acara

**AUSTRALIAN CURRICULUM,
ASSESSMENT AND
REPORTING AUTHORITY**

ANNUAL REPORT

2015–16

Australian CURRICULUM   NAP NATIONAL ASSESSMENT PROGRAM   My School®

Suggested citation:
Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority Annual Report 2015–16.
Further copies of this document can be downloaded from www.acara.edu.au
Note that there is the potential for minor revisions of this report.
Check www.acara.edu.au for any amendments.

Published October 2016.

OUR MISSION

ACARA will improve the learning of all young Australians through world-class school **curriculum**, **assessment** and **reporting**.

Contents

Senator the Hon. Simon Birmingham
Minister for Education and Training
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

25 August 2016

Dear Minister

ACARA Annual Report 2015–16

On behalf of the Board of the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA),
I am pleased to present the annual report for the financial year ended 30 June 2016, pursuant to
Section 46 of the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013.*

As ACARA is a corporate Commonwealth entity, this document has been prepared in accordance
with the requirements of Section 17BE of the Public Governance, Performance and Accountability
Rule 2014 (PGPA Rule).

As per the requirements of Section 17BB of the PGPA Rule, this annual report was approved
by resolution of the ACARA Board at its meeting of 25 August 2016, held at Level 13, 280
Elizabeth St Sydney.

The 2015–16 year saw ACARA continue to meet objectives set by the Education Council, including
the endorsement of improvements to the national curriculum. For the first time, ACARA administered
NAPLAN testing directly linked to the national curriculum, providing a powerful mechanism for
improving the education outcomes for the benefit of all Australians.

Significant progress has been made to move NAPLAN online from 2017 with the release of research
that indicates students, teachers, education systems and parents will benefit from the change.

ACARA also continued to publish quality comparative performance information on the *My School*
website, ensuring that reliable information is accessible to all Australians. Improvements have been
made this year to the website's functionality and its look and feel.

I acknowledge the directions set by the Education Council, and thank the ACARA Board, Executive,
staff and stakeholders for their contribution this year to achieving ACARA's objectives.

Yours faithfully

Emeritus Professor Steven Schwartz AM
Chair, ACARA Board

1.0 Overview

This section includes a foreword by the Chair, the CEO's report,
an outline of ACARA's role, function, mission and strategic directions.

1.1 Chair's foreword

ACARA occupies a unique role in Australia's education landscape. It is responsible for developing the Australian Curriculum and for monitoring its effectiveness through ACARA's national assessment and reporting programs. This cycle provides the opportunity to improve learning outcomes for all young Australians regardless of where they live or their socio-educational background.

It is ACARA's role to lead collaboration in identifying what young people should learn and achieve, to prepare them with knowledge, skills and confidence to participate successfully in the community and the economy.

This year, following consultation with stakeholders, including teachers, ACARA has revised the Australian Curriculum to make it easier to manage, particularly for primary schools, and to strengthen its focus on literacy.

The ACARA Board was pleased to observe the continued implementation of the Australian Curriculum across the country. Because the curriculum does not specify how content must be taught, it allows schools and teachers to teach in accordance with the needs of their students, the requirements of their school and local curriculum authorities.

"The philosophy of the school room in one generation will be the philosophy of government in the next."

– Abraham Lincoln

ACARA's delivery of the National Assessment Program (NAP) assists governments and educators to identify areas of strength as well as those that need improvement.

ACARA works with governments, educators and students to move NAPLAN online from 2017. Computerised testing will make NAPLAN results available sooner and, for the first time, tests will be tailored to the abilities of all students. It will also provide more precise results to help teachers tailor their teaching more specifically to student needs.

ACARA's national reporting program drives improvements in education outcomes by promoting accountability, engagement and sharing of best practice through the publication of nationally consistent data.

The *My School* website now has eight years of data enabling fair comparisons to be made among schools that serve students from similar socio-educational backgrounds. ACARA continues to improve *My School* to make information more accessible to parents, educators and governments.

The success of ACARA's work is underpinned by its extensive consultation and collaboration. On behalf of the Board, I would like to thank members of our advisory groups who contribute valuable insights so that ACARA's work remains relevant and responsive to change.

I also thank my fellow Board members for their knowledge and insights, and the ACARA CEO and staff for their dedication and contributions in 2015–16. Their commitment to improving the learning of all young Australians has ensured success in the delivery of ACARA's ambitious 2015–16 work plan.

Emeritus Professor Steven Schwartz AM
Chair, ACARA Board

1.2 CEO's report

ACARA's sixth year of operations was one of significant progress across the agency's program of work.

During 2015–16, we undertook work to improve the Australian Curriculum, responding to themes and recommendations resulting from the Curriculum Review, endorsed by the Education Council. These themes included uncrowding and rebalancing the curriculum, strengthening parental engagement and improving accessibility for students with a disability.

Our work was informed by targeted consultation with key stakeholders, including state and territory curriculum authorities and practising teachers. In September 2015, we welcomed Australia's education ministers' endorsement of the revised Australian Curriculum for Foundation – Year 10.

In December 2015, the Education Council endorsed the Australian Curriculum: Languages for Hindi and Turkish, and the Framework for Aboriginal Languages and Torres Strait Islander Languages. This framework represents a significant step in acknowledging the importance and value of Aboriginal languages and Torres Strait Islander languages.

NAPLAN, now in its ninth year, was held in May 2016. For the first time, NAPLAN was aligned to the Australian Curriculum: English and the Australian Curriculum: Mathematics. For some students, it may be the last time they take a paper-based NAPLAN test, as we begin the move to NAPLAN online from 2017.

This transition to online assessment was a major focus for ACARA this year. We released technical specifications for electronic devices required for NAPLAN online, information about the extended test window for NAPLAN, and research that indicated automated essay scoring is a viable solution for marking NAPLAN.

Additional research programs are still underway, along with planned readiness tests and trials to ensure everyone is ready for the move to NAPLAN online.

The release of the NAP – ICT Literacy report in November 2015 showed a need for a renewed focus on teaching digital technologies in schools. The core aspects of ICT literacy are vital for students to engage with a world dependent on these technologies, and for future employment and social interaction. The Australian Curriculum: Digital Technologies covers these core aspects.

The 2015 NAPLAN results indicated stable achievement, relative to 2014. These results, along with seven other years' worth of data, are available on the *My School* website.

My School continues to be regularly visited by parents and educators alike, with 1.4 million user sessions in 2015–16. This year we published student attendance data, including a new measure that shows the proportion of students in Years 1–10 who attended school at least 90 per cent of the time. We also delivered a number of enhancements to the site to make it more user-friendly, including an animated video that explains the index of community socio-educational advantage (ICSEA) and the purpose of *My School*.

I thank our Chair, Emeritus Professor Steven Schwartz, and our Board members for the leadership they have provided throughout 2015–16. I also acknowledge the advice and guidance provided by our partners and stakeholders, and valuable contributions of ACARA's staff.

Next year looks to be just as challenging as we build on the investment that has been made across our national curriculum, assessment and reporting programs. In particular, ACARA will continue its important work with jurisdictions towards the transition to NAPLAN online. I look forward to our continued journey to improve the learning of all young Australians.

Robert Randall
Chief Executive Officer

1.3 Who we are

Role and function

The Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) is an independent statutory authority and a corporate Commonwealth entity established under Section 5 of the *Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority Act* (Cth) on 8 December 2008.

ACARA has been operational since 28 May 2009, with a mission to improve the learning of all young Australians through world-class school curriculum, assessment and reporting.

ACARA executes policy directions determined by the Council of Australian Governments' (COAG) Education Council regarding curriculum, assessment, data and reporting at the national level.

Organisational structure

The members of the ACARA Board are the accountable authority for the purposes of the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013* (PGPA Act).

ACARA's operations are led by a Chief Executive Officer (CEO). The agency comprises five business units: Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting, Communications and Strategic Relations, Office of the Chief Executive and Corporate Services.

Locations

In 2015–16, ACARA's head office was located at Level 10, 255 Pitt Street Sydney. ACARA also maintained offices at Level 8, 440 Collins Street Melbourne, and at Level 12, 68 St Georges Terrace Perth.

1.4 What we do

Our mission

ACARA's mission is to improve the learning of all young Australians through world-class school curriculum, assessment and reporting.

Our work

Curriculum: We take a national approach to education through developing and implementing a robust and comprehensive national curriculum.

Assessment: We run the National Assessment Program, the national tests students sit in school, aligned to the national curriculum. This includes the National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN).

Reporting: We are responsible for collecting and publishing information on the *My School* website about the performance and resources of just over 10,000 schools and campuses around the country. We publish a range of reports, including the NAPLAN national report.

Our stakeholders

ACARA's partners are the Australian Government, state and territory departments of education, and national non-government school sector peak bodies. ACARA's stakeholders include teachers, principals, parents and students as well as the broader community.

ACARA has a range of advisory and expert groups that provide advice to support our work. The advisory structure is reviewed regularly to ensure advice provided is fit for purpose.

ACARA also works closely with its Council counterparts, the Australian Institute of Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) and Education Services Australia (ESA).
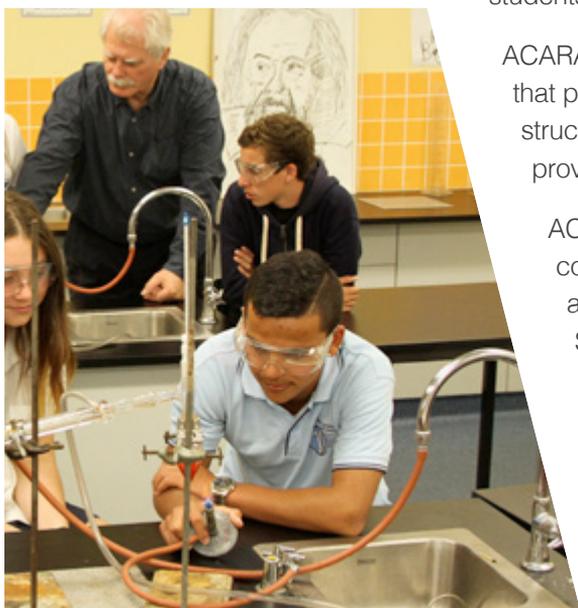
Factsheets for parents on the
Australian Curriculum.

2.0 Annual performance statements

This section details ACARA's achievements and performance during the year against criteria identified in ACARA's Corporate Plan 2015–16 and the targets set out in the Portfolio Budget Statements 2015–16 (PBS).

Introductory statement

These annual performance statements have been prepared for the 2015–16 reporting period pursuant to section 39(1)(a) of the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013* (PGPA Act).

In the opinion of the ACARA Board, as the accountable authority, these performance statements accurately present ACARA's performance in the reporting period, and comply with section (39)(2) of the PGPA Act.

In 2015, ACARA was reviewed by the Australian Government, as required under a provision in its enabling legislation, and its 2016–17 to 2019–20 work plan was endorsed by the Education Council (the Council). As a result, ACARA revised some of the initiatives and associated performance measures in the Corporate Plan 2015–16. Achievements against these revised performance measures are outlined below.

The key purposes of ACARA, as identified in the Corporate Plan 2015–16, are to:

Curriculum
- maintain a world-class curriculum from Foundation to Year 12 in specified learning areas, which is fit for purpose, accessible and available for implementation
- assemble the evidence base required to both evaluate the current curriculum and develop the next generation of the national curriculum
- provide expert advice on curriculum practice nationally and internationally.

Assessment
- provide a quality, comprehensive and cohesive suite of assessments (including NAPLAN and NAP sample) based on the national curriculum and delivered online, to improve the understanding of educational outcomes for Australian students
- provide expert advice on educational assessment.

Data and reporting
- provide and apply a comprehensive and reliable national measurement framework, including high-quality performance indicators
- facilitate the use of data for research and policy development
- deliver detailed, accessible, timely and innovative school-education information.

Collaboration and leadership
- be a leading expert body in curriculum practice, educational assessment and national reporting, in close collaboration with government and non-government partners in education and other key stakeholders.

2.1 Purpose 1: Provision of a national curriculum

Overview

The rationale for an Australian curriculum centres on improving the quality, equity and transparency of Australia's education system. In particular, a national curriculum ensures that every child in Australia, regardless of where they live or the school they attend, has access to a world-class curriculum.

Through its curriculum program, ACARA is responsible for:

- delivering the Foundation – Year 10 and Senior Secondary Australian Curriculum through the Australian Curriculum website

- strengthening assessment of student learning of the Australian Curriculum through provision of student work samples and illustrations of practice, as well as NAP development and data analysis

- monitoring the effectiveness of the Australian Curriculum by collecting, analysing and reporting annually on feedback

- reviewing, and reporting on, recent developments in research and international curriculum practice to inform national policy and practice and to improve the Australian Curriculum further

- providing authoritative Australian Curriculum advice to stakeholders and facilitate information-sharing and collaboration in support of the Australian Curriculum.
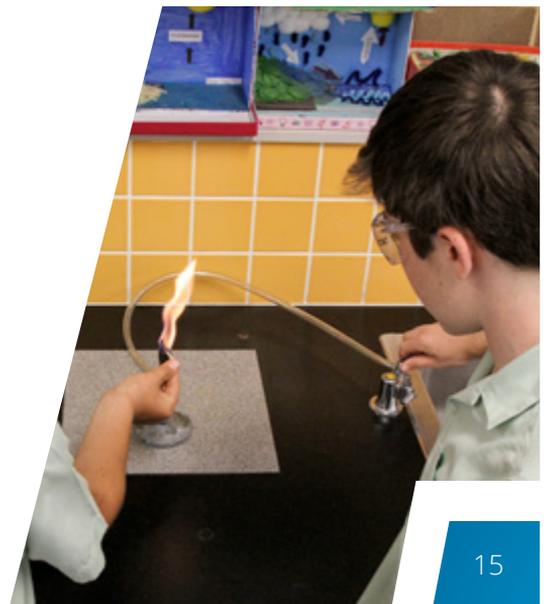
Performance against criteria

Performance criterion
Monitoring activities around the national curriculum undertaken

Measure
Report published by end of January 2016

Criterion source
Corporate Plan 2015–16

Result

ACARA's report, *Monitoring the effectiveness of the Foundation – Year 10 Australian Curriculum 2015*, was published in March 2016.

This report included feedback and research collected in the period from July 2014 to June 2015. It was based on feedback from 11 federal, state and territory school and curriculum authorities as well as feedback provided by two jurisdictions earlier in 2014, which they advised was still current. Beyond school and curriculum authorities, six submissions were received from associations of professional educators.

The ACARA Board approved the 2015 monitoring report on 10 December 2015. The major finding of the 2015 report was that there was a general level of satisfaction with the streamlining of the Australian Curriculum achieved during 2015, accompanied by a strongly expressed desire for a period of stability that would support implementation across jurisdictions.

Performance criterion

The Education Council approves ACARA's proposed amendments to the Australian Curriculum following on from the Review of the Australian Curriculum and the following curricula are endorsed:

- The Arts, Languages (Chinese, French, Indonesian, Italian, Arabic, German, Japanese, Korean, Modern Greek, Vietnamese and Spanish), Health and Physical Education, Technologies, Civics and Citizenship, and Economics and Business, as well as Work Studies (Years 9 and 10)
- The Aboriginal Languages and Torres Strait Islander Languages Framework.

Measure

Proposed amendments endorsed and curricula endorsed and published on the ACARA website

Criterion source

Corporate Plan and PBS 2015–16

Result

At its meeting of 18 September 2015, the Education Council endorsed ACARA's revised version of the Foundation – Year 10 Australian Curriculum for publication on the Australian Curriculum website.

The revised version addressed two recommendations from the 2014 Review of the Australian Curriculum, conducted by the Australian Government, resolving the overcrowded curriculum and rebalancing the curriculum. This version also included two newly developed curricula:

- revised Foundation – Year 10 Australian Curriculum for English, Mathematics, Science, Humanities and Social Sciences, The Arts, Technologies and Health, and Physical Education
- Foundation – Year 10 Australian Curriculum: Languages for Arabic, Chinese, French, German, Indonesian, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Modern Greek, Spanish and Vietnamese
- Australian Curriculum: Work Studies, Years 9–10.

The revised Australian Curriculum for Foundation – Year 10 was published on the Australian Curriculum website as version 8.0 on 18 October 2015.

In December 2015, the Education Council endorsed the Australian Curriculum: Aboriginal Languages and Torres Strait Islander Languages Framework. The Framework was published on the Australian Curriculum website as version 8.1 of the curriculum on 16 December 2015.

Other projects completed under the curriculum program of work during 2015–16:

Australian Curriculum

In December 2015, the Education Council endorsed the Australian Curriculum: Languages – Hindi and Turkish. These curricula were published on the Australian Curriculum website as version 8.1 of the curriculum on 16 December 2015.

