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NATIONAL REPORT ON SCHOOLING IN AUSTRALIA | 2018

THIRTIETH EDITION

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National Report on Schooling in Australia 2018
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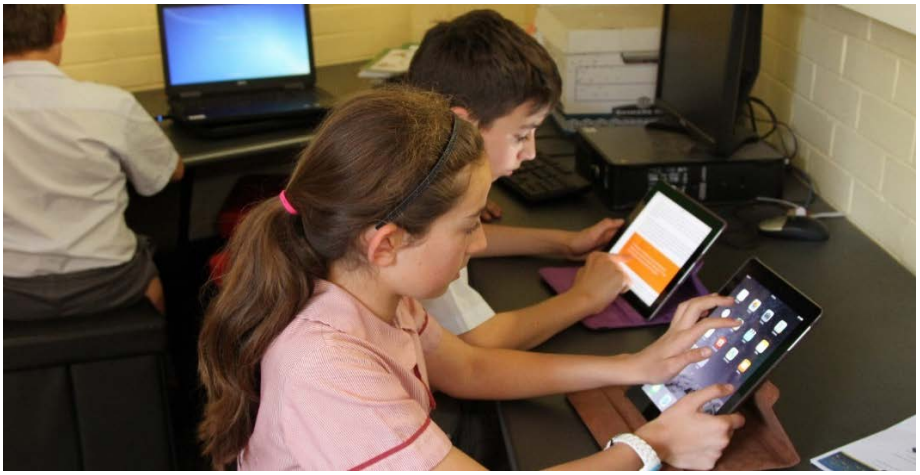

Introduction

The *National Report on Schooling in Australia 2018* is the thirtieth annual report on Australia's school education sector.[1] It has been produced by the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) on behalf of education ministers, meeting as the COAG Education Council.

The report highlights progress in 2018 towards the Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians agreed by Australian education ministers in 2008, and is the tenth report to address these nationally agreed goals and commitments.

The *National Report on Schooling in Australia 2018* consists of two parts: this written report and the online National Report on Schooling data portal.

The written report addresses the eight areas of commitment to action specified in the Melbourne Declaration, describes the national policy and reporting context for school education in Australia and reports against the nationally agreed key performance measures (KPMs) for schooling, including providing data, analysis and commentary. It also includes other high-level statistical information on Australian schooling in 2018 and for the ten-year period 2009–2018 inclusive.

The online National Report on Schooling data portal provides readers and researchers with interactive access to a wider range of nationally consistent data on schooling in Australia. These include data on enrolments, staffing, and school funding, and on the KPMs for student participation, achievement in the National Assessment Program, and attainment of Year 12 and post-school qualifications. The data portal allows readers to view data by state and territory as well as at the national level, by school sector, by calendar year and by other breakdowns, such as gender and Indigenous status. Data sets are regularly updated as new data become available and may be downloaded from the portal.

Previous editions of the National Report on Schooling in Australia for the years 2009–2017 are available on the ACARA website. Editions from 1989 to 2008 are archived on the Education Council website.

[1] The first edition of the joint annual report on schooling across Australia was compiled at the direction of the then Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA) for 1989.

Overview of the report

Part 1, 'Schools and schooling', provides information on the status of Australian schooling in 2018, including school, student and teacher numbers, school structures, and funds used for school education.

In Australia, responsibility for school education rests mainly with the six state and two territory governments.[2]

All states and territories provide for 13 years of formal school education. Primary education, including a foundation year, lasts for either seven or eight years and is followed by secondary education of six or five years respectively.[3] Typically, schooling commences at age five, is compulsory from age six until age 17 (with provision for alternative study or work arrangements in the senior secondary years), and is completed at age 17 or 18. School structures and age requirements in states and territories are summarised in part 1.4.

The majority – 70.1 per cent – of schools are government schools, established and administered by state and territory governments through their education departments or authorities. The remaining 29.9 per cent are non-government schools, mostly associated with religious organisations. Non-government schools are established and operated under conditions determined by state and territory governments through their registration authorities. School numbers are shown in part 1.1.

Around two-thirds (65.7 per cent) of school students[4] are enrolled in government schools and approximately one-third (34.3 per cent) in non-government schools. Part 1.2 reports on numbers of students by school sector, state and territory, and Indigenous status.

Staff numbers closely reflect enrolments, with 64.3 per cent of school teachers[5] employed by the government school sector and 35.7 per cent by non-government schools. Part 1.3 reports on staff numbers and student/teacher ratios.

School, student and teacher numbers in 2018 are shown for Australia, and by state and territory in figure 1.

Schools are funded through a combination of state/territory government funding, Australian government funding, fees and charges and other parental/private contributions.

In 2018, total recurrent government funding for schooling was $61.5 billion. This was made up of 69.9 per cent from state and territory budgets and 31.1 per cent from the Australian Government (Commonwealth) budget.

Overall, 75.8 per cent of recurrent government funding was allocated to government schools and 24.2 per cent to non-government schools. The bulk (91.6 per cent) of state and territory funds was allocated to government schools; the majority (61.1 per cent) of Australian Government funds was allocated to non-government schools.

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

[3] SA is now the only jurisdiction to follow the eight-year/five-year pattern.

[4] Count of full-time plus part-time students

[5] Full-time equivalent teaching staff.

Figure 1

Numbers of schools, students and teachers by state and territory, Australia, 2018

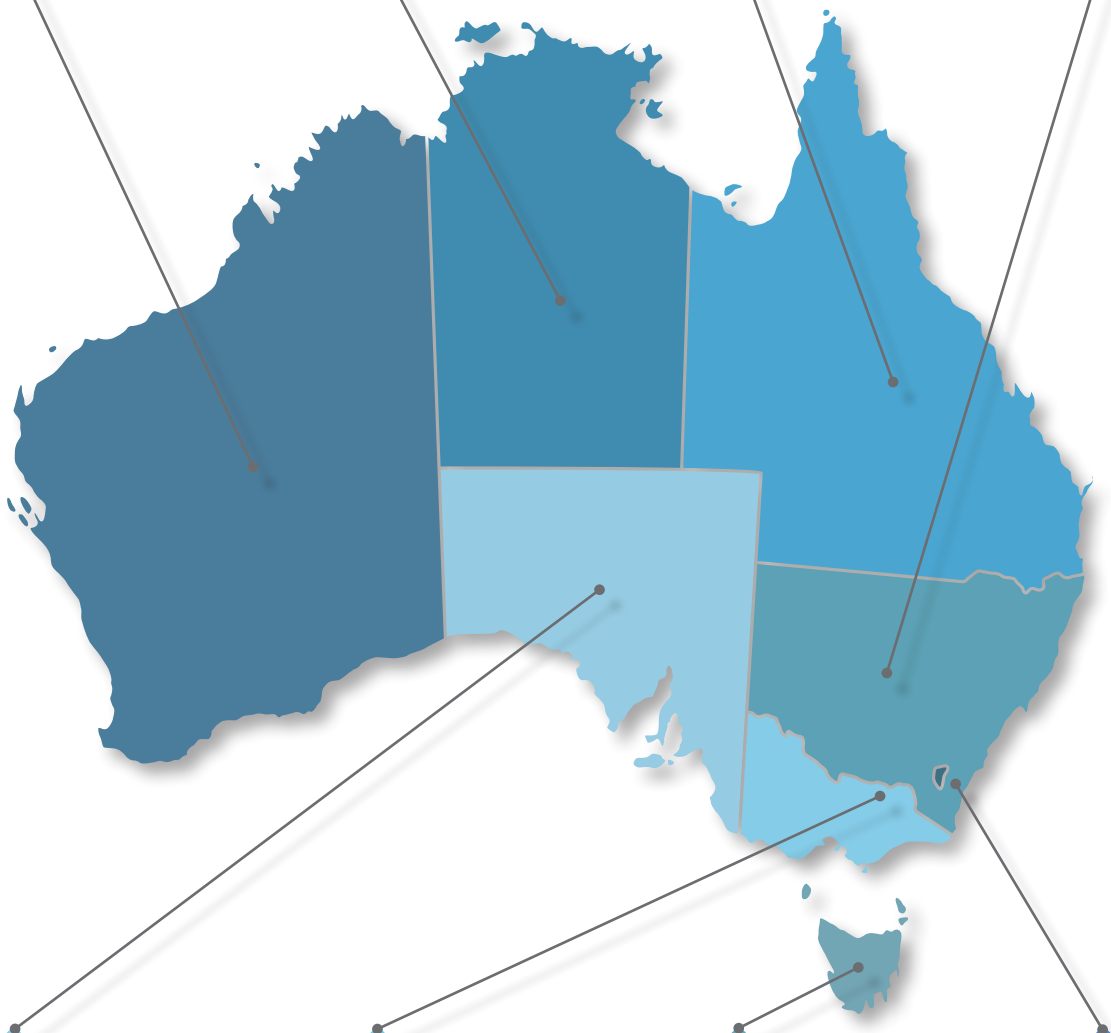
AUSTRALIA					
Schools	9,477	Students	3,893,834	Teachers	288,583

Western Australia	
Schools	1,094
Students	418,119
Teachers	30,076

Northern Territory	
Schools	188
Students	40,691
Teachers	3,285

Queensland	
Schools	1,745
Students	820,709
Teachers	60,804

New South Wales	
Schools	3,101
Students	1,219,572
Teachers	89,026



South Australia	
Schools	716
Students	269,370
Teachers	19,553

Victoria	
Schools	2,238
Students	973,127
Teachers	74,689

Tasmania	
Schools	261
Students	81,239
Teachers	5,990

Australian Capital Territory	
Schools	134
Students	71,007
Teachers	5,160

Notes

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

Source: ABS, Cat. No. 4221.0, *Schools, Australia,* 2018; See also National Report on Schooling data portal.

Part 2, 'Policies and priorities', outlines the national policy context for Australian schooling in 2018 and reports against the commitments to action agreed by Australian education ministers in the Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians.

Part 2.1 of this report summarises the national policy context for schooling, including the roles of the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) and the Education Council in deciding agreed national policy and initiatives for education.

It also provides examples of major national and state and territory policy initiatives for school education in 2018 including:

- the agreement by COAG in December 2018 to the new National School Reform Agreement to operate from 2019 to 2023
- the announcement by the Education Council in December 2018, that a review of the Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians would be conducted in 2019
- the delivery of three major reports on education: the Review to Achieve Educational Excellence in Australian Schools (2018); the Independent Review of Regional, Rural and Remote Education (2018); and the final report of the STEM Partnerships Forum (2018).

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

Parts 2.3–2.10 report on national progress in implementing the Melbourne Declaration commitments to action with a focus on developments in 2018. They also list examples of state and territory initiatives relating to the commitments.

Progress towards the commitments to action reported for 2018 include:

- The final report of the STEM Partnerships Forum emphasised the need for ongoing partnerships between education and industry to improve Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) education.
- A partnership agreement between a coalition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peak organisations and all Australian governments (through COAG) was developed to finalise the revised framework for the Closing the Gap agenda.
- A number of states and territories implemented new and continuing initiatives to improve and support school leadership, for early childhood education, and to support senior secondary schooling and youth transitions.
- The eleventh annual tests in literacy and numeracy for Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 were conducted through the National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN). Nationally, approximately 15 per cent of students participating in NAPLAN undertook the tests online in 2018.
- The sixth three-yearly NAP sample assessment in science literacy for Year 6 students was conducted online, with the assessment extended to Year 10 students for the first time.

- The Independent Review into Regional, Rural and Remote Education presented its final report.
- The *My School* website was redeveloped to be mobile phone-accessible and updated in March and December 2018.
- The Australian Schools List (ASL) website was updated with new features including an improved search functionality and a search by map facility.

Part 3, 'Measuring and reporting performance', reports on the performance of Australian schooling in 2018, using the nationally agreed key performance measures (KPMs) for schooling specified in the *Measurement Framework for Schooling in Australia 2015*.

Part 3 reports on 21 of the 26 agreed KPMs[6] along with, in some cases, associated COAG targets. The measures are reported at the national level, and by various breakdowns, such as school sector, state and territory, school year and Indigenous status. For selected KPMs, time series for the previous nine years 2009–2017 since the Melbourne Declaration are also included. Where relevant breakdowns or time series are not reported in part 3, they are provided in the National Report on Schooling data portal, along with extensive statistical information on schooling in Australia.

Data reported for 2018 include that:

- The national school enrolment rate for the 6–15-year-old population was 99.7 per cent.
- The average national attendance rate for students in Years 1–10 was 91.9 per cent. Average attendance rates were higher for Years 1–6 than for Years 7–10.
- At 82.3 per cent, the average attendance rate for Indigenous students was 10.2 percentage points lower than for non-Indigenous students (92.5 per cent). There was an increase in this gap of 0.4 percentage points in 2018.
- Three quarters (75.2 per cent) of all Australian students in Years 1–10 attended school for at least 90 per cent of school days. However, less than half (48.7 per cent) of Indigenous students within this group met the 90 per cent benchmark.
- NAPLAN participation rates were over 90 per cent for reading and writing for each of Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 and for numeracy for Years 3, 5 and 7. Year 9 participation rates were lower than for other years across all domains.
- The proportion of students achieving at or above the national minimum standard in NAPLAN tests was over 90 per cent for all year groups tested in reading, and for Year 3 in writing. The proportion of

[6] The remaining five KPMs, covering student achievement in the NAP international assessments TIMSS and PIRLS and in NAP sample assessments in Civics and Citizenship and Information and Communication Technology Literacy do not apply to the 2018 reporting year.

students achieving at or above the national minimum standard in NAPLAN numeracy tests was over 95 per cent for all year groups tested.

- At 58 per cent, the proportion of Year 6 students achieving at or above the proficient standard in NAP – Science Literacy was statistically similar to when this sample assessment was last conducted in 2015, but significantly higher than in 2012.

- NAP – Science Literacy was extended to Year 10 for the first time, with 50 per cent of students achieving the proficient standard.

- There was little change in the performance of 15-year-old Australian students in the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) 2018 from when this sample assessment was last conducted for PISA 2015. At 59 per cent and 54 per cent the proportions of students achieving at or above the proficient standard in reading literacy and mathematical literacy were statistically similar to 2015. The proportion of students achieving at or above the proficient standard in scientific literacy decreased significantly from 61 per cent in 2015 to 58 per cent in 2018. Australian student performance was significantly above the OECD average in reading literacy and scientific literacy, but statistically similar to the OECD average in mathematical literacy.

- The national apparent retention rate from Year 10 to Year 12 decreased for the first time since 2012: by 0.5 percentage points to 82.8 per cent. The apparent retention rate from Year 10 to Year 12 for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students decreased by 0.4 percentage points to 62.6 per cent, with the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous rates remaining at 21.3 percentage points. These changes were not statistically significant at the national level.

- The proportion of 15–19-year-olds who were fully engaged in education, training or employment, as measured by the ABS Survey of Education and Work, decreased (but not significantly) from 89.0 per cent in 2017 to 88.6 per cent in 2018.

- The proportion of the 20–24-year-old population that has attained at least Year 12 or equivalent or AQF Certificate III or above, as measured by the ABS Survey of Education and Work, increased significantly from 86.4 per cent in 2017 to 88.8 per cent in 2018.

Table 1 summarises the KPMs for 2018 in comparison with 2017 (or the most recent previous year for which comparable data exist).

Table 1

Key performance measures for schooling, Australia, 2017–18

Key performance measures	2017 (or previous year)	2018	Comparison
1. Student participation			
(a) Enrolment Proportion of children aged 6–15 years who are enrolled in school (%)	100.0	99.7	N/A
(b) Attendance rate The number of actual full-time equivalent student-days attended by full-time students in Years 1–10 as a percentage of the total number of possible student-days attended over the period (%)	92.4	91.9	↔
(c) Attendance level[7] The proportion of full-time students in Years 1–10, whose attendance rate in Semester 1 is equal to or greater than 90 per cent (%)	77.1	75.2	N/A
(d) NAPLAN participation Proportion of students participating in NAPLAN for Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 for reading, writing and numeracy (%):			
Reading			
Year 3	94.8	94.7	↔
Year 5	95.4	95.3	↔
Year 7	94.5	94.0	↔
Year 9	91.3	90.5	↔
Writing			
Year 3	94.7	94.4	↔
Year 5	95.3	95.2	↔
Year 7	94.6	94.2	↔
Year 9	91.6	90.9	↔
Numeracy			
Year 3	94.6	94.3	↔
Year 5	95.0	94.8	↔
Year 7	94.0	93.4	↔
Year 9	90.7	89.6	↔

[7] KPM (c) for 2017 excludes NSW government school students.

Key performance measures	2017 (or previous year)	2018	Comparison
(e) Apparent retention rates from Year 10 to Year 12 (Indigenous school students cf. non-Indigenous school students) (%)			
Indigenous school students	63.0	62.6	↔
Non-Indigenous students	84.3	83.9	↔
All students	83.3	82.8	↔
Gap – Indigenous/non-Indigenous (percentage points)	21.3	21.3	↔
(f) Participation of young people in VET including VET in Schools Proportion of the population aged 15–19 years who, in the calendar year, successfully completed at least one unit of competency as part of a VET qualification at AQF Certificate II or above (%)	27.9	27.0	↔
(g) Proportion of 15–19-year-olds in full-time education or training, in full-time work, or both in part-time work and part-time education or training (%)	89.0	88.6	↔
(h) Proportion of 20–24-year-olds in full-time education or training, in full-time work, or both in part-time work and part-time education or training (%)	75.0	74.6	↔
(i) Proportion of 17–24-year-olds who have left school that are in full-time education or training, in full-time work, or both in part-time work and part-time education or training (%)	74.7	74.3	↔
2. Student achievement: National Assessment Program – literacy			
(a) Proportion of students achieving at or above the national minimum standard for reading (%)			
Year 3 – Band 2	94.9	95.6	↔
Year 5 – Band 4	93.9	94.9	↔
Year 7 – Band 5	94.0	94.1	↔
Year 9 – Band 6	91.7	93.4	↔
(b) NAPLAN mean scale scores for reading			
Year 3	431.3	433.8	↔
Year 5	505.7	509.3	↔
Year 7	544.7	542.2	↔
Year 9	580.9	584.1	↔
(c) Proportion of students achieving at or above the national minimum standard for writing (%)			
Year 3 – Band 2	95.5	94.4	↔
Year 5 – Band 4	91.7	89.8	↔
Year 7 – Band 5	87.9	86.9	↔
Year 9 – Band 6	81.6	79.5	↔

Key performance measures	2017 (or previous year)	2018	Comparison
(d) NAPLAN mean scale scores for writing			
Year 3	413.6	407.1	↔
Year 5	472.5	464.7	↔
Year 7	512.9	505.3	↔
Year 9	552.0	542.4	↔
(e) Proportion of students achieving at or above the proficient standard (level 3) on the OECD PISA combined reading scale (%)	61 (2015)	59	↔
3. Student achievement: National Assessment Program – numeracy			
(a) Proportion of students achieving at or above the national minimum standard for numeracy (%)			
Year 3 – Band 2	95.4	95.8	↔
Year 5 – Band 4	95.4	95.7	↔
Year 7 – Band 5	95.4	95.6	↔
Year 9 – Band 6	95.8	95.5	↔
(b) NAPLAN mean scale scores for numeracy			
Year 3	409.4	407.7	↔
Year 5	493.8	494.0	↔
Year 7	553.9	548.4	↔
Year 9	591.9	595.7	↔
(c) Proportion of students achieving at or above the proficient standard (level 3) on the OECD PISA combined mathematics scale (%)	55 (2015)	54	↔
4. Student achievement: National Assessment Program – Science Literacy			
(a) Proportion of students achieving at or above the proficient standard in Science Literacy (%)			
Year 6 – level 3	55 (2015)	58	↔
Year 10 – level 4	N/A	50	N/A
(b) Proportion of students achieving at or above the proficient standard (level 3) on the OECD PISA combined scientific literacy scale (%)	61 (2015)	58	↓
7. Student attainment			
(a) Proportion of the 20–24-year-old population having attained at least Year 12 or equivalent or AQF Certificate II or above (%)	87.1	90.0	↑
(b) Proportion of the 20–24-year-old population having attained at least Year 12 or equivalent or AQF Certificate III or above (%)	86.4	88.8	↑

Notes:

Comparisons in table 1 have been tested for statistical significance:

 means the increase in the measure was statistically significant

 means the decrease in the measure was statistically significant

 means the change in the measure was not statistically significant

N/A means not applicable:

- The methodology for the annual measure of KPM 1(a), which uses different data sources for the numerator and denominator, may allow the measure to exceed 100 per cent. Increases or decreases in this measure are not represented as changes, as a measure of statistical significance is not available.
- 2018 was the first year for which data on student attendance levels could be collected for NSW government schools. This causes a break in series for the national measure of KPM (c) between 2017 and 2018
- 2018 was the first year in which Year 10 undertook the NAP sample assessment in Science Literacy.

Where possible, measures are expressed to one decimal place. Measures for NAP sample and international assessments are expressed to the nearest whole number.

Part 1: Schools and schooling

Part 1 provides information on the status of Australian schooling in 2018, including school, student and teacher numbers, school structures, and funds used for school education.

1.1 School numbers

In 2018 there were 9,477 schools in Australia.[8] This total included primary, secondary, combined (primary and secondary) and special schools, across government and non-government school sectors. (See Part 4: Glossary for definitions of school levels, school types and school sectors.)

Of the total number of schools, 70.1 per cent were administered by state and territory governments[9], 18.5 per cent identified as having Catholic affiliation[10], and 11.4 per cent were classified as independent. Most independent schools are affiliated with religious denominations or promote a particular educational philosophy.

The number and proportion of schools by school type and school sector in 2018 are shown in table 1.1. The proportion of schools by school sector in 2018 is illustrated in figure 1.1.

[8] As at the National Schools Statistics Collection (NSSC) Schools Census, August 2018.
[9] Independent public schools established in Western Australia and Queensland are counted as government schools in the NSSC and in this report.
[10] Systemic and non-systemic Catholic schools are counted as Catholic schools in the NSSC and in this report.

Table 1.1

Number and proportion of schools by school type and school sector, Australia, 2018

School type	Government		Non-government						All schools	
			Catholic		Independent		Total		Total	
Australia	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	% by school type
Primary	4,778	76.6	1,246	20.0	216	3.5	1,462	23.4	6,240	65.8
Secondary	1,043	73.8	323	22.8	48	3.4	371	26.2	1,414	14.9
Combined	494	36.8	144	10.7	703	52.4	847	63.2	1,341	14.2
Special	331	68.7	40	8.3	111	23.0	151	31.3	482	5.1
Total	6,646	70.1	1,753	18.5	1,078	11.4	2,831	29.9	9,477	100.0

Notes:

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

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

- primary – school delivers primary education
- secondary – school delivers secondary education
- combined – school delivers both primary and secondary education
- special – students may include primary students, secondary students, ungraded students or a combination of primary, secondary and ungraded students. Special schools cater for students with disabilities and/or social or emotional problems.

See Part 4: Glossary for definition of special school.

Categories used in tables and graphs showing 'school sector' are 'government', 'Catholic' and 'independent'. In some tables, the category 'total non-government' (total of Catholic and independent data) is also used. Systemic and non-systemic Catholic schools are counted as Catholic schools in the NSSC and in this report.
See Part 4: Glossary for definition of school sector.

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

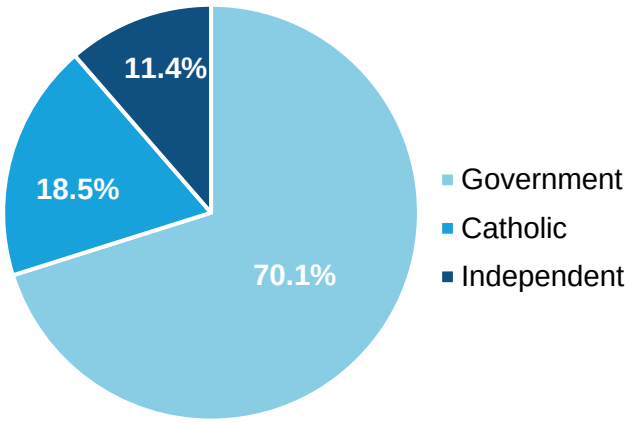
See Part 1.4: School structures for an overview of school years and age requirements across jurisdictions.

Source: ABS, Cat. No. 4221.0, *Schools, Australia,* 2018.

See also National Report on Schooling data portal.

Figure 1.1

Proportion of schools by school sector, Australia, 2018 (per cent)



Source: ABS, Cat. No. 4221.0, *Schools, Australia*, 2018. See also National Report on Schooling data portal.

The number and proportion of schools by state and territory in 2018 are shown in table 1.2. Proportions shown are unchanged from 2017.

Table 1.2

Number and proportion of schools by school type and state/territory, Australia, 2018

	State/territory								
School type	**NSW**	**Vic.**	**Qld**	**SA**	**WA**	**Tas.**	**NT**	**ACT**	**Australia**
Primary	2,107	1,547	1,137	453	678	157	78	83	6,240
Secondary	513	339	259	78	136	42	22	25	1,414
Combined	310	243	269	160	201	55	82	21	1,341
Special	171	109	80	25	79	7	6	5	482
Total	3,101	2,238	1,745	716	1,094	261	188	134	9,477
Proportion (%)	32.7	23.6	18.4	7.6	11.5	2.8	2.0	1.4	100.0

Source: ABS Cat. No. 4221.0, *Schools, Australia*, 2018.

See also National Report on Schooling data portal.

The number of schools in each state and territory is largely determined by the size and geographical distribution of the school-aged population, but changes in school numbers from year to year may be due to administrative or structural changes in schooling as well as to changes in student populations.

There was a net fall of 52 (0.5 per cent) in the total number of schools over the period 2009–2018, but this did not reflect a decrease in total student numbers. The numbers and proportions of schools in the three school sectors over this period are shown in table 1.3, with 104 more non-government schools in 2018 than in 2009, and a net fall in the number of government schools of 156. The total number of schools in Australia rose by 33 from 9,444 in 2017 to 9,477 in 2018.

Table 1.3

Number and proportion of schools by school sector, Australia, 2009–2018

	Government		Catholic		Independent		Total
Year	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.
2009	6,802	71.4	1,705	17.9	1,022	10.7	9,529
2010	6,743	71.2	1,708	18.0	1,017	10.7	9,468
2011	6,705	71.1	1,710	18.1	1,020	10.8	9,435
2012	6,697	71.0	1,713	18.2	1,017	10.8	9,427
2013	6,661	70.9	1,717	18.3	1,015	10.8	9,393
2014	6,651	70.8	1,722	18.3	1,016	10.8	9,389
2015	6,639	70.6	1,737	18.5	1,028	10.9	9,404
2016	6,634	70.5	1,738	18.5	1,042	11.1	9,414
2017	6,639	70.3	1,744	18.5	1,061	11.2	9,444
2018	6,646	70.1	1,753	18.5	1,078	11.4	9,477

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

Source: ABS Cat. No. 4221.0, *Schools, Australia*, 2018 and previous releases.

See also National Report on Schooling data portal.

1.2 Student numbers

Enrolments by school level and sector

In total, 3.89 million individual students were enrolled in Australian schools in 2018, a rise of 1.2 per cent from 2017. Of these, 2.25 million (57.7 per cent) were primary school students, and 1.65 million (42.3 per cent) were secondary school students. This difference is mainly due to the structure of schooling, in which primary schooling comprises more year groups/cohorts than secondary schooling.[11] Another contributing factor is that not all students complete Years 11 and 12, the last two years of secondary school. The numbers of students by school level and school sector in 2018 are summarised in table 1.4.

Table 1.4

Number and proportion of students (full-time plus part-time) enrolled in schools by school level and school sector, Australia, 2018

	School sector							
	Government		Catholic		Independent		Total	
School level	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	% by level
Primary	1,580,323	70.3	405,462	18.0	262,090	11.7	2,247,875	57.7
Junior secondary	693,351	59.9	252,563	21.8	211,441	18.3	1,157,355	29.7
Senior secondary	284,495	58.2	107,710	22.0	96,399	19.7	488,604	12.5
Total secondary	977,846	59.4	360,273	21.9	307,840	18.7	1,645,959	42.3
Total	2,558,169	65.7	765,735	19.7	569,930	14.6	3,893,834	100.0

Notes:

In tables and graphs using the category 'school level', primary education comprises a Foundation (pre-Year 1) grade, followed by Years 1–6 in NSW, Vic., Qld, WA, Tas., NT and ACT. In SA, primary education comprises a Foundation grade followed by Years 1–7.

Junior secondary comprises the years from commencement of secondary school to Year 10, including ungraded secondary.

Senior secondary comprises Years 11 and 12.

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

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

Source: ABS, Cat. No. 4221.0, *Schools, Australia,* 2018.

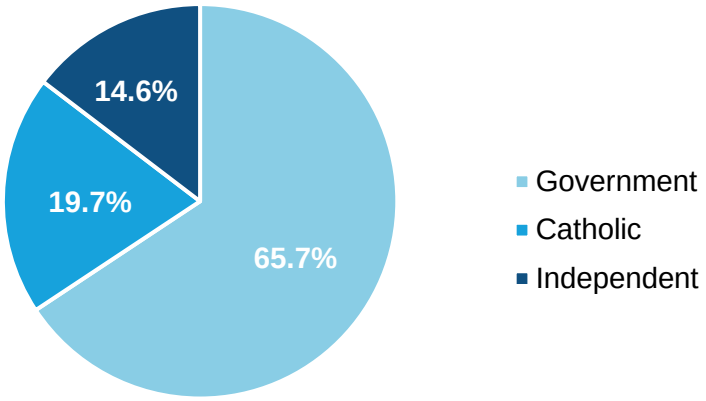
See also National Report on Schooling data portal.

As shown in table 1.4 and figure 1.2, 65.7 per cent of Australian school students in 2018 were enrolled in government schools, 19.7 per cent of students were enrolled in Catholic schools and 14.6 per cent of students were enrolled in independent schools.

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

Figure 1.2

Proportion of students (full-time plus part-time) enrolled in schools by sector, Australia, 2018 (per cent)



Source: ABS, Cat. No. 4221.0, *Schools, Australia,* 2018

See also National Report on Schooling data portal.

The proportions of students enrolled in each school sector differed between levels of education, with government schools accounting for 70.3 per cent of primary students but less than 60 per cent (59.4 per cent) of secondary students.

This suggests a movement of students from government to non-government schools, particularly between primary and secondary school. However, as the movement of individual students between sectors and between states and territories is not tracked nationally, it is not currently possible to accurately measure the extent or timing of student movements between the three school sectors.

Part-time students accounted for only 0.3 per cent of total enrolments. They were concentrated in Years 11 and 12 (74.5 per cent), and in government schools (87.1 per cent).

Enrolments by school level, and state and territory

Total enrolments (full-time plus part-time) by state and territory in 2018 are shown in table 1.5.

Table 1.5

Number of students (full-time plus part-time) enrolled in schools by state/territory and school level, Australia, 2018

	State/territory								
School level	**NSW**	**Vic.**	**Qld**	**SA**	**WA**	**Tas.**	**NT**	**ACT**	**Australia**
Primary	701,671	554,010	472,673	168,378	240,681	45,697	24,692	40,073	2,247,875
Junior secondary	371,268	292,776	251,749	60,459	123,389	24,849	11,853	21,012	1,157,355
Senior secondary	146,633	126,341	96,287	40,533	54,049	10,693	4,146	9,922	488,604
Total secondary	517,901	419,117	348,036	100,992	177,438	35,542	15,999	30,934	1,645,959
Total (No.)	1,219,572	973,127	820,709	269,370	418,119	81,239	40,691	71,007	3,893,834
Proportion of Australian total (%)	31.3	25.0	21.1	6.9	10.7	2.1	1.0	1.8	100.0

Notes: In tables and graphs using the category 'school level', primary education comprises a Foundation (pre-Year 1) grade, followed by Years 1–6 in NSW, Vic., Qld, WA, Tas., NT and ACT. In SA, primary education comprises a Foundation grade followed by Years 1–7.

