that, as far as possible, students are reported only once in this collection.

Persons not present at a school on the NSSC census date are included as students if they were expected to be absent for less than four continuous weeks (excluding school vacations).

Students undertaking VET in Schools (including through TAFE), school-based apprenticeships or traineeships, work placements or tertiary extension studies as a part of the student's school enrolment are in scope for the NSSC. The workload of these subjects/programs (which may take place outside the school premises) is included in a student's aggregate workload to determine whether a student is classified as full-time or part-time, and in calculating the full-time equivalent for part-time students.

Student attendance

The National Student Attendance Data Collection is undertaken by ACARA in collaboration with state and territory education departments (which collect and collate attendance data from government schools in each jurisdiction), the non-government school sectors and the Australian Department of Education (which collects and collates attendance data from non-government schools). The collection is conducted for students in Years 1–10 over the Semester 1 period in each school year.

There are two agreed national key performance measures (KPMs) in 2015 for student attendance:

- Attendance rate: The number of actual full-time equivalent student-days attended by full-time students in Years 1–10 as a percentage of the total number of possible student-days attended over the period.
- Attendance level: The proportion of full time students in Years 1–10 whose attendance rate in Semester 1 is equal to or greater than 90 per cent.

ACARA has developed the [National Standards for Student Attendance Data Reporting](#) to establish a nationally consistent set of parameters for the collection and reporting of student attendance data across jurisdictions and school sectors. The national standards have been endorsed by all states and territories and are published on the ACARA website. The standards came into effect formally from the 2014 reporting year.

Survey of Education and Work

The [Survey of Education and Work \(SEW\)](#), conducted annually by the ABS, provides selected information on participation in education, highest educational attainment, transition from education to work, and current labour force and demographic characteristics for the population aged 15–74 years. Data from *Education and Work* are used to report participation and attainment data, including key performance measures for schooling, in this report.

See [ABS, Category 6227.0, Education and Work, May 2015, Explanatory Notes](#) for further information.

Teaching staff

Teaching staff are staff who spend the majority of their time in contact with students. They support students either by direct class contact or on an individual basis, and are engaged to impart school curriculum.

For the purposes of this report, teaching staff includes principals, deputy principals, campus principals and senior teachers mainly involved in administration. Teacher aides and assistants, and specialist support staff are excluded, except assistant teachers working in homeland learning centres and community schools in the Northern Territory.

User cost of capital

In the government budget context, the user cost of capital is usually defined as the opportunity cost of funds tied up in capital assets used to deliver government services.

Capital charging is the actual procedure used for applying this cost of capital to the asset management process. As such, it is a means of representing the cost of capital used in the provision of government budgetary outputs.

VET in Schools

Data on vocational education and training delivered to secondary students/VET in Schools were derived from the National VET in Schools Collection and the National VET Provider Collection, compiled by the National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER) under the Australian Vocational Education and Training Management Information Statistical Standard (AVETMISS), release 7.0.