Collaborative problem-solving online assessment

In 2015–16, ACARA entered into a partnership project with the NSW Department of Education and education authorities in Ireland and Sweden to investigate the development of innovative, online assessment tasks that can elicit reliable data on students' collaborative problem-solving skills. Four tasks were developed by the partners and trialled in 2015 with over 2,000 students. The data from the trial were analysed by ACARA's technical partner and the project findings were used for a paper accepted for delivery at the 2016 International Association for Educational Assessment (IAEA) Conference in Cape Town, South Africa.

Materials for parents

In response to the Review of the Australian Curriculum, materials that support improved parental access to the Australian Curriculum were developed in the third and fourth quarters of 2015 and published on the Australian Curriculum website on 16 December 2015. The materials, written in plain English, focus on what students will learn in each learning area for their current year, or band of years of schooling. The materials are visually engaging and use infographics, diagrams and images to illustrate the information and are accessible to parents and carers via a dedicated section of the Australian Curriculum website.

Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) project

The Curriculum STEM project, undertaken by ACARA in partnership with the Australian Association of Mathematics Teachers, was completed in June 2016. The project reflected the work of 13 schools from around Australia, whose objective was to demonstrate ways in which the STEM disciplines could be integrated for Year 9 and Year 10 students. Each project was based on an authentic challenge facing the schools, local community or wider society, with the stipulation that STEM-based learning be the starting point for investigating and resolving the issue. ACARA's Curriculum Specialists worked with the schools to collect samples of students' work and to develop five filmed illustrations of practice. The final report and the videos are available on the Australian Curriculum website.

Provision of curriculum services

ACARA staff engaged with school authorities, professional and stakeholder organisations across the country to provide support for the implementation of the Australian Curriculum. This support included presentations at conferences, workshops and professional organisations; work with schools and teachers to collect work samples and film illustrations of practice; and contribution to joint curriculum project development and implementation projects.

Mathematics proficiencies project

In mid-2015, the Australian Government Department of Education and Training commissioned ACARA to develop a project that would support teachers' engagement with the Australian Curriculum: Mathematics. The purpose of the project was to highlight the application of four key mathematical skills (understanding, fluency, problem-solving and adaptive reasoning). The Mathematics Proficiencies project was completed in June 2016; the associated illustrations of practice and resources were made available on the Australian Curriculum website in August 2016.

Students with a disability

In 2015–16, ACARA partnered with schools in four different jurisdictions to film illustrations of practice that would support access to the Australian Curriculum for students with a disability. This project was undertaken in response to the Review of the Australian Curriculum and was designed to enable each school to tell its story about the use of the Australian Curriculum's general capabilities to personalise learning. Filming was completed in June 2016 and the videos will be made available on the Australian Curriculum website.

ACHIEVEMENTS

- ☑ All actions related to the Review of the Australian Curriculum completed.
- ☑ Parent materials made available on the Australian Curriculum website.
- ☑ STEM report and illustrations of practice published on the Australian Curriculum website.
- ☑ Mathematics Proficiencies project completed.
- ☑ Collaborative online assessment trials completed with international partners.

2.2 Purpose 2: Provision of a national assessment program

Overview

National assessment provides education leaders, teachers and parents with the means to periodically monitor students' achievement, and progress against national benchmarks and their peers using an objective measure. The National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) is used in combination with other forms of assessment to diagnose learning and inform priorities for students, cohorts and schools. New digital technologies are transforming assessment, allowing more engaging and accurate assessment, with results returned to schools within weeks.

Through its assessment program, ACARA is responsible for:

- researching, developing and supporting activities required for online assessment
- managing planning and development as well as overseeing the delivery and reporting for the National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN), collaborating with stakeholders and leading key components for the transition from pen-and-paper form to online delivery
- managing the development and overseeing the delivery of assessment and reporting for the National Assessment Program (NAP) sample assessments
- responding to agreed national assessment policy and providing evidence-based advice to the Australian Education Senior Officials Committee (AESOC) and the Education Council.
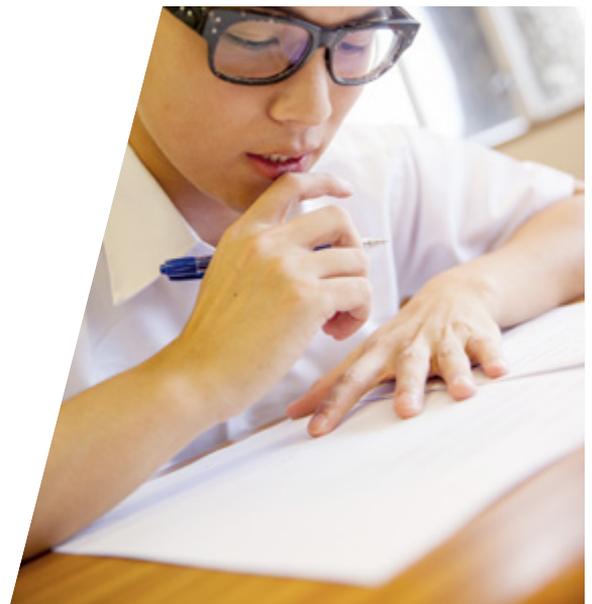
Performance against criteria

Performance criterion
National Assessment Program (NAP) – NAPLAN and NAP sample assessments delivered

Measure
NAPLAN and NAP Sample successfully delivered and reported on

Criterion source
Corporate Plan and PBS 2015–16

Result
2016 NAPLAN and 2015 NAP Sample – Science Literacy assessments were successfully conducted according to agreed protocols and risk management strategies.

2016 NAPLAN
In May 2016, NAPLAN tests were delivered for the ninth year. These tests were administered on 10–12 May 2016 by test administration authorities (TAAs) in accordance with the agreed framework of ACARA's National Protocols for Test Administration.

2016 NAPLAN was aligned to the Australian Curriculum: English and the Australian Curriculum: Mathematics, since the adoption of the curriculum in all states and territories. Previously, the tests were based on the Statements of learning for English and the Statements of learning for mathematics, which were common across all states and territories.

The equating studies for the 2016 NAPLAN tests were carried out from 26 April to 6 May 2016, with students in approximately 270 schools participating (and then subsequently participating in the 2016 NAPLAN tests).

2015 NAP Sample – Science Literacy
In 2015, the fifth assessment cycle of Science Literacy was administered online. To prepare for the online assessment of Science Literacy, questions were developed and subjected to a rigorous trialling process. Approximately 12,000 Year 6 students participated in the sample assessment in October and November 2015.

The following NAP reports were published during 2015–16:

- The 2015 NAPLAN summary information (preliminary results) was published on 5 August 2015
- The 2015 NAPLAN National Report and test incidents report were both published on 2 December 2015
- The 2014 NAPLAN technical report was published on 9 September 2015
- The 2014 NAP Sample – ICT Literacy public report was published on 17 November 2015.

Performance criterion
NAPLAN and NAP Sample assessment results are analysed accurately
and meaningfully for reporting against common scales

Measures
NAPLAN (pen-and-paper assessment) and NAP Sample assessment
(delivered online) results are analysed accurately and meaningfully.

Strong awareness of the National Protocols for Test Administration within schools,
leading to greater consistency in national test administration and minimal test
incidents, and NAPLAN online test items are trialled.

Criterion source
Corporate Plan and PBS 2015–16

Result
The 2015 NAPLAN and 2014 NAP Sample assessment results were analysed
accurately and meaningfully, with results published during the reporting period.

- The distribution of the 2015 NAPLAN individual student reports by jurisdictions
  varies, with Queensland releasing its reports the earliest (from 27 July 2015). This
  was earlier than previous years, providing parents and carers with an opportunity
  to identify their child's strengths and achievements in the areas of literacy and
  numeracy, and identify any areas where attention is required. This builds on the
  Australian Government's commitment for faster turnaround of NAPLAN results
- 2015 NAPLAN preliminary national results were provided to jurisdictions
  on 28 July 2015 and published on the NAP website on 5 August 2015.
- 2015 NAPLAN National Report was endorsed by the Education Council and
  published on 2 December 2015.
- 2014 NAP Sample – ICT Literacy report was endorsed by the Education Council
  and published on 17 November 2015.

NAP result analysis in progress:

- Analysis of 2016 NAPLAN results began in May 2016, with preliminary national
  results to be published in August 2016.
- Analysis of 2015 NAP Sample – Science Literacy results are being finalised
  with the national public report to be published in early 2017.

NAPLAN administration:

- 2015 NAPLAN test incidents report was published in December 2015. Test incidents are breaches of the National Protocols for Test Administration. The number of reported test incidents was very small and did not affect overall NAPLAN results.
- 2016 NAPLAN administration documents were updated and provided to TAAs in a timely manner. Test incidents resulting from 2016 NAPLAN are being managed as per the protocols in an efficient and effective manner, indicating a strong awareness of the National Protocols for Test Administration within schools.

NAPLAN test item trialling:

- 2016 NAPLAN test items were trialled according to protocols and risk management strategies, with trials successfully conducted from 27 July to 7 August 2015.
- Online NAPLAN test items were trialled in numeracy, reading, spelling, grammar and punctuation, and writing domains as a part of the NAPLAN online research and development program, to inform work towards the transition from paper-based to computer-based assessment.

In 2015–16, ACARA has achieved in other areas of work under its assessment program:

Online assessment: research and development

- ACARA's online assessment research and development program of 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 the reporting period, the following research and development studies were progressed:
  - o Trialling study: 120 schools nationally participated in the trialling study in August 2015. This study evaluated item and testlet performance, and testlet construction and targeting of items, and helped to finalise the parameters for the tailored test design. Psychometric data from this study have informed test construction and other research studies in 2016 and will contribute to the development of final tests in 2017.
  - o The device effect study: 73 schools nationally participated in the 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 is capable of being 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.

o The readability and layout study: The study investigated how students perceive, and react to, a range of different online item configurations and displays. The purpose of the study was to evaluate different item display and navigation options relative to onscreen layouts.

- Planning and preparation activities, including detailed project-planning and procurement, were conducted during 2015–16 in provision for the following research and development studies and trials to be undertaken in August 2016:

  o Scaling and linking study: The scaling component of the study is to construct online scales, investigate functioning of the tailored test design (TTD) and measure student performance in multistage adaptive tests. The linking component is to link online scales with existing NAPLAN assessment scales.

  o The accessibility adjustments study: To evaluate the impact of adjustments on the performance of students and their interaction with the NAPLAN online tests, and to collect empirical data that can be used to support the finalisation of adjustment development.

  o The proficiency levels and standards study: To supplement the current national minimum standard with standards that target high-order achievements in NAPLAN tests aligned with the Australian Curriculum and benchmarked against the international assessments.

Online assessment: platform, reporting and administration documents

- ACARA is continuing to commit significant resources and time to the development and finalisation of specification and requirement documents, and to undertake user-acceptance testing of the Assessment Delivery System.

- ACARA provided input into the business requirements for the Automated Essay Scoring System and procurement has been finalised; the system is being fine-tuned for inclusion in NAPLAN online.

- Templates for new NAPLAN online student, school and parent summary reports have been developed and are being finalised.

- NAPLAN online administration documents such as the National Protocols for Test Administration and Handbook for Principals have been drafted and consulted upon. These documents will be refined and updated following feedback from the use of these documents in the Platform Trial and Readiness Test in August 2016.

Online assessment: communication

- In 2015–16, ACARA finalised a national communications and engagement strategy to support the move to NAPLAN online from 2017. The strategy provides a framework for communications around the transition to online assessment at the national level. It also identifies opportunities, initiatives and stages of activity to assist jurisdictions in progressing their respective communications.

- ACARA continued its national communications approach to ensure stakeholders are kept informed through the transition period. Regular communication in the form of website updates, infographics and videos were disseminated through multiple channels, including social media and ACARA Update newsletters.

NAP

- 2016 NAPLAN was held on 10–12 May 2016, the ninth year for NAPLAN. NAPLAN is an important tool for parents, educators and the public to see how Australia's children are meeting essential literacy and numeracy standards. This is also the first year when NAPLAN has been aligned to the Australian Curriculum: English and the Australian Curriculum: Mathematics. Previously, the tests were based on the Statements of learning for English and the Statements of learning for Mathematics.

- Project-planning activities relating to the fifth cycle of the NAP – Civics and Citizenship (CC) 2016 sample assessment were conducted in 2015–16. This included the following activities:
  o developing a training package for NAP–CC in-school test administrators
  o ensuring that the NAP–CC Technical Readiness test will be available in August 2016
  o ensuring that the NAP–CC main study will be able to administered using the new online platform in October and November 2016.

- Planning and procurement activities began in 2015–16 for the sixth cycle of the NAP – ICT Literacy 2017 sample assessment.

Assessment frameworks

- In 2015–16, the NAPLAN assessment framework was revised, based on feedback from stakeholders and educational experts, with activities continuing to progress the test specifications for the 2017 dual paper-based and online tests.

- Planning to ensure all NAP Sample Assessment Frameworks are revised and aligned with the Australian Curriculum, and informed by the curriculum implementation timeline across all jurisdictions are underway.

- During 2015–16, 2015 NAP–SL and 2016 NAP–CC mapping exercises were conducted to identify alignment between the existing assessment framework and the Australian Curriculum. Item descriptors were modified to reflect aspects of the Australian Curriculum content descriptions and codes were assigned. These are included in School Summary Reports.

ACHIEVEMENTS

- ☑ 2015 NAPLAN Individual student reports distributed early.
- ☑ 2014 NAPLAN technical report published.
- ☑ 2015 NAPLAN National Report and test incidents report published on 2 December 2015.
- ☑ Advice and input into the online assessment platform development provided, administrative documents and consulted on reporting templates developed.
- ☑ The Device Effect Study and Accessibility Study Research relating to support for online assessment completed and results published on the NAP website.
- ☑ 2014 NAP – ICT Literacy public and technical reports published on 17 November 2015.
- ☑ The fifth cycle of NAP–SL main assessment held from 12 October to 6 November 2015. This was the first time NAP–SL was delivered online. NAP–SL Summary Reports received by all participating schools in December 2015.

2.3 Purpose 3: National data collection and reporting

Overview

Public reporting promotes accountability and engagement in school education. Provision of quality information on schooling is important for schools and their students, for parents and their families, and for the community and governments.

Through its national data collection and reporting program, ACARA is responsible for:

- monitoring and, where necessary, reviewing the existing national key performance measures for schools
- producing a comprehensive and authoritative national report on schooling in Australia, related to national key performance measures
- managing the collection and quality assurance of data and providing national school information through the *My School* website and national reports
- managing the sharing and dissemination of data with government and non-government school authorities and with other applicants in accordance with agreed protocols
- responding to agreed national data collection and reporting policy, and providing evidence-based advice to AESOC and the Education Council.

Performance against criteria

Performance criterion
The National Report on Schooling in Australia is published before the end of the subsequent calendar year

Measure
A concise national report, reporting key information published by the end of December of the following year and a related data portal available, allowing public access to the various national data sets for schooling

Criterion source
Corporate Plan 2015–16

Result
During 2015–16, ACARA published all sections of the 2011 and 2012 National Report on Schooling in Australia. In addition, the 2013 National Report on Schooling in Australia 2013 (Parts 1–6 and 8–10) was approved by ministers and also published on the ACARA website. These reports were published in a format and process that did not allow for timely access to content.

In February 2016, the Australian Education, Early Childhood and Youth Affairs Senior Officials Committee endorsed a new form of presentation for the National Report on Schooling in Australia consisting of:

- a concise national report, reporting key information and published annually, and
- a data portal, allowing public access to the various national data sets for schooling.

This allows for a more timely publication of data relating to the National Report on Schooling in Australia. In the first half of 2016, ACARA undertook work to implement the alternative presentation for the 2014 National Report on Schooling in Australia. Work towards finalising the 2014 report was undertaken in liaison with jurisdictions, and it is expected to be published in the first quarter of 2016–17 with all subsequent reports to meet the performance criterion.

Performance criterion
ACARA data continues to be materially accurate

Measure
An additional year's data is provided on the *My School* website, including any specific new measures approved by ministers

Criterion source
Corporate Plan and PBS 2015–16

Result

The *My School* website was updated on 9 March 2016 for 2015 school profile and population data, NAPLAN results and student attendance data. *My School* now includes up to eight years of performance data. All data quality assurance processes were implemented during the collection, validation, calculation and verification stages of preparing *My School* 2016 data and undertaken in accordance with the principles and protocols for reporting on schooling in Australia 2009.