Junior secondary comprises the years from commencement of secondary school to Year 10, including ungraded secondary.

Senior secondary comprises Years 11 and 12.

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

Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding.

Source: ABS, Cat. No. 4221.0*, Schools, Australia,* 2018.

See also National Report on Schooling data portal.

Enrolments by state and territory and school level reflect the school-age population and its age distribution in each jurisdiction. More than three quarters of students (77.4 per cent) are enrolled in the three most populous states of New South Wales, Victoria and Queensland.

Growth in enrolments

The numbers of students enrolled in Australian schools grew by 44,609 (1.2 per cent) between 2017 and 2018 and by 409,030 (11.7 per cent) between 2009 and 2018. Enrolments in both government and non-government schools have risen over the past nine years, with the bulk of total growth over the period (64.4 per cent) occurring in government schools. Table 1.6 summarises these data.

Table 1.6

Number and proportion of students (full-time plus part-time) by school sector, Australia, 2009–2018

Year	School sector						Total
	Government		Catholic		Independent		
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.
2009	2,294,638	65.8	704,837	20.2	485,329	13.9	3,484,804
2010	2,304,259	65.6	713,911	20.3	492,705	14.0	3,510,875
2011	2,315,253	65.4	724,594	20.5	501,962	14.2	3,541,809
2012	2,342,379	65.2	736,595	20.5	511,012	14.2	3,589,986
2013	2,375,024	65.1	749,059	20.5	521,436	14.3	3,645,519
2014	2,406,495	65.1	757,749	20.5	529,857	14.3	3,694,101
2015	2,445,130	65.2	765,539	20.4	540,304	14.4	3,750,973
2016	2,483,802	65.4	767,050	20.2	547,374	14.4	3,798,226
2017	2,524,865	65.6	766,870	19.9	557,490	14.5	3,849,225
2018	2,558,169	65.7	765,735	19.7	569,930	14.6	3,893,834

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

Source: ABS, Cat. No. 4221.0, *Schools, Australia,* 2018.

See also National Report on Schooling data portal.

From 2009 to 2014, growth was proportionately higher in non-government schools, producing small shifts in the 'share' of total enrolments from the government to the non-government school sectors. This continued a long-term trend that began in 1977.[12]

However, since 2014, this trend appears to have reversed, with the government sector proportion of enrolments rising from 65.1 per cent in 2014 to 65.7 per cent in 2018.

The proportional decrease in non-government school enrolments since 2014 has occurred in the Catholic school sector, with a fall from 20.5 per cent of students in 2014 to 19.7 per cent in 2018. In 2017 and 2018 there were small reductions in the absolute numbers of students enrolled in Catholic schools.

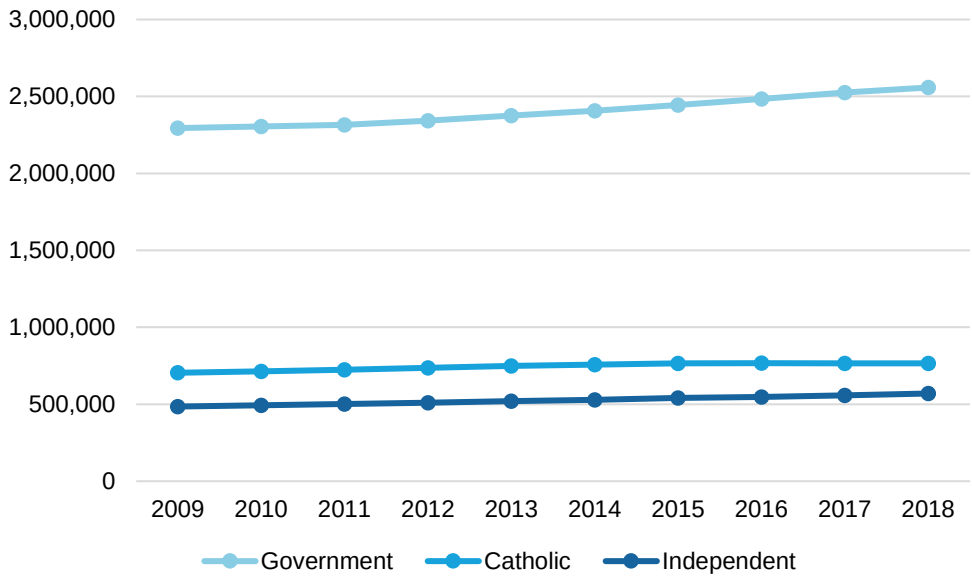
Incremental proportional growth of independent school sector enrolments continued over 2014–2018.

[12] ABS, *Schools Australia, 2016*, media release.

Figure 1.3 shows the time series for student enrolments 2009–2018.

Figure 1.3

Number of students enrolled (full-time plus part-time) by school sector, Australia, 2009–2018



Source: ABS, Cat. No. 4221.0, *Schools, Australia,* 2018.

See also National Report on Schooling data portal.

For time series of enrolments by state and territory, and for full-time equivalent enrolments, see the National Report on Schooling data portal.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students

In 2018 there were 221,982 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (Indigenous)[13] students enrolled in Australian schools, making up 5.7 per cent of the total school population. Table 1.7 shows the number and proportion of Indigenous students by school level and sector.

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

Table 1.7

Number and proportion of Indigenous students (full-time and part-time) enrolled in schools by school level and sector, Australia, 2018

	School sector							
	Government		Catholic		Independent		Total	
School level	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	% by level
Primary	117,546	87.0	12,300	9.1	5,288	3.9	135,134	60.9
Junior secondary	53,456	80.1	8,098	12.1	5,197	7.8	66,751	30.1
Senior secondary	15,306	76.2	2,670	13.3	2,121	10.6	20,097	9.1
Total secondary	68,762	79.2	10,768	12.4	7,318	8.4	86,848	39.1
Total	186,308	83.9	23,068	10.4	12,606	5.7	221,982	100.0

Notes:

In tables and graphs using the category 'school level', primary education comprises a Foundation (pre-Year 1) grade, followed by Years 1–6 in NSW, Vic., Qld, WA, Tas., NT and ACT. In SA, primary education comprises a Foundation grade followed by Years 1–7.

Junior secondary comprises the years from commencement of secondary school to Year 10, including ungraded secondary.

Senior secondary comprises Years 11 and 12.

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

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

Source: ABS, Cat. No. 4221.0, *Schools, Australia,* 2018. See also National Report on Schooling data portal.

Indigenous enrolments were more highly concentrated in government schools, with 83.9 per cent of Indigenous enrolments in government schools compared with 65.7 per cent of enrolments for all students (as shown in table 1.4).

Indigenous students were under-represented in senior secondary years: 4.1 per cent of senior secondary students were Indigenous, compared with 5.8 per cent of junior secondary students. These proportions reflect Year 10 to Year 12 apparent retention rates amongst Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, which are lower than for the overall school population, but which rose in absolute terms, and relative to rates for non-Indigenous students, between 2012 and 2017.[14]

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students are not evenly or proportionately distributed among states and territories. Table 1.8 shows this distribution for 2018.

[14] Apparent retention rates are reported in Part 3: Measuring and reporting performance.

Table 1.8

Number and proportion of Indigenous students (full-time plus part-time) enrolled in schools by school level and state/territory, Australia, 2018

	State/territory								
School level	**NSW**	**Vic.**	**Qld**	**SA**	**WA**	**Tas.**	**NT**	**ACT**	**Australia**
Primary	44,024	9,601	40,902	8,342	16,827	4,303	9,866	1,269	135,134
Junior secondary	23,413	5,029	20,019	2,735	7,972	2,189	4,759	635	66,751
Senior secondary	6,045	1,558	5,948	1,683	2,569	800	1,241	253	20,097
Total secondary	29,458	6,587	25,967	4,418	10,541	2,989	6,000	888	86,848
Total (No.)	73,482	16,188	66,869	12,760	27,368	7,292	15,866	2,157	221,982
Proportion of Indigenous students (%)	33.1	7.3	30.1	5.7	12.3	3.3	7.1	1.0	100.0
Indigenous students as a proportion of total enrolments (%)	6.0	1.7	8.1	4.7	6.5	9.0	39.0	3.0	5.7

Source: ABS, Cat. No. 4221.0, *Schools, Australia,* 2018.

See also National Report on Schooling data portal.

With 73,482 Indigenous students in 2018, New South Wales had both the highest number of Indigenous enrolments and the highest proportion (33.1 per cent) of the national total. This represented 6.0 per cent of the state's students, slightly more than the national average of 5.7 per cent It was also slightly more than the NSW share of total enrolments nationally (31.3 per cent)[15].

Victoria, with 25.0 per cent of all school students, had 7.3 per cent of all Indigenous students, representing 1.7 per cent of students in that state. Western Australia, with 10.7 per cent of total enrolments Australia-wide, accounted for 12.3 per cent of Indigenous students.

The highest concentration of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students was in the Northern Territory, which accounted for only 1.0 per cent of total school enrolments in 2018, but for 7.1 per cent of Indigenous enrolments. The 15,866 Indigenous students enrolled in Northern Territory schools made up 39.0 per cent of the Territory's school population. Because of this, data on Indigenous students have a much greater impact on overall statistics (including performance measures) for the Northern Territory than for any other state or territory. More detailed data on full-time, part-time and full-time equivalent (FTE) enrolments by state and territory, school sector and level, Indigenous status and sex, are available in the National Report on Schooling data portal.

[15] State and territory proportions of total enrolments are reported in table 1.5.

1.3 Staff numbers

In 2018, there were 288,583 full-time equivalent (FTE) teaching staff across primary and secondary schooling in Australia. The numbers and proportions of FTE teaching staff by school sector, school level and sex in 2018 are shown in table 1.9.

Table 1.9

Number and proportion of full-time equivalent (FTE) of teaching staff by school sector, school level and sex, Australia, 2018

	Primary				Secondary				Total			
School sector	**M**	**F**	**Total**	**%**	**M**	**F**	**Total**	**%**	**M**	**F**	**Total**	**%**
Government	18,987	87,488	106,475	70.7	30,158	48,825	78,984	57.2	49,145	136,313	185,458	64.3
Catholic	4,063	21,155	25,217	16.8	11,591	17,702	29,293	21.2	15,654	38,857	54,511	18.9
Independent	4,115	14,745	18,860	12.5	12,714	17,040	29,755	21.6	16,829	31,785	48,614	16.8
Total non-government	8,178	35,900	44,077	29.3	24,306	34,742	59,048	42.8	32,483	70,642	103,125	35.7
All schools	27,164	123,387	150,552	52.2	54,464	83,567	138,031	47.8	81,628	206,955	288,583	100.0

Notes:

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

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

M = male, F = female

Source: ABS, Cat. No. 4221.0*, Schools, Australia,* 2018.

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

In 2018, Australia's teaching workforce continued to be predominantly female, with women making up 71.7 per cent of FTE teachers, and men making up 28.3 per cent. This gap has widened since 2000, when one third (33.5 per cent) of teachers were male. In 2018, this difference was again more pronounced at the primary level (82.0 per cent female) than at secondary level (60.5 per cent female).

Across Australia, 64.3 per cent of FTE teachers were employed by the government school sector, 18.9 per cent by the Catholic school sector and 16.8 per cent by the independent sector. This is consistent overall with the distribution of students across school sectors (as reported in table 1.4).

The number and proportion of FTE teaching staff by state/territory in 2018 is shown in table 1.10. This distribution is also consistent with the broad distribution of students (as reported in table 1.5).

Table 1.10

Number and proportion of full-time equivalent (FTE) of teaching staff by state and territory and school level, Australia, 2018

School level	State/territory								
	NSW	Vic.	Qld	SA	WA	Tas.	NT	ACT	Australia
Primary	45,519	38,588	32,170	11,144	15,537	3,087	1,897	2,610	150,552
Secondary	43,508	36,102	28,634	8,409	14,539	2,903	1,388	2,551	138,031
Total	89,026	74,689	60,804	19,553	30,076	5,990	3,285	5,160	288,583
Proportion (%)	30.8	25.9	21.1	6.8	10.4	2.1	1.1	1.8	100.0

Notes:

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

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

Source: ABS, Cat. No. 4221.0*, Schools, Australia,* 2018.

See also National Report on Schooling data portal.

In 2018 the number of FTE teaching staff increased by 6,524 (2.3 per cent), almost double the percentage growth in student enrolments between 2017 and 2018 (1.2 per cent). Between 2009 and 2018, the total number of FTE teaching staff grew by 39,387 (15.8 per cent). This was noticeably more than the percentage growth in student enrolments (11.7 per cent) over the same period.

Table 1.11

Number of full-time equivalent (FTE) of teaching staff by school sector, Australia, 2009–2018

School sector	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Government	162,566	163,697	165,272	167,152	167,903	169,199	171,763	176,819	180,973	185,458
Catholic	46,807	47,391	48,393	49,427	50,527	50,936	52,160	53,154	53,839	54,511
Independent	39,823	40,333	41,445	42,407	43,154	43,930	45,277	46,357	47,248	48,614
Total non-government	86,630	87,724	89,838	91,834	93,682	94,866	97,437	99,511	101,087	103,125
All schools	249,196	251,422	255,110	258,986	261,585	264,065	269,200	276,330	282,059	288,583

Note:

Components may not add to totals due to rounding.

Source: ABS, Cat. No. 4221.0*, Schools, Australia,* 2018.

See also National Report on Schooling data portal.

In 2018, FTE teaching staff accounted for 69.5 per cent of the FTE of all school staff. In addition to teaching staff, 126,941 FTE staff were employed in administrative and clerical roles, as teacher aides and assistants, as specialist support staff or in building and maintenance.

Additional information on numbers of teaching and non-teaching school staff is available in the National Report on Schooling data portal.

Student–teacher ratios

The student–teacher ratio is calculated as the number of full-time equivalent (FTE) students per FTE teaching staff. Table 1.12 summarises average student–teacher ratios in Australia in 2018 across the three school sectors.

Table 1.12

Full-time equivalent (FTE) student–teacher ratios, by school sector and school level, Australia, 2018

School sector	Primary	Secondary	All schools
Government	14.8	12.3	13.8
Catholic	16.1	12.3	14.0
Independent	13.9	10.3	11.7
Total non-government	15.1	11.3	12.9
All schools	14.9	11.9	13.5

Source: ABS, Cat. No. 4221.0, *Schools, Australia,* 2018.

See also National Report on Schooling data portal.

For all Australian schools, the average FTE student–teacher ratio in 2018 was 13.5:1, a reduction from 13.6:1 in 2017. This resulted from the growth in the number of FTE teaching staff (relative to the growth in student enrolments) reported above.

The average ratio for government schools (13.8:1) was higher than for non-government schools overall (12.9:1), but lower than the average ratio for Catholic schools (14.0:1).

At the primary level, the average FTE student–teacher ratio was 14.9:1 compared with 11.9:1 at the secondary level. Table 1.13 shows average student–teacher ratios in 2018 by school level and state and territory.

Table 1.13

Full-time equivalent (FTE) student–teacher ratios, by state/territory and school level, Australia, 2018

School level	State/territory								
	NSW	Vic.	Qld	SA	WA	Tas.	NT	ACT	Australia
Primary	15.4	14.3	14.7	15.1	15.5	14.8	13.0	15.3	14.9
Secondary	11.9	11.6	12.1	11.9	12.2	12.2	11.5	12.1	11.9
All schools	13.7	13.0	13.5	13.7	13.9	13.5	12.3	13.7	13.5

Source: ABS, Cat. No. 4221.0*, Schools, Australia,* 2018.

See also National Report on Schooling data portal.

Student–teacher ratios are consistently lower for secondary education than for primary education in all school sectors and across all states and territories.

This reflects the different requirements of different age groups, and of different school subjects, especially in secondary schools. These may include smaller maximum class sizes for practical subjects, and for senior secondary classes.

The specialist and administrative duties undertaken by teaching staff in secondary schools, such as non-teaching principals and deputy principals, subject head teachers, teacher librarians, and careers advisers and counsellors, also contribute to this difference. The extent to which teaching staff perform these roles may vary between states and between school systems. This will affect the number of teachers employed in each school, and therefore the average student–teacher ratio.

Lower student–teacher ratios mean there is a smaller number of students per teacher and, potentially, smaller class sizes.

However, ratios, by themselves, are only approximate indicators of actual class size because they do not take into account the factors mentioned above.

The national average student teacher ratio has consistently decreased this century: from 14.8:1 in 2001, to 13.9:1 in 2009, and to 13.5:1 in 2018. Time series data (from 2009) on student–teacher ratios by state and territory, school sector and school level are available in the National Report on Schooling data portal.

1.4 School structures

Differences between Australian states and territories in school structures and in age requirements for student enrolment have been substantially reduced in recent years, including by decisions in Queensland and Western Australia to move Year 7 from a primary school year to a secondary school year from 2015.

In 2018, primary education consisted of a Foundation year followed by Years 1–6 in all states and territories except South Australia. Secondary education consisted of Years 7–12. In South Australia, primary education consisted of a Foundation year followed by Years 1–7, and secondary education consisted of Years 8–12.[16] The Foundation year/first year of full-time schooling has different names in the various jurisdictions.[17]

The age at which schooling becomes compulsory is six years in most states and territories.[18] In Tasmania, it is five years, and in Queensland, six years and six months. In practice, most children start the foundation year of primary school at between four and a half and five and a half years old.

All states and territories require young people to participate in schooling until they complete Year 10 and to participate full time in education, training or employment, or a combination of these activities, until at least the age of 17.[19]

Table 1.14 summarises school structures and requirements for school enrolment by state and territory.

[16] In 2018, the South Australian Government announced that Year 7 will be moved from a primary school year to a secondary school (from 2022 for government schools).

[17] The names of the Foundation year/first year of full-time schooling used in each jurisdiction are listed in table 1.14. The Australian Curriculum uses the name 'Foundation' for this year of schooling.

[18] New South Wales, Victorian, South Australian, Northern Territory and Australian Capital Territory students must attend school from the age of six. In Western Australia, children must start school from the beginning of the year if they are to reach the age of five years and six months during the year.

[19] Until 2010, the minimum school leaving age in most jurisdictions was 15 or 16. In 2010, the National Youth Participation Requirement, agreed by the Council of Australian Governments (COAG), came into effect across all states and territories, effectively lengthening the period of compulsory education. From 2014, the age requirement in Western Australia was lifted to the end of the year in which a student turns 17 years 6 months of age, they achieve the requirements for secondary graduation, or until they turn 18 years of age, whichever happens first.

Table 1.14

Primary and secondary school structures, minimum school starting age, compulsory school starting age, and minimum school leaving age, by state and territory, Australia, 2018

State/territory	Foundation (first year of full-time school)	Primary schooling	Secondary schooling	Minimum school starting age (Foundation)[(a)]	Compulsory school starting age	Minimum school leaving age[(b)]
New South Wales	Kindergarten	Kindergarten Years 1–6	Years 7–12	4 turning 5 by 31 July	6 years	17 years
Victoria	Preparatory	Preparatory Years 1–6	Years 7–12	4 turning 5 by 30 April	6 years	17 years
Queensland	Preparatory	Preparatory Years 1–6	Years 7–12	4 turning 5 by 30 June	6 years 6 months	17 years
South Australia	Reception	Reception Years 1–7	Years 8–12	4 turning 5 by 1 May	6 years	17 years
Western Australia	Pre-primary	Pre-primary Years 1–6	Years 7–12	4 turning 5 by 30 June	5 years 6 months	17 years 6 months – 18 years[(c)]
Tasmania	Preparatory	Preparatory Years 1–6	Years 7–12	5 by 1 January	5 years	17 years
Northern Territory	Transition	Transition Years 1–6	Years 7–12	4 turning 5 by 30 June	6 years	17 years
Australian Capital Territory	Kindergarten	Kindergarten Years 1–6	Years 7–12	4 turning 5 by 30 April	6 years	17 years

Notes:

(a) State and territory minimum ages for the commencement of the Foundation year of schooling are as at January of the year of commencement.

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

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

Sources: ABS, Cat. No. 4221.0, *Schools Australia*, 2018; state and territory education authorities.

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

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

Students who are geographically isolated, or who are otherwise unable to attend a local school may study through distance education schools or centres. Boarding facilities are available at some schools, mainly in the non-government sectors.[20]

Each state and territory also has an early childhood education sector that is separate from primary and secondary schooling[21], although early childhood centres are often attached to, or accommodated in, primary schools. Statistical data on early childhood education are excluded from this report.

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

[20] Students of compulsory school age may also be home-schooled if they have met the criteria set down by the relevant state or territory education authority. Students undertaking home schooling are only included in the National Schools Statistics Collection (NSSC) if they are also formally enrolled and active in a course of study at school (including through distance education). No part of a student's home schooling is included in the NSSC or in this report.

[21] In some jurisdictions, part-time programs that precede the Foundation year and are conducted in primary schools (for example, Kindergarten in Western Australia) are considered to be a part of schooling. However, these programs are outside the scope of the National Schools Statistics Collection (NSSC); therefore, data on them are not included in this report. Statistical data on early childhood education are available in ABS, *Preschool Education, Australia,* 2018 (cat. no. 4240.0).

1.5 School funding

Schools are funded through a combination of state/territory government funding, Australian Government funding, fees and charges and other parental/private contributions.

The bulk of funding for government schools is provided by the state or territory government that owns and administers the school, with contributions from the Australian Government. A smaller contribution comes from fees, charges and other private sources.

The majority of funding for non-government schools is sourced from fees, charges and other private sources and from Australian Government funding, with smaller contributions from state and territory governments.

Part 1.5 focuses on reporting public funding for school education. There is no single collection of school funding data. Because of differences between the several collections, not all data reported in this part are directly comparable. (Table 1.28 at the end of part 1.5 outlines the key differences between the data collections.)

Parts 1.5.1–1.5.5 provide an outline of government (state/territory and Australian government) funding arrangements for both government and non-government schools.

Part 1.5.6 provides high-level data on recurrent funding information for the 2017 calendar year published for individual schools on the *My School* website. This includes funding from both public and private sources. These data were released at the same time (April 2019) as *My School* non-finance data for the 2018 school year. Due to reporting timeframes, *My School* calendar year finance data will always lag by one year relative to most *My School* non-finance data.

In line with state and territory government budgets, government school funding is historically reported on a financial year basis. The financial year reported is the period of 1 July 2017 – 30 June 2018.

Non-government school funding is reported on a calendar year basis and reflects funding and expenditure for the 2017 calendar year. These data are recalculated for reporting in the Report on Government Services (ROGS) for the 2017–18 financial year[22] and are quoted in parts 1.5.1 and 1.5.4.

1.5.1 Overview of government recurrent funding for school education

In 2017–18 total government recurrent funding of $61.5 billion was provided for school education:

- $43.0 billion (70.0 per cent) was provided through state and territory budgets
- $18.5 billion (30.0 per cent) was provided through the Australian Government budget.

Of total recurrent funding,

- the government school sector received 75.8 per cent

[22] The cost per full-time equivalent student for the financial year is derived using the average of the full-time equivalent student numbers for the 2017 and 2018 calendar years.

- the non-government sector received 24.2 per cent.

Total recurrent school education funding was:

- $18,387 per student for government schools
- $11,193 per student for non-government schools.

This information is outlined in further detail in table 1.15 and figure 1.4 below. Table 1.15 provides further details on the recurrent expenditure by governments[23] on school education.

Table 1.15

Recurrent funding for school education, Australia, 2017–18

	Government		Non-government		Total	
	($ billion)	$ per FTE student	($ billion)	$ per FTE student	($ billion)	$ per FTE student
State and territory governments	39.421	15,551	3.609	2,714	43.029	11,135
Australian Government	7.191	2,837	11.272	8,479	18.463	4,778
Total Australian/state/territory government funding	46.612	18,387	14.880	11,193	61.492	15,912
Average FTE students (no.)	2,535,001		1,329,401		3,864,402	

Notes:

Average FTE students is the number of full-time equivalent (FTE) students, averaged over the 2017 and 2018 calendar years. See Part 4: Glossary for definition of FTE.

Components may not add to totals due to rounding.

Sources: Education Council, National Schools Statistics Collection (Finance), 2018; Steering Committee for the Review of Government Service Provision (SCRGSP), *Report on Government Services 2020*, Productivity Commission; ABS, Cat. No. 4221.0 *Schools, Australia,* 2018.

See also National Report on Schooling data portal.

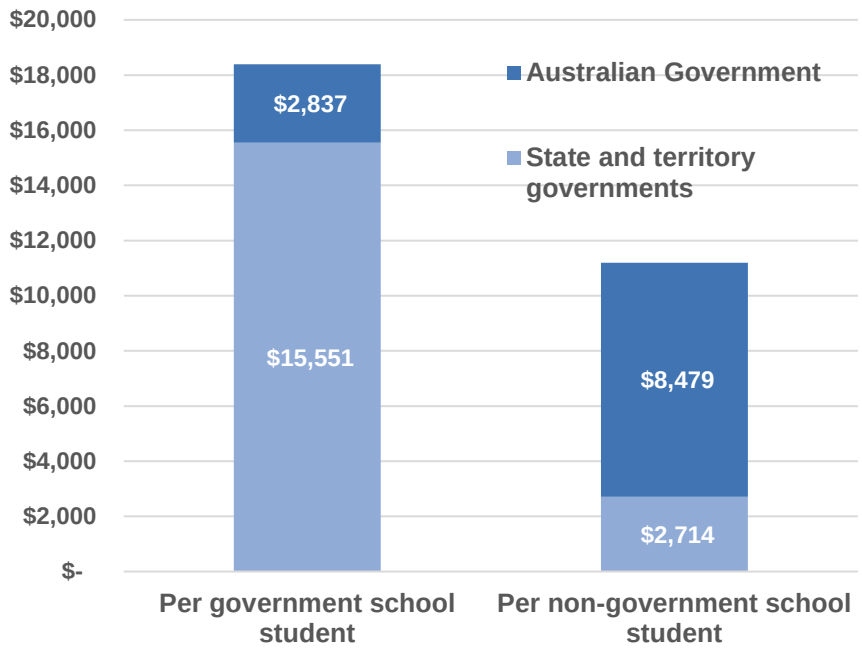
Figure 1.4 shows the relative contribution of state and territory governments and the Australian Government funding to the government and non-government school sectors, on a per student basis.

- Total government recurrent funding per government school student was $18,387 in 2017–18.
- This was $11,193 for non-government school students.

[23] Depreciation and user cost of capital expenses relating to government schools have been attributed to states/territories, based on their ownership of the underlying assets. However, a portion of these assets has been acquired through Australian Government capital contributions, with states and territories responsible for maintenance costs.

Figure 1.4

Government recurrent funding for school education, per student, Australia, 2017–18 ($)



Note:

Student numbers are 2017–18 average full-time equivalent (FTE) school student populations. As such, they differ from the number of individual (full-time plus part-time) students for 2018 reported in part 1.2.

Sources: Education Council, National Schools Statistics Collection (Finance), 2018; Steering Committee for the Review of Government Service Provision (SCRGSP), *Report on Government Services 2020*, Productivity Commission; ABS, Cat. No. 4221.0 *Schools, Australia*, 2018.

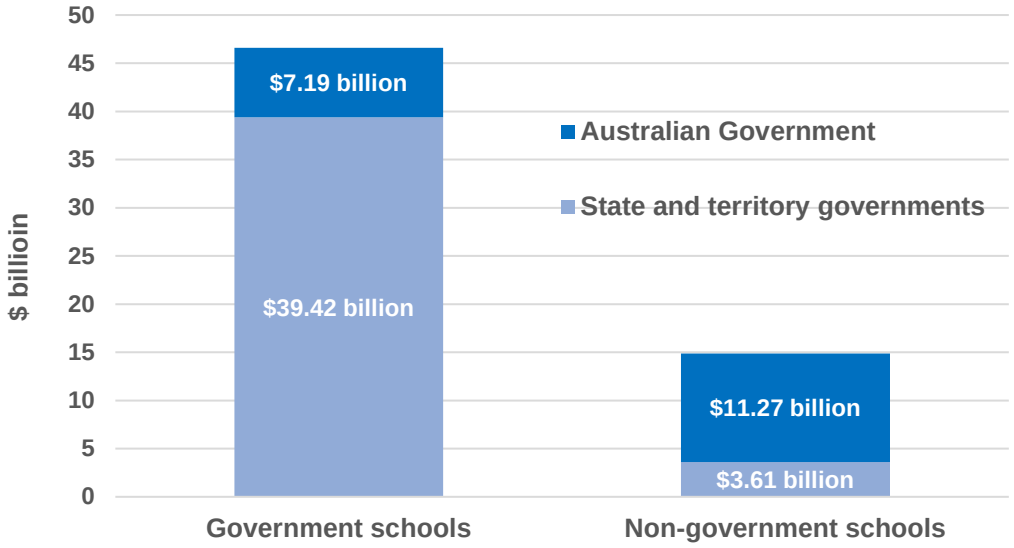
See also the National Report on Schooling data portal.

Figure 1.5 below reports total recurrent expenditure on government and non-government schools from all government sources in 2017–18.

- Total government recurrent funding for government schools was $46.6 billion.
- Total government recurrent funding for non-government schools was $14.9 billion.

Figure 1.5

Total government recurrent funding for school education, Australia, 2017–18 ($ billion)



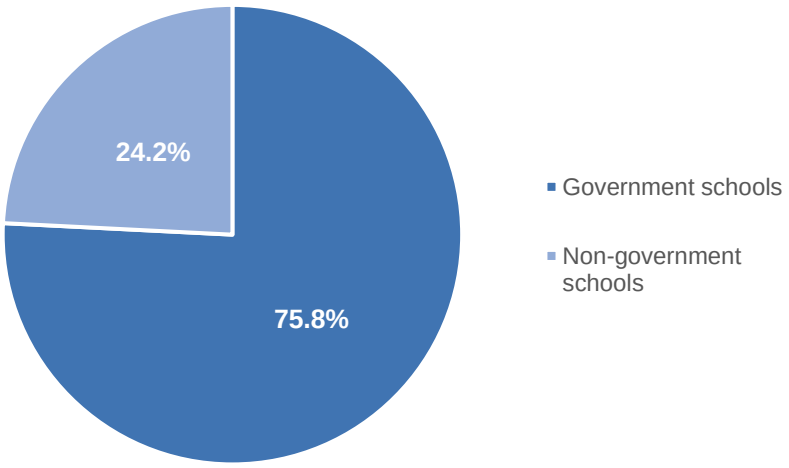
Sources: Education Council, National Schools Statistics Collection (Finance), 2018; Steering Committee for the Review of Government Service Provision (SCRGSP), *Report on Government Services 2020*, Productivity Commission; ABS, Cat. No. 4221.0 *Schools, Australia*, 2018.

See also the National Report on Schooling data portal.

Figure 1.6 below shows the relative shares of total recurrent funding for each school sector. Non-government schools received 24.2 per cent and government schools 75.8 per cent in 2017–18. These proportions are similar to those for 2016–17.