In accordance with the Education Council directions, agreed to in September 2015, ACARA:

- developed a new *My School* landing page to present more concise and accessible information for the range of visitors to *My School*, including the provision of more user friendly video material
- revised text on all pages, including reviewing the factsheets and glossary, to ensure that it was understandable by a range of audiences and was jargon-free.

Student attendance data for Semester 1 2015 were published on *My School* on 18 November 2015, including the new Minister-approved measure – 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 on 17 December 2015. Both attendance data releases were disaggregated by Indigenous status.

In 2015–16, ACARA has achieved in other areas of work under its data and collection program:

- The number of applications under the Data Access Protocols 2015 continue to be steady at approximately 10 per month. There have been significant improvements in the time taken to process applications from 21 days in 2014–15 to 10 days in 2015–16.
- Finalised a process for the development of the Australian Schools List (ASL), a key activity supporting *My School* data collection and NAPLAN online school registration.
- Revised national standards for student attendance data reporting to reflect the changes of reporting student attendance data, and addition of the new measure of students attending 90 per cent or more of the time published on the ACARA website on 14 October 2015.

ACHIEVEMENTS

☑ A schedule for the development and implementation of the Education Council-agreed enhancements on *My School* was endorsed by the Council and agreed enhancements for 2015–16 developed and implemented on time.

☑ Published 2011 and 2012 National Reports on Schooling in Australia, and Parts 1–6 and 8–10 of the 2013 National Report on Schooling in Australia.

☑ Published Revised National Standards for Student Attendance Data Reporting.

☑ Published new student attendance data, including the new measure – student attendance level (the proportion of students in Years 1–10 attending school for 90 per cent or more of the time).

2.4 Purpose 4: National collaboration and leadership

Overview

ACARA works in a transparent and collaborative manner with the Australian Government, state and territory departments of education, and government and non-government school authorities.

ACARA seeks input and advice on its work with its advisory groups to enable all stakeholders to provide input. ACARA provides consistent and structured opportunities for engagement and considers advice from all stakeholders.

Through its national collaboration and leadership efforts, ACARA is responsible for:

- providing national leadership in curriculum, assessment, data collection and reporting directly and in collaboration with the Australian Government, states, territories, non-government sector, AITSL, ESA and other stakeholder groups, ensuring liaison with key stakeholders across all matters relating to curriculum, assessment and reporting

- communicating information about ACARA's work and achievements to partners, stakeholders and the broader community

- collaborating with international education bodies to ensure ACARA's work and advice to ministers are informed by leading research and better practice, and provide support services internationally where these align with ACARA's core areas of work.

Performance against criteria

Performance criterion
An advisory structure that is fit-for-purpose is in place

Measure
Advisory structure published and communicated to partners

Criterion source
Corporate Plan 2015–16

Result

In response to the finding of the 2015 Review of ACARA, in 2015–16 ACARA simplified its advisory and reference group structure to reflect the future objectives of the agency.

The terms of reference documentation for ACARA's reference groups were reviewed and communicated to jurisdictions. The review ensured that each group's purpose and scope are relevant to ACARA's work plan, allowing for high-level advice to be provided to ACARA's executive on specific matters relating to curriculum, assessment and reporting.

ACARA's revised advisory group structure for 2015–16 was published on the ACARA website.

Performance criterion
A transparent and timely reporting process and structure are maintained

Measure
Progress reports against the annual work plan submitted to the Education Council and/or AESOC twice a year and at each meeting of the ACARA Board, and all advice provided on time and of high quality

Criterion source
Corporate Plan 2015–16

Result

During the reporting period, ACARA provided reports on progress against its 2015–16 work plan to two scheduled meetings of the Education Council and AESOC and to each of the six scheduled meetings of the ACARA Board. ACARA also provided the Education Council and AESOC with a fortnightly report, capturing key activities planned for the fortnight ahead.

Reports were presented on time and provided the ACARA Board and key stakeholders with detailed information on the status of all ACARA's activities.

Performance criterion
Collaboration with partners (government and non-government school sectors),
and national stakeholders and international education bodies clearly maintained

Measure
Evidence of collaboration through: scheduled meetings of ACARA's key advisory
groups; ACARA's attendance at key working groups and peak bodies and evidence
of communication with international education bodies

Criterion source
Corporate Plan 2015–16

Result
During 2015–16, ACARA held five meetings with its National Assessment, Data,
Analysis and Reporting (NADAR) Reference Group and four meetings with the F–12
Curriculum reference group. These groups provided high-level advice to the ACARA
executive to advance ACARA's strategic priorities within ACARA's 2015–16 work plan.

Meetings with the Curriculum Directors' Group were also convened to share information
and expertise. Members of this group play a key role in communicating ACARA's work
in the area of curriculum to government and non-government school sectors.

In addition, meetings were held with ACARA's following key expert advisory groups:

- ACARA Research and Data Committee
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Group
- Students with Disability Advisory Group
- Measurement Advisory Group
- National Testing Working Group
- Recognition of Alternative Curriculum.

A number of other ACARA groups met during the reporting period as required,
including the Finance Data Working Group, National Report on Schooling Working
Group and Marking Quality Team.

ACARA attended scheduled meetings of the Online Assessment Working Group as a key
member and submitted papers to and attended meetings of the Data Strategy Working
Group and the Schools Policy Group as an observer. ACARA attended meetings of
AESOC and the Education Council to speak to items relating to ACARA's work.

Discussions were held with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia's Public Education and
Evaluation Commission as part of ACARA's work in supporting the Kingdom of
Saudi Arabia's development of a new national curriculum on a fee-for-service basis.

In 2015, ACARA held meetings with Brazilian government officials and embarked upon work to support Brazil in the development of its national learning standards through a contract with the Lemann Foundation, acting on behalf of the Brazilian government.

ACARA developed Australia's report for the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) 'Network on Education Quality Monitoring the Asia Pacific' comparative study. The project explores practices for assessing transversal competencies, or general capabilities, used by schools and school systems in the Asia-Pacific region. The Australian report includes a description of the national education context and details of school case studies. The Australian material will be synthesised with other participating countries to form the regional report.

In 2015–16, ACARA entered into a partnership project with education authorities in Ireland and Sweden to develop and trial innovative online assessment. Data from the trial informed a paper for the 2016 International Association for Educational Assessment (IAEA) Conference in Cape Town, South Africa.

ACHIEVEMENTS

In 2015–16, ACARA's achievements
in national collaboration and leadership include:

- ☑ Led national communications initiatives for the move to NAPLAN online.
- ☑ Liaised with government and non-government school sectors on the development of ACARA's 2016–2020 work plan, endorsed by the Education Council in September 2015.
- ☑ Continued work to promote general community understanding of the significance of national curriculum, assessment and reporting processes through the provision of regular publication of ACARA updates and engagement with media.
- ☑ Supported ACARA's key areas of work through communications planning and stakeholder engagement for curriculum, assessment and reporting activities.
- ☑ Provided quality advice that facilitates effective decision-making by AESOC/Education Council.
- ☑ Built on ACARA's reputation for world-class curriculum, assessment and reporting programs, including hosting numerous international delegations.

2.5 Analysis of performance

National education landscape

In the 2015–16 reporting period, ACARA continued to contribute to improving the learning of all young Australians through revisions of the national curriculum, the enhancement of national testing and the provision of meaningful and reliable public data on schools.

The year saw ACARA reach some significant milestones. This was the first year the NAPLAN program was aligned with the national curriculum, further improving the comparability of our assessment and reporting. ACARA's reporting program enables fair comparisons of performance between similar schools across Australia and will provide important benchmark information for future monitoring of the education system.

ACARA continued to be responsive to the changing needs of education in Australia. In line with the findings of the Review of the Australian Curriculum and as agreed by the Education Council (the Council) in March 2015, ACARA developed materials that support improved parental access to the Australian Curriculum, addressed overcrowding in the curriculum, and worked towards improving the accessibility of the Australian Curriculum for students with a disability. These improvements were welcomed by ACARA's stakeholders and endorsed by the Council during the 2015–16 reporting year.

Following consultation with jurisdictions, the next phase for the curriculum will involve a period of stability and supporting continued implementation to ensure that every child in Australia, regardless of where they live or the school they attend, has access to Australia's world-class national curriculum.

ACARA continued to lead the way in embracing new digital technologies in 2015–16, particularly in its assessment program. Following studies undertaken in prior years, ACARA embarked on another phase of research and test development for online delivery, and collaborated with Education Services Australia and all Australian governments in working towards successful implementation of NAPLAN online from 2017. ACARA has begun working with jurisdictions to implement a communications strategy to ensure that the requirements for the transition are provided to, and understood by, schools.

Value and impact of ACARA's work

ACARA's work plan identifies strategies to promote general community understanding of the significance of a national curriculum, assessment and reporting processes through targeted stakeholder engagement and proactive media engagement. In 2015–16, ACARA continued to provide quality information on schooling through *My School* and build on its reputation as an authoritative source of school data.

Recognition of ACARA's key role in Australian schooling was demonstrated through continued referencing and citations in government documentation, by education specialists and academics, and the media. Advice provided to the Australian Education Senior Officials Committee (AESOC) and the Council informed national policy in all of ACARA's key areas of work, attesting to the value of ACARA's governance and advisory framework and the expertise of its staff and Board.

ACARA's expertise and reputation have also led to international recognition and collaborations across curriculum, assessment and reporting. In 2015–16, ACARA hosted several international delegations, provided advice to support national curriculum work in other countries and attended international forums including the ones held by UNESCO and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development.

ACARA's public reporting continued to promote accountability and engagement in school education; the national data it has collected and made available to governments, researchers and others have informed public debate about Australia's education systems.

Accountability

In 2015–16, ACARA performed its purposes in accordance with directions given to it by the Council, in accordance with the ACARA Charter, and as stipulated by the ACARA Act. In 2015–16, ACARA delivered a number of recommendations as determined by the Council, including in response to the review of the Australian Curriculum.

ACARA's consultative process informs the development of its work program. In 2015–16, ACARA liaised with government and non-government school sectors on the development of ACARA's 2016–2020 work plan.

ACARA's 2016–17 to 2019–20 work plan and budget were endorsed by the Council in September 2015 and April 2016 respectively. Additionally, a detailed work plan was developed for 2016–17 for consideration by the Council. These plans identified ACARA's ongoing responsibilities and key activities and were informed by consultation with all education sectors. ACARA reported its progress against its 2015–16 annual work plan at meetings of the ACARA Board, AESOC and the Council.

Over the next phase of ACARA's existence, ACARA will further refine the cycle of assessment and reporting against the Australian Curriculum. Working with jurisdictions, ACARA intends to support the development of the national online assessment capability and public understanding of the significance of the shift to online assessment.

The further refinement of the Australian Curriculum and development of associated resource materials will reflect the evolving needs of the community, as well as preparing Australia's young people with the skills they need to enter the workforce and the community as contributing members of society.

Engagement and consultation

Much of ACARA's work is underpinned by consultation with a range of stakeholders. Following the review of ACARA undertaken by the Australian Government Department of Education and Training from December 2014 to mid-2015, ACARA's governance structures were reviewed to ensure that they are aligned with requirements for the next phase of ACARA's work.

ACARA also works closely with its Council counterparts, the Australian Institute of Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) and Education Services Australia (ESA).

Through its various advisory and reference groups, ACARA draws on the expertise and knowledge of experts from across Australia including teachers, school leaders, academics, public officials, and members of a range of other stakeholder groups.

3.0 Management and accountability

This section details ACARA's corporate governance arrangements, an overview of human resource management, risk management, financial management and communications and strategic relations. It also addresses additional reporting requirements.

3.1 Corporate governance

Enabling legislation and functions

ACARA is an independent statutory authority and a corporate Commonwealth entity established under Section 5 of the *Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority Act* (Cth) on 8 December 2008.

The ACARA Act outlines the authority's functions, which are to:

- develop and administer a national school curriculum, including curriculum content and achievement standards, for school subjects specified by the Ministerial Council's charter for ACARA
- develop and administer national assessments
- 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
- provide school curriculum resource services, education research services and other related services
- provide information, resources, support and guidance to the teaching profession, and perform other related functions.

There were no changes to ACARA's enabling legislation in 2015–16.

Directions of the Education Council

Section 7 (3) of the ACARA Act requires ACARA to perform its functions and exercise its powers in line with the charter set by the Education Council.

ACARA reports to the Education Council and to the federal minister for education about requirements under the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013* (PGPA Act).

Responsible minister

The Australian Government Minister for Education and Training (the Minister) is the responsible minister for ACARA. For the 2015–16 financial year, the Minister for Education and Training was the Honourable Christopher Pyne MP, Minister for Education and Training from 1 July 2015 to 21 September 2015, followed by Senator the Honourable Simon Birmingham, Minister for Education and Training, from 21 September 2015 until 30 June 2016.

Governance framework

ACARA's governance framework provides the structure for informed decision-making, risk management and accountability. The framework has its foundation in the ACARA Act, which establishes a 13-member governing body. The ACARA Board includes a chairman, a deputy chairman and 11 other members representing states, territories, Catholic schools and independent schools. Each member is appointed by the Minister by written instrument, with the agreement of the Ministerial Council.

The Board is accountable to the Parliament of Australia through the Minister. The Board is responsible for ensuring the proper and efficient performance of ACARA, and is the accountable authority under the PGPA Act.

Among other responsibilities, ACARA Board members are required to disclose to their fellow directors any material personal interest they may have in a matter relating to the affairs of the authority. Major procurement undertaken by ACARA is tabled at each meeting so that Board members can disclose potential or actual conflicts. A record of all disclosures is maintained by ACARA.

Further information about the Board, including membership, can be seen at **3.2 The Board**.

ACARA's governance and advisory structure allows for input and advice from key stakeholder groups and experts. This advice assists the executive in making recommendations to the ACARA Board and to the Education Council. It also supports ACARA in achieving the objectives of its Charter in a consultative and collaborative way. An overview of ACARA's advisory groups in 2015–16 can be seen below.

The CEO

The CEO is appointed by the Board in consultation with the Minister. The CEO is responsible for the day-to-day administration of ACARA, and is to act in accordance with directions given by the Board.

The CEO acts on behalf of ACARA, and is accountable to the ACARA Board. The CEO consults the Board on all matters relating to the performance of ACARA functions and provides information necessary for Board members to fulfil their governance responsibilities. In December 2015, Robert Randall was reappointed as ACARA's CEO for a period of three years with effect from 10 February 2016.

The Executive Committee

The Executive Committee is a standing committee. It supports the CEO in managing day-to-day administration of ACARA. Responsibilities include, but are not limited to, the performance of ACARA in achieving the outcomes of the Portfolio Budget Statements, in fulfilling the mission, purposes and objectives outlined in the Corporate Plan 2015–16, in allocating resources, and in managing enterprise-wide risks, legislative compliance, stakeholder relations and corporate governance. In 2015–16, the Executive met monthly as a group and twice a month as a part of the Senior Management Group.

Advisory groups

ACARA is supported by advisory groups that assist in the performance of its functions and provide input and expertise across ACARA's work priorities.

ACARA's reference groups ensure that jurisdictions and a range of stakeholder organisations have regular and meaningful opportunities to provide advice and other input to ACARA. Members are expected to represent high-level views of their jurisdiction or organisation on matters discussed by the reference groups and to ensure, as far as practicable, that information relating to the work of the reference groups is communicated back to the relevant members of their jurisdiction or organisation.

All other groups provide expert advice and development input. Membership is granted through a nomination process by jurisdictions and organisations and/or on the basis of expertise in a particular field.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Group

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Group provides ACARA with expert guidance and advice about the representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures in the Australian Curriculum. It also advises ACARA on the protocols and cultural sensitivities that need to be taken into account by ACARA business units as ACARA proceeds with its curriculum, assessment and reporting programs. The group comprises individuals with demonstrated expertise in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education and community engagement.

Curriculum Directors Group

The Curriculum Directors Group has been established to facilitate information-sharing, collaboration and support for the Australian Curriculum between ACARA and representatives of state and territory curriculum and school authorities. Members are drawn from government, Catholic and independent school sectors across all jurisdictions and bring high-level curriculum implementation expertise to the group.

F–12 Curriculum Reference Group

The F–12 Curriculum Reference Group gives high-level expert advice to the ACARA Executive in support of strategic initiatives that enhance the development, implementation and improvement of the Australian Curriculum. Members of this group bring a range of jurisdictional perspectives that reflect national, state and territory priorities.

The group has representatives from each state and territory and federal government, nominated by the relevant AESOC member, the National Catholic Education Commission (NCEC) and one nominee of the Independent Schools Council of Australia (ISCA).

Finance Data Working Group

The Finance Data Working Group gives advice and assistance to ACARA's Executive on ACARA's national responsibilities associated with financial reporting on schooling and Australia's schools. This helps ACARA in the collection and reporting of school finance data for *My School*.

Marking Quality Team

The Marking Quality Team participate in the development and review of NAPLAN writing prompts. Members develop consensus scores for the training and control materials used to ensure national consistency of marking for the NAPLAN writing tests. The group also advises on required changes to marking guide exemplars. Members attend training on how to deliver a common marker training package to the state and territory markers in their jurisdiction. The group also advises on required changes to marking guide exemplars. The Marking Quality Team works closely with the National Testing Working Group.

Measurement Advisory Group

The Measurement Advisory Group provides ACARA's Executive with high-level expert and independent educational measurement and assessment advice and input for the National Assessment Program (NAP), and in particular, the National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN).

NAP sample assessment learning area working groups

NAP sample assessment learning area working groups give ACARA advice about proposed assessment materials from curriculum, psychometric and equity perspectives for their learning area. They examine draft assessment instruments to make sure these instruments are of appropriate difficulty and are valid, free of bias and accessible to all participating students.

NAPLAN Online Communications Group

A subcommittee of AESOC's Online Assessment Working Group (OAWG), the NAPLAN Online Communications Group was established to help facilitate implementation of the NAPLAN online communications and engagement strategy. The group comprises representatives of each jurisdiction and sector, based on nominations by the relevant OAWG member. The group acts as a conduit for coordinating communications and engagement activities concerning NAPLAN online within their organisation or jurisdiction.

National Assessment, Data, Analysis and Reporting Reference Group

The National Assessment, Data, Analysis and Reporting Reference Group (NADAR) provides ACARA's Executive with high-level advice on the appropriateness, opportunities and potential risks associated with the work proposed and undertaken by ACARA within the scope of its remit. The group ensures that jurisdictions or organisations have regular and meaningful opportunities to provide advice and feedback to ACARA on its assessment and reporting work program.

The group has representatives from all departments of education, test administration authorities (where these are separate from the department), the Catholic and independent school sectors and other relevant stakeholders.

National Report on Schooling Working Group

The National Report on Schooling Working Group helps to develop the planning framework/format for the annual National Report on Schooling in Australia and contributes to review of the draft report.

National Testing Working Group

The National Testing Working Group is a forum for information-sharing and collaboration among ACARA, testing authorities and stakeholders about NAPLAN. The group gives feedback on items and test forms during item and test development, advises on administration and reporting activities and provides quality assurance to achieve high-quality tests in a nationally consistent framework.

Student Attendance Data Working Group

The Student Attendance Data Working Group advises ACARA about the development and implementation of a student attendance data methodology to collect and report consistent student attendance data across jurisdictions and sectors.

Students with Disability Advisory Group

The Students with Disability Advisory Group provides ACARA with high-level advice in relation to students with a disability. This advice helps ACARA to contribute towards the goals of the Melbourne Declaration with respect to students with a disability.

3.2 The Board

The ACARA Board is responsible for ensuring proper and efficient performance of the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority's functions.

The Board comprises 13 non-executive members who are nominated by federal, state and territory education ministers, as well as by the National Catholic Education Commission (NCEC) and the ISCA.

One member retired from the Board in February 2015 in accordance with Section 18 of the ACARA Act. The appointment of a new member is in progress. No other changes were made to the membership of the Board during the reporting period.

All Board members undertook a governance workshop in October 2015, facilitated by an independent expert.

Board membership

Membership of the ACARA Board is established under section 13 of the ACARA Act. It comprises nominees of education ministers and national peak non-government school bodies, agreed to by the Education Council. The ACARA Board held six meetings during the 2015–16 reporting period.

Chair – Emeritus Professor Steven Schwartz AM

Emeritus Professor Steven Schwartz AM has served as vice-chancellor and president of three universities (Macquarie and Murdoch Universities in Australia, and Brunel University in England). He is a Director of Teach for Australia and the Australian Scholarship Foundation. Professor Schwartz is also the former National Chairman of the Fulbright Commission. He is a Fellow of the Academy of Social Sciences, a Royal Society Exchange Fellow and a NATO Fellow. Professor Schwartz is a prize-winning researcher, teacher and author of 13 books.

Qualifications held: BA, MS, PhD.

Deputy Chair – Emeritus Professor Brian Caldwell

Emeritus Professor Brian Caldwell is the Managing Director and Principal Consultant at Educational Transformations and Professor Emeritus and Honorary Professorial Fellow at the University of Melbourne where he served as Dean of Education from 1998 to 2004. He served as Dean of Education at the University of Tasmania from 1989 to 1990.

Previously, he served as a teacher of mathematics and science in Victoria and Alberta, Canada, and held academic posts at the University of Alberta.

Professor Emeritus Caldwell is a fellow and life member of both the Australian College of Educators (ACE) and the Australian Council for Educational Leaders (ACEL). He is a recipient of the College Medal of ACE and the Gold Medal of ACEL, and has served as President of ACEL and Deputy Chair of the Australian Council for Educational Research. He is also Patron of ACEL (Victoria).

Qualifications held: BSci, BEd, MEd, PhD, EdD (honoris causa).

Ms Liz Banks

Liz Banks is Deputy Secretary of the Early Years and Schools Division in the Tasmanian Department of Education, and nominee of the Tasmanian Education Minister.

Qualifications held: BEd, TCE, DipT.

Ms Susan Bowden

Susan Bowden is the General Manager, Early Childhood, Northern Territory Department of Education, and nominee of the NT Education Minister.

Qualifications held: BEd, MEDL.

Emeritus Professor Patrick Garnett

Emeritus Professor Patrick Garnett is Chair of the School Curriculum and Standards Authority, Western Australia, and nominee of the WA Education Minister.

Qualifications held: BSc (Hons), PhD, BEd, MA, HonDEd, FRACI, CChem, CompIEAust, MACE.

Mr Stephen Gniel

Stephen Gniel is the former Deputy Director-General, Education Strategy, Australian Capital Territory Directorate of Education and Training, and nominee of the ACT Education Minister.

Qualifications held: BEd, MBA.

Retired from the Board on 19 February 2016.

Ms Valerie Gould

Valerie Gould is the Executive Director of the Association of Independent Schools, Western Australia, and nominee of the Independent Schools Council of Australia. She is also a Fellow of the Australian Council for Education Leadership (ACEL) and the Australian College of Educators (FACE).

Qualifications held: BEc, DipEd.

Mr Paul Hewitt

Mr Paul Hewitt is the Executive Director of Curriculum, Teaching and Assessment, New South Wales Board of Studies, Teaching and Educational Standards and nominee of the NSW Education Minister.

Qualifications held: MA, Grad DipEd, DipT.

Mr Michael Hewitson AM

Michael Hewitson AM is the retired foundation principal of Trinity College, Gawler, now Councillor for Unley (South Australia), and nominee of the federal Education Minister.

Qualifications held: BSc(Hons) Dip Ed B.Ed, FACE.

Dr David Howes

Dr David Howes is the acting Assistant Deputy Secretary, Victorian Department of Education and Training, and nominee of the Victorian Education Minister.

Qualifications held: BA (Hons), Dip Ed, MEd, PhD.

Ms Jayne Johnson

Ms Jayne Johnson is the Chief Education Officer, South Australian Department for Education and Child Development, and nominee of the SA Education Minister.

Qualifications held: BEd, BSci, MS Ed.

Dr Tim McDonald

Dr Tim McDonald is the Executive Director of Catholic Education, the Catholic Education Office, Western Australia, and nominee of the National Catholic Education Commission.

Qualifications held: EdD, MEd, BEd (Hons), DipT.

Ms Patrea Walton

Ms Patrea Walton is the Deputy Director-General, Queensland Department of Education and Training, and nominee of the Qld Education Minister.

Qualifications held: BEd, DipT.

Board member appointments

Members	Initial appointment	Appointment ending
Emeritus Prof. Steven Schwartz	June 2015	May 2018
Emeritus Prof. Brian Caldwell	July 2014	May 2017
Ms Susan Bowden	July 2013	May 2018
Ms Liz Banks	May 2012	May 2018
Emeritus Prof. Patrick Garnett	May 2012	May 2018
Mr Stephen Gniel	July 2014	February 2016
Ms Valerie Gould	July 2014	May 2017
Mr Paul Hewitt	June 2015	May 2018
Mr Michael Hewitson	July 2014	May 2017
Dr David Howes	June 2015	May 2018
Ms Jayne Johnston	June 2015	May 2018
Dr Tim McDonald	June 2015	May 2018
Ms Patrea Walton	July 2014	May 2017

Board members may be reappointed. The maximum period of appointment cannot exceed six years.

Meetings of the Board

Date	Meeting	Apologies	Location
20 August 2015	Meeting 59	Susan Bowden, Steven Schwartz	255 Pitt Street, Sydney
8 October 2015	Meeting 60	Susan Bowden	255 Pitt Street, Sydney
10 December 2015	Meeting 61	Nil	255 Pitt Street, Sydney
3 March 2016	Meeting 62	Nil	255 Pitt Street, Sydney
28 April 2016	Meeting 63	Liz Banks, Tim McDonald	255 Pitt Street, Sydney
23 June 2016	Meeting 64	Liz Banks, Tim McDonald, Patrea Walton	255 Pitt Street, Sydney

Committees of the Board

Audit and Risk Committee

The Audit and Risk Committee provides assurance and assistance to the ACARA Board on governance arrangements, financial reporting, systems of risk management and oversight and systems of internal control.

In 2015–16, monitoring of performance became a Committee responsibility, as required by the PGPA Act.

Audit and Risk Committee membership

ACARA's Audit and Risk Committee comprises three members of the ACARA Board and two external members. During the reporting period, the Committee provided independent assurance and advice to the Board on ACARA's governance arrangements, risk control and compliance framework, and financial statement responsibilities. In 2015–16, the Audit and Risk Committee met four times.

Ms Liz Banks *(Chair, appointed as Chair 16 July 2014)*
Professor Emeritus Brian Caldwell *(appointed to the Committee 16 July 2014)*
Mr Paul Crombie *(independent member)*
Mr Michael Hewitson *(appointed to the Committee 16 July 2014)*
Mr Gilbert Smith *(independent member)*

Audit and Risk Committee meetings

Date	Meeting	Apologies	Location
11 August 2015	Meeting 29	Nil	255 Pitt Street, Sydney
26 November 2015	Meeting 30	Nil	255 Pitt Street, Sydney
22 February 2016	Meeting 31	Nil	255 Pitt Street, Sydney
4 May 2016	Meeting 32	Liz Banks	255 Pitt Street, Sydney

3.3 Risk management

ACARA has a risk management policy and a risk management framework in place. These set policies and guidelines for risk management at all levels of the organisation. The aims are to:

- enable ACARA to proactively identify and manage its risks in a systematic and structured way
- integrate the risk management process into strategic and business planning
- promote risk awareness and attention to the ongoing review, treatment, monitoring and reporting of risks throughout the organisation.

The structure of ACARA's documents and the corresponding implementation process, including terminology, assessment and evaluation criteria, are based on the Australian standard Risk Management – Principles and Guidelines (AS/NZS ISO 31000:2009).

Fraud control

Under Australian Government policy, there is a requirement for all agencies to have a fraud control plan in place. The core objectives of ACARA's fraud control plan and policy are to identify potential fraud risk categories to which ACARA is exposed and to outline responsibilities for fraud control. The relevant standards are Risk Management – Principles and Guidelines (AS/NZS ISO 31000:2009) and Australian Standard Fraud and Corruption Control (AS 8001–2008).

3.4 Financial management

ACARA's financial accountability and reporting responsibilities are set out in the PGPA Act and are based on efficient, effective and ethical use of allocated resources. ACARA works within a financial control framework, which ensures it administers its responsibilities appropriately and effectively.

Analysis of financial performance

ACARA reported a deficit of $1.262M for 2015–16. This deficit reflects additional resource requirements associated with research to support the transition to online national assessment, which were not anticipated at the time ACARA's 2012–13 to 2015–16 budget was agreed by the federal, state and territory ministers for education in late 2011. ACARA's reserves are sufficient to accommodate this deficit.

The percentage breakdown of expenditure for 2015–16 across the five business units was as follows:

- Curriculum   19.3%
- Assessment and Reporting including NAPLAN online   46.8%
- Communications and Strategic Relations   3.5%
- Office of the CEO including the ACARA Board   6.4%
- Corporate Services, representing HR, ICT, finance and facilities   24.0%

ACARA is a collaborative initiative funded 50 per cent by the Australian Government and 50 per cent by state and territory governments. The Education Council, which comprises all the funding parties, approved $109.2M funding to meet ACARA's operational requirements for the period of 1 July 2012 to 30 June 2016. In April 2016 the Educational Council approved $105.5M funding to meet ACARA's operational requirements for the period of 1 July 2016 – 30 June 2020.

Factors that have affected or may affect operations

No major financial factors have impacted ACARA's operations to date. ACARA's operations are dependent on funding from state, territory and Australian governments.

Reportable decisions or issues

Under paragraph 19(1)(c), (d) or (e) of the PGPA Act, ACARA must notify the federal Minister for Education and Training of any significant decisions or issues. There were no significant decisions or issues reportable under these provisions for 2015–16.

3.5 Communications and strategic relations

The Communications and Strategic Relations (C&SR) team is responsible for informing and engaging partners and stakeholders about ACARA's work.

The C&SR team supports key areas of ACARA's work through strategic communications planning, development of publications and engagement of stakeholders, including the media. C&SR creates and delivers appropriate, tailored and timely information to internal and external audiences.

The team also manages official correspondence, internal staff communications and ensures consistency across the ACARA brand and sub-brands including *My School*, the Australian Curriculum, NAP and NAPLAN online communications material.

Engagement through media

ACARA's work is of intense public interest. Media attention on ACARA's work has remained steady, with the C&SR team responding to around 400 media queries over the year across the areas of curriculum, assessment and reporting.

ACARA hosted press briefings for high-level releases, including those of the 2015 NAPLAN summary information release, the NAPLAN national report and the release of *My School* 2015.

Other key areas of media interest this year included the release of the revised endorsed Australian Curriculum, the Digital Technologies curriculum, the release of the NAP Sample ICTL report, the move to NAPLAN online and financial data on the *My School* website.

Supporting ACARA's work program

The C&S unit provides strategic communications support to maximise stakeholder awareness and understanding of ACARA's work. C&SR manages the delivery of information to stakeholders across multiple platforms including social media, video, media and stakeholder briefings, updates to ACARA's websites and monthly newsletters to ACARA's subscriber base.

Key releases listed chronologically in 2015–16 included:

- Hindi and Turkish language curricula consultation
- NAPLAN 2015 summary information results
- Release of Corporate Plan 2015–16
- NAPLAN online: research to support NAPLAN online commences
- Australian Curriculum: designing lessons for gifted and talented students
- Updated Australian Curriculum website released
- Review of ACARA by the Australian Government Department of Education and Training
- The Australian Schools List website updated
- NAPLAN online: will support most devices from 2017
- NAP sample – Science Literacy tests start 2015
- 2014 NAP – ICT literacy report shows a decline in ICT literacy
- *My School*: updated with 2015 Term 1 and 2 student attendance data
- NAPLAN 2015 results: overall stable student achievement
- Your child and the Australian Curriculum: fact sheets for parents released
- Release of the Framework for Aboriginal Languages and Torres Strait Islander Languages; Hindi and Turkish curricula
- Re-appointment of ACARA's CEO
- *My School*: Term 3 student attendance data
- *My School* updated for 2016
- NAPLAN 2016 aligned with the Australian Curriculum
- NAPLAN 2016
- Public consultation for Auslan, the Framework for Classical Languages, Classical Greek and Latin language curricula
- Release of ACARA's refreshed website
- New interactive website for work samples.

Informing the public

ACARA has four main websites, comprising the ACARA website, the NAP website, the Australian Curriculum website and the *My School* website. These websites are important tools for communicating with our stakeholders.

Our online presence continues to grow. In 2015–16, there were 906,369 user sessions of the ACARA website. The Australian Curriculum website had 4.1 million user sessions, and the NAP website had 1.02 million user sessions. The *My School* website saw 1.4 million user sessions this year.

The Communications and Strategic Relations team responded to 2,393 queries received through our general email address info@acara.edu.au.

Twelve *ACARA Update* and *ACARA Update Extra* e-newsletters were distributed to more than 25,000 subscribers in 2015–16.

National engagement focus

ACARA's focus is on collaboration and engagement with national partners and stakeholders. During the year, ACARA's executive team attended and presented at a range of stakeholder engagement opportunities, including conferences, seminars, workshops and forums.