Figure 1.6

Share of recurrent government funding for school education, Australia, 2017–18



Sources: Education Council, National Schools Statistics Collection (Finance), 2018; Steering Committee for the Review of Government Service Provision (SCRGSP), *Report on Government Services 2020*, Productivity Commission; ABS, Cat. No. 4221.0 *Schools, Australia*, 2018.

See also the National Report on Schooling data portal.

1.5.2 Inter-governmental funding arrangements for school education

The power for provision and regulation of education rests with the states and territories. States and territory governments fund the bulk of government school costs for their jurisdictions under state and territory legislation.

States and territories also provide funding for non-government schools in accordance with their respective legislative requirements.

During 2018, the majority of states and territories were party to individual agreements with the Australian Government where the parties agreed to provide a specific share of funding required by government and non-government schools in their jurisdiction according to need, as measured by the Schooling Resource Standard (SRS).

The *Australian Education Act 2013* outlines the Australian Government funding arrangements for government and non-government schools. This includes the application of the SRS for determining funding for schools. The SRS of a school is made up of a base amount for every student along with up to six loadings to provide extra funding for disadvantaged students and schools. The amount of funding received by a school will change from year to year depending on the number of students enrolled at the school and the number of students at the school who attract additional loading funding.

The six loadings which attract funding in addition to the base amount are:

- the number of students with disability at the school
- the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students at the school
- the proportion of students from low socio-educational advantage backgrounds. This is based on student background data on parental education collected by ACARA
- the number of students with low English proficiency
- the location of the school
- the size of the school.

The base amount for a non-government school is discounted by the capacity of the school's community to contribute financially to the school. This discount only applies to non-government schools and is calculated on a sliding scale based on the school's socio-economic status (SES) score. The SES score of a non-government school is based on the average SES score of each area in which the students at the school reside.

From 2018, funding for students with disability is based on the Nationally Consistent Collection of Data on School Students with Disability. Funding is based on the level of adjustment (supplementary, substantial or extensive) that students with disability are provided with in the classroom to enable them to participate in education on the same basis as other students. Further information about the NCCD is available through the National Report on Schooling in Australia data portal.

In 2018 the National Schools Resourcing Board published its review of the SES score methodology. This reviewed the methodology for determining the capacity of non-government school communities to contribute to the operational costs of their school.

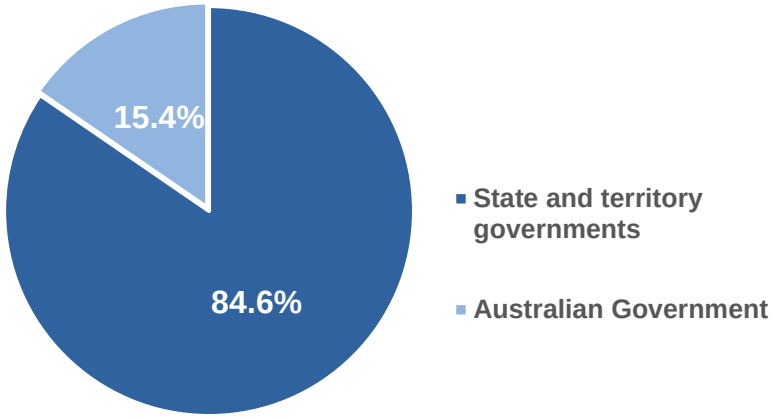
From 2019, bilateral funding agreements between states and territories and the Australian Government under the National School Reform Agreement will come into operation.

1.5.3 Government funding for government schools

State and territory governments are the major funders of government schools: in 2017–18 they contributed 84.6 per cent ($39.4 billion) of total recurrent funding, with the Australian Government contributing the remaining 15.4 per cent ($7.2 billion). The relative proportions are shown below in figure 1.7.

Figure 1.7

Total government recurrent expenditure, government schools, Australia, 2017–18 (per cent)



Sources: Education Council, National Schools Statistics Collection (NSSC) (Finance), 2018; ABS, Cat. No. 4221.0, *Schools, Australia*, 2018.

Government school recurrent expenditure – in school and out of school

Finance data for the National Schools Statistics Collection (NSSC) – Finance are provided by the various state, territory and federal education departments. It is a financial year, annual collection of total government funded expenditure data (expenditure on salary and non-salary costs) on government schools only.

The collection provides education ministers with consistent data on government expenditure on school education, across government school systems and over time.

Table 1.16 shows a national overview of expenditure levels by states in 2017–18 in key operational areas such as the relative levels of salary and non-salary costs.

- In-school expenditure includes teaching, learning, school administration; and library functions within schools.

- Excluding user cost of capital[24], teacher salaries expenditure accounts for 61.2 per cent of in-school expenditure.
- Excluding user cost of capital, in-school non-teacher salaries expenditure accounts for 15.5 per cent of in-school expenditure.
- Excluding user cost of capital, in-school non-salary costs account for 23.2 per cent of in-school expenditure. These expenditures include school materials, maintenance, cleaning and student transport costs.
- Out-of-school expenditure for government systems includes state office, regional and local functions supporting schools.
- Excluding user cost of capital, expenditure on out-of-school support functions represents approximately 4.8 per cent of total government funding on state and territory government schools. By far the major component of funding (not including user cost of capital), 95.2 per cent, goes to fund schools directly.

Table 1.16 also shows funding going to in-school and out-of-school activities for the past five years. Salaries are by far the largest component of expenditure on schools, with teacher salaries comprising the majority of this expenditure.

- Teaching salary costs represented 76.9 per cent of total salary costs in 2017–18 and 49.1 per cent of total expenditure inclusive of user cost of capital.
- Teaching staff salaries changed marginally from 77.4 per cent of total salary costs in 2016–17 to 76.9 per cent of total salary costs in 2017–18 inclusive of user cost of capital.
- Non-teaching staff salaries changed marginally from 22.6 per cent of total salary costs in 2016–17 to 23.1 per cent of total salary costs in 2017–18.
- Non-salary costs changed marginally from 21.3 per cent of total government sector expenditure in 2016–17 to 20.4 per cent in 2017–18.

[24] The user cost of capital refers to the notional cost of funds tied up in capital (such as government school land and buildings). It represents the opportunity cost of using these funds to provide education services, rather than for other purposes, or for retiring debt. The value of the user cost of capital is based on 8.0 per cent of the written down value of capital assets.

Table 1.16

Operating expenditure by government education systems, Australia, from 2013–14 to 2017–18 financial years (accrual basis) (nominal $'000)

Area of expenditure	2013–14	2014–15	2015–16	2016–17	2017–18
In-school expenditure					
Salaries (teaching)	19,255,424	19,952,536	21,161,119	21,775,001	22,870,538
Salaries (non-teaching)	4,316,830	4,666,906	4,974,562	5,346,145	5,800,908
Redundancies	11,240	20,722	12,167	1,567	12,276
Non-salary costs	7,547,257	7,982,909	8,408,634	8,596,391	8,685,118
User cost of capital	5,629,094	5,922,211	6,101,612	6,205,593	7,301,342
Sub-total incl. user cost of capital	36,759,845	38,545,284	40,658,094	41,924,697	44,670,182
Out-of-school expenditure					
Salaries (teaching)	0	0	0	0	0
Salaries (non-teaching)	982,240	957,663	970,581	1,016,970	1,050,087
Redundancies	31,650	13,184	27,586	18,096	24,146
Non-salary costs	664,298	669,146	677,086	713,232	812,816
User cost of capital	32,120	46,264	46,511	58,588	54,700
Sub-total incl. user cost of capital	1,710,308	1,686,257	1,721,764	1,806,886	1,941,749
TOTAL	38,470,153	40,231,541	42,379,858	43,731,583	46,611,931

Notes:

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

Components may not add to totals due to rounding.

Sources: Education Council, National Schools Statistics Collection (NSSC) (Finance), 2018; *National Report on Schooling in Australia* (previous years).

See also National Report on Schooling data portal.

Table 1.17 below shows expenditure on government education systems, by states and territories, in 2017–18.

Table 1.17

Expenditure by government education systems, by level of education and area of expenditure by state and territory, 2017–18 ($'000)

	NSW	Vic.	Qld	SA	WA	Tas.	NT	ACT	Australia
In-school primary education									
Total excl. user cost of capital	6,585,366	4,440,052	4,492,049	1,602,418	2,512,959	511,716	373,258	392,402	20,910,220
Total incl. user cost of capital	8,008,950	5,577,394	5,353,404	1,813,549	2,986,718	558,940	431,310	465,734	25,195,999
In-school secondary education									
Total excl. user cost of capital	5,663,910	3,556,333	3,458,739	968,003	1,835,156	405,869	237,367	333,243	16,458,620
Total incl. user cost of capital	6,702,543	4,363,435	4,009,442	1,078,944	2,190,280	456,130	270,503	402,906	19,474,183
Out of school									
Total excl. user cost of capital	345,284	417,590	523,168	231,931	208,067	39,668	86,638	34,703	1,887,049
Total incl. user cost of capital	356,849	430,706	526,036	237,912	226,622	40,374	86,638	36,612	1,941,749
TOTAL									
Total excl. user cost of capital	12,594,560	8,413,975	8,473,956	2,802,352	4,556,182	957,253	697,263	760,348	39,255,889
Total incl. user cost of capital	15,068,342	10,371,535	9,888,882	3,130,405	5,403,620	1,055,444	788,451	905,252	46,611,931

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

Components may not add to totals due to rounding.

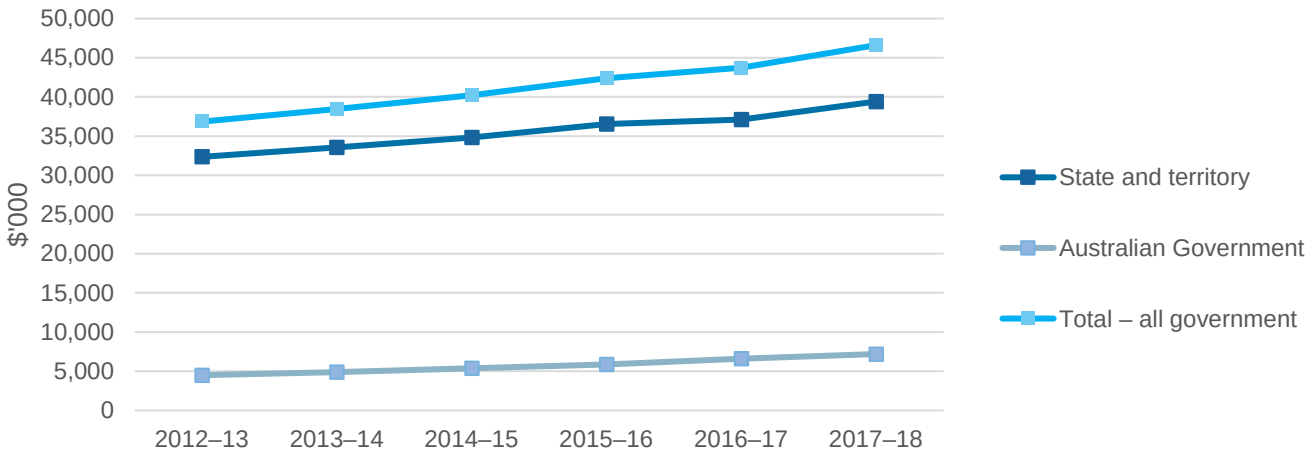
Sources: Education Council, National Schools Statistics Collection (NSSC) (Finance), 2018; *National Report on Schooling in Australia* (previous years).

See also National Report on Schooling data portal.

The annual recurrent expenditure by government education systems for the last six financial years is provided in figure 1.8. This shows government school recurrent expenditure has increased from $36.9 billion in 2012–13 to $46.6 billion in 2017–18 – an increase of 26.5 per cent.

Figure 1.8

Australian, state and territory government recurrent expenditure (nominal $'000), government schools, from 2012–13 to 2017–18



Level of government	2012–13	2013–14	2014–15	2015–16	2016–17	2017–18
State and territory	32,357,724	33,570,521	34,843,944	36,527,775	37,134,420	39,420,779
Australian Government	4,495,078	4,899,631	5,387,597	5,852,083	6,597,163	7,191,152
Total – all government	36,852,802	38,470,152	40,231,541	42,379,858	43,731,583	46,611,931

Sources: Education Council, National Schools Statistics Collection (Finance), 2018; Steering Committee for the Review of Government Service Provision (SCRGSP), *Report on Government Services 2020,* Productivity Commission.

See also National Report on Schooling data portal.

Primary and secondary school recurrent per capita expenditure

The per capita expenditure information provided in table 1.18 gives a nationally consistent basis for comparison across states of the levels of expenditure in government schools in 2017–18.

Nominal per capita recurrent expenditure in government schools has steadily increased over the past decade, apart from a slight dip from 2011–12 to 2012–13 for secondary students.

Table 1.18 shows that nationally in 2017–18, this expenditure reached $16,847 for primary students and $20,881 for secondary students.

Table 1.18

Recurrent per capita expenditure on government schools, by school level, Australia, from 2010–11 to 2017–18 financial years (accrual basis) (nominal $)

Financial year	Primary	Secondary	Total
2010–11	13,895	16,720	15,002
2011–12	14,515	17,746	15,768
2012–13	14,520	17,608	15,703
2013–14	14,860	18,313	16,167
2014–15	15,243	18,949	16,662
2015–16	15,964	19,350	17,275
2016–17	16,117	19,800	17,531
2017–18	16,847	20,881	18,387

Note:

Amounts include state/territory and Australian Government contributions.

Sources: Education Council, National Schools Statistics Collection (Finance), 2018; *National Report on Schooling in Australia* (previous years).

See also National Report on Schooling data portal.

Table 1.18 also shows a growth of 4.9 per cent in total per capita funding over 2016–17 to 2017–18 from $17,531 to $18,387.

Nationally, recurrent per capita expenditure for government primary schools increased by 4.5 per cent from 2016–17 to 2017–18, while funding over the same period increased by 5.5 per cent for government secondary schools.

Secondary schools have a higher rate of per capita expenditure than primary schools, mainly because of the greater complexity and range of the curriculum and of services provided, and smaller class sizes, especially in the last two years of schooling.

Table 1.19 below shows the per capita expenditure by state and territories, by school level, for the 2017–18 financial year.

Table 1.19

Per capita expenditure (per FTE student) on government schools, by school level, by state and territory, 2017–18 financial year ($)

State/territory	Primary	Secondary	All students
New South Wales	16,796	22,454	18,965
Victoria	15,546	19,151	16,939
Queensland	16,879	19,970	18,071
South Australia	17,535	19,022	18,059
Western Australia	17,952	21,837	19,406
Tasmania	17,353	20,494	18,632
Northern Territory	25,074	28,550	26,296
Australian Capital Territory	19,241	24,337	21,299
Australia	**16,847**	**20,881**	**18,387**

Note:

Amounts include state/territory and Australian Government contributions.

Source: Education Council, National Schools Statistics Collection (Finance), 2018.

See also National Report on Schooling data portal.

1.5.4 Government funding for non-government schools

Per capita income

Non-government schools derive their income from Australian Government and state/territory government grants, from school fees and charges; and from fundraising, including donations. The income shown in table 1.20 funds both recurrent and capital applications.

For Catholic schools, 71.5 per cent of total income is from government sources; for independent schools 44.8 per cent of their per capita income is from government sources.

Table 1.20

Non-government school per capita income, by source, Australia, 2018 calendar year

	Catholic schools		Independent schools	
	Per capita income ($)	Per capita income (%)	Per capita income ($)	Per capita income (%)
Australian government grants	9,406	55.0	7,877	33.8
State/territory grants	2,838	16.6	2,556	11.0
Total government grants	**12,245**	**71.5**	**10,433**	**44.8**
Private income	4,870	28.5	12,845	55.2
TOTAL	**17,115**	**100.0**	**23,278**	**100.0**

Notes:
Excludes amounts related to boarding facilities and direct payments by the Australian Government to students and/or parents.
Components may not add to totals due to rounding.

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

See also National Report on Schooling data portal.

Per capita expenditure by non-government schools

Table 1.21 summarises per capita expenditure by non-government schools[25] according to level of schooling.

Table 1.21

Non-government school per capita expenditure, by school sector and school type, Australia, 2018 calendar year

School sector and type	Per capita expenditure ($)
Catholic	
Primary	13,938
Secondary	19,503
Combined	21,440
Independent	
Primary	18,664
Secondary	26,440
Combined	23,213

Notes:

Excludes amounts related to boarding facilities and direct payments by the Australian Government to students and/or parents.
Includes debt-servicing of loans for capital and operating purposes.
Where applicable, expenditure of system offices is allocated across the schools in proportion to enrolments.
Where figures have been rounded, discrepancies may occur between the sums of component items and totals.

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

See also National Report on Schooling data portal.

Government expenditure on non-government schools

As well as providing recurrent grants to government schools, all states and territories contribute to funding for non-government schools. State/territory governments used a variety of mechanisms for allocating funding to non-government schools in 2018.

Table 1.22 (below) shows total Australian, state and territory recurrent expenditure on non-government schools in 2017–18.

Total recurrent expenditure on non-government school education by the Australian Government, and state and territory governments in 2017–18 was approximately $14.9 billion. Australian Government expenditure

[25] The per capita figures reflect capital expenditure, and recurrent expenditure, which is a mixture of cash- and accrual-based expenditure, including debt servicing of loans for capital and operating purposes.

was $11.3 billion, or 75.7 per cent of this total. State and territory recurrent expenditure was $3.6 billion or 24.3 per cent of the total.

Table 1.22

Australian, state and territory government recurrent expenditure, non-government schools ($'000) 2017–18

	Expenditure
Australian Government specific purpose payments (excluding capital grants)	11,271,530
State and territory government recurrent expenditure	3,608,504
TOTAL	**14,880,033**

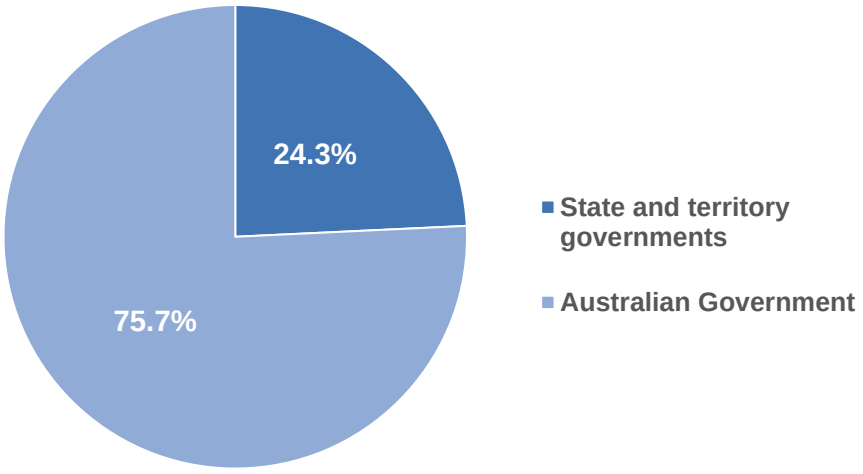
Source: Steering Committee for the Review of Government Service Provision (SCRGSP), *Report on Government Services 2020,* Productivity Commission

See also National Report on Schooling data portal.

This is depicted in figure 1.9.

Figure 1.9

Total government recurrent expenditure, non-government schools, Australia, 2017–18 (per cent)



Source: Steering Committee for the Review of Government Service Provision (SCRGSP), *Report on Government Services 2020*, Productivity Commission.

See also National Report on Schooling data portal.

Total recurrent expenditure on non-government school education by the Australian Government, and state and territory governments in 2017–18 was approximately $11,193 per student. This was made up of Australian Government expenditure of $8,479 per FTE student and state and territory government expenditure of $2,714 per FTE student.

1.5.5 Capital expenditure

Government schools

State and territory governments provide the majority of funding for capital expenditure in government schools. Since 2009, states and territories may also use Australian Government recurrent funding for capital purposes in government schools. Therefore, allocation of Australian Government funding to capital purposes differs according to policy and practices in respective states and territories.

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

As shown in table 1.23, capital expenditure in government schools was $3.3 billion in the 2017–18 financial year. This table combines funding provided from the Australian Government, and state and territory sourced funding.

Table 1.23

Capital expenditure by state and territory governments in government schools, Australia, from 2011–12 to 2017–18 financial years (accrual basis) ($'000)

Financial year	NSW	Vic.	Qld	SA	WA	Tas.	NT	ACT	Australia
2011–12	584,824	720,258	434,002	144,570	668,824	36,746	54,187	96,735	2,740,147
2012–13	426,911	444,307	345,810	106,720	465,354	8,356	19,416	74,055	1,890,928
2013–14	399,794	387,953	428,176	134,026	520,537	20,071	33,741	61,418	1,985,716
2014–15	345,547	300,479	313,414	84,209	404,317	15,530	20,465	69,922	1,553,883
2015–16	404,588	288,033	313,630	39,118	287,789	34,957	75,989	53,292	1,497,396
2016–17	492,162	586,901	457,810	48,749	322,696	34,957	72,476	28,953	2,044,704
2017–18	861,740	1,106,300	566,134	180,927	358,825	49,220	44,167	96,382	3,263,695

Notes:

Amounts include components of Australian Government funding used for capital purposes. Components may not add to totals due to rounding.

The level of capital expenditure rose to unusually high levels from 2009 to 2012 due mainly to the injection of significant Australian Government funding under the former Building the Education Revolution (BER) program and other capital expenditure associated with national partnerships. This has reverted to reflect longer term average capital expenditure more closely, following the completion of projects funded through these programs.

Sources: Education Council, National Schools Statistics Collection (Finance), 2018; National Report on Schooling in Australia, past years. See also National Report on Schooling data portal.

Non-government schools

Commonwealth funding for non-government school capital expenditure is provided by the Australian Government through the Capital Grants Program (CGP) for non-government schools.

State and territory governments also contribute to non-government school capital projects in their jurisdictions.

See Part 1.5.6 *My School* financial information below for further information. Note that the data provided below are not comparable to the data provided above and are presented for the 2017 calendar year.

1.5.6 *My School* financial information

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

Part 1.5.6 provides high-level profiles of recurrent funding information for the 2017 calendar year published for individual schools on the *My School* website. This includes funding from both public and private sources. These data were released at the same time (April 2019) as *My School* non-finance data for the 2018 school year. Due to reporting timeframes, *My School* calendar year finance data will always lag by one year relative to most *My School* non-finance data.

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

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

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

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

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

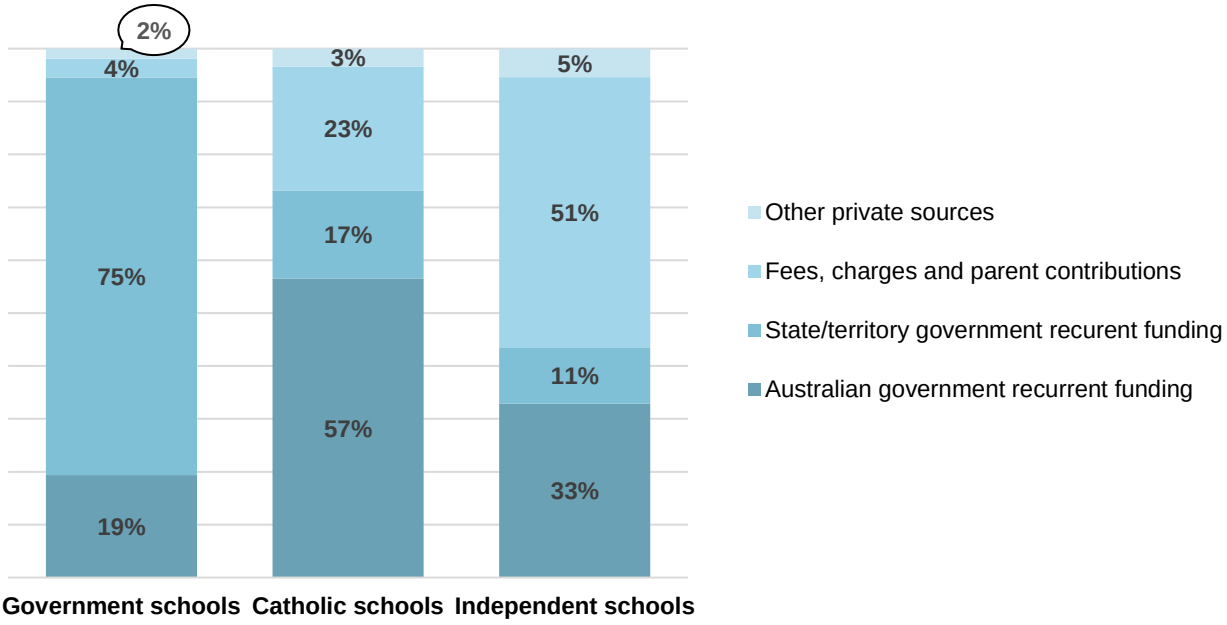
Recurrent income

For 2017, the Australian Government funding accounted for 19 per cent of the total gross income for government schools with state and territory governments providing the majority of funds, 75 per cent, being funded by state and territory governments.

For non-government schools, the Australian Government contributed 57 per cent of Catholic sector gross income and 33 per cent of independent sector gross income. Income from fees, charges and parent contributions contributed 51 per cent of independent sector income and 23 per cent of Catholic sector income. See also figure 1.10 below.

Figure 1.10

Gross income by funding source, Australia, 2017 (per cent)



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

See also National Report on Schooling data portal.

Table 1.24 below shows the movements in net recurrent income for all school between 2016 and 2017. Total net recurrent income grew from $55.7 billion to $58.8 billion, or 5.5 per cent.

Table 1.24

Movements in recurrent income between 2016 and 2017

Source of income	2016 ($ billion)	2017 ($ billion)	Change 2016–17 (%)
Australian Government	16.272	17.822	9.5
State/territory government	29.457	30.391	3.2
Fees, charges and parental contributions	10.303	10.812	5.0
Other private sources	1.624	1.780	9.9
Total gross income	57.656	60.805	5.5
Deductions (from recurrent to capital services)	1.967	2.046	4.1
Total net recurrent income	**55.689**	**58.759**	5.5

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

See also National Report on Schooling data portal.

Net recurrent income per student (NRIPS)

Net recurrent income per student represents income per student from all sources, public and private minus deductions per student due to debt and capital expenditure.

Between 2016 and 2017, the growth in net recurrent income per student (NRIPS) was 4.0 per cent. This was greater than the growth in the ABS Wage Index (2.4 per cent).[26] This is a useful comparison, as a major proportion of school expenditure is on staff salaries

The compound annual growth rate of NRIPS was 5.2 per cent over the period from 2009 to 2017. The corresponding compound annual growth rate[27] of the ABS Wage Index was 3.1 per cent.

As the number of students varies across years, showing income per student allows for a more informative comparison, particularly between sectors. Table 1.25 depicts income per student. In 2017, the net recurrent income per student (NRIPS) was $15,209. This was an increase of 4.01 per cent from 2016.

[26] ABS Wage Index (in education and training) ABS cat. No. 6345.0, series ID A2603449J.

[27] The compound annual growth rate is a useful measure of growth over a number of years where growth rates vary over time.

Between 2016 and 2017, the NRIPS increased 3.48 per cent for the government sector (to $ 14,198), increased 4.9 per cent for the Catholic sector (to $14,764), and increased 4.7 per cent for the independent sector (to $19,966). This is shown in table 1.25 below.

Table 1.25

Movements in income per student between 2016 and 2017 ($ per FTE student)

Source of income	2016 ($)	2017 ($)	Change 2016–17 (%)
Australian Government	4,273	4,613	7.97
State/territory government	7,734	7,866	1.71
Fees, charges and parental contributions	2,705	2,798	3.45
Other private sources	426	461	8.09
Total gross Income	15,138	15,738	3.96
Deductions	516	530	2.56
Total NRIPS	14,622	15,209	4.01
NRIPS (government)	13,719	14,198	3.49
NRIPS (Catholic)	14,075	14,764	4.89
NRIPS (independent)	19,062	19,966	4.74

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

See also National Report on Schooling data portal.

Capital expenditure

My School allows for comparable reporting of capital expenditure on all schools. Table 1.26 below shows that total government capital expenditure on all schools was approximately $2.2 billion in 2017.

Table 1.26

Total capital expenditure from government sources, all schools, 2017 ($'000)

	NSW	Vic.	Qld	SA	WA	Tas.	NT	ACT	Australia
Australian Government	40,553	133,983	26,045	8,872	20,720	3,254	9,898	2,635	245,559
State/territory governments	532,961	592,166	360,344	66,758	259,399	50,981	58,839	41,252	1,962,700
Total government	573,514	726,149	386,389	75,630	280,119	54,235	68,737	43,887	2,208,259

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

See also National Report on Schooling data portal.

The *My School* collection also provides for reporting of capital expenditure from government sources on non-government schools. See table 1.27 below.

In 2017, capital expenditure from government sources was

- $148.4 million in Catholic schools
- $103.6 million in independent schools.

Table 1.27

Capital expenditure from government sources, non-government schools, Australia, from 2011 to 2017 (accrual basis) ($'000)

	NSW	Vic.	Qld	SA	WA	Tas.	NT	ACT	Australia
2011									
Catholic	311,936	116,542	266,298	62,752	95,248	20,274	13,147	21,883	908,081
Independent	162,237	82,116	104,622	32,021	61,002	5,060	10,458	6,552	464,068
2012									
Catholic	69,551	44,704	73,862	14,568	21,237	4,878	2,119	5,204	236,122
Independent	68,420	34,748	56,212	8,444	22,483	1,625	2,705	3,751	198,388
2013									
Catholic	56,058	50,332	89,125	10,314	23,127	4,684	4,957	2,007	240,605
Independent	53,383	28,315	66,563	8,708	13,247	2,708	1,483	3,928	178,335
2014									
Catholic	32,182	30,528	148,854	7,093	11,513	3,913	1,815	2,758	238,656
Independent	33,155	16,610	70,238	6,724	3,416	976	1,113	1,164	133,397
2015									
Catholic	39,276	29,404	75,923	5,520	9,330	2,638	1,597	1,672	165,360
Independent	26,897	14,269	42,971	5,239	7,346	317	1,606	1,547	100,192
2016									
Catholic	29,450	24,904	36,426	5,689	10,670	2,238	3,767	2,157	115,301
Independent	25,056	18,359	38,620	4,155	11,311	1,286	6,352	1,329	106,469
2017									
Catholic	29,946	32,925	67,110	3,270	7,590	2,809	3,585	1,142	148,377
Independent	24,718	25,337	35,541	6,145	6,989	640	2,806	1,449	103,625

Notes:

The level of capital expenditure rose to unusually high levels from 2009 to 2013, due mainly to the injection of significant Australian Government funding under the former Building the Education Revolution (BER) program and other capital expenditure associated with national partnerships. This has reverted to reflect longer term average capital expenditure more closely, following the completion of projects funded through these programs.

In the *My School* data collection, a number of Catholic non-systemic schools in NSW, SA and WA are currently classified as independent schools. This affects comparisons between school sectors for those states and nationally.

Source: ACARA, *My School.*

See also the National Report in Schooling data portal.

Table 1.28 below outlines features of the key data collections used for reporting school funding in parts1.5.1–1.5.6 above.

Table 1.28

Key features of finance data collections used to report on school funding in this report

National Schools Statistics Collection (Finance)	Non-government schools finance collection	*My School* collection
2017–18 financial year	2018 calendar year	2017 calendar year
Expenditure based (based on payment of expenses) for government schools only	Income and expenditure are reported (income received by schools from government and private sources)	Income based (income provided to schools from government and private sources)
Private funding not reported	Private income reported. Income reported is for both recurrent and capital applications	Private sources of income including fees and donations are reported
Expenditure such as payroll tax, user cost of capital and student transport included in government school reporting	Excludes amounts related to boarding facilities.	Expenditure such as payroll tax, user cost of capital and student transport are not included.
State level collection	School level collection	School level collection
Per student expenditure at primary, secondary or all government schools	Per student expenditure figures reflect capital expenditure and recurrent expenditure (which is a mixture of cash- and accrual-based expenditure) including debt servicing of loans for capital and operating purposes	Net recurrent income per student (NRIPS). NRIPS represents income per student from all sources, public and private minus deductions due to debt and capital expenditure
Government schools only	Non-government schools only. Catholic non-systemic schools are reported as Catholic schools	Some Catholic non-systemic schools in NSW, SA and WA are reported as independent schools in aggregated data

Information on expenditure by state and territory governments on non-government schools is collected separately to the data collections described above and is reported in table 1.22 and figure 1.9.

Part 2: Policies and priorities

Part 2 outlines the national policy context for Australian schooling in 2018 and reports against the commitments to action agreed by Australian education ministers in the Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians.

2.1 National policy context

Within Australia's federal system of government, constitutional responsibility for school education rests mainly with the Australian states and territories.[28] The federal (Australian) government contributes to education policy through national agreements and its financial relations with the states.

The six state and two territory governments and the Australian Government have cooperated to work towards agreed goals and commitments expressed in the Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians.

In Australia, joint decisions on agreed national policy and shared priorities are made through intergovernmental policy councils. For education and training in 2018, these councils were the Council of Australian Governments (COAG), the COAG Education Council, and the COAG Industry and Skills Council.

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

Council of Australian Governments

The Council of Australian Governments (COAG) is the peak intergovernmental forum in Australia. Its members are the Prime Minister, state and territory first ministers and the president of the Australian Local Government Association.

COAG Education Council

The COAG Education Council is the national ministerial council with responsibility for schooling. Membership of the Education Council consists of state, territory, Australian Government and New Zealand ministers with responsibility for the portfolios of school education, higher education and/or early childhood education.

The Education Council's scope of responsibility covers:

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

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

The Council's priority actions include[29]:

1. implementation of priority reform activities for early childhood
2. Australian curriculum and national assessment
3. teacher quality and school leadership
4. Indigenous education
5. school funding
6. reducing regulatory burden.

COAG Industry and Skills Council

The COAG Industry and Skills Council has responsibility for skills development and national training arrangements including vocational education and training (VET).

[29] COAG Education Council 2014 Terms of Reference.

National policy initiatives

National School Reform Agreement

During 2018, a new national agreement for school education was developed and agreed through COAG. The agreement was developed through collaboration between the Australian Government and states and territories, and was informed by the findings and recommendations of the Review to Achieve Educational Excellence in Australian Schools (2018), the Independent Review of Regional, Rural and Remote Education (2018) and the final report of the STEM Partnerships Forum (2018).

The National School Reform Agreement was published (in draft form) in November 2018 and will operate from 2019 to 2023.

In December 2018, the Education Council agreed on a program of work to support the implementation of the eight national policy initiatives specified in the agreement. Each of the initiatives will be jointly developed by all Australian governments with reporting to Council throughout 2019.

Review of the Melbourne Declaration

In December 2018, the Education Council agreed to undertake a review of the Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians.[30]

Ministers agreed that the review consider the scope of the declaration encompassing lifelong education and agreed to hold national and state forums to consult and collaborate with key stakeholder groups.

The review is scheduled for completion in late 2019.

STEM Partnerships Forum

In April 2018, the Education Council received and published the report of the STEM Partnerships Forum, Optimising STEM Industry School Partnerships: Inspiring Australia's Next Generation. The forum, established by Council in 2017, and chaired by Australia's Chief Scientist,[31] brought together leaders from industry and education to facilitate a more strategic approach to develop the engagement and attainment of students in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM).

The forum's report included ten recommendations covering establishing workforce needs, student subject selection and tertiary prerequisites, teacher professional development, best practice models for school industry partnerships, resource development, and recording student achievement through a unique student identifier and a national STEM data 'dashboard'. These recommendations provided input to the development of the National School Reform Agreement.

Review to Achieve Educational Excellence in Australian Schools

This review[32] was commissioned by the Australian Government in 2017 to provide advice on how additional Commonwealth education funding should be used by Australian schools and school systems to improve school performance and student achievement. The completed report, Through Growth to Achievement: Review to Achieve Educational Excellence in Australian Schools was delivered to the Australian Government in March 2018 and presented to the Education Council in May 2018. The report

[30] Education Council Communique, 14 December 2018.

[31] Dr Alan Finkel AO

[32] Chaired by David Gonski AO

identified three priorities and made 23 recommendations over five areas to address them. These have provided input to the new National School Reform Agreement.

Independent Review into Regional, Rural and Remote Education

This review was commissioned by the Australian Government in 2017 to improve the educational outcomes of students living in regional, rural and remote areas. The final report of the Independent Review into Regional, Rural and Remote Education[33] was submitted to the Australian Government in January 2018 and presented to Education Council in April 2018. The report identified four priority areas and made 11 recommendations including on curriculum and assessment, teaching, expanding VET and university opportunities and pathways, information and communication technology ICT, support to move away from home, and building a high level national focus on regional, rural and remote education and training. These recommendations also provided input to the National School Reform Agreement.

National School Resourcing Board

The National School Resourcing Board was established in 2017 to provide greater independent oversight over Commonwealth school funding. In June 2018, the Board provided the final report on its first priority, the Review of the socio-economic status score methodology [in determining the allocation of Australian Government funding to non-government schools] to the Australian Government.

Under new needs-based funding arrangements, the socio-economic status (SES) score of individual non-government schools will be a significant factor in the determination of Australian Government funding to those schools. In its report, the Board made six recommendations including that, from 2020, the capacity of a non-government school to contribute to its costs be determined based on a direct measure of median income of parents and guardians of the students at a school.[34]

In its response to the report, in September 2018, the Australian Government accepted all six recommendations made by the Board and announced that the implementation of the new direct income measure will see the government provide an estimated $3.2 billion in additional funding for the non-government sector during the transition to the new arrangements from 2020 to 2029.

State and territory policy initiatives[35]

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

In 2018, state and territory policy initiatives included:

- In New South Wales, the Education for a Changing World project is examined the potential impact of emerging developments such as artificial intelligence on life and work, and the implications this raises for education. New South Wales is supporting greater innovation with schools to prepare students for a changing world, and successfully piloted the Catalyst Lab Innovation Program to generate new ideas to address specific challenges.

[33] Conducted by Emeritus Professor John Halsey.

[34] This is a change from the existing methodology, which estimates parental income based on area-based data from the Census of Population and Housing.

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

- Over 1,000 Victorian government, Catholic and independent schools agreed to adopt a whole-school approach to Respectful Relationships supported by the resilience, rights and respectful relationships teaching, and learning materials and associated training.

- Queensland released its Inclusive education policy for government schools.

- The South Australian Government announced that Year 7 would move from a primary school year to a secondary school year (from 2022 in government schools). This will make the structure of schooling in South Australia consistent with other jurisdictions.

- The Western Australian Government released a new action plan: Let's take a stand together, to combat school violence in public schools. Also in Western Australia, Catholic schools were supported to ensure student safety, including through the Child Safe Framework.

- The Australian Capital Territory released its Future of Education Strategy, which outlines the plan for education in the ACT for the next decade.

2.2 Educational goals

The Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians[36] sets the directions for Australian schooling for the decade from 2009, as agreed to by all Australian education ministers.

The Melbourne Declaration has two overarching educational goals29F[37] for young Australians:

> Goal 1: Australian schooling promotes equity and excellence
>
> Goal 2: All young Australians become successful learners, confident and creative individuals, and active and informed citizens.

Commitment to action

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

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

Progress in 2018 in addressing the areas for action is reported in the following sections of Part 2.

In December 2018, education ministers agreed to undertake a review of the Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians to be conducted in 2019.[38]

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

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

[38] Education Council Communique, 14 December 2018.

COAG targets

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

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

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

COAG has also agreed to a target of 95 per cent of all Indigenous four-year-olds enrolled in early childhood education by 2025.[39]

Closing the Gap

COAG targets for education are part of a broader COAG agenda for Closing the Gap between outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders and other Australians.

In December 2018, COAG issued a new draft framework for Closing the Gap to be finalised through a partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

A joint council on Closing the Gap will include Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representatives, alongside ministerial representatives.

[39] Reporting on this early childhood education target is outside the scope of this report.

2.3 Developing stronger partnerships

Following the commitment to develop stronger partnerships made in the Melbourne Declaration, the Australian Government, and state and territory governments entered into a set of formal national partnership agreements in education through COAG.

National partnership agreements for: improving teacher quality; education in low socio-economic status schools; literacy and numeracy; school construction; information and communication technology (ICT) in secondary schools; and youth attainment and transitions were implemented from 2009 to 2013.

Information on these national partnerships is included in previous editions of this report.[40]

Closing the Gap

In 2018, a partnership agreement between a coalition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander-controlled peak organisations and all Australian governments (through COAG) was developed to finalise the revised draft framework for the Closing the Gap agenda, including for education, into the future. This partnership acknowledges that direct engagement and negotiation is the preferred pathway to productive and effective outcomes. The new Joint Council on Closing the Gap includes Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representatives, alongside ministerial representation.

STEM partnerships forum

The STEM Partnerships Forum, established under the National STEM School Education Strategy 2016–2026, reported to Education Council in April 2018. The final report of the forum, Optimising STEM Industry School Partnerships: Inspiring Australia's Next Generation emphasised the need for ongoing partnerships between education and industry to improve Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) education. In particular, the report recommended collaboration with industry: to understand workforce development needs; to develop professional learning for teachers, including industry accreditation for school VET teachers; and to create a narrative for students and parents on how STEM skills and knowledge can solve real world problems. The report also recommended that Education Council consider and promote models of best practice to bring together schools and industry.[41]

Pathways in Technology

The Australian Government has committed $5.1 million to pilot the Pathways in Technology (P–TECH) model of education–industry collaboration at a number of sites across the country as part of the broader strategy to improve Australia's STEM capability.

P–TECH involves the establishment of long-term partnerships between industry, schools and tertiary education providers that enable businesses to play an active role in supporting young people to develop the skills they need for the jobs of the future. Local education and industry partners involved in the pilot are working together to design and deliver P–TECH learning programs suited to local circumstances.

[40] Ongoing national partnerships in the early childhood education sector, are reported in Part 2.5: Strengthening early childhood.

[41] Education Council, Optimising STEM Industry School Partnerships: Inspiring Australia's Next Generation, pp. 13–17

State and territory initiatives

Under the Melbourne Declaration commitment to stronger partnerships, states and territories have worked to establish and grow local and state-wide partnerships of schools with community groups, business, higher education, government agencies and others.

In line with the national STEM strategy, STEM initiatives were launched or implemented in several jurisdictions in 2018:

- New South Wales launched the STEM Industry School Partnerships program, which develops school connections with industry, regional development organisations, universities and communities. The $0.6 million pilot was supported by Regional Development Australia and several major international companies.
- As part of the Victorian Government's $128 million STEM commitment to build Tech Schools across Victoria, a further eight schools were opened in 2018 in addition to the two schools opened in 2017. Each Tech School is an innovative STEM hub, owned by a Victorian tertiary provider and advised by a partnership of local schools, industry and other stakeholders
- Through the Advancing STEM in Queensland state primary schools initiative, the Queensland Government has committed more than $80 million over four years to (2017/18 – 2020/21) to strengthen STEM in government primary schools.
- The Queensland STEM Girl Power initiative encourages girls into STEM pathways for the senior years of schooling.

Other examples of partnerships in 2018 included:

- A renewed national project agreement for the National School Chaplaincy Program was developed and agreed between the Australian Government and states and territories. This program provides pastoral care through the appointment of chaplains in schools. The Australian Government is providing $247 million over four years (2019–2022) for this program.
- The Queensland Ready Reading volunteer program. In partnership with Volunteering Queensland, this program aims to train up to 3,000 parents, carers and community members, before the end of 2020, to support children's reading in schools.
- The Kimberley Schools Project, which commenced in 2018 across nine government schools and one non-government school in very remote areas of Western Australia's Kimberley region. The project aims to accelerate children's literacy through targeted and consistent teaching practices from preschool to Year 2. It has a strong focus on community co-design and school attendance, with specific curriculum materials, and expert staff providing one-on-one coaching and advice to principals and teachers. The initiative will expand to include targeted teaching of numeracy strategies and more Kimberley schools over coming years.
- The Western Australian Catholic sector's Transforming Lives 2025 strategy, which continued to build strong partnerships between Catholic schools and Aboriginal students and families. Amongst other goals, this strategy aims to create culturally aware Catholic schools; double Aboriginal enrolments from 2,500 to 5,000 students; increase school completion rates; and raise the proportion of Aboriginal students meeting minimum national literacy and numeracy standards from 75 per cent to 90 per cent.

- The work of the Northern Territory Transition Support Unit to connect with students, parents and schools to improve family support and to maximise opportunities as students move from home communities to a boarding school or residential facility, in the Northern Territory or interstate, to continue their secondary education.

2.4 Supporting quality teaching and school leadership

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

Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership

The Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) is a company owned and funded by the Australian Government. AITSL has responsibility for supporting the implementation of the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers and the Australian Professional Standard for Principals.

AITSL aims to develop teacher expertise and empower teachers and school leaders to create better education outcomes for Australian children.

In 2018, AITSL continued to drive improvements in initial teacher education, supporting states and territories to implement amendments to the accreditation standards to further achieve national consistency, rigour and transparency in accreditation. This included establishing expert advisory panels and delivering training to accreditation panels.

States and territories continued to implement the standards for teachers and principals, and the accreditation of teacher education programs, within their jurisdictions.

Further information on the work AITSL is undertaking to support the teaching profession is available on the AITSL website.

High Achieving Teachers Program

In 2018, the Australian Government announced it will support alternative pathways into teaching through the High Achieving Teachers Program. In 2020 and 2021, around 300 participants with relevant subject expertise and potential to become high-achieving teachers will be placed in Australian secondary schools experiencing teacher workforce challenges.

State and territory initiatives

- In 2018, New South Wales implemented the new School Leadership Institute to support current and future school leaders at key points in their career. This institute aims to provide world-class, innovative, evidence-informed, future-focused leadership programs to ensure aspiring leaders support the learning and growth of teachers and students in their schools.

- In 2018, Victoria supported 12 teaching academies of professional practice, school–university partnerships involving 141 schools and seven universities. These were designed to deliver preparation experience for pre-service teachers, test approaches to initial teacher education, and strengthen links between education theory, research and practice. In addition, the Bastow Institute of Education Leadership (part of the Victorian education department) established communities of practice for the 57 government school networks across the state.

- Queensland is investing $31.1 million to establish four rural and remote centres for learning and wellbeing to provide enhanced professional learning and wellbeing support to teachers, school leaders and students in rural and remote Queensland.

- A new Western Australian Public School Leadership Strategy 2018–2021 commenced, with initiatives to support and develop high quality government school leaders. The strategy incorporates early talent identification and selection; leadership development and support; performance improvement, management and feedback; and system leadership.
- A key foundation of the ACT's Future of Education Strategy is empowering teachers, school leaders and other professionals to meet the learning needs of all students. To achieve this, the ACT Government is rolling out a $5.4 million Empowered Learning Professionals Leadership Plan.
- In the Northern Territory, the Mentoring and Coaching Framework for principals was implemented to match principals with mentors and coaching programs.

2.5 Strengthening early childhood education[42]

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

National Partnership Agreement on Universal Access to Early Childhood Education

In 2018, the Australian Government committed $427.9 million under the National Partnership Agreement on Universal Access to Early Childhood Education to support universal access to quality early childhood education programs. This funding was intended to ensure that every child can participate in a quality preschool education for 600 hours a year, or 15 hours a week, in the year before they start school. Over 340,000 children stood to benefit from this investment in 2018.

Early Years Learning Framework

The Australian Government supported a number of targeted early learning initiatives aligned to the Early Years Learning Framework. The Early Learning Languages Australia (ELLA) program is designed to make language-learning interesting to children in preschool and Foundation – Year 2 of schooling, through the use of interactive apps.

There are also three early learning initiatives that provide foundational science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) skills and promote positive experiences in science and mathematics for children aged three to five years: the Early Learning STEM Australia Pilot; Let's Count; and Little Scientists. In 2018, the Early Learning STEM Australia (ELSA) apps were successfully piloted in 97 preschools, and ELSA has been extended for a second pilot year in 2019.

The Australian Government has also committed $5.9 million from 2017–18 to 2020–21 to trial a series of applications to be used in preschool to improve English literacy outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children for whom English is a second language.

National Quality Framework

The National Quality Framework (NQF) drives continuous improvement in the nationally consistent quality, regulation and assessment of early childhood and child care services. The NQF applies to most long-day care, family day care, kindergarten/preschool and outside school-hours care services in Australia. The Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA) is the national body that supports regulatory authorities in states and territories in implementing the NQF.

In December 2018, Education Council endorsed terms of reference for a review of the NQF, taking into account recommendations arising from the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse as they relate to services regulated under the NQF, and recommendations arising from Education Council's Family Day Care program of work.

[42] Early childhood education refers to programs that children may undertake in the years before they commence full-time schooling. Statistical information on early childhood education is outside the scope of this report.

Lifting our game

At its meeting of September 2018, the Education Council endorsed Early Learning Reform Principles, informed by the recommendations and findings of the Lifting Our Game review (2017) and agreed to provide this advice to COAG.

State and territory initiatives

- In 2018, New South Wales became the first state to extend community preschool subsidies for all three-year-olds under the Start Strong funding reforms. Start Strong aim to increase the school readiness of all children, with additional support targeted to Aboriginal children, and vulnerable and disadvantaged children from low-income families.
- New South Wales also launched the Aboriginal Families as Teachers program in 2018. This supports Aboriginal families to build a rich home-learning environment, as well as promote active participation in early childhood education and support improved school transitions.
- In Victoria, early childhood education is being strengthened by the Education State Early Childhood Reform Plan, Ready for kinder, Ready for school, Ready for life, the progressive implementation of preschool for three-year-olds, school readiness funding and the kindergarten[43] quality improvement program.
- Queensland's Enhancing K–2 Continuity and alignment program aims to strengthen early childhood teaching and learning and transitions by focusing on connections between early childhood and school settings, including between the Early Years Learning Framework and the Australian Curriculum. Queensland has also invested $4 million over four years (2017–2020) through the Step up into Education initiative.
- Other Queensland initiatives for early childhood include the delivery of preschool programs in government schools in remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, the promotion of participation by Indigenous children in urban and rural areas and the Refugee and Asylum Seeker Early Childhood program.
- In South Australia, health, wellbeing, and care services for families and young children (particularly the vulnerable and at risk) are delivered across the state, through a network of children's centres and preschools.
- The KindiLink program, which was piloted from 2016 in 38 Western Australian public schools, was extended until the end of 2021, following positive evaluation findings released in 2018. The program, which operates in socio-economically disadvantaged areas in the state, supports children's learning in preschool, forges supportive home–school partnerships, and builds confidence and capacity in families.
- The Western Australian Catholic sector has adopted a similar program – Aboriginal Families as First Educators – which runs in a number of metropolitan and regional schools and forms an important part of the sector's commitment to early years learning and the importance of families in this process.

[43] In Victoria, Kindergarten is the name used for preschool early childhood education.

- The ACT Government established the Early Childhood Advisory Council to develop strong partnerships between government and non-government parts of the early childhood education and care sector. The government is also developing an Early Childhood Strategy to improve equitable access to quality early childhood education across the ACT. The strategy aims to provide a framework to foster children's transitions from education and care to school, recognise the importance of the education and care workforce, and improve qualifications.

- Under the NT Government's Early Childhood Development Plan, the Families as First Teachers program was expanded to provide early learning and family support for remote Indigenous families. Child and family centres also provide tailored services to meet the needs of local children and families in six locations across the Northern Territory.

Further information on early childhood education is available on the Australian Government Department of Education website.

2.6 Enhancing middle years development

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

The Australian Government delivers a range of programs that support teaching and learning across various learning areas. For example, the government is undertaking a review of civics and citizenship education resources and provides a rebate to schools to take students in the middle and senior years (Years 4–12) to Canberra under the Parliament and Civics Education Rebate (PACER) program to visit Australia's Parliament House and other national institutions. This also addresses the Melbourne Declaration goal that young Australians become active and informed citizens.

State and territory initiatives

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

- Victoria continued to build on its Literacy and Numeracy Strategy by investing $187 million to provide direct teaching support to secondary school students, including middle years, who are at risk of finishing school without the literacy and numeracy skills they need for future work or study.
- Queensland continued to provide support for middle years students through the junior secondary phase of education, the P–10 literacy continuum and the P–12 curriculum, assessment and reporting framework.
- Queensland also delivered programs to build teacher capability, lift student achievement and increase participation in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) through the Queensland Coding Academy, Virtual STEM Academies and Robotics lending library.
- South Australia's priorities included improving literacy and numeracy outcomes (particularly for Aboriginal students), STEM, languages, music and entrepreneurial education.
- Two hundred Western Australian government schools with primary-aged students will have classrooms converted into science laboratories by the end of 2020–21. Conversions were completed in 99 schools in 2018.
- Catholic Education in Western Australia continued to establish new K–12 schools and amalgamated others to support students, particularly in the middle years.
- The ACT Government, through the Future of Education Strategy, developed the principle of student agency, encouraging students to make decisions about their learning and how their learning environments operate.
- The Northern Territory's Middle Years Transition Framework is designed to improve educational outcomes for students by supporting schools to develop effective transition programs that enable positive movement of students and support continued engagement of students between phases of schooling.

2.7 Supporting senior years of schooling and youth transitions

Australian governments are committed to working with all school sectors to support the senior years of schooling and provision of high-quality pathways to facilitate effective transitions between further study, training and employment (Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians 2008). COAG has established targets to lift the Year 12 or equivalent or AQF Certificate III attainment rate to 90 per cent by 2020, and to at least halve the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students' Year 12 or equivalent attainment rates by 2020.

VET delivered to secondary students

Programs for the delivery of VET to secondary students[44], including school-based apprenticeships and traineeships, operate in all states and territories. Under these programs, school students can combine school study with training towards an accredited Australian Qualifications Framework[45] (AQF) VET qualification. The achievement of a VET qualification signifies that a student has demonstrated competency against the skills and knowledge required to perform effectively in the workplace. All VET qualifications must be issued by registered training organisations (RTOs).

Participation of school-aged students including secondary students in VET in 2018 is reported in Part 3: Measuring performance and in the National Report on Schooling data portal. VET course enrolments and VET qualifications completed by senior secondary students are reported at the school level on the *My School* website.

The Education Council's Preparing Secondary Students for Work: A framework for vocational learning and VET delivered to secondary students, as well as a range of career education resources, are published on the Australian Government's My Skills website.[46] The framework clarifies the distinction between vocational learning (career education and general work-related curriculum such as Work Studies) and VET (nationally recognised training described within an industry-developed training package or an accredited course). It emphasises that VET delivered to secondary students is the same as all other VET, and that the same quality standards apply.

[44] The Preparing Secondary Students for Work framework uses the term 'VET delivered to secondary students' to describe accredited VET undertaken by school students. However, the term 'VET in Schools' (VETiS) continues to be used in the VET sector to identify VET delivered to secondary students/as part of a Senior Secondary Certificate of Education, including for data collection and reporting purposes under the Australian Vocational Educational and Training Management Information Statistical Standard (AVETMISS).

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

[46] The My Skills website is Australia's training directory, which allows users to explore VET courses and qualifications by industry and state and territory.

State and territory initiatives

All states and territories offer VET courses to secondary students, usually as part of the Senior Secondary Certificate of Education in each jurisdiction, as well as career education and other work-related programs.

Initiatives in 2018 included:

- In 2018, New South Wales implemented the cross-government Pathways for the Future reform project, linking schooling, vocational education and training (VET) and higher education pathways data for the first time. This is intended to increase understanding of student training and education pathways, and the factors contributing to student disengagement.

- NSW also continued to develop innovative tertiary pathways with funding from the NSW Skills Board. In 2018, two new models were available to students: higher apprenticeships and degree apprenticeships. These allow students to undertake work-integrated VET and higher education study in areas of high industry demand.

- Victoria has invested $184.7 million to support students to make better career decisions and to provide enhanced vocational pathways into high-quality apprenticeships, traineeships and VET programs. This includes reforms to careers education in government schools and establishing Head Start, a new model of apprenticeships and traineeships for school students.

- The Victorian Government committed $43.8 million to expand the Navigator program state-wide. Navigator works with disengaged young people (aged 12–17) and their support networks to address multiple, complex needs and re-engage them in education.

- Queensland is preparing to implement a new senior assessment and tertiary entrance system, commencing Year 11 students in 2019. This system will feature internal and external assessment and the introduction of the Australian Tertiary Admissions Rank (ATAR).

- In Western Australia, Catholic Education expanded the Virtual School Network (ViSN) in 2018, providing quality online learning partnerships and opportunities, particularly for students in smaller and non-metropolitan schools, where the choice of programs in senior secondary studies may be limited. Catholic schools also continued to align VET in Schools offerings more closely to ongoing post-school training and employment opportunities.

- The Australian Capital Territory Government supports all students in ACT public schools through the stages of schooling and beyond to further education, training and/or employment. This includes workplace learning programs, transition services and programs, transition and career officers, pathway planning, careersXpo, vocational learning options, vocational education and training.

- Employment Pathways is a key initiative under the Northern Territory Department of Education's Indigenous Education Strategy. An alternative secondary education provision designed to meet the needs of students from remote and very remote communities, Employment Pathways was delivered in 33 government schools in the Northern Territory.

2.8 Promoting world-class curriculum and assessment

The *Melbourne Declaration on Education Goals for Young Australians* includes a commitment for Australian governments to work together to ensure world-class curriculum and assessment, as part of a quality schooling system for all young Australians.

The Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority

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

In terms of curriculum and assessment, the functions of ACARA[47] are to:

- develop and administer a national school curriculum, including content of the curriculum and achievement standards, for school subjects specified in the Charter[48]
- develop and administer national assessments
- provide school curriculum resource services
- provide information, resources, support and guidance to the teaching profession.

2.8.1 The Australian Curriculum

The Australian Curriculum has been developed, endorsed and refined over the last eight years. There are eight learning areas in the curriculum, corresponding to those listed by education ministers in the Melbourne Declaration[49]:

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

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

[48] The Education Council determines the ACARA Charter. The current charter took effect from November 2016.

[49] Schedule 1 of the ACARA charter specifies subjects in each of these learning areas for Foundation – Year 10 and for the areas of English, Mathematics, Science, and Humanities and Social Sciences for Years 11 and 12.

The Australian Curriculum incorporates seven general capabilities: Literacy, Numeracy, Information and Communication Technology capability, Critical and Creative Thinking, Personal and Social capability, Ethical Understanding, and Intercultural Understanding. There are also three cross-curriculum priorities: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures, Asia and Australia's Engagement with Asia, and Sustainability.

The general capabilities and cross-curriculum priorities are addressed within the content of the eight learning areas.

The ACARA Charter specifies the following priorities for curriculum:

- monitor and enhance the accessibility, balance and manageability of the national curriculum
- collect curriculum implementation information to assist with development of the next generation of curriculum
- scope options for further development of senior secondary curriculum in partnership with interested jurisdictions.

The new Australian Curriculum website was launched in 2017. A new version of machine-readable content for the Australian Curriculum website was published in mid-2018.

Material available on the website includes student work samples in learning areas, illustrations of practice, showing how schools are implementing the Australian Curriculum, and publications such as Curriculum Connections and Primary Matters. Work samples have now been published to support the curriculum across all learning areas with the exception of some languages.

In January 2018, ACARA published version 2.0 of the national literacy and numeracy learning progressions, incorporating extensive feedback from trialling. This optional resource supports teachers to identify and monitor student literacy and numeracy development in all learning areas.

In January 2018, ACARA released the Monitoring the Effectiveness of the Foundation – Year 10 Australian Curriculum 2017–18 report, which focused on technology demands in the curriculum, and literacy and numeracy demands across the curriculum. Feedback from stakeholders across the country indicated broad satisfaction with these elements of the Australian Curriculum.

ACARA continued to collect and review evidence to inform its advice to the Education Council on refinements to the Australian Curriculum, due in 2020. This included comparative studies of the curriculum of New Zealand, Finland, Singapore and British Columbia in 2018. These studies examined the purpose of the curriculum, the role and function of competencies and values, flexibility of student progress, the nature and presentation of content, achievement standards, student agency, strategies to address diversity, and strategies to address indigenous perspectives.

Curriculum projects

ACARA curriculum projects for 2018 included the development of 95 elaborations to better support teachers to incorporate the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures cross-curriculum priority into the Australian Curriculum: Science across all year levels. The elaborations were developed in consultation with science specialists, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education experts, and academics. The elaborations provide teachers with practical examples illustrating the Science content descriptions within the three main strands of learning: Science Understanding, Science as a Human Endeavour, and Science Inquiry Skills.

ACARA continued to manage the National Innovation in Science Agenda, Digital Technologies in Focus project. Approximately 160 disadvantaged schools in urban, rural and remote locations across all states and territories participated in the project in 2018. The integration of technology was modelled through the publication of digital newsletters in April and June 2018, regular webinars, as well as periodic school visits. ACARA has also developed professional learning modules in the Digital Technologies curriculum.

The Australian Government funded a range of STEM initiatives to support the delivery of the Science, Technologies and Mathematics learning areas, and projects to support the delivery of The Arts.

In the Northern Territory, the Indigenous Languages and Cultures Curriculum was developed, detailing content and achievement standards to support the learning and teaching of Aboriginal languages and cultures, with over 3,000 students enrolled in 2018.

2.8.2 The National Assessment Program

NAP NATIONAL ASSESSMENT PROGRAM The National Assessment Program consists of:

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

ACARA is responsible for overseeing the first two of these. The Australian Government oversees participation in international assessments.

The ACARA Charter specifies the following priorities for assessment:

- to ensure ACARA's resources and attention are focused on its assessment function, in particular ACARA's responsibilities for the successful transition to NAPLAN online
- to ensure that the suite of online assessments are directly linked to the national curriculum, to improve the understanding of educational outcomes for Australian students.

National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN)

The National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) provides national consistent measures to determine whether or not students are meeting important educational outcomes.

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

These assessments test students' literacy and numeracy knowledge and tell us whether students are developing the essential skills they will need in life.

ACARA has been responsible for the development and oversight of the delivery of the NAPLAN tests since 2010. States and territories are responsible for the administration of the tests in each jurisdiction.

Since 2016, NAPLAN tests have been aligned to the Australian Curriculum: English F–10 and the Australian Curriculum: Mathematics F–10.

The eleventh annual NAPLAN assessments were conducted in 2018. For national reporting purposes, key performance measures (KPMs) have been approved by education ministers for reading, writing, numeracy and participation. These KPMs[50] are reported for NAPLAN 2018 in Part 3: Measuring and reporting performance and in the National Report on Schooling data portal.

NAPLAN result data are also available in interactive form on the results page of the ACARA National Assessment Program website. The results page and the NAPLAN National Report for 2018 provide nationally comparable data on the results for each test domain. Comparisons of performance are available by state/territory, by student characteristics such as gender, Indigeneity, and parental education; and by school characteristics such as location.