NAPLAN Online

A key focus of the C&SR team in 2015–16 was developing and implementing a national communications and engagement strategy to support the move to NAPLAN online from 2017.

The strategy identifies communications opportunities and initiatives at the national level for NAPLAN Online. It also provides a framework for state and territories to progress communications and stakeholder engagement within their jurisdictions according to respective implementation requirements and timeframes.

The strategy provides high-level advice and direction for managing communications related to milestones for transitioning to NAPLAN online while ensuring stakeholders have an opportunity to receive and understand information about NAPLAN Online.

During 2015–16, ACARA also began implementation of this strategy, working with partners and stakeholder groups to ensure students, parents and teacher were kept informed through the transition period. Regular communication in the form of website updates, infographics and videos were disseminated through multiple channels, including social media and ACARA Update newsletters.

Social media

ACARA's social media presence continued to build in 2015–16. At 1 July 2015, ACARA had more than 22,000 followers across our Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn profiles. By 30 June 2016, that figure had risen to more than 29,000 – an increase of 32 per cent.

ACARA develops infographics to explain some of our more complex work in a concise format, for delivery on digital channels including the websites and social media.

Social media followers

12,426
Likes

14,084
Followers

572
Subscribers

In 2015–16 ACARA's followers across social media channels increased by 23 per cent

Twitter key metrics

14,084
Followers

3,716
Following

2,603
Tweets

2,400
Likes

Top Facebook post

ACARA
16 December 2015

We have released a suite of materials designed for parents. Seven fact sheets, written in plain English, describe what is typically taught in each learning area at different year bands throughout school.

See new materials here: www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/…/parent-infor…/ introduction.

Information for parents
THE AUSTRALIAN CURRICULUM – YEARS 1 AND 2

THE AUSTRALIAN CURRICULUM

YEARS 1 AND 2

11,603 *People Reached*		
378 *Likes, Comments & Shares*		
230 *Likes*	**136** *On Post*	**94** *On Shares*
27 *Comments*	**13** *On Post*	**14** *On Shares*
121 *Shares*	**116** *On Post*	**5** *On Shares*
1,156 *Post Clicks*		
186 *Photo views*	**317** *Link clicks*	**653** *Other Clicks*

ACARA's most popular Facebook post of 2015–16

3.6 Workforce management

ACARA's diverse workforce brings a valuable range of skills and expertise to the organisation, helping foster productive relationships within the education sector. Many staff members are considered leaders in their fields, bringing to their roles important local and international experience. They have been recruited or seconded from positions within state and territory education departments, curriculum, assessment and certification authorities, the non-government school sector, federal and state government agencies, as well as the private sector. This means that ACARA's workforce reflects the complexity and dynamism of Australia's education community.

Key achievements in 2015–16 include:

- preparation for negotiating a new Enterprise Agreement undertaken with negotiations commencing May 2016
- alignment of the revised capability framework to positions (position descriptions) completed in June 2016, which lays the foundation for future recruitment and development initiatives
- embedding capabilities into the new performance module completed and aligned to the annual review cycle
- manager consultation was undertaken following the completion of ACARA's two-year training program (2014–2016). A new program is being established for 2016–17.

Staff profile

As at 30 June 2016, ACARA's workforce comprised 93 direct hires, including two staff members appointed as secondees from state or territory agencies.

A key aspect of ACARA's work involves collaboration with a broad network of advisory and reference groups from states and territories. Although members of these groups are not represented in ACARA's staff profile, they make a significant national contribution to ACARA's work and achievement.

Code of conduct

ACARA's Code of Conduct articulates standards of behaviour expected from ACARA officers. These standards reflect ACARA's values, which the Executive and staff must adhere to in the performance of their duties.
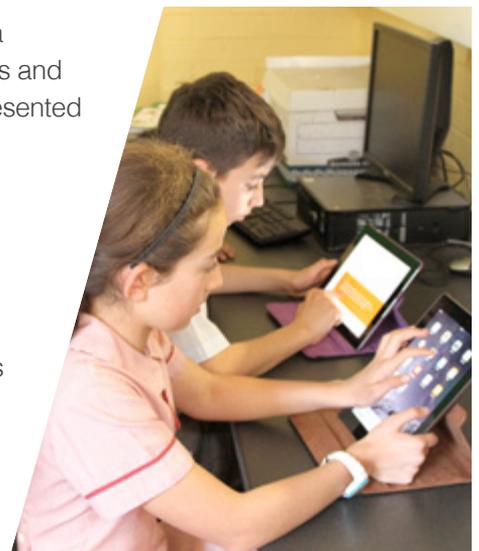
Executive team

The executive team is responsible for ACARA's day-to-day operations and contributing to ACARA's strategic direction. The team has evolved with ACARA and comprised the following staff over the course of the financial year:

- Chief Executive Officer: Mr Robert Randall (from November 2012)
- General Manager, Assessment and Reporting: Dr Stanley Rabinowitz (from July 2014)
- General Manager, Curriculum: Dr Fiona Mueller (from February 2016)
- General Manager, Curriculum: Dr Phil Lambert PSM (from April 2013 to January 2016)
- Chief Operating Officer: Ms Deborrah Lambourne (from September 2010 to April 2016)
- Director, Communications and Strategic Relations: Ms Robyn Ziino (from July 2013 to April 2016)

Chief Executive Officer, Mr Robert Randall

Mr Robert Randall has been Chief Executive Officer of ACARA since November 2012. As CEO, he is responsible for the day-to-day administration of ACARA and is accountable to the ACARA Board.

Robert has 20 years' experience working across curriculum, assessment and reporting in Australia at both state and national level, ranging from program design through to implementation.

Prior to his appointment as CEO, Robert held the positions of Deputy CEO and General Manager, Curriculum, at ACARA, establishing policy and process frameworks for the development and implementation of the Australian Curriculum. In the lead-up to the establishment of ACARA, Robert was General Manager of the Interim National Curriculum Board.

Robert began his career as a teacher of mathematics in Perth before holding a range of positions within and beyond schools in Western Australia. In 1996 Robert was appointed Director, Curriculum, with the NSW Board of Studies, and in 2001 took up the position of Director of Curriculum K–12 with the NSW Department of Education and Training.

Robert holds a Master's of Educational Management from The University of Western Australia, as well as a Graduate Diploma in Education from the Western Australian Secondary Teachers College Education and a Bachelor's of Applied Science (Mathematics) from the Western Australian Institute of Technology.

In December 2015 the Chair of ACARA announced that the ACARA Board had approved the reappointment of Mr Robert Randall as Chief Executive Officer effective from February 2016 for a three-year term.

General Manager, Assessment and Reporting, Dr Stanley Rabinowitz

Dr Stanley Rabinowitz commenced his role as General Manager at ACARA in July 2014. Some of his key responsibilities involve managing the national assessment programs (NAPLAN and NAP sample), national data reporting, including the *My School* website, and utilising his experience to launch NAPLAN online in Australia in 2017.

Dr Rabinowitz joined ACARA after serving as Senior Program Director of WestEd's Assessment & Standards Development Services, where he served as Director of the national Center for Standards and Assessments Implementation (CSAI) and the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium Project Management Partner. Prior to joining WestEd, Dr Rabinowitz served as State Assessment Director for the New Jersey Department of Education.

Dr Rabinowitz has consulted extensively on standards, assessment and school/educator accountability issues with researchers, policymakers and assessment staff at national, state and district levels in the USA. Through his involvement in more than a dozen state and national technical advisory committees, including the Common Core State Standards National Validation Committee and the role he served in the CSAI, Dr Rabinowitz is very familiar with the standards and assessment system challenges and constraints faced by states and districts. He also has experience in supporting states as they design and implement new standards, assessment and accountability systems.

Dr Rabinowitz received BA from Brooklyn College and his MS and PhD in Educational Psychology and Statistics from the State University of New York at Albany, New York, USA.

Director, Curriculum, Dr Fiona Mueller

Dr Fiona Mueller joined ACARA in February 2016. She leads a team of curriculum specialists in support of the implementation of the Australian Curriculum, collaborating and consulting with all jurisdictions and a wide range of stakeholders on curriculum projects and ensuring an ongoing research-based focus on national and international best practice in education.

A teacher of English, French, German, Italian and history for over 20 years, Fiona has been involved with schools in government, Catholic and independent sectors in Australia, Europe and the United States. She held a range of curriculum development and leadership roles in schools before taking on policy responsibilities at the NSW Board of Studies.

Close work with schools and teachers inspired Fiona to undertake doctoral research into the history and contemporary provision of single-sex public schooling in Australia. She then moved into the tertiary sector where, in addition to teaching, she undertook research into Australian secondary students' literacy skills. She has presented in numerous international forums, one major focus being the general capabilities, or 'soft skills', that are increasingly identified as essential for young people to become competitive in a global economy.

Fiona's interests include English literacy standards and the place of foreign languages in Australian education. Most recently, in addition to teaching undergraduates and postgraduates at the Australian National University, Fiona was Acting Head of ANU College, the pathway institution for international students.

General Manager, Curriculum, Dr Phil Lambert

Dr Phil Lambert has extensive experience in education as a principal, inspector, policy director, assistant director-general, regional director and general manager. He has authored and co-authored books and presented a number of papers and keynote speeches at state, national and international conferences, covering a range of topics.

Phil has a Master's in Educational Administration and Management and in 2001 completed his doctorate at the University of Sydney. In 2006, he was conferred Adjunct Associate Professor at the University of Sydney and in 2011, Adjunct Professor at Nanjing Normal University, China. He is also a Fellow of the Australian College of Educators and the Australian Council for Educational Leaders. In May 2013 he was Visiting Professor at Southern Taiwan University of Science and Technology.

Phil has overseen a number of major policy initiatives in New South Wales in early childhood, primary education, rural education and Aboriginal education. He has received a number of honours, awards and acknowledgements during his career. In the 2012 Queen's Birthday Honours, Phil was awarded the Public Service Medal for his outstanding contribution to education in New South Wales.

Chief Operating Officer, Ms Deborrah Lambourne

Ms Deborrah Lambourne is a senior executive with experience as chief operating officer, chief financial officer, worked as director, financial strategy and planning, and general manager, project management office at the University of Sydney.

Deborrah has a strong track record in strategic planning, implementing change management initiatives to achieve greater organisational effectiveness and return on investment.

She has worked in the higher education, financial services and consumer finance sectors.

Director, Communications and Strategic Relations, Ms Robyn Ziino

Ms Robyn Ziino has more than 20 years' experience working across various sectors including law, compliance, government relations and regulation in both commercial and non-commercial industries

Robyn holds a Master's of Arts in Professional Communication (major in journalism and public relations), as well as degrees in law (honours), English literature and criminology. She is a qualified lawyer and a certified compliance professional by the Australasian Institute of Compliance.

3.7 Reporting on other requirements

Evidence to parliamentary committees

ACARA attended the following hearings of the Senate Education and Employment Legislation Committee to give evidence:

- Supplementary Budget Estimates (21 October 2015)
- Additional Estimates (10 February 2016).

ACARA also gave evidence on 16 March 2016 before the Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters with respect to its Inquiry into Electoral Education.

Judicial decisions and reviews by outside bodies

There was no decision by the Administrative Appeals Tribunal (AAT) in relation to ACARA's operations during this reporting period. There was one Freedom of Information decision, made by the Acting Australian Information Commissioner, Timothy Pilgrim, on 1 December 2015, which was decided in ACARA's favour (NAPLAN numeracy tests 2012–2014 were not released under FOI). See Marty Ross and Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority [2015] AICmr 75.

There were no reports made about ACARA's performance or ACARA's officers or employees by the Auditor-General, parliamentary committees, the Commonwealth Ombudsman or the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner.

Compliance with the PGPA Act

During 2015–16, ACARA maintained appropriate internal controls and processes to review its compliance with the finance law, including to ensure that instances of significant non-compliance were notified to the responsible minister in accordance with section 19 of the PGPA Act. ACARA identified no instances of significant non-compliance and did not report any non-compliance to the Minister for Education and Training in the reporting period.

Work health and safety

Work health and safety (WHS) at ACARA covers a broad range of elements that bring together a common goal to provide a workplace where people feel safe and are not at risk of physical or mental injury.

ACARA's training program is a key area of how the organisation ensures staff understand their obligations and ACARA's role in providing and maintaining a safe workplace. This training takes the form of inductions and refresher courses where workers learn about ACARA's WHS policy; their legal WHS responsibilities; emergency evacuation instructions; how to report hazards, incidents and injury; work station ergonomics and manual handling. Where practicable, demonstrations are provided to reinforce key concepts.

WHS information is provided to staff on the importance of maintaining an understanding of work-related risks. Presentation themes include mental health, being active at work and travelling to work. Workers are exposed to risks when travelling to and from work and at work itself. Emphasis is placed on mitigating these risks to avoid physical or mental injury.

ACARA's commitment to providing a safe workplace is implemented through its WHS Committee. The committee promotes awareness of WHS in the workplace and meets every three months to discuss health and safety issues identified by staff or hazards that have been identified during workplace inspections. ACARA's Perth office has a WHS representative on the committee to provide training to new workers, identify any hazards and report WHS issues. Regular WHS audits ensure continued improvement.

WHS performance

During 2015–16, no claims were submitted to Comcare. No provisional improvement notices (section 90, *Work Health and Safety Act 2011*), prohibition notices (section 195) or improvement notices (section 191) were issued. There were no investigations undertaken by Comcare arising out of ACARA's responsibility as a 'person conducting a business or undertaking' in accordance with the Act.

ACARA's Audit and Risk Committee is advised of any issues arising and the actions carried out to mitigate WHS risks.

In 2015–16, consistent with the legislative requirements of the *Work Health and Safety Act 2011*, ACARA aimed to:

- provide a safe workplace by eliminating or reducing the risk of hazards
- promote health and wellbeing by encouraging health initiatives; for example, the provision of fruit to all staff and the use of sit-to-stand desks
- provide influenza vaccinations to all staff at no charge
- provide access to the Employee Assistance Program
- conduct regular hazard inspections and encourage the reporting of any incidents or hazards.

Insurance and indemnities

During 2015–16, ACARA held insurance protecting directors and officers from liability for the consequences of managerial misconduct or negligence, to the extent that the provision of the indemnity is not prevented by applicable legislation.

Ministerial directions

ACARA is required, under section 17BA of the Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Rule 2014, to provide particulars of any directions issued by the responsible minister, or other minister, under ACARA's enabling legislation or other legislation. No directions were issued to ACARA.

During 2015–16, ACARA was consulted on the application of the PGPA Act (Protective Security Policy) Government Policy Order 2015. This is the first government policy order that ACARA has been consulted on under the PGPA Act. No policy orders have been issued by the government.

Ecologically sustainable development and environmental performance

Office environment

ACARA has maintained its commitment to reduce the consumption of raw materials by implementing and maintaining the following strategies:

- Recycled paper is used in all printers.
- Drafts are reviewed electronically where possible.
- Data projectors, plasma screens and e-tablets are used to display information to groups, which reduces the reliance on printed handouts.
- Communications with both internal and external audiences is conducted electronically wherever possible, through email, e-newsletters and the internet.
- Video-conferencing facilities are utilised as an alternative to travel wherever possible.

ACARA continues to maintain a recycling program together with other tenants in its main office building. Items that can be recycled include all glass, paper, metal, coffee cups and take-away containers.

Organic waste management is also an important aspect to the program. Organic matter is converted to compost and used in farming to replenish the soil.

Printer cartridges are recycled, which helps to reduce greenhouse gases.

ACARA regularly produces videos to increase understanding of its work.

4.0 Financial statements
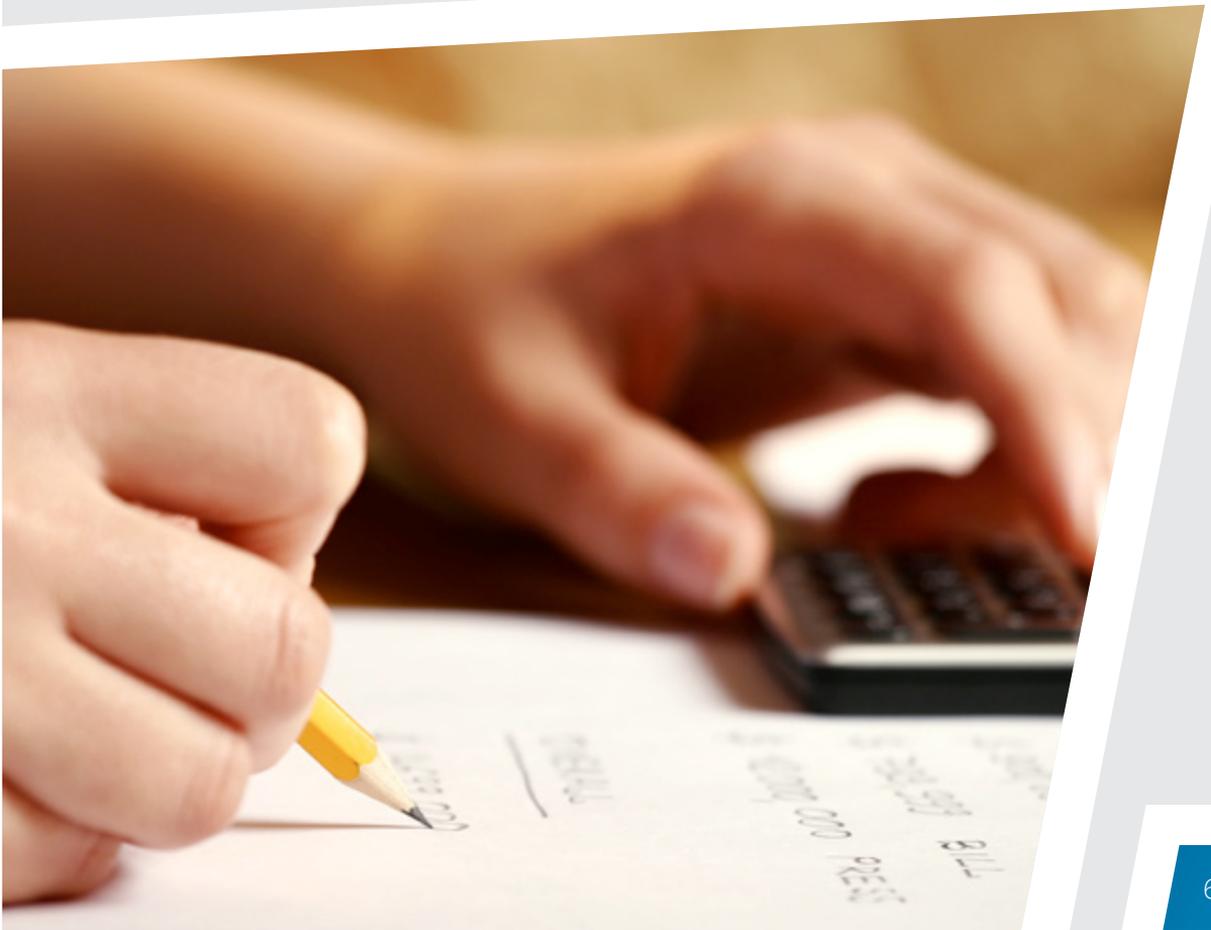
4.1 Statement by the Accountable Authority, Chief Executive Officer and Acting Chief Financial Officer

Statement by the Accountable Authority, Chief Executive Officer and Acting Chief Financial Officer

In our opinion, the attached financial statements for the year ended 30 June 2016 comply with subsection 42(2) of the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013* (PGPA Act), and are based on properly maintained financial records as per subsection 41(2) of the PGPA Act.

In our opinion, at the date of this statement, there were reasonable grounds to believe that ACARA, the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority, has sufficient funds to meet its debts and will be able to pay its debts as and when they fall due.

This Statement is made in accordance with a resolution of the directors.

Emeritus Professor Steven Schwartz
Chair, Accountable Authority

Dated this 25th day of August 2016

Emeritus Professor Brian Caldwell
Deputy Chair, Accountable Authority

Dated this 25th day of August 2016

Mr. Robert Randall
Chief Executive Officer

Dated this 25th day of August 2016

Mr. Peter Gray
Acting Chief Financial Officer

Dated this 25th day of August 2016

To the Minister for Education and Training

I have audited the accompanying annual financial statements of the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority for the year ended 30 June 2016, which comprise:

- Statement by the Accountable Authority, Chief Executive Officer and Acting Chief Financial Officer;
- Statement of Comprehensive Income;
- Statement of Financial Position;
- Statement of Changes in Equity;
- Cash Flow Statement;
- Notes to and forming part of the Financial Statements and other explanatory information.

Opinion

In my opinion, the financial statements of the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority:

(a) comply with Australian Accounting Standards and the Public Governance, Performance and Accountability (Financial Reporting) Rule 2015; and

(b) present fairly the financial position of the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority as at 30 June 2016 and its financial performance and cash flows for the year then ended.

Accountable Authority's Responsibility for the Financial Statements

The directors of the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority are responsible under the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013* for the preparation and fair presentation of annual financial statements that comply with Australian Accounting Standards and the rules made under that Act and is also responsible for such internal control as the directors determine is necessary to enable the preparation and fair presentation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

Auditor's Responsibility

My responsibility is to express an opinion on the financial statements based on my audit. I have conducted my audit in accordance with the Australian National Audit Office Auditing Standards, which incorporate the Australian Auditing Standards. These auditing standards require that I comply with relevant ethical requirements relating to audit engagements and plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements are free from material misstatement.

An audit involves performing procedures to obtain audit evidence about the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements. The procedures selected depend on the auditor's judgement, including the assessment of the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error. In making those risk assessments, the auditor considers internal control relevant to the entity's preparation and fair presentation of the financial statements in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the entity's internal control. An audit also includes evaluating the appropriateness of the accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates made by the Accountable Authority of the entity, as well as evaluating the overall presentation of the financial statements.

I believe that the audit evidence I have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my audit opinion.

Independence

In conducting my audit, I have followed the independence requirements of the Australian National Audit Office, which incorporate the requirements of the Australian accounting profession.

Australian National Audit Office

Peter Kerr
Executive Director
Delegate of the Auditor-General
Canberra
25 August 2016

4.3 Financial statements

**Statement of comprehensive income
for the year ended 30 June 2016**

	Note	2016 $'000	2015 $'000	Original budget $'000
NET COST OF SERVICES				
Expenses				
Employee benefits	2.1(a)	10,962	13,048	14,874
Supplier expenses	2.1(b)	15,461	14,708	9,616
Depreciation and amortisation	2.1(c)	646	722	730
Loss on disposal of assets		57	13	-
Total expenses		**27,126**	**28,491**	**25,220**
Own source income				
Revenue				
Revenue from jurisdictions – states and territories		12,200	12,502	12,200
Interest – bank deposits		110	227	220
Other revenue – projects and recoveries		662	554	-
Total own source revenue		**12,972**	**13,283**	**12,420**
Net cost of (contribution by) services		(14,154)	(15,208)	(12,800)
Revenue from government – Australian Government		12,892	14,478	12,800
Deficit attributable to the Australian Government		**(1,262)**	**(730)**	**-**
Changes is asset revaluation		-	77	-
Total comprehensive income / (deficit) attributable to the Australian Government		**(1,262)**	**(653)**	**-**

Budget variances

1. Employee benefits – ACARA reduced staffing in non-core areas in June / July 15. New appointments in core areas were filled at dates later than anticipated in the budget.

2. Supplier expenses – ACARA incurred higher than anticipated expenses due to: new activities associated with NAPLAN Online, the use of agency staff and contractors to fill vacant positions.

3. Depreciation and amortisation – ACARA delayed the purchase of capital equipment items to coincide with the relocation of the ACARA Sydney office, which occurred in July 16.

4. Interest – bank deposits – lower than budgeted interest rates and the longer than anticipated collection times in respect of contributions reduced the interest received by ACARA.

5. Other revenue – ACARA attracted funding from industry and international sources for new project work in Curriculum and Assessment.

6. Revenue from government – Australian Government – grants for new projects, in addition to ACARA's approved work plan, was the reason for the variance on this item.

7. Deficit attributable to the Australian Government – in January 2016 ACARA sought approval from the Ministers of Education and Finance to report a deficit of $1.5M for the financial year 2015–16. In March 2016 ACARA received approval.

Variances are considered to be "major" based on the following:

•   the variance between budget and actual is greater than 2% or $50K; and

•   an item below this threshold but which is considered important for the readers understanding or is relevant to an assessment of the discharge of accountability and to an analysis of performance of ACARA.

The above statement should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes.

Statement of financial position
as at 30 June 2016

	Note	2016 $'000	2015 $'000	Original budget $'000
Assets				
Financial assets				
Cash and cash equivalent deposits	4.1(a)	5,554	11,512	3,847
Trade and other receivables	3.1	8,652	2,751	145
Total financial assets		**14,206**	**14,263**	**3,992**
Non-financial assets				
Leasehold incentives	3.2(a)	46	599	-
Fixture and fittings (under construction)	3.2(b)	1,214	-	-
Plant and equipment	3.2(c)	538	238	596
Intangibles	3.2(d)	-	2	-
Other non-financial assets	3.2(e)	2	243	90
Total non-financial assets		**1,800**	**1,082**	**686**
Total assets		**16,006**	**15,345**	**4,678**
Liabilities				
Payables				
Suppliers	3.3(a)	5,272	3,739	1,251
Grants in advance (deferred revenue)	3.3(b)	8,243	7,322	-
Other payables	3.3(c)	43	536	40
Total payables		**13,558**	**11,597**	**4,640**
Provisions				
Employee provisions	5.1	1,533	1,571	960
Total provisions		**1,533**	**1,571**	**960**
Total liabilities		**15,091**	**13,168**	**2,251**
Net assets		**915**	**2,177**	**2,427**
Equity				
Retained surplus		838	2,100	2,427
Reserves		77	77	-
Total equity		**915**	**2,177**	**2,427**

Budget variances

1. Cash and cash equivalent deposits – anticipated cash outflows associated with suppliers were not transacted at 30 June 2016.

2. Trade and other receivables – ACARA receives grants biannually and is reliant on receiving these in early July and January each year. ACARA raised 2016–17 contribution charges for all state and territories in advance to ensure maintenance of its cash flow for 2016–17.

3. Fixtures and fittings (under construction) – ACARA made a decision to relocate the Sydney office during 2015–16, it was not anticipated at the time of budget preparation.

4. Plant and equipment – once a decision was a taken to relocate the ACARA office, capital purchases were delayed to coincide with the requirements for the new facilities.

5. Other non-financial assets – prepayments for software licences has transferred to a software as a service type arrangement thereby reducing outlays in advance of the expenditure.

6. Suppliers – expenditure for NAPLAN and NAPLAN Online incurred deliverables due on 30 June 2016 with invoices paid in July 16. Capital works associated with the relocation of the ACARA office in Sydney were accrued at 30 June 2016.

7. Grants in advance (deferred revenue) – ACARA raised 2016–17 contribution charges for all state and territories in advance to ensure maintenance of its cash flow for 2016–17.

8. Employee provisions – at the time of setting the budget ACARA had anticipated a more significant reduction in employee entitlements, with reductions in staff, but the reduction occurred in June 15.

Variances are considered to be "major" based on the following:

• the variance between budget and actual is greater than 10%; and

• an item below this threshold but which is considered important for the readers understanding or is relevant to an assessment of the discharge of accountability and to an analysis of performance of ACARA.

The above statement should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes.

Statement of changes in equity
for the year ended 30 June 2016

	Retained earnings			Asset Revaluation Reserve			Total equity		
	2016 $'000	2015 $'000	Original budget $'000	2016 $'000	2015 $'000	Original budget $'000	2016 $'000	2015 $'000	Original budget $'000
Opening Balance	2,100	2,830	2,427	77	-	-	2,177	2,830	2,427
Comprehensive income									
Surplus / (deficit) for the periods	(1,262)	(730)	-	-	-	-	(1,262)	(730)	-
Other comprehensive income	-	-	-	-	77	-	-	77	-
Total comprehensive income	**(1,262)**	**(730)**	**-**	**-**	**77**	**-**	**(1,262)**	**(653)**	**-**
Closing balance as at 30 June	**838**	**2,100**	**2,427**	**77**	**77**	**-**	**915**	**2,177**	**2,427**

Budget variances

1. Surplus / (Deficit) – In January 2016 ACARA sought approval from the Ministers of Education and Finance to report a deficit of $1.5M for the financial year 2015–16. In March 2016 ACARA received approval.

The above statement should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes.

Cash flow statement
for the year ended 30 June 2016

	Note	2016 $'000	2015 $'000	Original budget $'000
OPERATING ACTIVITIES				
Cash received				
Receipts from government and jurisdictions		20,314	30,028	25,000
Interest		110	227	220
GST received		1,346	1,756	-
Other cash received		321	410	-
Total cash received		**22,091**	**32,421**	**25,220**
Cash used				
Employees		(11,001)	(13,747)	(14,874)
Suppliers		(15,304)	(19,523)	(10,712)
GST paid		(836)	(207)	-
Total cash used		**(27,141)**	**(33,477)**	**(25,586)**
Net cash used by operating activities	4.1(b)	**(5,050)**	**(1,056)**	**(366)**
INVESTING ACTIVITIES				
Cash used				
Purchase of property, plant and equipment		(908)	(79)	(250)
Total cash used		**(908)**	**(79)**	**(250)**
Net cash used by investing activities		**(908)**	**(79)**	**(250)**
Net decrease in cash held		**(5,958)**	**(1,135)**	**(616)**
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the reporting period		11,512	12,647	4,462
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the reporting period	4.1(a)	**5,554**	**11,512**	**3,847**

Budget variances

1. Receipts from jurisdictions – ACARA received grants in advance for the financial year 2015–16 in June 2015, which reduced the grant receipts in 2015–16. No grants in advance for 2016–17 were received in 2015–16.

2. Interest – lower than budgeted interest rates and the longer than anticipated collection times in respect of contributions reduced the interest received by ACARA.

3. GST – the net outcome from the recovery of GST on supplier payments and GST collected on invoices raised was anticipated to be nil.

4. Other cash received – this cash related to new projects which were not anticipated at the time of the budget preparation.

5. Employees – ACARA reduced staffing in non-core areas in June / July 15. New appointments in core areas were filled at dates later than anticipated in the budget.

6. Suppliers – ACARA incurred higher than anticipated expenses due to: new activities associated with NAPLAN Online, the use of agency staff and contractors to fill vacant positions.

7. Purchase of property, plant and equipment – expenditure incurred with the relocation of the ACARA Sydney office was not anticipated at the time of the budget preparation.

Variances are considered to be "major" based on the following:

•   the variance between budget and actual is greater than 10%; and

•   an item below this threshold but which is considered important for the readers understanding or is relevant to an assessment of the discharge of accountability and to an analysis of performance of ACARA.

The above statement should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes.

4.4 Notes to the financial statements

Index to the notes to and forming part of the financial statements for the year ended 30 June 2016

1. Overview

1.1 Objectives of the entity

The entity is a corporate not for profit Commonwealth entity. The entity is structured to meet the following outcome:

Outcome 1: Improved quality and consistency of school education in Australia through national curriculum, national assessment, data collection and performance reporting system.

The continued existence of the entity in its present form and current programs is dependent on Education Council policy, and on continued funding by Commonwealth, state and territory governments.

1.2 Basis of preparation of the financial report

The financial statements are general purpose financial statements and are required by section 42 of the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013.*

The financial statements and notes have been prepared in accordance with:

- Financial Reporting Rule (FRR) for reporting periods ending on or after 1 July 2015; and

- Australian Accounting Standards and Interpretations issued by the Australian Accounting Standards Board (AASB) that apply for the reporting period.

The financial statements have been prepared on an accrual basis and are in accordance with the historical cost convention, except for certain assets at fair value where required. Except where stated, no allowance is made for the effect of changing prices on the results or the financial position. The financial statements are presented in Australian dollars and values and are rounded to the nearest thousand dollars unless otherwise specified.

Unless an alternative treatment is specifically required by an accounting standard or the FRR, assets and liabilities are recognised in the statement of financial position when and only when it is probable that future economic benefits will flow to the entity or a future sacrifice of economic benefits will be required and the amounts of the assets and liabilities can be reliably measured. However, assets and liabilities arising under executory contracts are not recognised unless required by an accounting standard. Liabilities and assets that are unrecognised are reported in the schedule of commitments or the contingencies note.

Unless alterative treatment is specifically required by an accounting standard, income and expenses are recognised in the Statement of Comprehensive Income when and only when the flow, consumption or loss of economic benefits has occurred and can be reliably measured.

1.3 Significant accounting judgements and estimates

No significant accounting assumptions and estimates have been identified that would have a significant impact on the amounts recorded in the financial statements.

Notes to and forming part of the financial statements.

1.4 New Australian Accounting Standards

Adoption of new Australian Accounting Standard requirements

No accounting standard has been adopted earlier than the application date as stated in the standard.

Future Australian Accounting Standard requirements

New standards, amendments to standards, and interpretations issued by the AASB are applicable to future reporting periods with ACARA still to complete are still to determine the financial impact on the ACARA financial statements.