The 2018 NAPLAN National Report and Test Incident Report were published in April 2019.

Consultation on draft proficient standards for NAPLAN tests for each domain and year level, aligned with the Australian Curriculum and international benchmarks, continued in 2018.

NAPLAN Online

The national platform for online assessment was funded by the Australian Government and built by Education Services Australia (ESA). ACARA continued to assist ESA in its work to enable the online assessment platform to successfully deliver NAPLAN Online, and to work with state and territory governments in building capacity to utilise platform functionality.

Approximately 15 per cent of students participating in NAPLAN undertook the tests online in 2018. These students were in New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland, South Australia, Western Australia and the Australian Capital Territory. Results for paper and online tests are reported on the same NAPLAN assessment scale.

ACARA worked with accessibility experts to improve access for students with disability to the NAPLAN Online tests. Improvements include the capability for all questions to be accessed by keyboard and for students with an audio and/or visual disability to have alternative questions automatically substituted by the platform.

The National Assessment Program – sample assessments

The national sample assessments test the skills and understanding of Year 6 and Year 10 students in the areas of science literacy, civics and citizenship, and information and communication technology (ICT) literacy. The assessments began in 2003 and are held on a rolling three-yearly basis. Participating schools are drawn from all states and territories and school sectors.

NAP – Science Literacy

The sixth NAP – Science Literacy sample assessment was conducted in 2018. This was the first NAP–SL assessment to include Year 10 students – previously only Year 6 participated – and was conducted online. Participation data for NAP–SL 2018 and the KPMs for NAP – Science Literacy are reported in Part 3: Measuring and reporting performance and in the National Report on Schooling data portal.

[50] Specified in the *Measurement Framework for Schooling in Australia 2015*

NAP – Civics and Citizenship

The most recent NAP – Civics and Citizenships assessment on a sample of Years 6 and 10 students took place in 2016 and the report on its key findings was released in 2017. The next assessment will take place in October 2019.

NAP – ICT Literacy

The 2017 NAP – ICT Literacy public report was approved by the Education Council and published on ACARA's NAP website in December 2018, together with the 2017 NAP – ICT Literacy technical report and school release materials for Years 6 and 10. The 2017 public report expands on previous versions of the report by including a 'Curriculum connections' chapter. This chapter explores areas for improvement and provides teaching strategies linked to the Australian Curriculum: Digital Technologies and the ICT general capability.

National Assessment Program – international assessments

Three international National Assessment Program (NAP) sample assessments are used as a basis for KPMs for schooling.

The assessments are:

- Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA). PISA takes place every three years and assesses 15-year-olds in reading, mathematical and scientific literacy. PISA is developed and administered internationally by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). The most recent cycle was PISA 2018. Results will be released in December 2019.

- Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS). TIMSS takes place every four years and assesses Year 4 and Year 8 students' achievement in mathematics and science. The assessment is administered by the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA). Data collection for the next cycle of TIMSS (2019) took place in Australia in late 2018. Results will be released in late 2020.

- Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS). PIRLS is a five-yearly assessment of reading literacy for Year 4 students. The IEA is also responsible for PIRLS. Results for the most recent cycle of PIRLS (2016) were released in December 2017. In 2018, the Education Council agreed that Australian students would participate in the next cycle of PIRLS (PIRLS 2021).

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

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

The declaration includes a commitment for governments to:

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

Needs-based school funding

Under the Quality Schools[51] funding arrangements, Australian Government recurrent funding for schools is calculated using a base per-student amount plus loadings aimed at addressing disadvantage.

For most non-government schools[52], the base amount is discounted by the estimated capacity of parents to contribute towards the school's operating costs.

The areas of student and school disadvantage addressed through the loadings are: students with disability, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, students from low socio-economic backgrounds, students with low English proficiency, location of the school (remoteness), and size of the school.

Review into regional, rural and remote education

In 2018, the Independent Review into Regional, Rural and Remote Education presented its final report. The review considered the key challenges and barriers that impact on the learning outcomes of regional, rural and remote students and provided recommendations to government on approaches to support these students in school and their transition to further study.

The review identified four priority areas:

- establishing a national focus for regional, rural and remote education
- enhancing leadership, teaching, curriculum and assessment
- improving information and communications technology
- enhancing transitions into and out of school.

The Australian Government has accepted all 11 recommendations of the review.

[51] The Quality Schools package replaced the previous Students First funding arrangements from January 2018 but retained the principle of needs-based funding using the same categories for loadings.

[52] Except for special schools, special assistance schools, remote sole provider schools and majority Indigenous schools

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures

In 2018, ACARA developed illustrations of practice for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures cross-curriculum priority as a way of improving teaching and learning in this area. ACARA has developed videos of illustrations of practice in consultation with representatives from Indigenous advisory groups. These videos, published on the Australian Curriculum website, showcase effective implementation across a range of teaching and school settings.

Indigenous Advancement Strategy Children and Schooling Programme

In 2018, over $330 million was provided through the Indigenous Advancement Strategy Children and Schooling Programme to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in their early childhood years, through primary and secondary education, to post-school qualifications and into the workforce.

The program funds activities that are geared towards supporting families to give children a good start in life through improved early childhood development, care, education and school readiness; getting children to school; improving literacy and numeracy; and supporting successful transitions to further education and work.

A number of initiatives are funded under the Indigenous Advancement strategy, including:

- the Indigenous Girls' Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) Academy
- the Remote School Attendance Strategy (RSAS). In December 2018 the RSAS was extended for an additional 3 years and is operating in 84 schools across remote Northern Territory, New South Wales, Queensland, South Australia and Western Australia.
- scholarships to provide Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students access to wider options for secondary education.

All states and territories also operate programs to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and communities within their jurisdictions.

More information on initiatives for Indigenous youth is available on the Australian Government's Indigenous website and in the annual reports to Parliament on progress in Closing the Gap.

2.10 Strengthening accountability and transparency

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

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

The Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority

In terms of data collection and reporting, the functions of ACARA[53] are to:

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

The ACARA Charter[54] specifies the following priorities for data and reporting priorities:

- assess data needs to review, and if necessary, introduce new performance indicators in the measurement framework
- manage the collection and quality assurance of data for policy development in the school education sector and provide accessible and comprehensive national school and schooling information (including the *My School* website and National Assessment Program reporting)
- produce a revitalised, timely and accessible national report on schooling, which meets the goals for national performance reporting.

Measurement Framework for Schooling in Australia

In 2018, ACARA commenced a periodic review of the Measurement Framework for Schooling in Australia, in consultation with jurisdictions and school sectors. The review will update the current *Measurement Framework for Schooling in Australia 2015,* and review key performance measures (KPMs) for schooling in the light of national policy decisions, including the new National Schools Reform Agreement.

National Report on Schooling in Australia

In 2018, ACARA published the *National Report on Schooling in Australia 2016* (July 2018) following endorsement by the Education Council. The *National Report on Schooling in Australia 2017* was prepared, in consultation with representatives of state and territory education authorities, other government agencies, and non-government school sectors for publication in early 2019.

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[53] *Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority Act 2008,* Section 6 (ACARA's functions in curriculum and assessment are outlined in Part 2.8: Policies and priorities –promoting world-class curriculum and assessment)

[54] The Education Council determines the ACARA Charter. The current charter took effect from November 2016.

The National Report on Schooling now comprises the interactive National Report on Schooling data portal, in addition to this written report.

National Report on Schooling data portal

The online National Report on Schooling data portal, first published in May 2017, provides public access, on a single website, to a wider range of national, state and territory data on schooling in Australia than available elsewhere. It includes current statistics and time series data on school numbers, enrolments, staffing and funding, and data on the agreed KPMs for schooling, including attendance, retention, assessment and Year 12 or equivalent attainment. The portal allows readers to view and download data at the national level, and also to disaggregate data by state and territory, by school sector, by calendar year and by available breakdowns of equity groups such as sex and Indigenous status.

ACARA further developed the data portal during 2018, with the addition of new data sets and data views in July 2018. Updated data for existing data sets were added in April and December 2018.

My School

ACARA is responsible for the national data collection on individual schools reported on the *My School* website. *My School* includes a description of each school, information on school type and sector, data on enrolments, staffing, attendance, funding and the performance of the school's students in NAPLAN assessments.

The Australian Government is committed to the *My School* website as it promotes accountability in education for parents, schools and communities by providing them with high quality, nationally comparable data on the performance and progress of students in Australian schools.

My School was redeveloped and updated in March 2018, with 2017 school profile and population data, 2017 NAPLAN results and 2016 school financial information.

Based on stakeholder feedback, the 2018 revamp of the *My School* website sought to make it mobile-friendly, easier to use and more engaging. The presentation of some data was made easier to understand, including in areas of 'gain' in NAPLAN scores.

In November/December 2018 the *My School* website was updated with school student attendance rates for 2018 and with 2017 data for senior secondary outcomes and VET in schools.

In June 2018, the Education Council requested a review of the current approach to presentation of National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) data, including information published on the *My School* website. The NAPLAN Reporting Review will report to the Education Council in 2019.

Australian Schools List website

ACARA maintains the Australian Schools List (ASL) website for online education services that rely on a current and accurate list of schools in Australia.

The list of schools is compiled from all school registration authorities in each state and territory, providing details of all schools and campuses in Australia. It also includes school location, school type and school sector attributes. The list is refreshed quarterly.

In June 2018, the Australian Schools List website was updated with new features including an improved search functionality, a search by map facility and a new look and feel.

Teacher workforce data

The National Report on Schooling data portal includes data on teaching and non-teaching staff employed in Australia's schools, drawn from the National Schools Statistics Collection. It also includes a data set, showing current and time series data on enrolments and qualifications in teacher education courses, drawn from the Australian Higher Education Statistics Collection. This provides information on the number of potential future teachers. The data include enrolments and qualifications for potential teachers in the early childhood, VET and higher education sectors as well as for potential primary and secondary school teachers.

In 2018, the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) continued to implement the Australian Teacher Workforce Data Strategy (ATWD). The ATWD combines and links initial teacher education data drawn from Australian Higher Education Statistics, registration data from state and territory teacher regulatory authorities and data obtained from teacher surveys. This national data set is expected to assist with workforce planning, with evaluating the outcomes of initial teacher education and with understanding teacher career paths and experiences.

Nationally Consistent Collection of Data on School Students with Disability

Since 2015, all schools have participated in the Nationally Consistent Collection of Data (NCCD) for School Students with Disability under the authority of the Education Council. Selected statistics from the NCCD are published on the National Report on Schooling data portal.

In 2018 the NCCD was used to calculate the Commonwealth school funding loading for students with disability.

National School Resourcing Board

In 2017 the Australian Government established the National School Resourcing Board to provide greater independent oversight over Commonwealth school funding. The Board will undertake reviews of different parts of the funding model under the *Australian Education Act 2013*. These reviews will seek to promote public confidence in the funding model and ensure that governments and other approved authorities comply with their obligations under the Act.

The final report of the Board's first review, Review of the Socio-economic status score methodology [for allocating Commonwealth funding to non-government schools] was presented to the Australian Government in June 2018.

In its response to the report (September 2018) the Australian Government accepted all six recommendations made by the Board, including that from 2020 the capacity to contribute for a non-government school should be determined based on a direct measure of median income of parents and guardians of the students at a school.

Part 3: Measuring and reporting performance

Part 3 reports on the performance of Australian schooling in 2018, using the nationally agreed key performance measures (KPMs) for schooling specified in the *Measurement Framework for Schooling in Australia 2015*.

3.1 Measurement Framework for Schooling in Australia

The *Measurement Framework for Schooling in Australia 2015* provides the basis for national reporting on the performance of schooling in 2018, as agreed by education ministers, and is the main focus of the statistical data included in this report.

The measurement framework defines 26 national key performance measures (KPMs) for schooling, specifies the data sources for these KPMs and outlines the reporting cycle for the period 2014–2018.[55]

[55] Most KPMs are reported annually, but some are collected and reported on a cyclical basis of three, four or five years. Twenty-one KPMs are reported for 2018. The remaining five KPMs, covering student achievement in the NAP international assessments TIMSS and PIRLS and in NAP sample assessments in Civics and Citizenship and Information and Communication Technology Literacy do not apply to the 2018 reporting year.

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

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

For national reporting purposes, KPMs for student participation, achievement and attainment are disaggregated by equity measures: Indigenous status, sex, geolocation, socio-economic status and language background, where it is possible and appropriate to do so.[56]

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

3.2 Student participation

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

3.2.1 Enrolment rate

Part 1.2 of this report provides data on the number of students enrolled by school sector, by school level, by state and territory, and over time. Part 1.4 outlines the structure of Australian schooling, including age requirements for compulsory enrolment in school for children and teenagers living in each of the states and territories.

This section reports on the number of students enrolled, as a proportion of the Australian population in the corresponding age group, as a KPM for schooling.

Key Performance Measure 1(a)

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

The KPM is specified as the number of students aged 6–15 years enrolled in school, expressed as a proportion of the 6–15-year-old population. As this approximates the age range of students for whom schooling is compulsory, the enrolment rate for this group is close to 100 per cent.

The numerator for the annual measure of this KPM is school enrolment data drawn from the National Schools Statistics Collection (NSSC). The denominator for the 6–15-year-old population is drawn from the Estimated Residential Population (ERP) for this age group, which is estimated by projection by the Australian Bureau of Statistics from the five-yearly Australian Census of Population and Housing. KPM 1(a) is reported by state and territory for 2018 in table 3.1.

Table 3.1

Number and proportion of the population aged 6–15 years enrolled in school, by state and territory, 2018

	NSW	Vic.	Qld	SA	WA	Tas.	NT	ACT	Australia
Number of children aged 6–15 years enrolled in school[(a)]	967,463	759,283	658,591	205,636	328,672	64,215	32,815	55,172	3,071,847
6–15-year-old population[(b)]	974,131	766,811	657,188	204,986	329,320	63,924	34,302	50,366	3,081,581
Proportion of 6–15-year-olds enrolled in school (%)[(c)]	99.3	99.0	100.2	100.3	99.8	100.5	95.7	109.5	99.7

Notes:

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

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

(c) When calculating an indicator using data from different sources, data comparability issues can emerge, which will affect the accuracy of the indicator. These differences can have unexpected effects such as producing an estimate greater than 100 per cent of the population, particularly where a cohort is small or where the rate being measured is close to 100 per cent of the population. Differences in the annual measure of this KPM should therefore be interpreted with care.

Sources: ABS, Cat. No. 4221.0, *Schools, Australia, 2018;* ABS, Cat. No. 3101.0, *Australian Demographic Statistics, Australian States and Territories,* June 2018 (release date 20/12/18 based on the 2016 Australian Census of Population and Housing); ACARA, National Report on Schooling data portal.

Using data on school enrolments (NSSC) and estimated resident population (ERP)[57] to calculate KPM 1(a), the rate of enrolment in schooling of 6–15-year-olds in 2018 was close to 100 per cent nationally, and in all jurisdictions except the Northern Territory (95.7 per cent) and the Australian Capital Territory (109.5 per cent).

Variations in enrolment rates between jurisdictions in 2018 (and previous years), notably for the ACT, are largely explained by 'cross-border enrolments'. Enrolment rates for states and territories are affected by the inclusion of students who cross state and territory boundaries to attend school. These students are counted in the school population of one state but in the residential population of another.

This occurs in many areas close to state and territory boundaries but, in most cases, movement either occurs in both directions or is too small to noticeably influence the overall rate for a state. However, in the case of the ACT, the number of students from interstate (and children of embassy staff) attending ACT schools[58] and the relatively small ACT population cause the proportion of 6–15-year-olds enrolled in school to significantly exceed 100 per cent of the ACT resident population for this age group.

Other factors that may influence the annual measure of this KPM include:

- The numerator and denominator for KPM 1(a) are drawn from different data sources. This in itself can give rise to data comparability issues that may affect the accuracy of the indicator.
- Although NSSC counting rules seek to prevent this, it is possible that some students who move between schools during the year are counted at more than one school. This is more likely in remote and very remote areas where the population is highly mobile. This may partly account for some enrolment rates exceeding 100 per cent.

Because of these factors, jurisdictions have agreed that the annual measure of KPM 1(a) be reported at state and national levels only.

Every five years, data on the proportion of 6–15-year-olds identified as attending primary and secondary schools are also available from the Australian Census of Population and Housing[59], and this source is specified in the measurement framework as a supplementary data source for reporting this KPM for census

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[57] ERP data in tables 3.1 and 3.2 are based on the 2016 Census of Population and Housing.

[58] 'Interstate' enrolments are mainly from surrounding areas of NSW. Children of embassy staff attending Canberra schools are counted in ACT school enrolments but are not included in ERP.

[59] The Census of Population and Housing is Australia's largest statistical collection undertaken by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS). The census is conducted every five years.

years. Administrative data for KPM 1(a) for the period 2009–2018 are reported in table 3.2, along with census data for this measure for the years 2011 and 2016.

Table 3.2

Number and proportion of the population aged 6–15 years enrolled in school, Australia, 2009–2018

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Number of children aged 6–15 years enrolled in school[(a)]	2,748,736	2,755,893	2,768,177	2,801,751	2,844,983	2,889,292	2,930,612	2,974,656	3,022,905	3,071,847
Population, Australia (aged 6–15 years)[(b)]	2,746,766	2,755,102	2,769,311	2,799,226	2,833,866	2,875,596	2,919,394	2,970,505	3,024,364	3,081,581
Proportion of 6–15-year-olds enrolled in school, Australia (%)[(c)]	100.1	100.0	100.0	100.1	100.4	100.5	100.4	100.1	100.0	99.7
Proportion of 6–15-year-olds enrolled in school, Australia (%) (supplementary census measure)[(d)]			99.3					99.4		

Notes:

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

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

(c) When calculating an indicator using data from different sources, data comparability issues can emerge that will affect the accuracy of the indicator. These differences can have unexpected effects such as producing an estimate greater than 100 per cent of the population, particularly where a cohort is small or where the rate being measured is close to 100 per cent of the population. Changes to the annual measure of this KPM should therefore be interpreted with care.

(d) The supplementary, five-yearly measure for this KPM is drawn from data collected in the Australian Census of Population and Housing, 2011 and 2016. Individuals are counted in their place of usual residence (rather than where they attend school) and identified as attending a primary or secondary school. Because of this, and other differences between census and NSSC and ERP data, the two measures are not fully comparable.

Sources: ABS, Cat. No. 4221.0, *Schools, Australia,* 2018; ABS, Cat. No. 3101.0, *Australian Demographic Statistics*, *Australian States and Territories,* June 2018 (release date 20/12/2018, based on the 2016 Australian Census of Population and Housing); ACARA, National Report on Schooling data portal; ABS, Australian Census of Population and Housing, 2011 and 2016.

As shown in table 3.2, KPM 1(a), data drawn from the Census of Population and Housing 2011 and 2016 confirm that close to 100 per cent of the 6–15-year-old population of Australia was enrolled in school in those years. Because the numerator and denominator are both drawn from the census, this measure avoids the problem of comparing student counts to population estimates and cannot exceed 100 per cent. However, because of exclusions in the data (for example, transient population, item non-responses), the census results understate both the actual number of school students and the target population.[60]

By counting students in the state/territory in which they normally reside, the census may provide a more realistic indicator of the school participation rate of resident 6–15-year-olds per jurisdiction. However, by

[60] For these reasons, table 3.2 reports the ratios for KPM 1(a) derived from the Census of Population and Housing but does not report numerators or denominators for the measure.

counting students in the state or territory in which they are enrolled, NSSC data better reflect educational activity/investment per jurisdiction.

At approaching 100 per cent, both measures of KPM1(a) provide evidence that long-standing policies for universal access to schooling, and for compulsory education for this age group are implemented in practice. This reflects the national policy objective, included in the Melbourne Declaration, that all students, in all states and territories, are provided with access to high-quality school education (at least until they have completed Year 10). It also highlights Australia's provision of universal school education, at least up to Year 10, to international audiences.

Further data on enrolment rates, including time series by state and territory, are available on the National Report on Schooling data portal.

Part 3.2.3 Apparent retention and Part 3.4 Senior schooling and youth transitions report on young people's participation in schooling, other forms of education, and work after Year 10.

3.2.2 Attendance

Like enrolment rates, the national KPMs for attendance in the *Measurement Framework for Schooling in Australia 2015* relate to students in the compulsory years of schooling. However, attendance measures are specified in terms of school year (Years 1–10) rather than by student age. Whereas KPM 1(a) reports on the proportion of children enrolled in school, KPMs 1(b) and 1(c) report on the proportion of available time that students spend at school once enrolled.

Key Performance Measure 1(b)

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

Key Performance Measure 1(c)

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

All school sectors in all states and territories use a common reference period – Semester 1 in each school year – for the collection of attendance data for national reporting.

This is consistent with the National Standards for Student Data Reporting, which came into operation for the 2014 data collection period and onwards. Data are reported from 2014 for the attendance rate and from 2015 for the attendance level.

In 2018, nationally comparable student attendance data were collected, as set out in the national standards, for all schools in all jurisdictions.[61]

[61] Data on student attendance levels (KPM 1(c)) could not be collected for NSW government schools prior to 2018.

Attendance rates

Table 3.3 reports KPM 1(b) by state and territory for 2018.

Table 3.3

Student attendance rates, Years 1–10, by state and territory, Australia, 2018 (per cent)

School sector	NSW	Vic.	Qld	SA	WA	Tas.	NT	ACT	Australia
Government	91.6	92.2	91.0	90.8	91.1	90.6	79.6	90.6	91.3
Catholic	93.2	93.3	92.2	92.9	93.2	92.5	80.0	92.6	92.9
Independent	93.4	93.8	93.3	93.4	93.7	93.3	88.2	93.9	93.5
All	92.2	92.7	91.5	91.6	91.8	91.3	80.8	91.6	91.9

Note:

Excludes part-time students. For data definitions, see the National Standards for Student Attendance Data Reporting.

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

Table 3.4 reports this KPM nationally, by school sector, for 2014–2018.

Table 3.4

Student attendance rates, Years 1–10, by school sector, Australia, 2014–2018 (per cent)

School sector	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Government	91.9	92.0	91.9	91.8	91.3
Catholic	93.9	93.6	93.6	93.4	92.9
Independent	94.3	93.9	93.8	93.7	93.5
All	92.7	92.6	92.5	92.4	91.9

Notes:

Excludes part-time students. For data definitions, see the National Standards for Student Attendance Data Reporting.

2018 attendance rates for NSW and Australia are not fully comparable to previous years, due to changes in the calculation method for NSW government schools in 2018.

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

The average school attendance rate for Years 1–10 across Australia in 2018 was 91.9 per cent. This was a fall of 0.5 percentage points from 92.4 per cent in 2017. Although more marked than the 0.1 percentage point falls in each of the three previous years, this change was not statistically significant. All states and territories reported reduced attendance rates in 2018, with the largest falls in Queensland[62] (0.9 percentage points); NSW[63] and the ACT (both 0.6 percentage points).

[62] Lower than previous attendance rates (and levels) reported for Queensland in 2018 may be partly due to disruption to schooling caused by widespread flooding in early 2018.

[63] In 2018 was the first time, NSW government school attendance data were collected in a way that conformed to the national standards. This change in collection methodology contributed to the reduction in reported attendance rates for NSW and nationally in 2018.

The average attendance rate for Years 1–10 in 2018 exceeded 90 per cent in all states and territories except the Northern Territory, where the much lower average attendance rate (65.1 per cent) for the high proportion[64] of Indigenous students led to an average rate for all students of 80.8 per cent.

The national average attendance rate in 2018 was 91.3 per cent for government schools and 93.2 per cent for non-government schools, with average percentage rates for all sectors in the low–mid 90s in each of the years 2014–2018.

A common characteristic across all states and territories was lower average attendance rates in Years 7–10 than Years 1–7. At the national level in 2018, the average attendance rate for Years 1–6 was 93.0 per cent compared with 90.4 per cent for Years 7–10.[65]

There was little difference in the 2018 national average attendance rate for girls (92.1 per cent) and boys (91.8 per cent).[66]

Average attendance rates were higher in major cities than in remote areas, and lowest in very remote areas.

However, this was much more marked for Indigenous students than for non-Indigenous students. For non-Indigenous students, the average attendance rate in schools in major cities was 92.8 per cent, in remote schools 91.4 per cent and in very remote schools 90.5 per cent. But for Indigenous students, these rates were 85.2 per cent (major cities), 75.8 per cent (remote) and 63.4 per cent (very remote), a difference of 21.8 percentage points between Indigenous students in major cities and in very remote schools, and a gap of 27.1 percentage points between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students in schools in very remote areas.[67]

Table 3.5 shows comparative attendance rates for Indigenous and non-Indigenous students in Years 1–10 by state and territory, and the gaps between them, in 2014 and 2018.

[64] As at August 2018, 40.3 per cent of full-time students in Years 1–10 in the Northern Territory were identified as Indigenous, compared with 5.9 per cent of full-time students in Years 1–10 across Australia. (ABS, *Schools Australia, 2018, table 42 (b)*)

[65] National Report on Schooling data portal, Student attendance data set

[66] National Report on Schooling data portal, Student attendance data set

[67] National Report on Schooling data portal, Student attendance data set

Table 3.5

Student attendance rates, Years 1–10, by state and territory and Indigenous status, Australia, 2014 and 2018 (per cent)

State/territory	NSW	Vic.	Qld	SA	WA	Tas.	NT	ACT	Australia
2014									
Indigenous	87.5	86.8	85.2	81.1	77.4	88.5	70.2	85.2	83.5
Non-Indigenous	93.9	93.1	92.8	92.6	92.7	92.4	90.9	92.5	93.2
All students	93.6	93.0	92.2	92.1	91.7	92.1	82.3	92.3	92.7
Gap Indigenous/non-Indigenous (percentage points)	6.4	6.3	7.6	11.5	15.3	3.9	20.7	7.3	9.7
2018									
Indigenous	85.4	86.3	84.4	80.5	76.5	87.8	65.1	83.9	82.3
Non-Indigenous	92.7	92.8	92.1	92.1	93.0	91.7	91.6	91.9	92.5
All students	92.2	92.7	91.5	91.6	91.8	91.3	80.8	91.6	91.9
Gap Indigenous/non-Indigenous (percentage points)	7.3	6.5	7.7	11.6	16.5	3.9	26.5	8.0	10.2
Change in gap 2014–2018 (percentage points)	0.9	0.2	0.1	0.1	1.2	0.0	5.8	0.7	0.5

Notes:

Excludes part-time students. For data definitions, see the National Standards for Student Attendance Data Reporting.

2018 attendance rates for NSW and Australia are not fully comparable to previous years, due to changes in the calculation method for NSW government schools in 2018.

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

There was a decrease of 1.2 percentage points in the average Indigenous school attendance rate from 2014 (83.5 per cent) to 2018 (82.3 per cent). The average national attendance rate for non-Indigenous students also fell – but by less than for Indigenous students, increasing the gap between them.

In 2018, at the national level, there was a 10.2 percentage point gap between the average attendance rates for Indigenous and non-Indigenous students, a rise of 0.5 percentage points since 2014. Above average gaps in attendance rates were again recorded in the Northern Territory, Western Australia and South Australia, particularly in very remote areas.

The average attendance rate for Indigenous students was lower for older year groups: 85.4 per cent for Years 1–6 but 77.1 per cent for Years 7–10. Attendance rates for Indigenous students in remote and very remote areas fell off more sharply for older students than in other locations, with an average national attendance rate of only 46.0 per cent for Year 10 Indigenous students in very remote areas. As a result, the attendance gap is larger at higher year levels in these areas.[68]

Attendance levels

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

[68] National Report on Schooling data portal, Student attendance data set

Table 3.6 shows KPM 1(c) by state and territory, by school sector, for 2018.

Table 3.6

Student attendance levels: proportion of students in Years 1–10 whose attendance rate is equal to or greater than 90 per cent, by state and territory and school sector, Australia, 2018 (per cent)

State/territory	NSW	Vic.	Qld	SA	WA	Tas.	NT	ACT	Australia
School sector									
Government	74.0	75.7	71.1	71.7	73.7	72.8	48.4	68.8	73.1
Catholic	78.4	80.0	73.9	77.7	80.8	76.4	50.2	75.3	77.8
Independent	80.8	82.6	79.7	80.1	82.8	79.6	68.6	83.1	81.0
All students	75.9	77.5	72.8	74.1	76.3	74.3	51.5	72.9	75.2

Note:

2018 was the first year for which data on student attendance levels could be collected for NSW government schools. As a result, the attendance levels (KPM 1(c)) reported for NSW and for Australia are not comparable with those for the previous three years.

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

In 2018, 75.2 per cent of Australian students in Years 1–10 attended school for at least 90 per cent of school days. The proportion of students whose attendance rate was as least 90 per cent was between 72.8 and 77.5 per cent in each of the states and territories, except for the Northern Territory, where it was 51.5 per cent. As with KPM 1(b), this result is due to significantly lower levels of attendance for Indigenous students in remote and very remote areas of the Territory. The proportions in all states and territories were higher for non-government than for government school students.

This KPM is intended to monitor progress in COAG's priority to close the gaps in educational outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people. The measure for 2018 confirms that a much lower proportion of Indigenous than non-Indigenous students were present at school for 90 per cent or more of the expected number of days. Table 3.7 shows KPM 1(c) by state and territory, by Indigenous status, for 2018 and the gap in this measure between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students.

Table 3.7

Student attendance levels: proportion of students in Years 1–10 whose attendance rate is equal to, or greater than, 90 per cent, by state and territory and Indigenous status, Australia, 2018 (per cent)

State/territory	NSW	Vic.	Qld	SA	WA	Tas.	NT	ACT	Australia
Indigenous	53.9	56.2	50.7	43.4	39.7	63.3	23.0	48.0	48.7
Non-Indigenous	77.3	77.9	74.8	75.7	79.0	75.4	71.0	73.7	76.8
All students	75.9	77.5	72.8	74.1	76.3	74.3	51.5	72.9	75.2
Gap Indigenous/non-Indigenous (percentage points)	23.4	21.7	24.1	32.3	39.3	12.1	48.0	25.7	28.1

Note:

2018 was the first year for which data on student attendance levels could be collected for NSW government schools. As a result, the attendance levels (KPM 1(c)) reported for NSW and for Australia are not comparable with those for the previous three years.

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

In 2018, less than half of Australia's Indigenous students attended school for 90 or more per cent of the time, with a gap of 28.1 percentage points between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students. The gaps in the Northern Territory, Western Australia and South Australia were above the national average, particularly in very remote areas.

Closing the gap

In 2014, the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) agreed to a target to close the gap in school attendance between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students within five years (by the end of 2018). The base year for this target is 2014. Progress towards this target is measured using the average attendance rate for Years 1–10 (KPM 1(b)).

Closing the Gap target

Close the gap in school attendance between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students by the end of 2018

Closing the Gap Report 2019: the annual report to Parliament on progress in Closing the Gap states that the target to close the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous school attendance by 2018 is not on track and that the final assessment of the target will be considered following the release of Semester 1, 2019 attendance data.

The Australian Government's performance reporting dashboard, published by the Productivity Commission, reports on progress towards COAG's key commitments:

> The attendance rate for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students has decreased from 83.5 per cent (Semester 1 2014) to 82.3 per cent (Semester 1 2018). The rate continues to be around 10 percentage points lower than the comparable rate for non-Indigenous students (92 per cent).
>
> No jurisdictions were on track for this target in 2018.
>
> Semester 1, 2019 is the agreed end point, as the closest data point to the end of 2018. The final assessment of the target will be considered following the release of the Semester 1 2019 attendance data.[69]

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

[69] Productivity Commission 2019, Performance Reporting Dashboard, Canberra (accessed August 2019).