Standard/Interpretation	Applicable for annual reporting periods beginning or ending on	Summary
AASB 15 Revenue from Contracts with Customers	1 January 2018	AASB 15 establishes a comprehensive framework for determining whether, how much and when revenue is recognised. It replaces existing revenue recognition guidance, including AASB 118 Revenue, AASB 111 Construction Contracts and IFRIC 13 Customer Loyalty Programmes. Expected impact is still under review.
AASB 9 Financial Instruments	1 January 2018	AASB 9 introduces new requirements for the classification and measurement of financial assets availabilities. Expected to have no significant impact.
AASB 16 Leases	1 January 2019	AASB 16 Leases removes the classification of leases as either operating or finance leases for the lease, effectively treating all leases as finance leases. This will effectively move all off-balance sheet operating leases onto the balance sheet that is similar to current finance lease accounting. Expected impact is still under review.

1.5 Revenue

Revenue from jurisdictions and government

Revenue from jurisdictions is recognised when:

- ACARA has obtained control of the revenue or the right to receive the revenue;
- The revenue can be reliably measured;
- It is probable that the economic benefits associated with the transaction will flow to the entity;
- The stage of completion of the transaction at the end of the reporting period can be measured reliably;
- The costs incurred for the transaction and cost to complete the transaction can be measured reliably.

When the outcome of the transaction involving the rendering of services cannot be estimated reliably, revenue shall be recognised only to the extent of the expenses recognised that are recoverable.

The distribution of government grant income for the initial four years of ACARA was determined by the Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA) following its April 2009 meeting. Funding for ACARA for the next four years was determined by the Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Childhood Development and Youth Affairs (MCEECDYA) at its October 2011 meeting. As at 30 June 2015, the relevant body was the Education Council. In April 2016 the Educational Council approved grant funding to ACARA for the four years July 2016 to June 2020.

Grants received in advance

Where ACARA receives grants in advance of the period to which the funds, or for specific projects for which work is yet to be completed, the grant is recognised in the Statement of Financial Position as a liability, grants in advance, unless ACARA has obtained control of the revenue, in which case it is recorded as revenue. At 30 June 2016 the amount recognised was $8,243,198 (2015: $7,322,440) and represents 2016–17 annual contributions from State and Territory jurisdictions and project work, for expenditure to be incurred in the 2016–17 financial year in the delivery of ACARA's 2016–17 Work Plan and project contracts.

Interest revenue

Interest revenue is recognised using the effective interest rate method as set out in AASB 139 *Financial Instruments: Recognition and Measurement*.

Resources received free of charge

Resources received free of charge are recognised as revenue when, and only when, a fair value can be reliably determined and the services would have been purchased if they had not been donated. Use of the resources is recognised as an expense.

1.6 Leases

A distinction is made between finance leases and operating leases. Finance leases effectively transfer from the lessor to the lessee substantially all the risks and rewards incidental to ownership of leased assets. An operating lease is a lease that is not a finance lease. In operating leases, the lessor effectively retains substantially all such risks and benefits.

Operating lease payments are expensed on a straight-line basis which is representative of the pattern of benefits derived from the leased assets.

In June 2016 ACARA entered into a new four year lease for office accommodation at 280 Elizabeth St Sydney, this lease is effective from 1 August 2016. Operating lease commitments shown in the table below include the office accommodation at 255 Pitt Street Sydney (one month), 68 St Georges Terrace Perth (two months) and 280 Elizabeth Street Sydney (48 months).

	2016 $'000	2015 $'000
COMMITMENTS PAYABLE		
Operating lease commitments		
Within 1 year	645	1,542
Within 1 to 5 years	1,868	121
Total operating lease commitments[1]	**2,513**	**1,663**

Notes to and forming part of the financial statements.

1.7 Cash

Cash and cash equivalents includes notes and coins held and any deposits in bank accounts with an original maturity of 3 months or less that are readily convertible to known amounts of cash and subject to insignificant risk of changes in value. Cash is recognised at its nominal amount.

1.8 Financial assets

ACARA classifies its financial assets as receivables.

The classification depends on the nature and purpose of the financial assets and is determined at the time of initial recognition.

Financial assets are recognised and derecognised upon 'trade date'.

Effective interest rate method

The effective interest method is a method of calculating the amortised cost of a financial asset and of allocating interest income over the relevant period. The effective interest rate is the rate that exactly discounts estimated future cash receipts through the expected life of the financial asset, or, where appropriate, a shorter period. Income is recognised on an effective interest rate basis except for financial assets at fair value through profit or loss.

Receivables

Trade receivables and other receivables that have fixed or determinable payments that are not quoted in an active market are classified as receivables. They are included in current assets, except for maturities greater than 12 months after the balance date. These are classified as non-current assets. Receivables are measured at amortised cost using the effective interest method less impairment. Interest is recognised by applying the effective interest rate.

Impairment of financial assets

Financial assets are assessed for impairment at each balance date.

Financial assets held at amortised cost—if there is objective evidence that an impairment loss has been incurred for receivables or held-to-maturity investments held at amortised cost, the amount of the loss is measured as the difference between the asset's carrying amount and the present value of estimated future cash flows discounted at the asset's original effective interest rate. The carrying amount is reduced by way of an allowance account. The loss is recognised in the Statement of Comprehensive Income.

Financial assets held at cost—if there is objective evidence that an impairment loss has been incurred, the amount of the impairment loss is the difference between the carrying amount of the asset and the present value of estimated future cash flows discounted at the current market rate for similar assets.

1.9 Financial liabilities

Financial liabilities are classified as either financial liabilities at fair value through profit or loss or other financial liabilities. Financial liabilities are recognised and derecognised upon 'trade date'.

Financial liabilities at fair value through profit or loss

Financial liabilities at fair value through profit or loss are initially measured at fair value. Subsequent fair value adjustments are recognised in profit or loss. The net gain or loss recognised in profit or loss incorporates any interest paid on the financial liability.

Notes to and forming part of the financial statements.

Other financial liabilities

Other financial liabilities are initially measured at fair value, net of transaction costs. These liabilities are subsequently measured at amortised cost using the effective interest method, with interest expense recognised on an effective yield basis.

The effective interest method is a method of calculating the amortised cost of a financial liability and of allocating interest expense over the relevant period. The effective interest rate is the rate that exactly discounts estimated future cash payments through the expected life of the financial liability, where appropriate, a shorter period.

Supplier and other payables

Supplier and other payables are recognised at their nominal amounts, being the amounts at which the liabilities will be settled. Liabilities are recognised to the extent that the goods or services have been received (and irrespective of having been invoiced).

1.10 Contingent liabilities and contingent assets

Contingent liabilities and contingent assets are not recognised in the statement of financial position. They may arise from uncertainty as to the existence of a liability or asset, or represent an existing liability or asset in respect of which settlement is not probable or the amount cannot be reliably measured. Contingent assets are disclosed when settlement is probable but not virtually certain and contingent liabilities are recognised when the probability of settlement is greater than remote.

1.11 Taxation

ACARA is exempt from income tax. All other forms of taxation are applicable.

Revenues, expenses and assets are recognised net of GST except:

a)   where the amount of GST incurred is not recoverable from the Australian Taxation Office; and

b)   for receivables and payables.

1.12 Insurance

ACARA has insured for risks through the Government's insurable risk managed fund, ComCover.
In addition ACARA holds a Workers Compensation policy with the Government's insurer ComCare.

1.13 Comparative changes due to prior year error

Where required by Accounting Standards comparative figures have been adjusted to conform with changes to presentation for the current financial year. Expenses shown in Note 2.1(b) were reviewed and reclassified where appropriate to better represent the nature of expenditure.

1.14 Events after reporting period

No matter or circumstances have arisen since the end of the financial year which significantly affected or may significantly affect the results of the financial statements as at 30 June 2016.

In June 2016 ACARA entered into a four year lease for new office accommodation in Sydney, this taking effect from the 1 August 2016. The lease for office accommodation occupied at the 30 June 2016 ceasing on 31 July 2016. The financial extent of the future commitments are detailed in Note 1.6 Leases.

Notes to and forming part of the financial statements.

2. Financial performance

2.1 Expenses

	2016 $'000	2015 $'000
2.1(a): Employee benefits		
Wages and salaries	9,078	10,269
Superannuation – defined contribution plans	1,043	1,262
Leave and other entitlements	831	870
Separation and redundancies	10	647
Total employee benefits	**10,962**	**13,048**
2.1(b): Supplier expenses		
Goods and services supplied or rendered		
Secondments, casual staff, contractors and consultants	2,619	3,392
NAPLAN item development and testing	6,565	5,270
Website development and maintenance	783	965
Travel and accommodation	733	1,083
Staff related expenses – payroll tax and recruitment	804	908
Consultants – Curriculum development	978	456
Office infrastructure	243	133
IT expenses	731	591
Audit fees payable to the Australian National Audit Office	49	48
Legal expenses	63	286
Other operational expenditure	1,084	877
Total goods and services supplied or rendered	**14,652**	**14,009**
Goods supplied	432	477
Services supplied	14,220	13,532
Total goods and services supplied or rendered	**14,652**	**14,009**
Other suppliers		
Operating lease rentals		
Minimum lease payments	565	541
Workers compensation expense	244	158
Total other suppliers	**809**	**699**
Total suppliers	**15,461**	**14,708**
2(c): Depreciation and amortisation		
Property, plant and equipment	644	709
Intangibles	2	13
Total depreciation and amortisation	**646**	**722**

3. Financial position

3.1 Financial assets

	2016 $'000	2015 $'000
3.1 Trade and other receivables		
Receivables for goods and services	8,373	2,634
GST	279	117
Total trade and other receivables	**8,652**	**2,751**

All trade and other receivables are expected to be recovered in less than 12 months, (2015 Recovery expected less than 12 months).

There are no trade and other receivables that are impaired at 30 June 2016 and 30 June 2015. A total of $2,605,200 (2015: $2,124,020) was past due and not impaired in the range of 31 – 60 days.

3.2. Non-financial assets

	2016 $'000	2015 $'000
3.2(a): Leasehold incentives		
Leasehold incentives		
Fair value	599	599
Accumulated depreciation	(553)	-
Total leasehold incentives	**46**	**599**
3.2(b): Fixtures and fittings (under construction)		
Additions	1,214	-
Accumulated depreciation	-	-
Total fixtures and fittings under construction	**1,214**	**-**
3.2(c): Plant and equipment		
Fair value	238	238
Additions	448	-
Disposals	(57)	-
Accumulated depreciation	(91)	-
Total plant and equipment	**538**	**238**
Total non-financial assets	**1,798**	**837**

No indications of impairment were found for plant and equipment.

All revaluations of non-financial assets were conducted by an independent valuer (Australian Valuation Solutions) as at 30 June 2015. All increments were transferred to the asset revaluation surplus by asset class and included in the equity section of the statement of financial position.

Notes to and forming part of the financial statements.

Reconciliation of opening and closing balances plant and equipment 2016

	Leasehold incentives $`000	Fixtures and fittings (under construction) $`000	Plant and equipment $`000	Total $`000
Total as at 1 July 2015	**599**	**-**	**238**	**837**
Additions – by purchase		1,214	448	1,662
Disposals	-	-	(57)	(57)
Depreciation / amortisation expense	(553)	-	(91)	(644)
Total as at 30 June 2016	**46**	**1,214**	**538**	**1,798**

Reconciliation of opening and closing balances plant and equipment 2015

	Leasehold incentives $`000	Plant and equipment $`000	Total $`000
Total as at 1 July 2014	**1,110**	**293**	**1,403**
Additions by purchase	-	79	79
Reclassified asset	9	(9)	-
Revaluations	13	64	77
Loss on disposal of assets	-	(13)	(13)
Depreciation expense	(533)	(176)	(709)
Total as at 30 June 2015	**599**	**238**	**837**

Notes to and forming part of the financial statements.

Infrastructure, plant and equipment

Asset recognition threshold

Purchases of property, plant and equipment are recognised initially at cost in the statement of financial position, except for purchases costing less than $1,000, which are expensed in the year of acquisition (other than where they form part of a group of similar items which are significant in total).

The initial cost of an asset includes an estimate of the cost of dismantling and removing the item and restoring the site on which it is located.

Revaluations

Fair values for each class of asset are determined as shown below:

Asset class	Fair value measurement
Leasehold incentives	Depreciated replacement cost
Infrastructure, plant and equipment	Market selling price and depreciated replacement cost

Following initial recognition at cost, property, plant and equipment were carried at fair value. Valuations were conducted with sufficient frequency to ensure that the carrying amounts of assets did not differ materially from the assets' fair values as at the reporting date. The regularity of independent valuations depended upon the volatility of movements in market values for the relevant assets.

Revaluation adjustments were made on a class basis. Any revaluation increment was credited to equity under the heading of asset revaluation reserve except to the extent that it reversed a previous revaluation decrement of the same asset class that was previously recognised directly in the surplus/deficit. Revaluation decrements for a class of assets were recognised directly in the surplus / (deficit) except to the extent that they reversed a previous revaluation increment for that class.

Any accumulated depreciation as at the revaluation date is eliminated against the gross carrying amount of the asset and the asset restated to the revalued amount.

Depreciation

Depreciable plant and equipment assets are written-off to their estimated residual values over their estimated useful lives to ACARA using, in all cases, the straight-line method of depreciation.

Depreciation rates, residual values and methods are reviewed at each reporting date and necessary adjustments are recognised in the current, or current and future reporting periods, as appropriate.

Depreciation rates applying to each class of depreciable assets are based on the following useful lives:

Asset class	2016	2015
Furniture and fittings	6.75 years	6.75 years
Leasehold incentives	6.75 years	6.75 years
Equipment	3 to 6.75 years	3 to 6.75 years

Notes to and forming part of the financial statements.

Impairment

All assets were assessed for impairment at 30 June 2016. Where indications of impairment exist, the asset's recoverable amount is estimated and an impairment adjustment made if the asset's recoverable amount is less than its carrying value.

The recoverable amount of an asset is the higher of its fair value less costs to sell and its value in use. Value in use is the present value of the future cash flows expected to be derived from the asset. Where the future economic benefit of an asset is not primarily dependent on the asset's ability to generate future cash flows, and the asset would be replaced if the entity were deprived of the asset, its value in use is taken to be its depreciated replacement cost.

Derecognition

An item of property, plant and equipment is derecognised upon disposal or when no further future economic benefits are expected from its use or disposal

	2016 $'000	2015 $'000
3.2(d): Intangibles		
Computer software		
Software at cost	8	8
Accumulated amortisation	(8)	(6)
Total computer software	**-**	**2**
Total intangibles	**-**	**2**

Intangibles

ACARA's intangibles comprise of software and are carried at cost less accumulated amortisation and accumulated impairment losses.

Software is amortised on a straight line method over the anticipated useful life. The useful life of ACARA's software is 3 years.

All assets were assessed for indications of impairment as at 30 June 2016 and no indications of impairment were found for intangibles.

Reconciliation of opening and closing balances intangibles (software)

	2016 $'000	2015 $'000
Total as at 1 July	**2**	**8**
Amortisation expense	(2)	(6)
Total as at 30 June	**-**	**2**

	2016 $'000	2015 $'000
3.2(e): Other non-financial assets		
Prepayments – not more than 12 months	2	243
Total other non-financial assets	**2**	**243**

Notes to and forming part of the financial statements.

3.3. Payables

	2016 $'000	2015 $'000
3.3(a): Suppliers		
Trade creditors and accruals – no more than 12 months	5,272	3,739
Total suppliers	**5,272**	**3,739**

Settlement was usually made net 30 days

	2016 $'000	2015 $'000
3.3(b): Grants in advance (deferred revenue)		
States and territories grant 2016–17 contributions	7,803	7,322
Australian Government project funds	440	-
Total grants in advance	**8,243**	**7,322**

	2016 $'000	2015 $'000
3.3(c): Other payables		
Rent subsidy – 255 Pitt St Sydney	43	536
Total other payables	**43**	**536**

	2016 $'000	2015 $'000
Other payables are expected to be settled		
No more than 12 months	43	494
More than 12 months	-	42
Total other payables	**43**	**536**

Notes to and forming part of the financial statements.

4. Funding

4.1. Cash flow reconciliation

Reconciliation of cash and cash equivalents as per statement of financial position to cash flow statement

	2016 $'000	2015 $'000
(a) Cash and cash equivalents as per		
Cash flow statement and statement of financial position	5,554	11,512
(b) Reconciliation of net cost of services to net cash from /(used by) operating activities		
Net cost of (contribution by) services	(14,154)	(15,208)
Revenue from government – Australian Government	12,892	14,478
Adjustments for non-cash items		
Depreciation / amortisation	646	722
Loss on disposal of plant and equipment	57	13
Changes in assets/liabilities:		
(Increase) / Decrease in net receivables	(5,900)	3,027
(Increase) / Decrease in other non-financial assets	241	(153)
Increase / (Decrease) in suppliers payables	779	(2,777)
Increase / (Decrease) in grants in advance	920	(149)
Increase / (Decrease) in other payables	(494)	(957)
Increase / (Decrease) in employee provisions	(37)	(52)
Net cash from operating activities	**(5,050)**	**(1,056)**

Notes to and forming part of the financial statements.