3.2.3 Apparent retention

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

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

Retention rates are designated as 'apparent' because they are based on aggregate enrolment data and do not record the progression of individual students.[70] Apparent rates do not distinguish between students progressing at a 'normal' rate of one grade per calendar year and students who repeat a grade or are promoted, thus moving between cohorts; students who choose to adopt flexible study patterns in senior years; or students who join or leave a cohort through migration.

As such, apparent retention rates do not measure the proportion of individuals who were part of a base year cohort (in a state or in a school sector) and have remained in that cohort in the reporting year, but the net change in the size of a cohort as students leave or join it. This makes them imperfect as a 'tracking mechanism'. However, as an overall measure of retention in schooling, apparent retention has advantages over measures focussed on the retention of individuals, as it includes students who have moved between schools, sectors or states but who have remained in the school system.

Table 3.8 and figure 3.1 show national apparent retention rates from Year 10 to Year 12 for full-time students by school sector over the period 2009–2018.

Table 3.8

Apparent retention rates (uncapped)[71], Year 10 – Year 12, by school sector, Australia, 2009–2018 (per cent)

School sector	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Government	71.4	74.1	75.0	74.8	76.7	78.6	79.2	79.5	79.8	79.2
Catholic	80.5	81.8	83.9	84.2	85.4	86.8	86.3	86.4	86.5	85.4
Independent	91.0	89.8	90.1	89.0	88.9	90.9	90.0	89.7	90.9	91.1
All	76.7	78.5	79.5	79.3	80.7	82.5	82.7	82.9	83.3	82.8

Note:

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

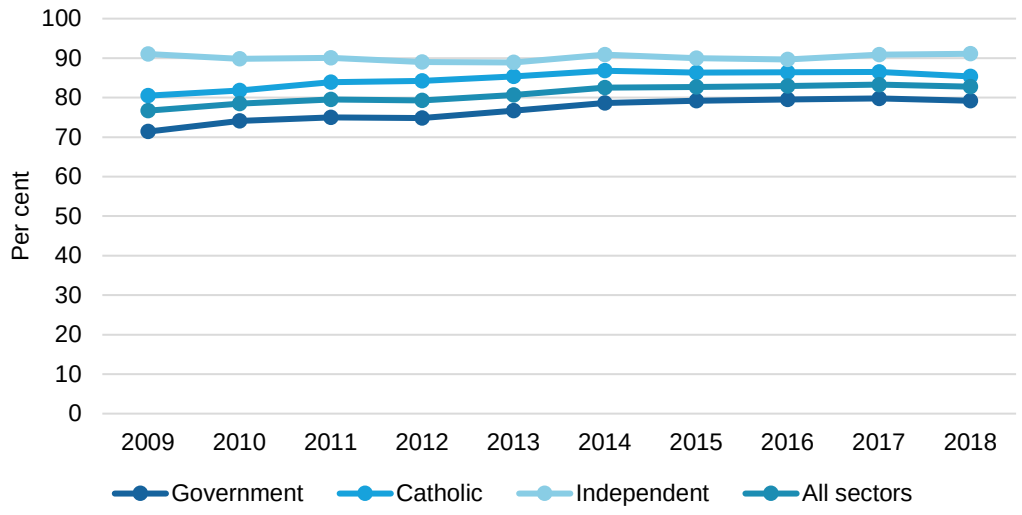
Source: ABS, Cat. No. 4221.0*, Schools, Australia,* 2018 and previous releases.

[70] Unit record enrolment data by student are not currently collected at the national level, so measures that rely on tracking of individual students cannot currently be derived nationally.

[71] The ABS publishes both capped apparent retention rates, which are capped at 100 per cent, and uncapped apparent retention rates. This report publishes uncapped rates because, due to student movements, it is quite possible for a school, state or school sector to have higher enrolments in Year 12 than in Year 10 two years previously, resulting in apparent retention rates above 100 per cent.

Figure 3.1

Apparent retention rates, Year 10 – Year 12, by school sector, Australia, 2009–2018 (per cent)



Source: ABS, Cat. No. 4221.0, *Schools, Australia,* 2018 and previous releases

As noted in previous reports, this series records upward movements in apparent retention from Year 10 to Year 12, following the implementation of strengthened education participation requirements for 15- and 16-year-olds.[72]

After five successive years of growth, the apparent retention rate from Year 10 to Year 12 decreased by 0.5 percentage points from 83.3 per cent in 2017 to 82.8 per cent in 2018, reversing the 0.4 percentage point growth in 2017. Notwithstanding, there has been a substantial net rise of 6.1 percentage points in this measure since 2009.

Apparent retention rates from Year 10 to Year 12 fell within both the government and Catholic school sectors in 2018, with a small rise in the independent sector, suggesting that a long period of convergence (2009–2016) of these rates between the three school sectors may have ended. This saw the gap in the rates between the government and independent sectors narrow from 19.6 percentage points in 2009 to 10.2 percentage points in 2016. In 2018, the gap had widened to 11.9 percentage points, a net reduction in this gap of 7.7 percentage points over the nine-year period 2009–2018.

The convergence of apparent retention rates between school sectors since 2009 may be due to both to rises in the proportions of government and Catholic school students continuing to Year 12, and to falls in the number of students transferring from government and Catholic to independent schools for Years 11 and 12. However, the size of each effect cannot be determined from apparent retention data. Because individual students are not tracked at the national level, the rates do not distinguish between progression of students within a sector, students moving between sectors and entry of students from overseas. Sector-specific apparent retention rates should therefore be interpreted with caution.

[72] These included the mandatory requirement for all young people to participate in schooling until they complete Year 10, and the requirement to participate full time in education, training or employment, or a combination of these activities, until the age of 17. These were implemented progressively in all states and territories between 2006 and 2010.

Caution is also advised when interpreting apparent retention rates disaggregated by state and territory, as they do not distinguish movements of students between jurisdictions, net migration for the age cohort, or numbers of overseas students enrolling in senior secondary schooling, from students progressing from Year 10 to 12 within a state.

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

Table 3.9

Apparent retention rates (uncapped), Year 10 – Year 12 by state and territory, Australia, 2009, 2010, 2017 and 2018 (per cent) and changes 2009–2018, 2010–18 and 2017–18 (percentage points)

State/territory	NSW	Vic.	Qld	SA	WA	Tas.	NT	ACT	Australia
2009	73.5	81.2	78.8	77.5	73.5	64.1	62.3	88.8	76.7
2010	74.5	82.1	81.0	80.6	76.5	70.7	61.4	91.8	78.5
2017	77.5	85.3	87.8	91.7	83.1	71.5	70.2	92.1	83.3
2018	76.3	84.7	87.8	90.8	85.0	73.2	65.1	90.0	82.8
Change 2009–18	2.8	3.5	9.0	13.3	11.5	9.1	2.8	1.2	6.1
Change 2010–18	1.8	2.6	6.8	10.2	8.5	2.5	3.7	-1.8	4.3
Change 2017–18	-1.2	-0.6	0.0	-0.9	1.9	1.7	-5.1	-2.1	-0.5

Notes:

The apparent retention rate measures the number of full-time school students in a designated level/year of schooling as a percentage of their respective cohort group in a base year. The base year for apparent retention rates Year 10 to Year 12 in 2018 is Year 10 in 2016. Counts of students are as at the annual Schools Census in the first week of August each year. Part-time students are not included. Ungraded students are not included.

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

Source: ABS, Cat. No. 4221.0*, Schools, Australia,* 2018 and previous releases.

All states and territories have recorded rises in this rate over the period 2009–2018 with the largest increase, of 13.3 percentage points, in South Australia. Only two jurisdictions recorded increases in the rate in 2018. Following an increase of 6.0 percentage points in 2017, the rate for the Northern Territory dropped by 5.1 percentage points in 2018.

Factors that may contribute to differences between states and territories in apparent retention rates from Year 10 to Year 12 include:

- Rates at the state and territory level can be inflated or deflated by interstate migration, including students transferring from one state to another to undertake senior secondary schooling. These movements are not taken into account in calculating rates.
- Differential rates of international immigration, including the temporary entry of overseas students for Years 11 and 12, inflate apparent retention rates in those jurisdictions where these incoming students are concentrated.

- The age distribution of the school population affects the year level (Year 11 or Year 12) to which most students must remain at school (or in alternative participation pathways) in order to meet participation requirements. This varies between states and territories because of historical differences in enrolment requirements and practices. States and territories with younger year cohorts tend to have higher Year 10 to Year 12 apparent retention rates, as a higher proportion of their student population is required to remain at school until the second half of Year 12.[73]

- State and territory retention rates are also affected by factors that are independent of schooling, such as differences in prevailing economic circumstances, including youth employment, and the availability and promotion of training and employment pathways that are recognised as approved alternatives to senior secondary schooling. States with more employment and training opportunities for 16- and 17-year-olds may record lower rates of retention to Year 12.

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

However, retention to Year 12 is not currently a KPM for schooling for the full student population.

KPM 1(e) in the *Measurement Framework for Schooling in Australia 2015* measures retention to Year 12, with a target population of Indigenous students, compared with non-Indigenous students. This KPM reflects concern by all governments at the significantly lower rates of school retention and completion for Aboriginal and Torres Islander students than for other groups and reflects the Melbourne Declaration objective to ensure that the learning outcomes of Indigenous students improve to match those of other students.

Key Performance Measure 1(e)

Apparent retention rates from Year 10 to Year 12
(Indigenous school students cf. non-Indigenous school students)

This KPM also relates to the COAG target to at least halve the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous 20–24-year-olds in Year 12 or equivalent attainment rates by 2020, but it is not a direct measure of progress towards this target.[74]

Table 3.10 and figure 3.2 report this KPM for the period 2009–2018.

[73] These students are included in the annual Schools Census conducted in August and therefore in the numerator of the apparent Year 10 to Year 12 retention rate. The higher age participation requirement in Western Australia also tends to raise the apparent Year 10 to Year 12 retention rate in that state.

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

Table 3.10

Apparent retention rates (uncapped), Year 10 to Year 12, by Indigenous status (per cent) and gap Indigenous/non-Indigenous (percentage points) Australia, 2009–2018

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Indigenous	50.1	52.5	53.5	53.3	55.8	60.4	60.6	60.9	63.0	62.6
Non-Indigenous	77.7	79.5	80.6	80.4	81.9	83.6	83.8	84.0	84.3	83.9
Gap (Indigenous/non-Indigenous)	27.6	27.0	27.1	27.1	26.1	23.2	23.2	23.1	21.3	21.3

Notes:

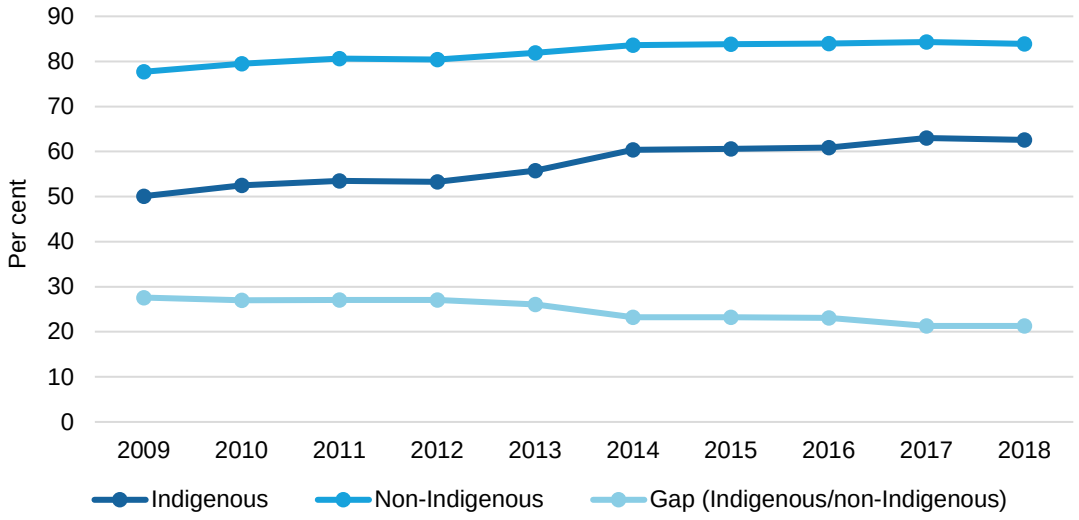
The apparent retention rate measures the number of full-time school students in a designated level/year of schooling as a percentage of their respective cohort group in a base year. The base year for apparent retention rates Year 10 to Year 12 in 2018 is Year 10 in 2016. Counts of students are as at the annual Schools Census in the first week of August each year. Part-time students are not included. Ungraded students are not included.

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

Source: ABS, Cat. No. 4221.0, *Schools, Australia,* 2018 and previous releases.

Figure 3.2

Apparent retention rates (uncapped), Year 10 to Year 12, by Indigenous status, Australia, 2009–2018 (per cent)



Source: ABS, Cat. No. 4221.0, *Schools, Australia,* 2018 and previous releases.

In 2018, the apparent retention rate from Year 10 to Year 12 for Indigenous students decreased for the first time since 2012. The fall of 0.4 percentage points in 2018 followed a rise of 2.1 percentage points between 2016 and 2017.

Over a longer period, Year 10 to Year 12 retention for Indigenous students has increased substantially – by 12.5 percentage points – from 50.1 per cent in 2009 to 62.6 per cent in 2018. This is more than double the

rise for non-Indigenous students of 6.2 percentage points over this period, leading to a narrowing of the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students by 6.3 percentage points.

At 21.3 percentage points, the gap was unchanged in 2018, but remains considerable, with Indigenous students still significantly less likely to proceed to Year 12 than other students.

Table 3.11 reports KPM 1(e) by state and territory for 2009, 2010, 2017 and 2018. The table displays variations between states and territories, both in apparent retention rates for Indigenous students and in the percentage point gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous rates.

Table 3.11

Apparent retention rates (uncapped), Year 10 to Year 12, by Indigenous status, by state and territory (per cent), and gap Indigenous/non-Indigenous (percentage points) 2009, 2010, 2017 and 2018

2009	NSW	Vic.	Qld	SA	WA	Tas.	NT	ACT	Australia
Indigenous	43.7	49.1	60.6	63.9	41.3	39.8	42.2	67.9	50.1
Non-Indigenous	74.5	81.4	79.8	77.9	75.5	65.7	72.4	89.2	77.7
Gap (Indigenous/non-Indigenous)	30.8	32.3	19.2	14.0	34.2	25.9	30.2	21.3	27.6
2010	**NSW**	**Vic.**	**Qld**	**SA**	**WA**	**Tas.**	**NT**	**ACT**	**Australia**
Indigenous	45.3	51.2	64.0	64.9	45.4	41.9	41.4	75.0	52.5
Non-Indigenous	75.5	82.3	82.0	81.1	78.4	72.9	71.9	92.1	79.5
Gap (Indigenous/non-Indigenous)	30.2	31.1	18.0	16.2	33.0	31.0	30.5	17.1	27.0
2017	**NSW**	**Vic.**	**Qld**	**SA**	**WA**	**Tas.**	**NT**	**ACT**	**Australia**
Indigenous	52.4	68.2	73.1	91.1	57.5	54.5	49.6	84.6	63.0
Non-Indigenous	78.9	85.6	88.9	91.7	84.6	73.0	82.8	92.3	84.3
Gap (Indigenous/non-Indigenous)	26.5	17.4	15.8	0.6	27.1	18.5	33.2	7.7	21.3
2018	**NSW**	**Vic.**	**Qld**	**SA**	**WA**	**Tas.**	**NT**	**ACT**	**Australia**
Indigenous	49.3	66.9	74.9	85.5	63.7	62.3	44.2	92.6	62.6
Non-Indigenous	77.8	84.9	88.8	91.0	86.3	74.1	78.1	89.9	83.9
Gap (Indigenous/non-Indigenous)	28.5	18.0	13.9	5.5	22.6	11.8	33.9	-2.7	21.3
Change in gap 2009–2018	-2.3	-14.3	-5.3	-8.5	-11.6	-14.1	3.7	-24.0	-6.3
Change in gap 2017–18	2.0	0.6	-1.9	4.9	-4.5	-6.7	0.7	-10.4	0.0

Notes:

The apparent retention rate measures the number of full-time school students in a designated level/year of schooling as a percentage of their respective cohort group in a base year. The base year for apparent retention rates from Year 10 to 12 in 2018 is Year 10 in 2016. Counts of students are as at the annual Schools Census in the first week of August each year. Part-time students are not included. Ungraded students are not included.

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

Small numbers of Indigenous students in some states and territories can affect results for these jurisdictions.

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

Source: ABS, Cat. No. 4221.0*, Schools, Australia,* 2018 and earlier releases.

In 2018, the apparent retention rate from Year 10 to Year 12 for Indigenous students increased by 8.0 percentage points in the ACT, by 7.8 points in Tasmania, by 6.2 points in Western Australia and by 1.8 points in Queensland. In these jurisdictions, as shown in table 3.11, the gap in apparent retention between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students narrowed.

In the other four jurisdictions the apparent retention rate from Year 10 to Year 12 for Indigenous students decreased in 2018: by 5.6 percentage points in South Australia; by 5.4 points in the Northern Territory; by 3.1 points in New South Wales; and by 1.3 points in Victoria. In these states and territories, the gap in apparent retention between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students widened in 2018.

In 2018, apparent retention from Year 10 to Year 12 was higher for Indigenous girls than for Indigenous boys in all states and territories, except in the Northern Territory, where it was marginally higher for Indigenous boys.[75]

In addition to factors affecting the state-by-state comparison of apparent retention rates overall, the following may contribute to variations between jurisdictions in retention rates for Indigenous students and in KPM 1(e):

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

Information on Indigenous disadvantage and gaps in outcomes between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders and non-Indigenous Australians, including progress towards COAG Closing the Gap targets for education, is provided in *Closing the Gap Report 2019: The annual report to Parliament on progress in Closing the Gap.*

Additional data on apparent retention, including for other year groups, are available in the National Report on Schooling data portal.

[75] National Report on Schooling data portal, apparent retention data set

3.3 Student achievement – National Assessment Program

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

For 2018, this includes KPMs for NAP – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN), NAP sample assessment – Science Literacy and the OECD PISA tests in reading, maths and science.

3.3.1 NAP – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN)

In 2018, the eleventh year of national literacy and numeracy testing, Year 3, 5, 7 and 9 students in Australia were assessed on the test domains of reading, writing, language conventions (spelling, grammar and punctuation) and numeracy.

The *2018 NAPLAN National Report* and the 'NAPLAN results' page of the NAP website provide nationally comparable information on the 2018 national and state/territory results for each test domain. They also provide comparisons of performance by student characteristics such as gender, Indigeneity, language background other than English, parental occupation and parental education and by school location.

NAPLAN results are also reported at the school level on the *My School* website, and parents receive an individual report on their child's achievement in the NAPLAN tests. An individual student report shows student performance against the national average and relative to the achievement band scale. Information about how to interpret scales and standards is available on the NAP website.

2018 was the first year of the transition from NAPLAN paper tests to NAPLAN tests conducted online. In 2018, approximately 15 per cent of all students took NAPLAN online. Online test results were equated with the paper test results and are reported on the same NAPLAN assessment scale.

NAPLAN participation rates, mean scale scores and proportions of students achieving at or above the national minimum standard in reading, writing and numeracy at each year level are specified as key performance measures (KPMs) in the *Measurement Framework for Schooling in Australia 2015.* These are reported for 2018 in the tables below.

NAPLAN participation

Key performance measure 1(d)

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

Table 3.12 reports KPM 1(d) for 2018.

Table 3.12

Proportion of students participating in NAPLAN for Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 for reading, writing and numeracy, 2018 (per cent)

	Year 3	Year 5	Year 7	Year 9
Proportion of students participating in reading tests	94.7	95.3	94.0	90.5
Proportion of students participating in writing tests	94.4	95.2	94.2	90.9
Proportion of students participating in numeracy tests	94.3	94.8	93.4	89.6

Notes:

Participation rates are calculated as all assessed and exempt students as a percentage of the total number of students in each year level, as reported by the school. Exempt students do not sit the test. For reporting purposes, they are deemed to be below the national minimum standard.

Definitions of terms are provided in the NAPLAN glossary on the NAP website.

Sources: ACARA, *National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy, Achievement in Reading, Writing, Language Conventions and Numeracy, National Report for 2018.*

In summary:

- In 2018, NAPLAN participation rates exceeded 90 per cent for all years for all domains except Year 9 numeracy. NAPLAN participation rates were similar across Years 3, 5 and 7, but lower for Year 9 by 3–4 percentage points.
- In 2018, the Year 9 participation rate in numeracy was 89.6 per cent. This is the first time that participation has fallen below 90 per cent in any year level or domain. For Year 9, compared with other year levels, absence makes a substantial contribution to non-participation, with absence rates of 6.3 per cent in reading and 7.2 per cent in numeracy.
- As with previous years, participation rates in NAPLAN in 2018 were lower for Indigenous students than for non-Indigenous students across all cohorts and domains.
- Nationally, there has been a small but steady decrease in participation rates in NAPLAN over the period from 2008 to 2018, with an average decrease across the four year levels in reading, writing and numeracy of approximately 0.25 percentage points per year.
- The decrease is smallest for Year 5 participation (a drop of 1.6 percentage points in reading, writing and numeracy on average since 2008). The greatest decrease in participation is for Year 9 reading, writing and numeracy. This has dropped by 3.1 percentage points since 2008 on average for these three domains.
- Since 2012, there has been an increase in the proportion of withdrawn students. This is mirrored in the fall in participation rates. Students are withdrawn from NAPLAN by their parent or carer. Withdrawals are understood to be on the basis of issues such as religious beliefs or philosophical objections to testing.

Reading

Key performance measure 2(a)

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

Key performance measure 2(b)

NAPLAN mean scale scores for reading

Table 3.13 reports KPMs 2(a) and 2(b) for Years 3, 5, 7 and 9, 2018.

Table 3.13

Summary for reading for Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 for Australia, proportion at or above national minimum standards (per cent); mean scale scores, 2018

	Year 3	Year 5	Year 7	Year 9
Proportion of students at or above national minimum standard (%)	95.6	94.9	94.1	93.4
CI ±	0.2	0.2	0.3	0.4
Mean scale score	433.8	509.3	542.2	584.1
(standard deviation)	(83.9)	(75.0)	(67.7)	(64.1)

Notes:

Exempt students do not sit the test. For reporting purposes, they are deemed to be below the national minimum standard.

CI = confidence interval.

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

Confidence intervals cited should be used to compare data within 2018 only.

Sources: ACARA, *National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy, Achievement in Reading, Writing, Language Conventions and Numeracy, National Report for 2018;* ACARA (unpublished data).

Summary of trends in reading between 2017 and 2018:

- At the national level, there was no statistically significant change in the proportion of students achieving at or above the national minimum standard for reading across all year levels. There was also no statistically significant change in the NAPLAN mean scale score for reading for any year level.
- Year 9 students in Victoria showed a statistically significant improvement in the proportion of students at or above the national minimum standard between 2017 and 2018.
- Australian Capital Territory students in Years 3, 5 and 9 showed a statistically significant improvement in the proportion of students achieving at or above the national minimum standard between 2017 and 2018.

Summary of trends in reading between 2008 and 2018:

- Nationally, there have been improvements in Year 3 and Year 5 reading from 2008 to 2018, with statistically significant increases in both the mean scale score and in the proportion of students attaining the national minimum standard.

- Among Indigenous students in Year 3 and 5, there was a statistically significant increase in both the mean scale score and the proportion of students at or above the national minimum standard.

The following improvements between 2008 and 2018 in states and territories, reflected the improvements seen at the national level:

- In New South Wales and Victoria there were improvements in reading in Years 3 and Year 5. The mean scale score for reading showed statistically significant increases for Year 3 and Year 5 students, while the proportion of students in Year 5 achieving at or above the national minimum standard also rose by a statistically significant amount.

- In Queensland, there were substantial improvements in Year 3 and Year 5 mean scale scores in reading. The proportion of students at or above the national minimum standard was also substantially above the 2008 level.

- In South Australia, statistically significant improvements have occurred for Year 3 and 5 students between 2008 and 2018 for both average achievement and the proportion of students at or above the national minimum standard in reading.

- In Western Australia, there have been statistically significant improvements in reading across Years 3, 5 and 9 between 2008 and 2018 for both the average achievement and the proportion of students at or above the national minimum standard in reading.

- In Tasmania, there were statistically significant improvements in mean achievement in Year 3 and Year 5 reading.

- In the Australian Capital Territory, there were improvements in both mean achievement and the proportion of students at or above the national minimum standard in Years 3 and 5.

Writing

Key performance measure 2(c)
Proportion of students achieving at or above the national minimum standard for writing

Key performance measure 2(d)
NAPLAN mean scale scores for writing

Table 3.14 reports on KPM 2(c) and 2(d) for Years 3, 5, 7 and 9, 2018

Table 3.14

Summary for writing for Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 for Australia: proportion of students achieving at or above the national minimum standard (per cent); mean scale scores, 2018

	Year 3	Year 5	Year 7	Year 9
Proportion of students at or above national minimum standard (%)	94.4	89.8	86.9	79.5
CI ±	0.2	0.3	0.5	0.7
Mean scale score	407.1	464.7	505.3	542.4
(standard deviation)	(69.5)	(67.8)	(74.0)	(83.3)

Notes:

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

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

Confidence intervals cited should be used to compare data within 2018 only.

The current writing scale allows both narrative and persuasive tasks to be reported on the same basis. Results for the narrative writing task from 2008 to 2010 were reported on a separate writing scale that is not comparable to the current scale. Therefore, for writing the base year is 2011.

Sources: ACARA, *National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy, Achievement in Reading, Writing, Language Conventions and Numeracy, National Report for 2018;* ACARA.

The writing genre assessed in NAPLAN 2018 was persuasive writing. Students and teachers were not advised in advance whether the genre would be narrative or persuasive. Since 2016, there have been two writing prompts: one for Years 3 and 5; and one for Years 7 and 9. A common writing scale for both genres has only been in place since 2011, hence reporting on writing uses 2011 as the base year.

Summary of trends in writing at the national level:

- Between 2017 and 2018, there was no statistically significant change in the proportion of students achieving at or above the national minimum standard for writing across all year levels 3, 5, 7 and 9. There was also no statistically significant change in the NAPLAN mean scale scores for writing.
- Between 2011 and 2018, there was a statistically significant decrease in writing mean achievement and in the proportion of students achieving at or above the national minimum standard for Years 5, 7 and 9 students.

The states' and territories' performances in writing generally reflect the national trends.

Numeracy

Key performance measure 3(a)
Proportion of students achieving at or above the national minimum standard for numeracy

Key performance measure 3(b)
NAPLAN mean scale scores for numeracy

Table 3.15 reports KPMs 3(a) and 3(b) for Years 3, 5, 7 and 9, 2018.

Table 3.15

Summary for numeracy for Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 for Australia: proportion of students at or above national minimum standard (per cent); mean scale scores, 2018

	Year 3	Year 5	Year 7	Year 9
Proportion of students at or above national minimum standard (%)	95.8	95.7	95.6	95.5
CI ±	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.3
Mean scale score	407.7	494.0	548.4	595.7
(standard deviation)	(71.6)	(65.4)	(69.1)	(66.3)

Notes:

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

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

Confidence intervals cited should be used to compare data within 2018 only.

Sources: ACARA, *National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy, Achievement in Reading, Writing, Language Conventions and Numeracy, National Report for 2018;* ACARA (unpublished data).

Summary of trends in numeracy at the national level:

- There were no significant changes in numeracy achievement between 2017 and 2018.
- Numeracy achievement for Year 3 and Year 7 has remained largely unchanged from 2008 to 2018.
- From 2008 to 2018, there were statistically significant increases in mean scale scores and the proportion of students performing at or above the national minimum standard in Year 5 and Year 9 numeracy.

At the state and territory level, there were a number of statistically significant improvements in performance in numeracy between 2008 and 2018:

- In New South Wales, there was a statistically significant increase in the proportion of Year 5 students at or above the national minimum standard for numeracy.
- In Victoria, both the mean scale score for Year 5 and the proportion of Year 5 students achieving at or above the national minimum standard increased significantly.

- Queensland students showed significant increases in numeracy achievement across Years 3, 5, and 9. In particular, there was substantial rise in the proportion of students achieving at or above the national minimum standard in Year 5.

- In South Australia, there were statistically significant improvements in the mean scale scores for Years 5 and 9. There was also an increase in the proportion of Year 5 students at or above the national minimum standard.

- In Western Australia, there were statistically significant increases in mean scale scores across Years 3, 5, 7 and 9. The proportion of students achieving at or above the national minimum standard also improved in Years 5 and 9, with the proportion of Year 9 students at or above the national minimum standard substantially higher.

- In Tasmania, there were statistically significant improvements for students in Year 5 and 9 in both mean scale score achievement and the proportion achieving at or above the national minimum standard.

- In the Northern Territory, there was a statistically significant increase in the proportion of Year 5 students at or above the national minimum standard.

- In the Australian Capital Territory, statistically significant improvements were made in the Year 5 mean scale score for numeracy and in the proportion of students at or above national minimum standard.

Closing the gap in literacy and numeracy

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

Closing the Gap target

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

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

Progress towards the Closing the Gap targets is reported in the *Closing the Gap Report 2019: the annual report to Parliament on progress in Closing the Gap.* The Australian Government's Performance reporting dashboard, published by the Productivity Commission, reporting on progress towards COAG's key commitments, reports that the target to halve the gap in literacy and numeracy achievement by 2018 was not met at the national level for any year group in either reading or numeracy:

While the target has not been met, there have been statistically significant improvements at the national level in the proportions of Indigenous students at or above the national minimum standard in Year 3 and Year 5 reading, and Year 5 and Year 9 numeracy in the period 2008–18.

The overall target was not met in any state or territory. However, in some jurisdictions the gap was halved for some year groups in literacy, numeracy or both:

- In reading, the gap was halved for Year 3 in Queensland; for Year 5 in Queensland and Tasmania; and for Year 9 in the ACT.

- In numeracy, the gap was halved for Year 5 in Queensland and Tasmania; for Year 7 in Tasmania and the Australian Capital Territory; and for Year 9 in Victoria, Queensland, Western Australia, South Australia and the Australian Capital Territory.[76]

NAPLAN results disaggregated by Indigenous status are provided on the NAPLAN results page of the ACARA website and in the 2018 NAPLAN National Report.

Data on the NAPLAN KPMs by state and territory are provided in the National Report on Schooling data portal (key performance measures dashboard).

3.3.2 NAP Sample – Science Literacy

The National Sample Assessment for Science Literacy (NAP–SL) first took place in 2003. It is administered every three years, as part of a rotating assessment cycle with the other NAP sample assessments of civics and citizenship and information and communication technology literacy.

The sixth NAP – Science Literacy assessment was conducted in 2018. Year 6 students have been assessed in each cycle; 2018 was the first to include Year 10 students, and was conducted online. (The first online assessment for Year 6 students took place in 2015.) The assessment included a representative sample of 5,551 Year 6 students (in 343 schools) and 3,032 Year 10 students (in 202 schools), across all states and territories. Participating schools received a summary report showing student responses compared with the national percentage correct for each item and links to the Australian Curriculum: Science.

The proportion of students achieving at or above the proficient standard (level 3 for Year 6 and level 4 for Year 10) is the KPM for Science Literacy at each year level.