5. People and relationships

5.1 Employee provisions

	2016 $'000	2015 $'000
Employee provisions		
Not more than 12 months	798	912
More than 12 months	735	659
Total employee provisions	**1,533**	**1,571**

Employee benefits

Liabilities for services rendered by employees are recognised at the reporting date to the extent that they have not been settled.

Liabilities for short-term employee benefits (as defined in AASB 119, Employee Benefits) and termination benefits expected within twelve months of the balance date are measured at their nominal amounts.

The nominal amount is calculated with regard to the rates expected to be paid on settlement of the liability.

All other employee benefit liabilities are measured at the present value of the estimated future cash outflows to be made in respect of services provided by employees up to the reporting date.

Leave

The liability for employee benefits includes provision for annual leave and long service leave. No provision has been made for sick leave as all sick leave entitlements are non-vesting and the average sick leave taken in future years by employees of ACARA is estimated to be less than the annual entitlement for sick leave.

The leave liabilities are calculated on the basis of the employees' remuneration at the estimated salary rates that will be applied at the time the leave is taken, including ACARA's employer superannuation contribution rates to the extent that the leave is likely to be taken during the service rather than paid out on termination.

The liability for long service leave has been determined by reference to the Australian Government shorthand method. In applying this method, the accrued long service leave for each employee as at reporting date is probability weighted, based on the Australian Government probability profile. The amount obtained for each employee is then discounted using the ten year Treasury bond rate. The estimate of the present value of the liability takes into account attrition rates and pay increases through promotion and inflation.

Separation and redundancy

ACARA recognises a provision for termination when it has developed a detailed formal plan for terminations and has informed those employees affected that it will carry out terminations.

Superannuation

Upon commencing employment with ACARA, employees nominate an approved superannuation scheme of their choice.

ACARA contributes a minimum of 10.5% of superannuable salaries on behalf of its employees. The liability for superannuation recognised as at 30 June represents outstanding contributions for the final month of the year.

Notes to and forming part of the financial statements.

5.2. Senior management personnel remuneration

Senior management personnel remuneration expense for the reporting period

	2016 $	2015 $
Short-term employee benefits:		
Salary	1,289,319	1,338,177
Allowances	-	-
Total short-term employee benefits	**1,289,319**	**1,338,177**
Post-employment benefits:		
Superannuation	147,909	147,191
Total post-employment benefits	**147,909**	**147,191**
Other long-term benefits:		
Annual leave accrued	57,120	112,111
Long-service leave	27,136	33,663
Total other long-term benefits	**84,256**	**145,744**
Termination benefits	**9,691**	**-**
Total senior executive remuneration expenses	**1,531,175**	**1,631,112**

The total number of senior management personnel that are included in the above table are 7 individuals (2015: 5 individuals)

5.3 Directors remuneration

	2016	2015
$Nil - $29,999	11	16
$30,000 - $59,999	-	-
$60,000 - $89,000	1	2
$90,000 - $119,999	1	-
Total number of non-executive directors	**13**	**18**
Total remuneration received or due and receivable by non-executive directors of ACARA, represents sitting fees as prescribed.	**$185,827**	**$199,755**

The directors of ACARA are appointed by the Minister for Education.

Notes to and forming part of the financial statements.

5.4. Related party disclosures

The following persons were Directors of ACARA during the year:

Emeritus Professor Steven Schwartz, Emeritus Professor Brian Caldwell, Mr Michael Hewitson, Mr Stephen Gniel, Ms Valerie Gould, Ms Patrea Walton, Emeritus Professor Patrick Garnett, Ms Liz Banks, Dr David Howes, Mr Paul Hewitt, Dr Tim McDonald, Ms Jayne Johnston and Ms Susan Bowden.

Several directors of ACARA held directorships or senior roles with other companies or government agencies. All transactions between ACARA and companies with a Director or key management personnel common to ACARA are conducted using commercial and arm-length principles. Members are excluded from discussions on matters in which they may have a conflict of interest.

	2016 $	2015 $
Transactions with directors or director related entities	884,611	585,391

Details of companies and government agencies which ACARA has engaged for services and with which ACARA Directors are associated.

SA Dept. of Education and Child Development	15,000	-
WA School Curriculum and Standards Authority	58,456	97,367
Office of Board of Studies, Teaching and Educational Standards NSW	811,155	457,155
University of Melbourne	-	26,219
Queensland Dept. of Education and Training	-	650
Victorian Curriculum Assessment Authority	-	4,000
Total	**884,611**	**585,391**

Notes to and forming part of the financial statements.

6. Managing uncertainties

6.1. Contingent assets and liabilities

There are no contingent assets or liabilities at 30 June 2016 (30 June 2015: nil).

6.2 Financial instruments

(a) Categories of financial instruments	Note	2016 $'000	2015 $'000
Financial assets			
Receivables			
Cash on hand or cash equivalents		5,554	11,512
Trade and other receivables		8,373	2,634
Total receivables		**13,927**	**14,146**
Total financial assets		**13,927**	**14,146**
Financial liabilities			
Financial liabilities measured at amortised cost			
Trade creditors	3.3(a)	5,272	3,739
Other payables	3.3(c)	43	536
Total financial liabilities measured at amortised cost		**5,315**	**4,275**
Total financial liabilities		**5,315**	**4,275**

Note GST is not a financial instrument and not been included.

Fair value of financial instruments

The fair value of each class of ACARA's financial assets and liabilities equal the carrying amount for the current reporting period.

(b) Net gains or lossess on financial assets	Note	2016 $'000	2015 $'000
Receivables			
Interest revenue from bank deposits		110	227
Net gain on receivables		**110**	**227**
Net gain on financial assets		**110**	**227**

Notes to and forming part of the financial statements.

(c) Credit risk

ACARA is exposed to minimal credit risk as financial assets consist of cash held with NAB and trade receivables. The maximum exposure to credit risk is the risk that arises from potential default of a debtor. This amount is equal to the total amount of trade receivables $8,372,480 (2015: $2,634,492).

For debtors other than government, it is ACARA's policy to only deal with entities with high credit ratings.

There are no financial assets that have had their terms renegotiated so as to prevent them from being past due or impaired, and they are stated at the carrying amounts as indicated. The following tables disclose the ageing of financial assets that are past due:

The following table illustrates ACARA's exposure to credit risk, excluding any collateral or credit enhancements.

	2016 $'000	2015 $'000
Financial assets		
Trade and other receivables:		
Debtors	8,373	2,634
Total	**8,373**	**2,634**

Credit quality of financial assets not past due or individually determined as impaired

	Not past due nor impaired 2016 $'000	Not past due nor impaired 2015 $'000	Past due or impaired 2016 $'000	Past due or impaired 2015 $'000
Debtors	5,768	510	2,605	2,124
Total	**5,768**	**510**	**2,605**	**2,124**

(d) Liquidity risk

ACARA financial liabilities are payables. The exposure to liquidity risk is based on the notion that ACARA will encounter difficulty in meeting obligations associated with its financial liabilities. This is unlikely as ACARA manages its budgeted funds to ensure it has adequate funds to meet payments as they fall due.

Maturities for non-derivative financial liabilities in 2016

The maturities for non-derivative financial liabilities is within 1 year for the trade creditors of $5,272,665 (2015: 3,738,796).

ACARA had no derivative financial liabilities in either 2016 or 2015.

(e) Market risk

ACARA holds basic financial instruments that did not expose ACARA to certain market risks, such as 'Currency risk' and 'Other price risk'.

(f) Interest rate risk

ACARA exposure to interest rate risk is limited to interest bearing deposits held with banks. ACARA does not hold any interest-bearing liabilities.

Notes to and forming part of the financial statements.

6.3. Financial assets and liabilities reconciliation

6.3(a) Financial asset reconciliation

6.3(a) Financial asset reconciliation	Note	2016 $'000	2015 $'000
Total financial assets as per statement of financial position		**14,206**	**14,263**
Less: non-financial instrument components			
Other receivables		279	117
Total non-financial instrument components		**279**	**117**
Total financial assets per financial instruments note		**13,927**	**14,146**

6.3(b) Financial liabilities reconciliation

	Note	2016 $'000	2015 $'000
Total financial liabilities as per statement of financial position		**13,558**	**11,597**
Less: non-financial instrument components			
Grants in advance	3.3(b)	8,243	7,322
Total non-financial instrument components		**8,243**	**7,322**
Total financial liabilities per financial instruments note		**5,315**	**4,275**

Notes to and forming part of the financial statements.

6.4. Fair value measurement

6.4(a) Fair value measurements

The following table provides an analysis of assets and liabilities that are measured at fair value.

The different levels of hierarchy are defined below.

Level 1: Quoted prices (adjusted) in active markets for identical assets or liabilities that the entity can access at measurement date.

Level 2: Inputs other than quoted prices included within Level 1 that are observable for the asset or liability, either directly or indirectly.

Level 3: Unobservable inputs for the asset or liability.

Fair value measurements, valuation techniques and inputs used

	Fair value measurements at the end of the reporting period using			For Levels 2 and 3 fair value measurements			
	2016 $'000	2015 $'000	Category (Level 1,2 or 3)	Valuation techniques(s)	Inputs used	Range (weighted average)	Sensitivity of the fair value measurement to changes in unobservable inputs
Non-financial assets							
Leasehold improvements	46	599	Level 3	Depreciated Replacement Cost (DRC)	Replacement Cost New (price per square metre)		
Fixtures and fittings – under construction	1,214	-	Level 2	Market Approach	Adjusted market transactions		
					Consumed economic benefit / Obsolescence of asset	14.8% per annum	
Infrastructure, plant and equipment	491	154	Level 2	Market Approach	Adjusted market transactions		
	47	84	Level 3	Depreciated Replacement Cost (DRC)	Replacement Cost New (price per square metre)		
					Consumed economic benefit / Obsolescence of asset	20% - 14.8% (20%) per annum	A significant increase (decrease) in this consumed economic benefit / obsolescence of the asset would result in a significantly lower (higher) fair value measurement.
Total non-financial assets	**1,798**	**837**					

Notes to and forming part of the financial statements.

1. The entity did not measure any non-financial assets at fair value on a non-recurring basis as at 30 June 2016.

2. There have been changes to the valuation techniques for assets in the infrastructure, plant and equipment class. In instances where sufficient observable inputs, such as market transactions of similar assets, were identified in this financial year, the valuation technique was changed from a Depreciated Replacement Cost (DRC) approach to a Market approach. There were no other changes in valuation technique from the previous reporting period.

3. Fair value measurements
   ACARA's assets are held for operational purposes and not held for the purposes of deriving a profit. The current use of all non-financial assets are considered their highest and best use.

4. Recurring and non-recurring Level 3 fair value measurements – valuation processes
   ACARA engaged Australian Valuation Solutions (AVS) to undertake a full valuation at 30 June 2015
   There have been no transfers between level 1 and level 2 of the hierarchy during the year.

Significant Level 3 inputs utilised by the entity are derived and evaluated as follows:

Recurring level 3 fair value measurements – reconciliation for assets						
	Non-financial assets					
	Leasehold incentives		Infrastructure, plant and equipment		Total	
	2016 $'000	2015 $'000	2016 $'000	2015 $'000	2016 $'000	2015 $'000
As at 1 July	599	1,110	84	293	683	1,403
Depreciation	(553)	(533)	(24)	(176)	(577)	(709)
Reclassified asset	-	9	-	(9)	-	-
Purchases	-	-	-	79	-	79
Revaluation	-	13	-	64	-	77
Transfers out of Level 3	-	-	-	(154)	-	(154)
Loss on disposal	-	-	(13)	(13)	(13)	(13)
Total as at 30 June	46	599	47	84	93	683

7. Other information

7.1 Reporting of outcomes

ACARA's work contributes towards the one outcome of improved quality and consistency of school education in Australia through a national curriculum, national assessment, data collection and performance reporting system, as described in Note 1.

Notes to and forming part of the financial statements.

Acronyms and glossary

Acronym	Title
ACARA	Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority
ACARA Act	*Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority Act 2008*
Accountable Authority	The person or group of persons responsible for, and control over, the operations of a Commonwealth entity under the PGPA Act.
ACER	Australian Council for Educational Research
AESOC	Australian Education Senior Officials Committee (previously AEEYSOC)
AITSL	Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership
AM	Member of the Order of Australia
ANAO	Australian National Audit Office
Band	The NAP assessment scale is divided into ten bands, used to report student progress through Years 3, 5, 7 and 9. Band 1 is the lowest band and band 10 is the highest band. A band contains a range of scores and is not a specific point.
CC	Civics and citizenship
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
COAG	Council of Australian Governments
Cohort	A group of students
Council, The	Education Council
Domain	Relating predominantly to NAP tests, this refers to particular learning areas (for example, reading, writing, language conventions, numeracy)
ESA	Education Services Australia
F–10	School years from Foundation to Year 10
F–12	School years from Foundation to Year 12
FOI Act	*Freedom of Information Act 1982*
Foundation (F)	Denotes the year prior to Year 1, which is known variously as 'kindergarten', 'preparatory' ('prep'), 'reception', 'transition', or 'pre-primary' in different states and territories. This terminology was adopted with the publication of the Australian Curriculum.
GST	Goods and services tax
ICT	Information and communication technology
ICSEA	Index of community socio-educational advantage

Acronym	Title
ISCA	Independent Schools Council of Australia
Jurisdictions	The Australian Government and state and territory governments of Australia
Melbourne Declaration	The Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australian 2008, which sets the direction of Australian schooling for the next 10 years.
MySchool	An interactive website presenting information about each of Australia's just over 10,000 schools and campuses.
NAP	National Assessment Program
NAPLAN	National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy; a series of common literacy and numeracy tests conducted annually across Australia for all students in Years 3, 5, 7 and 9.
NAP sample	The NAP sample tests students' skills and understanding in science literacy, civics and citizenship and information and communication technology (ICT) Literacy. Only selected groups of students in Years 6 and 10 participate in these sample assessments, which are held on a rolling three-yearly basis.
NCEC	National Catholic Education Commission
PBS	Portfolio Budget Statements
PGPA Act	*Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013*
PGPA Rule	Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Rule 2014
Proficiency level	The sample assessment scales are divided into a number of levels, depending on the domain. These levels are like bands for NAPLAN in that they encompass a range of scores.
SMG	Senior management group
STEM	Science, technology, engineering and mathematics
WHS	Work health and safety (formerly known as occupational health and safety)

Compliance index

Requirement	Section
Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013	
Annual performance statements	2
Financial statements	4
Auditor-General's report	4
Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Rule 2014	
i. Approval by the accountable authority of the entity ii. Signed by the accountable authority iii. Detail how and when approval of the annual report was given iv. State that the accountable authority of the entity is responsible for preparing and giving the annual report to the entity's responsible minister	Letter of transmittal
Enabling legislation	1.3, 3.1
Functions and objectives in enabling legislation	3.1
Purposes of the entity as included in the entity's corporate plan for the period	2.0
Names and titles of responsible minister(s)	3.1
Ministerial directions	3.7
Government policy orders	3.7
Compliance with direction or order	3.7
Annual performance statements, including: i. a statement that the performance statements are prepared for paragraph 39(1)(a) of the PGPA Act ii. a statement specifying the reporting period for which the performance statements are prepared iii. a statement that, in the opinion of the accountable authority of the entity, the performance statements: (i) accurately present the entity's performance in the reporting period, and (ii) comply with subsection 39(2) of the PGPA Act.	2.0
Reporting of non-compliance with the finance law	3.7
Information on members of the accountable authority: name, qualifications, experience, meetings attended and whether the member is an executive member or non-executive member	3.2
Organisational structure	1.3
Locations of major activities or facilities	1.3
Corporate governance	3.1

Requirement	Section
Decision-making process to approve the entity paying for a good or service from another Commonwealth entity	n/a
Significant activities and changes that affected operations or structure of the entity during the period	n/a
Judicial decisions or administrative tribunals	3.7
Reports by the Auditor General, a Committee of either House, or of both Houses, of the Parliament; the Commonwealth Ombudsman; or the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner	3.7
Information from subsidiary	n/a
Indemnity applied to accountable authority or officer of entity	3.7

Notes

Notes