Key performance measure 4(a)

Proportion of students achieving at or above the proficient standard in NAP – Science Literacy:

Year 6 – level 3

Year 10 – level 4

[76] Productivity Commission 2019, Performance Reporting Dashboard, Canberra (accessed August 2019).

KPM 4(a) is shown in table 3.16.

Table 3.16

Proportion of students achieving at or above the proficient standard (Level 3, Year 6; Level 4, Year 10) in Science Literacy, 2006–2018 (per cent)

	2006	2009	2012	2015	2018
Year 6 Australia (%)	54	52	51	55	58
CI±	2.1	2.2	2.0	1.8	2.4
Year 10 Australia (%)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	50
CI±	–	–	–	–	2.8

Notes:

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

N/A = Not applicable. Year 10 Science Literacy was assessed for the first time in 2018.

Source: ACARA, National Assessment Program – Science Literacy public report 2018.

See also National Report on Schooling data portal.

At the national level:

- The proportion of participating Year 6 students in Australia achieving at or above the proficient standard in 2018 was 58 per cent. This was not statistically significantly different to the proportion achieving at or above the standard in 2015, but was significantly higher than this measure in 2012.
- The proportion of participating Year 10 students in Australia attaining the proficient standard in 2018 was 50 per cent.

Further information on student achievement in science literacy in 2018, including by state and territory, is provided in the National Report on Schooling in Australia data portal and in the National Assessment Program – Science Literacy public report 2018.

3.3.3 National Assessment Program – Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA)

The Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) takes place every three years and assesses 15-year-olds in reading, mathematical and scientific literacy. PISA is developed and administered internationally by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).

PISA 2018 compares the performance of samples of 15-year-old students from 79 OECD member countries, partner countries or economies.[77] Over 600,000 students participated in PISA in 2018.[78]

In each cycle of PISA, one domain is selected as the main focus on a rotating basis. In PISA 2018, reading literacy was the major domain. Once a domain has been a main focus, reliable comparisons can be made between the results in the first focus year and results in subsequent testing years.

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

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

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

Key Performance Measure 2(e)
Proportion of students achieving at or above the proficient standard (level 3) on the OECD PISA combined reading scale

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

Key Performance Measure 4(b)
Proportion of students achieving at or above the proficient standard (level 3) on the OECD PISA combined scientific literacy scale

These KPMs refer to the proficient standard adopted for Australia as representing 'a challenging but reasonable' expectation of student achievement at a year level, with students needing to demonstrate more than elementary skills expected at that year level.[79] For PISA, the proficient standard is defined as level 3 on each of the international PISA scales.

KPMs 2(e), 3(c) and 4(b) for PISA 2018 and for previous PISA assessments are reported in table 3.17. The table also includes the OECD averages for PISA 2018 for the proportion of students achieving above the proficient standard in each domain.

[77] 'Partner countries' are countries that are not members of the OECD. A 'partner economy' is a region, state or city rather than a whole country. The PISA student sample in each country is intended to represent the student population of that country. The student sample in a partner economy represents the student population in that region, state or city only, and may not be representative of the country of which it is part. As such, PISA results for partner economies may not be fully comparable with results for countries.

[78] OECD PISA website

[79] *Measurement Framework for Schooling in Australia 2015*, p.5. In the case of PISA, the year level is the 15-year-old target group.

Table 3.17

Proportion of students achieving at or above or above the proficient standard (level 3) in PISA, Australia, 2000–2018; OECD average, 2018 (per cent)

Proportion of students achieving at or above or above the proficient standard in PISA (%)								
	Australia 2000–2018							OECD average
	2000	2003	2006	2009	2012	2015	2018	2018
Reading literacy – KPM 2(e)	69	70	66	65	64	61	59	54
Mathematical literacy – KPM 3(c)	NA	67	67	64	58	55	54	54
Scientific literacy – KPM 4(b)	NA	NA	67	67	65	61	58	52

Notes:

In each cycle of PISA, one domain is selected as the main focus on a rotating basis. In PISA 2018, reading literacy was the major domain. Once a domain has been a main focus, reliable comparisons can be made between the results in the first focus year and results in subsequent testing years.

Reading literacy was the focus domain for the first time in 2000.

N/A – not applicable. Not included in time series, as mathematical literacy was the focus domain for the first time in 2003 and scientific literacy was the focus domain for the first time in 2006.

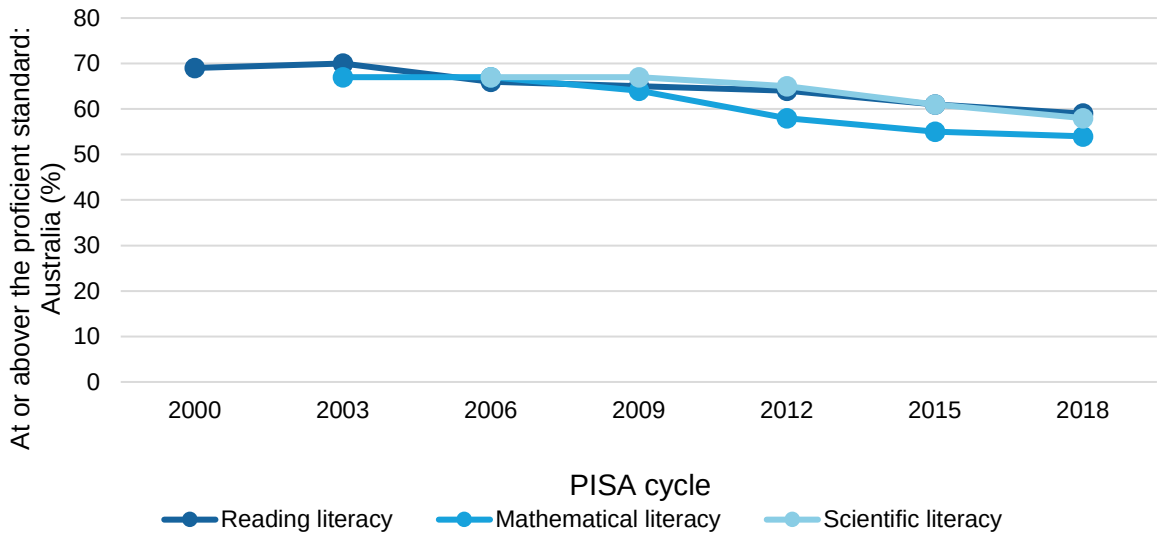
The OECD average reflects the performance of participating students across OECD member nations. It does not include the performance of students in non-member countries or partner economies.

Source: Thomson, Sue; De Bortoli, Lisa; Underwood, Catherine; and Schmid, Marina, *PISA 2018: Reporting Australia's Results. Volume I Student Performance: Data tables*

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

Figure 3.13

Proportion of students achieving at or above or above the proficient standard (level 3) in PISA, Australia, 2000–2018 (per cent)



Notes:

Reading literacy was the focus domain for the first time in 2000.

Mathematical literacy was the focus domain for the first time in 2003.

Scientific literacy was the focus domain for the first time in 2006.

Source: PISA 2018: Reporting Australia's Results. Volume I Student Performance: Data tables.

A total of 14,273 Australian students participated in PISA 2018[80]. This represented approximately 5.0 per cent[81] of Australian 15-year-old students. The student sample was taken across 740 schools.

In PISA 2018, at the Australian national level:

- fifty-nine per cent of participating Australian students achieved at or above the national proficient standard for reading literacy (KPM 2(c))
- fifty-four per cent of participating Australian students achieved at or above the national proficient standard for mathematical literacy (KPM 3(c))
- fifty-eight per cent of participating Australian students achieved at or above the national proficient standard for scientific literacy (KPM 4(b)).

[80] Sue Thomson, Lisa De Bortoli, Catherine Underwood and Marina Schmid (Australian Council for Educational Research) *PISA 2018 in Brief I: Student performance,* p2

[81] ABS, *Schools Australia, 2018* reports that there were 283,278 15-year-old school students as at the Schools Census in August 2018.

An overall downward trend in all three KPMs for PISA continued in 2018, but there was relatively little change since the last cycle of PISA in 2015, with decreases of 2.0 percentage points, 1.0 percentage point and 3.0 percentage points respectively. Only the fall of three percentage points in scientific literacy was statistically significant.

The proportions of participating Australian students meeting the national proficient standard in 2018 were significantly above the OECD average in in reading and scientific literacy. The proportion of students meeting the proficient standard in mathematical literacy was statistically similar to the OECD average.

Australian students achieved average scores of:

- 503 points in reading literacy, the same score as in PISA 2015, and significantly higher than the OECD average of 487 points
- 491 points in mathematical literacy, a fall from 494 points in PISA 2015, but not significantly different from PISA 2015 or from the OECD average of 489. This was the first instance in which the Australian average did not significantly exceed the OECD average in any domain
- 503 points in scientific literacy, a significant fall from 510 points in PISA 2015, but significantly higher than the OECD average of 489 points.

Further detailed information on PISA results for 2018, including international and interstate comparisons, is provided in PISA 2018: Reporting Australia's results, Volume I, Student Performance.

3.4 Senior schooling and youth transitions

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

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

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

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

3.4.1 Participation of young people, including secondary students, in VET

The Australian vocational education and training (VET) sector provides nationally recognised training and qualifications for those entering or already engaged in the workforce. Competency standards (units of competency) for VET qualifications in different industries and occupations are included in national training packages, which also define qualifications in each industry. Nationally recognised VET qualifications are detailed on a national register/database, training.gov.au, which is managed by the Australian Government on behalf of states and territories.

The requirements for each level of VET qualification are set out in the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF)[82], which also provides guidelines for Senior Secondary Certificate of Education qualifications (Year 12 qualifications) and qualifications in the higher education sector.

Secondary school students in all states and territories can undertake nationally recognised VET courses[83] as part of their school program, usually in the senior years of schooling, as part of the Senior Secondary Certificate of Education in each jurisdiction.[84]

Secondary students enrolled in VET include school-based apprentices and trainees. These are students who, as well as undertaking an accredited VET qualification as a part of their school studies, have entered into a formal contract of part-time paid employment and training with an employer. Typically, these students

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

[83] Preparing Secondary Students for Work – A framework for vocational learning and VET delivered to secondary students released by the Education Council (December 2014) adopts the term 'VET delivered to secondary students' to replace the term 'VET in Schools (VETiS)' historically used for these programs. However, in 2018, the term 'VET in Schools' continued to be used in the VET sector to identify VET delivered to secondary students and for data collection and reporting purposes. 'VET in Schools' continues to be the term used within the Australian Vocational Educational and Training Management Information Statistical Standard (AVETMISS).

[84] See glossary for the names of senior secondary certificates of education issued by each state and territory.

undertake part of their traineeship or apprenticeship while at school and complete it once they have left school.

Enrolments in VET and school-based apprenticeships and traineeships, and VET qualifications issued to secondary students are reported at the school level on the *My School* website for schools with senior secondary enrolments.

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

VET KPM and program measures

The KPM for participation in VET includes all 15–19-year-old VET students (whether or not they are enrolled in school) as a proportion of the 15–19-year-old population. The specification for participation is the completion of at least one unit of competency in a VET qualification at AQF Certificate II or above.[85]

Key performance measure 1(f)

Participation in VET including VET in Schools

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

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

Table 3.18 and figure 3.4 show national data for this KPM for the period 2009–2018.

[85] AQF Certificate II is regarded as entry level training for employment.

Table 3.18

Number and proportion of 15–19-year-olds who successfully completed at least one unit of competency as a part of a VET qualification at AQF Certificate II or above, Australia, 2009–2018

Australia	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Number of 15–19-year-olds successfully completing at least one unit of competency at AQF II or above (‘000)	359.1	374.1	399.2	418.5	395.5	494.8	438.1	414.7	413.4	401.9
15–19-year-old population ('000)	1,462.4	1,460.1	1,453.5	1,459.7	1,466.7	1,474.7	1,469.9	1,475.2	1,482.6	1,490.6
Proportion of 15–19-year-olds successfully completing at least one unit of competency at AQF II or above (per cent)	24.6	25.6	27.5	28.7	27.0	33.6	29.8	28.1	27.9	27.0

Notes:

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

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

From January 2014, all registered training organisations (RTOs), including private providers, were required to collect and report full AVETMISS[86] data on all nationally accredited training. This constitutes a break in the time series.

From January 2015, VET students have been allocated a unique student identifier (USI). From 2015 onwards, NCVER has applied a de-duplication process, using the USI, to better estimate the counts of students participating in VET activity. This constitutes a further break in the time series between 2014 and 2015.

Sources: NCVER, National VET in Schools Collection 2009–18; NCVER, National VET Provider Collection 2009–18; ABS, Cat. No. 3101.0, *Australian Demographic Statistics* (release date 19/09/2019, based on the 2016 Census of Population and Housing).

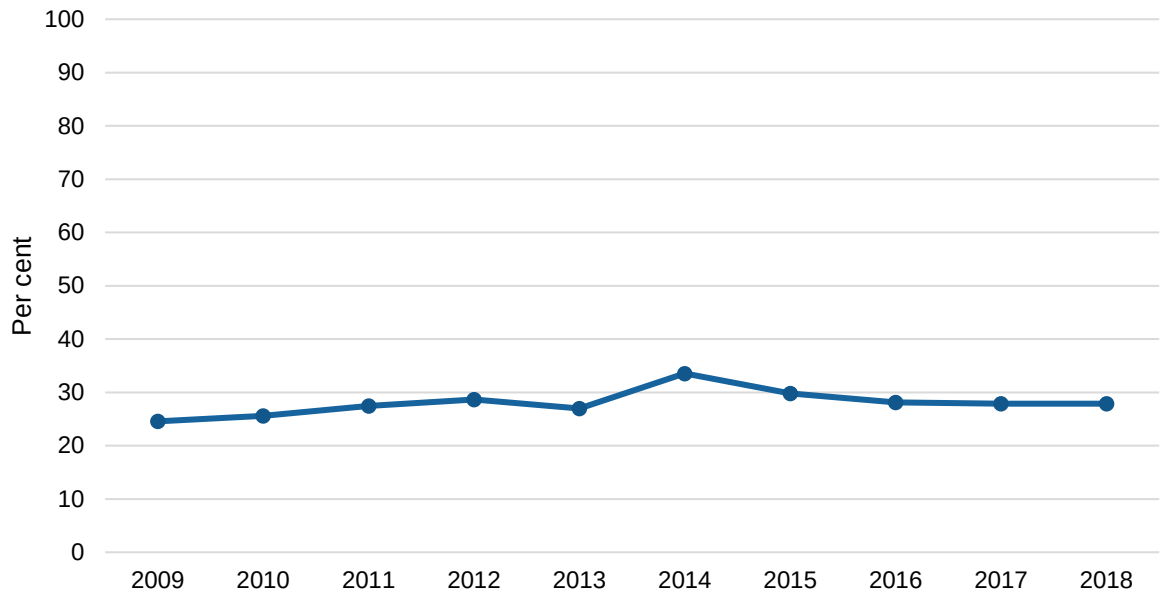
See also National Report on Schooling data portal.

[86] Australian Vocational Education and Training Information Management Statistical Standard

Figure 3.4

Proportion of 15–19-year-olds successfully completing at least one unit of competency at AQF II or above (per cent), Australia, 2009–2018

Per cent



Sources: NCVER, National VET in Schools Collection 2009–18; NCVER, National VET Provider Collection 2009–18; ABS, Cat. No. 3101.0, *Australian Demographic Statistics* (release date 19/09/2019, based on the 2016 Census of Population and Housing).

There is a break in the time series between 2013 and 2014, when reporting requirements for VET providers were extended to include privately funded accredited VET training. This change contributes to the higher numbers and proportions of 15–19-year-olds reported as participating in VET in 2014 than in previous years.

There is a further break in the series between 2014 and 2015, following the introduction of a national Unique Student Identifier (USI) (student number) for VET students. The USI allows all training activity undertaken by a student to be electronically linked, irrespective of where the training took place. This has enabled the removal of duplicate student entries from 2015, resulting in reductions in the KPM and a break from data reported for 2014.

Data for KPM 1(f) by state and territory, disaggregated by Indigenous status, sex, geolocation and language background are provided in the National Report on Schooling data portal.

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

VET program measure 1

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

Table 3.19 reports VET program measure 1 for 2018 using the Australian standard classifications for field of education as a proxy for occupation/industry profile. Other disaggregations, by skills service organisation and by occupational category, are provided in the National Report on Schooling data portal along with state and territory data disaggregated by Indigenous status, sex, geolocation and language background.

Table 3.19

Number of 15–19-year-olds participating in VET at AQF Certificate II or above, by field of education of major course, Australia, 2018

Field of education	Number of students
01 – Natural and physical sciences	1,931
02 – Information technology	15,192
03 – Engineering and related technologies	62,104
04 – Architecture and building	43,615
05 – Agriculture, environmental and related studies	12,465
06 – Health	20,565
07 – Education	5,231
08 – Management and commerce	71,209
09 – Society and culture	68,532
10 – Creative arts	27,343
11 – Food, hospitality and personal services	58,546
12 – Mixed field programmes	15,121
Total	**401,854**

Notes:

Field of education is according to ABS 1272.0 – Australian Standard Classification of Education (ASCED), 2001.

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

Sources: NCVER, National VET in Schools Collection 2018; NCVER, National VET Provider Collection 2018.

VET program measure 2
Level of AQF certification for 15–19-year-olds who in the calendar year successfully completed a VET qualification

Table 3.20 reports on the number VET qualifications completed by 15–19-year-olds in 2018, by the AQF level of qualifications.

Table 3.20

VET qualifications completed by 15–19-year-olds, by qualification level of major course, Australia, 2018

Qualification level	Number
Certificate I	26,979
Certificate II	105,698
Certificate III	67,953
Certificate IV	11,084
Diploma or higher	11,450
Total	**223,164**

Notes:

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

Numbers of enrolments and numbers of qualifications should not be compared. Enrolments include students in their first, second or third year of a VET course and from multiple cohorts, whereas qualifications completed by secondary students are more likely to be issued in the final year of school. In addition, a secondary student may intend to complete only a partial qualification while at school. Students may also commence training between the ages of 15 and 19 and complete the qualification when they are no longer in this age group.

Sources: NCVER, National VET in Schools Collection 2018; NCVER, National VET Provider Collection 2018.

Numbers of qualifications and enrolments should not be compared, as enrolments include students who are beginning or continuing a multi-year course as well as those in the final year of a course. Also, due to time constraints, VET courses delivered to secondary students do not necessarily lead to the achievement of a full AQF VET qualification. Where they do not, students assessed as competent in one or more units of competency receive a statement of attainment towards a certificate or other qualification and are eligible to complete the full qualification post-school.

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

VET delivered to secondary students

KPM 1(f) and the VET program measures include all 15–19-year-old students undertaking VET. The data below refer to VET delivered to 15–19-year-old secondary school students. For the purposes of the national VET in Schools data collection[87], these are students who are undertaking accredited VET as a part of a Senior Secondary Certificate of Education.[88] These data are not restricted to Certificate II or above, or to students who have successfully completed at least one unit of competency.

Table 3.21 shows the number of 15–19-year-old students undertaking VET in Schools programs each yearin the period 2009–2018 with school-based apprentices and trainees disaggregated.

Table 3.21

Number of 15–19-year-old students undertaking VET in Schools programs, Australia, 2009−2018

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
School-based apprentices and trainees [(a)] ('000)	20.9	17.3	18.1	22.5	21.7	20.5	19.7	16.9	19.9	18.1
Other VET in Schools program students ('000)	195.8	203.6	218.3	219.8	218.1	216.1	226.8	216.8	217.8	208.7
Total VET in Schools students ('000)	216.7	220.9	236.4	242.3	239.7	236.6	246.5	233.7	237.7	226.9

Note:

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

Sources: NCVER, National VET in Schools Collection, 2018; NCVER, VET in Schools 2018; NCVER, VET in Schools 2018 data slicer.

In the 2018 calendar year, there were 226,850 students aged 15–19 years enrolled in VET in Schools programs. Based on these data, it is estimated that approximately 45 per cent of senior secondary students undertook one or more VET courses in 2018 as part of their Senior Secondary Certificate.[89]

Of these students, the majority (54.8) per cent were enrolled in Certificate II qualifications and a further 34.8 per cent were enrolled in Certificate III qualifications. Eight per cent were undertaking a school-based apprenticeship or traineeship.

The most popular courses undertaken by secondary students were from training packages in Tourism, Travel and Hospitality, followed by Business Services, and Sport, Fitness and Recreation.

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

[88] In some jurisdictions, students who have left school (i.e. are not secondary students) but are receiving credit for a VET course towards a senior secondary certificate may be included in these counts. To the extent that these students are included, this inflates the data as a measure of the number of secondary school students undertaking VET.

[89] This is an estimate only, as there are some disparities between the counting of VET in Schools students and of Year 11 and 12 enrolments in the NSSC. For example, VET courses undertaken by Year 10 (or Year 9) students in some jurisdictions may be credited towards the SSCE and thus included in the VET in Schools data collection but these students are not included in the count of senior secondary students; Year 11 and 12 enrolments include small numbers of students aged 20 and above who are not counted in the number of 15–19-year-old secondary students undertaking VET.

Between 2017 and 2018, the number of VET in Schools students aged 15–19 years decreased by 4.6 per cent. There was a fall in enrolments in school-based apprenticeships and traineeships following a resurgence of these programs in 2017.

Further detailed information, including data disaggregated by state and territory, data definitions and data quality issues, are provided in the annual NCVER publications Australian vocational education and training statistics: Young people in education and training and VET in Schools.

Enrolments and qualifications achieved in VET by secondary students are reported at the school level, by field of education and qualification level, on the *My School* website.

3.4.2 Participation in education and work

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

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

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

The *Measurement Framework for Schooling in Australia 2015* specifies that data drawn from the Census of Population and Housing[90], will also be reported for census years.

Key performance measure 1(g)

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

Key performance measure 1(h)

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

KPMs 1(g) and 1(h) are shown for the period 2009–2018 and for census years 2011 and 2016 in table 3.22. Figure 3.5 illustrates KPMs 1(g) and 1(h), as measured by SEW, over the period 2009–2018.

[90] The Census of Population and Housing is Australia's largest statistical collection undertaken by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS). The census is conducted every five years.

Table 3.22

Proportions of 15–19-year-olds and 20–24-year-olds in full-time education or training, in full-time work, or both in part-time work and part-time education or training, Australia, 2009–2018 (per cent)

Calendar year	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Full-time participation rates for 15–19-year-olds	84.1	84.8	85.3	86.5	86.3	87.2	87.4	88.4	89.0	88.6
CI±	1.4	1.5	1.4	1.0	1.2	1.1	0.3	1.3	1.0	1.2
Full-time participation rates for 15–19-year-olds (supplementary census measure)			86.0					86.4		
Full-time participation rates for 20–24-year-olds	77.1	77.2	77.0	76.6	73.8	74.1	73.6	76.1	75.0	74.6
CI±	2.0	1.6	1.5	1.7	1.1	1.6	1.7	1.5	1.5	1.6
Full-time participation rates for 20–24-year-olds (supplementary census measure)			74.7					72.2		

Notes:

CI = confidence interval

The percentages reported for Survey Education and Work (SEW) data in this table include 95 per cent confidence intervals. Confidence intervals are a way of expressing the degree of sampling and measurement error associated with survey estimates. For example, an estimate of 80 with a 95 per cent confidence interval of ±2 means that if the total population was surveyed rather than a sample, there is a 95 per cent chance that the result would lie between 78 and 82.

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

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

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

SEW includes people in very remote areas but excludes people in Indigenous communities in very remote areas. This exclusion has only a minor impact on national estimates or estimates by state/territory except for the Northern Territory where people in these communities account for about 15 per cent of the population.

The decreases in the SEW participation measures from 2017 to 2018 are not statistically significant.

Data reported from the Census of Population and Housing exclude respondents who provided incomplete or insufficient information on their participation in education and work. As such, the data do not encompass the full census counts of 15–19 and 20–24-year-olds.

Changes in census measures from 2011 to 2016 are not statistically significant.

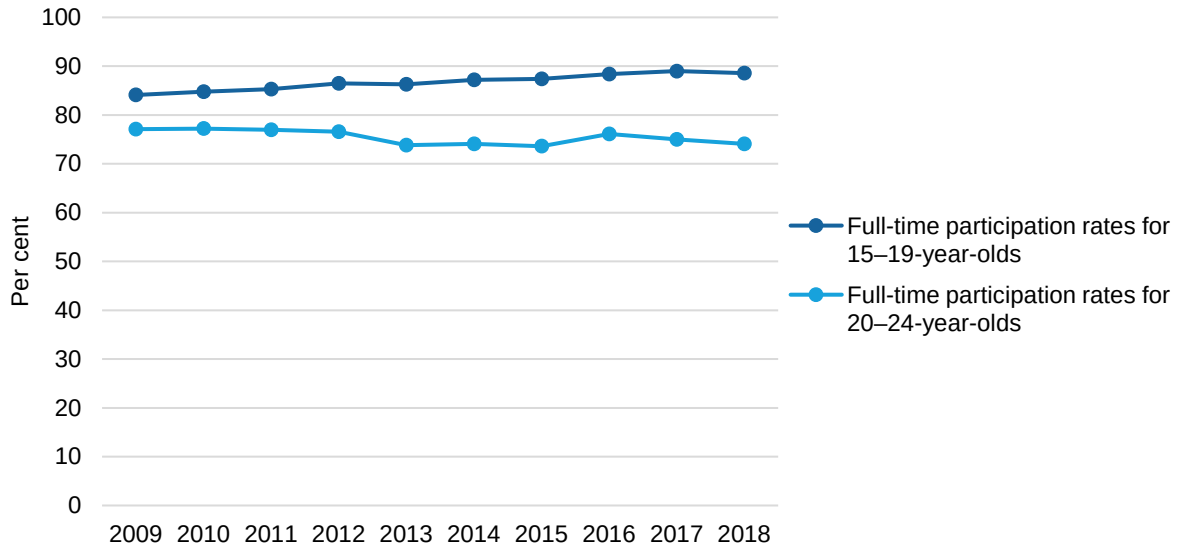
Sources: ABS, Cat. No. 6227.0, *Education and Work,* May 2018; ABS, *Census of Population and Housing*, 2011, 2016; see also National Report on Schooling data portal.

As shown in table 3.22, full-time participation rates for young people in their mid–late teens were consistently higher than for those in their early to mid-20s. This is to be expected, as the 15–19-year age group includes a high proportion of secondary school students for whom full-time participation in education, training or work is compulsory, at least until age 17[91].

Since 2009, there has been a net increase in full-time participation for 15–19-year-olds from 84.1 per cent to 88.6 per cent, but a net fall in the participation rate for 20–24-year-olds from 77.1 per cent to 74.6 per cent, despite a rise over this period in participation in education and training by this age group.[92]

Figure 3.5

Proportions of 15–19-year-olds and 20–24-year-olds in full-time education or training, in full-time work, or both in part-time work and part-time education or training, Australia, 2009–2018 (per cent)



Note:

Refer to table 3.22 for confidence intervals.

Source: ABS, Cat. No. 6227.0, *Education and Work*, May 2018.

KPM 1(i) measures the participation in post-school education and training and/or work of 17–24-year-olds who are not at school. This measure is informative as an indicator of the transition of young people from school to further education and/or work, and the performance of schooling in facilitating this. It excludes people who were still at school from both the numerator and the denominator.

[91] Based on SEW data, 83.4 per cent of 15–19-year-olds in 2018 were engaged in formal study.

[92] This fall is partly due to the expansion of the sample population of the Survey of Education and Work from 2013 to include people who were permanently unable to work.

Key performance measure 1(i)

Proportion of 17–24-year-olds who have left school that are in full-time education or training, in full-time work, or both in part-time work and part-time education or training

SEW data for this KPM are reported for the period 2009–2018 in table 3.23 and figure 3.6. Census data for the years 2011 and 2016 are reported in table 3.23.

Table 3.23

Proportion of 17–24-year-olds who have left school that are in full-time education or training, in full-time work, or both in part-time work and part-time education or training, Australia, 2009–2018 (per cent)

Calendar year	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Full-time participation rates for 17–24-year-olds who have left school	74.6	75.0	75.1	75.5	72.7	73.2	72.9	75.5	74.7	74.3
CI±	1.7	1.5	1.4	1.3	1.1	1.4	1.4	1.2	1.3	1.6
Full-time participation rates for 17–24-year-olds who have left school (supplementary census measure)			73.0					71.0		

Notes:

CI = confidence interval

The percentages for Survey Education and Work (SEW) data reported in this table include 95 per cent confidence intervals. Confidence intervals are a way of expressing the degree of sampling and measurement error associated with survey estimates. For example, an estimate of 80 with a 95 per cent confidence interval of ±2 means that if the total population was surveyed rather than a sample, there is a 95 per cent chance that the result would lie between 78 and 82.

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

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

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

SEW includes people in very remote areas but excludes people in Indigenous communities in very remote areas. This exclusion has only a minor impact on national estimates or estimates by state/territory except for the Northern Territory where people in these communities account for about 15 per cent of the population.

The change in the SEW measure from 2017 to 2018 is not statistically significant.

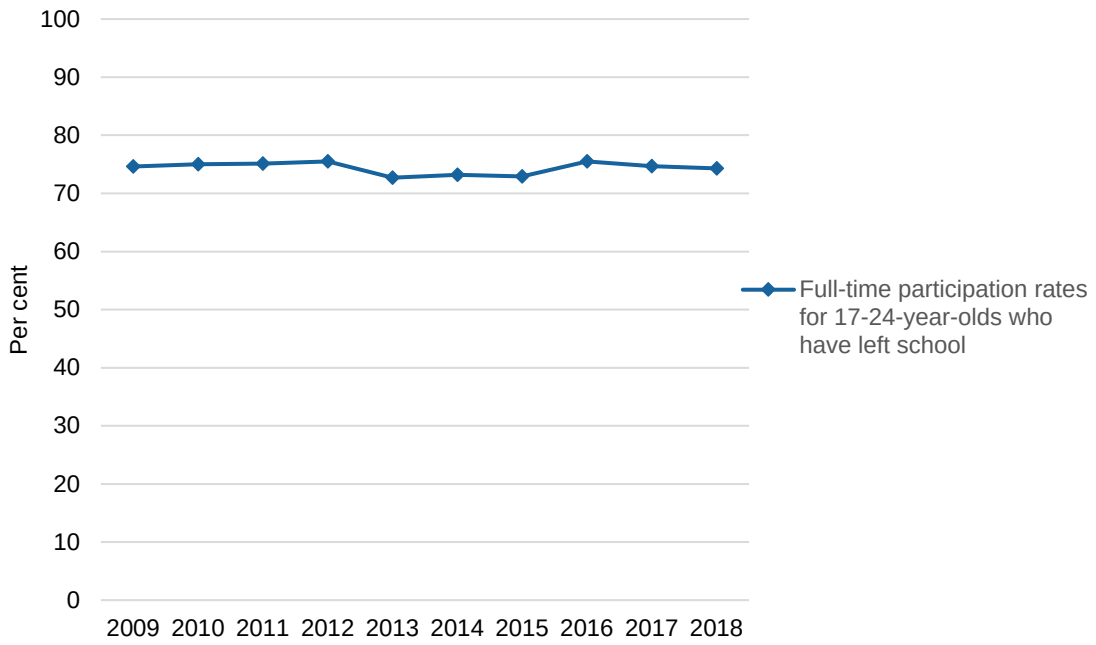
Data reported from the Census of Population and Housing exclude respondents who provided incomplete or insufficient information on their participation in education and work. As such, the data do not encompass the full census count of 17–24-year-olds.

The change in the census measure from 2011 to 2016 is not statistically significant.

Sources: ABS, Cat. No. 6227.0, *Education and Work,* May 2018; ABS, Census of Population and Housing, 2011, 2016.
See also National Report on Schooling data portal.

Figure 3.6

Proportion of 17–24-year-olds who have left school in full-time education or training, in full- time work, or both in part-time work and part-time education or training, Australia, 2009–2018 (per cent)



Note:

Refer to table 3.23 for confidence intervals.

Source: ABS, Cat. No. 6227.0, *Education and Work*, May 2018.

Data on KPMs 1(g), 1(h) and 1(i) by state and territory are provided on the National Report on Schooling data portal. However, because of sample size and other factors, SEW data for particular age groups are less reliable when disaggregated by state and territory, especially for smaller jurisdictions.

Because the survey is not conducted in Indigenous communities in very remote areas, and because of sample size, SEW data cannot be disaggregated by Indigenous status. Census data provide more robust measures by state and territory, and can be disaggregated by Indigenous status, but are only available for census years. Census data for these KPMs by state and territory and Indigenous status are reported in the National Report on Schooling data portal.

The data portal also displays SEW and census data on participation in education and training by various age groups.

3.4.3 Student attainment

The attainment key performance measures (KPMs) specified in the *Measurement Framework for Schooling in Australia 2015* measure the level of educational attainment achieved by young Australians by the time they have reached their early–mid-twenties. These measures reflect COAG targets for youth attainment in education and training:

Key performance measure 7(a)

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

Key performance measure 7(b)

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

The measures are based on the ABS Survey of Education and Work (SEW), which is conducted in May each year.

The *Measurement Framework for Schooling in Australia 2015* specifies that data drawn from the Census of Population and Housing[93], will also be reported for census years.

Table 3.24 reports KPMs 7(a) and 7(b) at the national level for the period 2009–2018. The table also includes these proportions as measured by the 2011 and 2016 census.

While the attainment KPMs 7(a) and 7(b) refer to the completion of Year 12 or equivalent or an AQF VET Certificate, this does not imply equivalence between the award of a Senior Secondary Certificate of Education on the completion of Year 12 and either AQF Certificate II or AQF Certificate III. Senior Secondary Certificate of Education qualifications are not located at a particular level in the Australian Qualifications Framework.[94]

For comparison purposes, table 3.24 also reports the proportion of the 20–24-year-old population in each of these years that had completed Year 12 or equivalent. This is not, by itself, a KPM for schooling, but is the main component of both KPMs 7(a) and 7(b).

[93] The Census of Population and Housing is Australia's largest statistical collection undertaken by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS). The census is conducted every five years.

[94] The volume of learning required to attain an AQF Certificate II is typically 0.5–1 year; for Certificate III it is typically 1–2 years, and for a Senior Secondary Certificate of Education it is typically 2 years (AQF Second edition p. 14). In some instances, senior secondary students undertaking VET have the opportunity to complete several Certificate II qualifications as a part of a Senior Secondary Certificate of Education.

Table 3.24

Proportion of the 20–24-year-old population that has attained at least Year 12 or equivalent, or AQF Certificate II or above; proportion of the 20–24-year-old population that has attained at least Year 12 or equivalent, or AQF Certificate III or above; proportion of the 20–24-year-old population that has attained at least Year 12 or equivalent; Australia, 2009–2018 (per cent)

Calendar year	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Proportion of the 20–24-year-old population that has attained at least Year 12 or equivalent, or AQF Certificate II or above	84.5	85.6	84.1	85.9	86.7	86.1	88.4	90.2	87.1	90.0
CI±	1.6	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.5	1.5	1.1	1.6	1.2	1.2
Proportion of the 20–24-year-old population that has attained at least Year 12 or equivalent, or AQF Certificate II or above (supplementary census measure)			85.3					88.6		
Proportion of the 20–24-year-old population that has attained at least Year 12 or equivalent, or AQF Certificate III or above	83.5	84.5	82.7	84.6	85.7	84.9	87.1	89.2	86.4	88.8
CI±	1.7	1.5	1.3	1.3	1.5	1.5	1.1	1.6	1.2	1.2
Proportion of the 20–24-year-old population that has attained at least Year 12 or equivalent, or AQF Certificate III or above (supplementary census measure)			84.6					87.9		
Proportion of the 20–24-year-old population that has attained at least Year 12 or equivalent	77.1	78.0	74.9	76.3	77.2	76.8	78.7	81.3	79.1	82.1
CI±	1.7	1.7	1.7	1.6	1.6	1.8	1.6	1.9	1.4	1.4
Proportion of the 20–24-year-old population that has attained at least Year 12 or equivalent (supplementary census measure)			75.3					79.5		

Notes:

CI = confidence interval

The percentages reported for SEW data in this table include 95 per cent confidence intervals. Confidence intervals are a way of expressing the degree of sampling and measurement error associated with survey estimates. For example, an estimate of 80 with a 95 per cent confidence interval of ±2 means that if the total population were surveyed rather than a sample, there is a 95 per cent chance that the result would lie between 78 and 82.

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

SEW includes people in very remote areas but excludes people in Indigenous communities in very remote areas. This exclusion has only a minor impact on national estimates or estimates by state/territory except for the Northern Territory where people in these communities account for about 15 per cent of the population.

The decreases in the SEW measures of KPM 7(a) and KPM (b) from 2016 to 2017 are statistically significant.

The increases in the SEW measures of KPM 7(a) and KPM (b) from 2017 to 2018 are statistically significant.

Data reported from the Census of Population and Housing exclude respondents who provided incomplete or insufficient information on their attainment in education and work. As such, the data do not encompass the full census counts of 15–19 and 20–24-year-olds.

Year 12 or equivalent includes AQF senior secondary certificates of education issued by Australian state and territory accreditation authorities and equivalent qualifications such as the International Baccalaureate, matriculation certificates and school leaving qualifications obtained outside Australia. It also includes respondents who indicated that their highest level of education is Year 12.

AQF Certificate II is a VET qualification regarded as entry level training for employment (or a similar qualification gained outside Australia).

AQF Certificate III is a VET qualification regarded as intermediate level training for employment (or a similar qualification gained outside Australia).

Sources: ABS, Cat. No. 6227.0, *Education and Work*, May 2018. ABS, *Census of Population and Housing*, 2011, 2016; See also National Report on Schooling data portal.

As measured by SEW, the proportion of 20–24-year-olds who had attained Year 12 or equivalent, or AQF Certificate II or above – KPM 7(a) – rose from 84.5 per cent in 2009 to 90.2 per cent in 2016 but fell significantly to 87.1 per cent in 2017. In 2018, the measure increased significantly to 90.0 per cent. The COAG target for this measure (90 per cent by 2015) was not met within the target timeframe.[95]

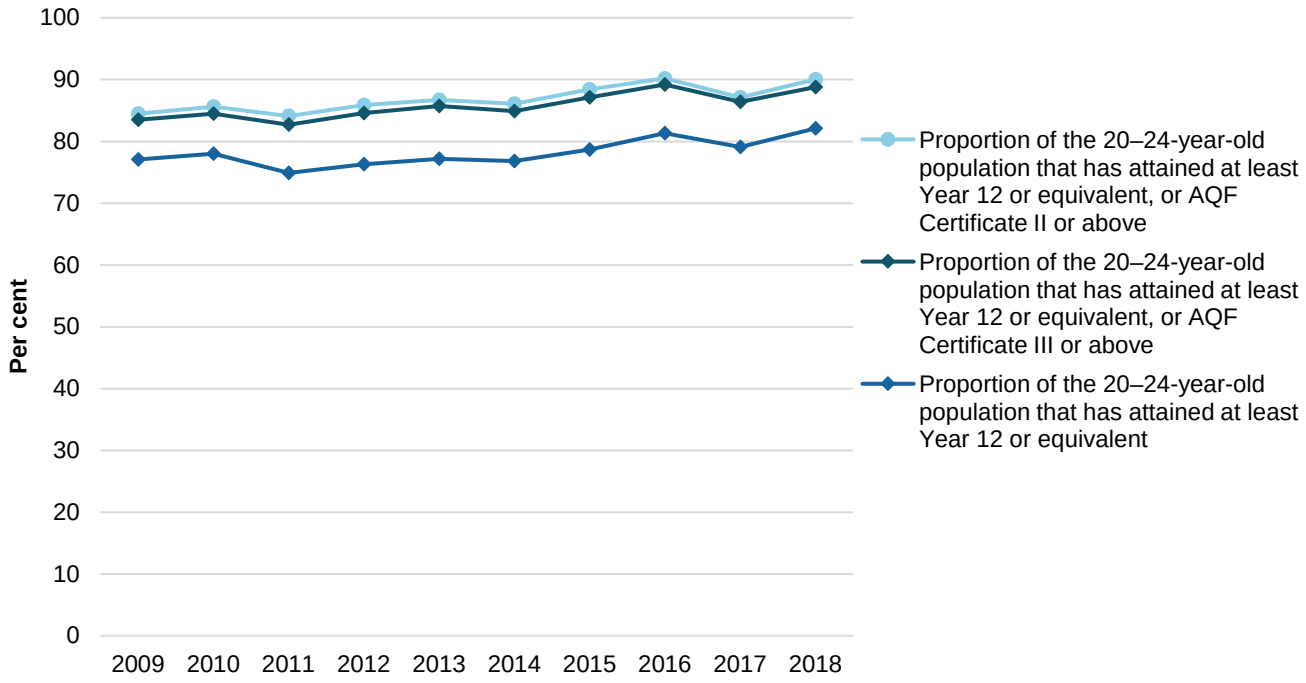
As measured by SEW, the proportion of 20–24-year-olds who had attained Year 12 or equivalent, or AQF Certificate III or above – KPM 7(b) – rose from 83.5 per cent in 2009 to 89.2 per cent in 2016, but decreased significantly to 86.4 per cent in 2017. In 2018, it increased significantly to 88.8 per cent.

The COAG Education target for this measure is 90 per cent by 2020. The Australian Government's Performance reporting dashboard reports that this target was on track in 2018. Figure 3.7 depicts the annual movement in the two attainment measures from 2009 to 2018, as measured by SEW, along with the proportion of 20–24-year-olds having attained at least Year 12 or equivalent.

[95] The COAG target for the completion of Year 12 or equivalent or Certificate II for the overall population has expired. It remains a target for attainment by Indigenous young people (90 per cent by 2020), but this cannot be measured using SEW data.

Figure 3.7

Proportions of 20–24-year-olds having attained at least Year 12 or equivalent, or AQF Certificate II or above; 20–24-year-olds having attained at least Year 12 or equivalent, or AQF Certificate III or above; and proportion of the 20–24-year-olds having attained at least Year 12 or equivalent; Australia, 2009–2018 (per cent)



Note:

Refer to table 3.24 for confidence intervals.

Source: ABS, Cat. No. 6227.0, *Education and Work*, May 2018.

See also National Report on Schooling data portal.

In each of the years 2009–2018, there has been little difference between the two attainment KPMs (a maximum difference of 1.4 percentage points occurred in 2011, with a difference of 1.2 percentage points in 2018), and, as shown in figure 3.7, the two measures have moved in parallel over the period.

Both KPMs closely parallel movements in the proportion of 20–24-year-olds that has attained at least Year 12 or equivalent. In 2018, 82.1 per cent of 20–24-year-olds had attained at least Year 12 or equivalent. A further 6.7 per cent, who had not attained Year 12, had attained Certificate III or above, and a further 1.2 per cent had attained Certificate II, but not Year 12 or Certificate III.

The proportion of young people completing Year 12 or equivalent is not itself a KPM for schooling, as pursuing a VET qualification post-Year 10 is a legitimate alternative to Years 11 and 12 as a pathway to further education and work.

However, as shown in figure 3.7, it is the main component of KPMs 7(a) and 7(b), with variations in the two KPMs closely following variations in Year 12 or equivalent attainment.

This has implications for predicting the COAG target, as the rate of Year 12 completion for current secondary students could be used as an indicator for the future attainment rates for Year 12 or Certificate III or above among 20–24-year-olds.

SEW data for KPMs 7(a) and 7(b) by state and territory are provided on the National Report on Schooling data portal. However, because of sample size and other factors, SEW data for particular age groups (such as 20–24-year-olds) are less reliable when disaggregated by state and territory, especially for smaller jurisdictions.

Census of Population and Housing data for the years 2006, 2011 and 2016 are also published in the National Report on Schooling data portal and provide more robust measures for disaggregation by jurisdiction.

However, in measuring attainment for 20–24-year-olds, neither the SEW nor the census measures take into account the interstate and international migration of young people for employment or higher education after leaving school. As measures of the effectiveness of schooling, the attainment KPMs therefore understate the success of schooling in some states and territories and overstate its success in others.

Closing the Gap

The COAG target for closing the gap in Year 12 or equivalent attainment is to halve the gap for Indigenous people aged 20–24 in Year 12 attainment or equivalent attainment rates by 2020.

Closing the Gap target

Halve the gap in Year 12 or equivalent attainment between Indigenous and non-Indigenous 20–24-year-olds by 2020

Progress against this target is measured using Census of Population and Housing data on the proportion of 20–24-year-old Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who have completed Year 12, or obtained a Certificate level II or above qualification (KPM 7(a)).[96]

Closing the Gap Report 2019 – The annual report to Parliament on progress in Closing the Gap reports that this target is on track. The Australian Government's Performance reporting dashboard, published by the Productivity Commission, reporting on progress towards COAG's key commitments, reports that:

> This target is on track. At the national level in 2016, 65.3 per cent of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander 20–24-year-olds had achieved Year 12 or equivalent, an increase from 47.4 per cent in 2006. This result was above the 2016 trajectory point of 63.0 per cent and since 2006, the gap decreased between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous attainment by 12.6 percentage points (from 36.4 to 23.8 percentage points). Western Australia and the Northern Territory have reached the target (and will meet the 2020 target if progress is sustained). South Australia and the Australian Capital Territory are on track.[97]

Census data on Year 12 or equivalent or Certificate II/III attainment disaggregated by state and territory and Indigenous status are also reported in the National Report on Schooling data portal.

[96] Because the Survey of Education and Work is not conducted in Indigenous communities in very remote areas, and because of sample size for sub-groups, SEW data cannot be disaggregated by Indigenous status. Therefore, SEW cannot be used to report on the Closing the Gap target.

[97] Productivity Commission 2019, Performance Reporting Dashboard, Canberra (accessed August 2019).

Part 4: Glossary

Note on data sources and terms:

A main source of data reported in the *National Report on Schooling in Australia 2018* and through the National Report on Schooling data portal is the National Schools Statistics Collection (NSSC) (non-finance). The NSSC includes statistics on students, schools, and staff involved in the provision or administration of primary and secondary education, in government and non-government schools, for all Australian states and territories. The School Census date for the collection, for all states and territories and all school sectors (affiliations), is the first Friday in August each year.

The NSSC is a joint undertaking of the Australian state and territory government departments of education, the Australian Government Department of Education and Training, the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) and the COAG Education Council.

Data for government schools are submitted to the ABS by state and territory departments of education.

Data for non-government schools in all states and territories are collected by the Australian Government Department of Education and Training and a subset is provided to the ABS for the NSSC.

Data from the collection are published by the ABS in *Schools, Australia* (cat. no. 4221.0). Definitions of terms in this glossary are, for the most part, quoted or adapted from the *Schools, Australia* glossary and explanatory notes.

Other major data sources for the *National Report on Schooling in Australia 2018* and the National Report on Schooling data portal include the National Student Attendance Data collection (ACARA), the Survey of Education and Work (ABS), Australian Demographic Statistics (ABS), the NSSC (finance) collection (states and territories), National Assessment Program (NAP) national reports (ACARA) and National VET Provider and National VET in Schools collections (National Centre for Vocational Education Research – NCVER).

Accrual accounting

A recording method in which revenues, expenses, lending and borrowing are recorded as they are earned, accrued or incurred regardless of when payment is made or received.

Apparent retention rates

Apparent rates, based on aggregate student data, are indicative measures of student progression through secondary school. An apparent retention rate is an indicative measure of the proportion of full-time school students who have stayed at school for a designated calendar year and year level. It is calculated by dividing the number of students in a cohort in a specific calendar year by the number of students in the same cohort in a previous year and is expressed as a percentage. For example, an apparent retention rate from Year 10 to 12 in 2018 measures the proportion of Year 10 students in 2016 that continued to Year 12 in 2018. See *Schools, Australia* explanatory notes for further information.

Schools, Australia also publishes data on apparent progression rates, apparent continuation rates and school participation rates. From 2015 onwards, the ABS has released rates tables in two formats, one with rates exceeding 100 per cent capped to a maximum value of 100.0 (capped), and one where rates exceeding 100 per cent continue to be reported as the raw calculated value (uncapped). This report continues to report uncapped rates for apparent retention.

Capital expenditure

Expenditure by a school or school system to purchase or improve land, buildings and other capital assets/equipment.

Census of Population and Housing

The Census of Population and Housing is Australia's largest statistical collection undertaken by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS). The census is conducted every five years. The aim of the census is to accurately collect data on the key characteristics of people in Australia on census night and the dwellings in which they live. In 2016, the census counted 9.9 million dwellings and approximately 23.5 million people. The *Measurement Framework for Schooling in Australia 2015* specifies the use of census data to report on a number of key performance measures for census years.

Estimated resident population (ERP)

The estimated resident population (ERP) series is used as a denominator to calculate students as a proportion of the population. The ERP is an estimate of the population of Australia, based on data from the ABS Census of Population and Housing, and is updated quarterly using information on births, deaths, and overseas and interstate migration provided by state, territory and Australian government departments. For further details see ABS, Cat. No. 3101.0, Australian Demographic Statistics, June 2018.

Full-time equivalent (FTE) students

The full-time equivalent (FTE) value of students is a measure used for resourcing/funding purposes. It is calculated by adding the number of full-time students and the FTE value of part-time students.

A full-time student is one who undertakes the prescribed minimum workload required to complete a given year level in a calendar year. This may vary between states and territories and from year to year. A part-time student is one who undertakes a workload less than that prescribed as full-time. Methods for estimating the FTE value of part-time students vary between states and territories due to different policy and administrative arrangements. The recorded FTE value for each student is capped at 1.

Full-time equivalent (FTE) student–teacher ratios

Full-time equivalent (FTE) student–teacher ratios are calculated by dividing the FTE student figure by the FTE teaching staff figure. Student–teacher ratios are an indicator of the level of staffing resources used,

and should not be used as a measure of class size. They do not take account of teacher aides and other non-teaching staff who may also assist in the delivery of school education or of non-teaching duties of teaching staff.

Full-time equivalent (FTE) teaching staff

The full-time equivalent (FTE) value of teaching staff is a measure of the level of staffing resources. Staff who are employed full-time and engaged solely on activities that fall within the scope of the NSSC have an FTE value of 1.0. All FTE values are rounded to one decimal place.

For staff not employed on a full-time basis, and/or engaged in a combination of in-scope and out-of-scope activities, the FTE value is calculated on the basis of the proportion of time spent on in-scope activities compared with staff who would be considered full-time.

The FTE value of teaching staff is calculated by adding the number of full-time teaching staff and the FTE value of part-time teaching staff.

Indigenous status

For the purposes of the NSSC, a student is classified as being of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander origin, based on information provided by the student, or their parent/guardian, on the school enrolment form. The Melbourne Declaration uses the term 'Indigenous' to refer to Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. This report uses both the terms 'Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander', and 'Indigenous' to describe students identifying as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander, with 'Indigenous' or 'Indigenous status' used in tables and graphs.

Measurement Framework for Schooling in Australia

The *Measurement Framework for Schooling in Australia 2015*, as agreed by education ministers, provides the basis for national reporting on the performance of schooling in 2018, and is the main focus of the statistical data included in this report.

The measurement framework defines national key performance measures (KPMs) for schooling, specifies the data sources for these KPMs and outlines the reporting cycle for the period 2014–2018.

The framework is maintained by the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) on behalf of the Education Council and is published on the ACARA website. It is periodically revised by ACARA in consultation with jurisdictions and sectors

National Assessment Program (NAP)

The National Assessment Program (NAP), as specified in the *Measurement Framework for Schooling in Australia 2015*, encompasses all assessments endorsed by education ministers for participation by students nationally:

- National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) – annual, full student cohort literacy and numeracy assessments in Years 3, 5, 7 and 9
- NAP sample assessments – triennial domestic sample student population assessments in science literacy (Years 6 and 10), information and communication technology literacy (Years 6 and 10) and civics and citizenship (Years 6 and 10)
- Australia's participation in international sample student population assessments: the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS), and the and Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS).

ACARA is delegated to manage the development and oversee the delivery of assessments and reporting for NAPLAN, and for domestic NAP sample assessments, as directed by the Education Council. PISA is conducted by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). TIMSS and PIRLS are conducted by the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA).

National Schools Statistics Collection

The scope of the National Schools Statistics Collection (NSSC) consists of all establishments that have as their major activity the administration or provision of full-time day primary, secondary and/or special education, or primary or secondary education by distance education. The statistics in the NSSC do not include students engaged in school-level education conducted by other institutions; in particular, technical and further education (TAFE) establishments, except where this is part of a school program, such as VET delivered to secondary students.

The NSSC consists of government and non-government statistics. Government statistics comprise all establishments (as defined), administered by departments of education under directors-general of education (or equivalent) in each state or territory. Non-government statistics comprise all such establishments not administered by departments of education.

The two sections of the NSSC are:

- non-finance statistics (numbers of schools, students and staff) collected for both government and non-government schools and published by the Australian Bureau of Statistics in its annual *Schools, Australia* (Cat. No. 4221.0) publication
- finance statistics (expenditure on salaries and non-salary costs) collected for government school systems only and published by ACARA in this report and through the National Report on Schooling data portal.

Primary education

See *School level and school year.*

Recurrent funding

Annual funding provided to schools/school systems for expenditure relating to ongoing operating costs of the school (for example, teaching and non-teaching staff salaries, school operating costs).

School

A school is an education establishment that satisfies all of the following criteria:

- its major activity is the provision of full-time day primary or secondary education or the provision of primary or secondary distance education.
- it is headed by a principal (or equivalent) responsible for its internal operation
- it is possible for students to enrol and be active in a course of study for a minimum of four continuous weeks, excluding breaks for school vacations.

The term ‘school’ in this publication includes schools in institutions and hospitals, mission schools and similar establishments.

The term 'school' in this publication excludes preschools, early learning or long-day care centres, senior technical and agricultural colleges, evening schools, continuation classes and institutions such as business or coaching colleges.

Multi-campus arrangements are counted as one school. Changes to school counts in this publication can occur when multiple schools amalgamate into a single multi-campus school, or multi-campus schools divide into separate schools.

School level and school year

All states and territories provide for 13 years of formal school education. Typically, schooling commences at age five, is compulsory from age six until at least the completion of Year 10, and is completed at age 17 or 18. Primary education, including a pre-Year 1 / Foundation Year[98], lasts for either seven or eight years and is followed by secondary education of six or five years respectively.

For national reporting purposes, primary education comprises a pre-Year 1 / Foundation Year followed by Years 1–6 in New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland, Western Australia, Tasmania, the Northern Territory and the Australian Capital Territory. Primary education comprises a pre-Year 1 year followed by Years 1–7 in South Australia.[99]

Junior secondary education includes the years from commencement of secondary schooling to Year 10, including ungraded secondary.

Senior secondary education comprises Years 11 and 12 in all states and territories.

Categories used in tables and graphs showing 'school level' are 'primary' and 'secondary'. In some tables, the categories 'primary', 'junior secondary', 'senior secondary' and 'total secondary' are used.

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

See also *Special school*.

Schools, Australia uses the term 'grade' to denote school year. Ungraded students (ungraded primary and ungraded secondary) are those who have not been placed in a specific year level.

See also *School type.*

School sector

This report and the National Report on Schooling data portal use the term 'school sector' to distinguish between government schools, which are established and administered by state and territory governments through their education departments, and non-government schools, usually with some religious affiliation, which are established and operated under conditions determined by state and territory governments through their registration authorities.

'School sector' is also used to further distinguish between non-government schools as Catholic or independent. Catholic schools make up the largest group of non-government schools. Independent schools

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[98] The Foundation Year (first year of full-time schooling) is known as Preparatory in Victoria, Queensland and Tasmania, Kindergarten in New South Wales and the Australian Capital Territory, Reception in South Australia, Pre-primary in Western Australia and Transition in the Northern Territory. In some jurisdictions, part-time programs that precede the Foundation Year are conducted in primary schools (for example, Kindergarten in Western Australia). However, these programs are outside the scope of the NSSC and of data sets included in this report.

[99] Year 7 became part of secondary education in Queensland and Western Australia from 2015. This change affects some comparisons with previous years of student and staff data by school level.

may be associated with other religions, other denominations, particular educational philosophies, or operate as single entities.

Schools, Australia uses the term 'affiliation' rather than the term 'school sector' to make these distinctions.

A further distinction is sometimes made between systemic and non-systemic non-government schools. Systemic schools are formally affiliated with a group or system of schools. Non-systemic non-government schools do not belong to a system.

In *Schools, Australia* and in this report, Catholic non-systemic schools are counted as 'Catholic' rather than as independent.

Categories used in tables and graphs showing 'school sector' are 'government', 'Catholic' and 'independent'. In some tables, the category 'total non-government' (total of Catholic and independent data) is also used.

Exception: For the purposes of financial reporting in Part 1.5.6, based on data drawn from the *My School* data collection, a number of Catholic non-systemic schools in NSW, SA and WA are counted as 'independent'. Government funding for these schools is distributed directly to the schools rather than through Catholic school system authorities. This affects comparisons between school sectors for those states and nationally. Financial data reported in Part 1.5.6 should not be compared to financial data included elsewhere in this report.

School type

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

- 'primary' – school delivers primary education
- 'secondary' – school delivers secondary education
- 'combined' – school delivers both primary and secondary education
- 'special' – students may include primary students, secondary students, ungraded students or a combination of primary, secondary and ungraded students.

See also *Special school.*

Secondary education

See *School level and school year.*

Senior secondary certificate of education

Senior secondary certificates of education (SSCEs) are Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) qualifications issued by the curriculum, assessment and certification authority in each state and territory to students meeting the requirements for successful completion of secondary schooling. These have different titles in each jurisdiction:

New South Wales	Higher School Certificate (HSC)
Victoria	Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE)
	Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL)
Queensland	Queensland Certificate of Education (QCE)

South Australia	South Australian Certificate of Education (SACE)
Western Australia	Western Australian Certificate of Education (WACE)
Tasmania	Tasmanian Certificate of Education (TCE)
Northern Territory	Northern Territory Certificate of Education and Training (NTCET)
Australian Capital Territory	Australian Capital Territory Senior Secondary Certificate (ACTSSC)

Special school

A special school satisfies the definition of a school (see *School,* above), and requires one or more of the following characteristics to be exhibited by a student before enrolment is allowed:

- mental or physical disability or impairment
- slow learning ability
- social or emotional problems
- in custody, on remand or in hospital.

Special schools include special assistance schools, as defined under the *Australian Education Act 2013.* These are non-government schools that are:

- likely to be recognised by the state minister as a special assistance school, and
- primarily established to cater for students with social, emotional or behavioural difficulties.

Staff

Staff are people engaged in the administration and/or provision of day primary, secondary or special school education, or primary or secondary education by distance education at in-scope education establishments.

The functional categories for school staff are as follows:

(a) Teaching staff are employees who spend the majority of their time in contact with students. They support students either by direct class contact or on an individual basis, and are engaged to impart school curriculum. For the purposes of this report, teaching staff includes principals, deputy principals, campus principals and senior teachers mainly involved in administration.

(b) Specialist support staff are employees who perform functions to support students or teaching staff. While these staff may spend the majority of their time in contact with students, they are not employed or engaged to impart the school curriculum.

(c) Administrative and clerical staff are employees whose main duties are generally of a clerical/administrative nature. Teacher aides and assistants are included in this category, as they are seen to provide services to teaching staff rather than directly to students.

(d) Building operations, general maintenance and other staff are employees involved in the maintenance of buildings and grounds. Also included are staff providing associated technical

services, other janitorial staff and staff who service equipment. School cleaners, whether salaried or employed on contract, are excluded.

For further details on the definition of staff, see *Schools, Australia* 2018, Glossary.

States and territories

Australia has a federal system of government comprising the national government, and the governments of the six states and two territories. In this report, the national government is generally referred to as 'the Australian Government'. In tables and graphs in this report and the National Report on Schooling data portal, states and territories are listed in the order of New South Wales (NSW), Victoria (Vic.), Queensland (Qld), South Australia (SA), Western Australia (WA), Tasmania (Tas.), the Northern Territory (NT) and the Australian Capital Territory (ACT). This is the order used in ABS publications, including *Schools, Australia*.

Student

A student is a person who, on the School Census date, is formally enrolled at a school and is active in a primary, secondary and/or special education program at that school. Students may be enrolled at more than one school; however, jurisdictions employ strategies that ensure that, as far as possible, students are reported only once in this collection.

Students not present at a school on the NSSC census date are included as students if they were expected to be absent for less than four continuous weeks (excluding school vacations).

School students undertaking vocational education and training (VET) (including through TAFE), school-based apprenticeships or traineeships, work placements or tertiary extension studies as a part of the student's school enrolment are in scope for the NSSC. The workload of these subjects/programs (which may take place outside the school premises) is included in a student's aggregate workload to determine whether a student is classified as full-time or part-time, and in calculating the full-time equivalent for part-time students.

Student attendance

The National Student Attendance Data Collection is undertaken by ACARA in collaboration with state and territory education departments (which collect and collate attendance data from government schools in each jurisdiction), the non-government school sectors and the Australian Department of Education (which collects and collates attendance data from non-government schools). The collection is conducted for students in Years 1–10 over the Semester 1 period in each school year.

There are two agreed national key performance measures (KPMs) in 2018 for student attendance:

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

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

ACARA has developed the National Standards for Student Attendance Data Reporting to establish a nationally consistent set of parameters for the collection and reporting of student attendance data across jurisdictions and school sectors. The national standards have been endorsed by all states and territories and are published on the ACARA website. The standards came into effect formally from the 2014 reporting year.

Survey of Education and Work

The Survey of Education and Work (SEW), conducted annually by the ABS, provides selected information on participation in education, highest educational attainment, transition from education to work, and current labour force and demographic characteristics for the population aged 15–74 years. Data from Education and Work are used to report participation and attainment data, including key performance measures for schooling, in this report.

See ABS, Category 6227.0, Education and Work, May 2018, explanatory notes for further information.

Teaching staff

Teaching staff are staff who spend the majority of their time in contact with students. They support students either by direct class contact or on an individual basis, and are engaged to impart school curriculum.

For the purposes of this report, teaching staff includes principals, deputy principals, campus principals and senior teachers mainly involved in administration. Teacher aides and assistants, and specialist support staff are excluded, except assistant teachers working in homeland learning centres and community schools in the Northern Territory.

User cost of capital

In the government budget context, the user cost of capital is usually defined as the opportunity cost of funds tied up in capital assets used to deliver government services.

Capital charging is the actual procedure used for applying this cost of capital to the asset management process. As such, it is a means of representing the cost of capital used in the provision of government budgetary outputs.

VET for secondary students / VET in Schools

Data on vocational education and training delivered to secondary students / VET in Schools were derived from the National VET in Schools Collection and the National VET Provider Collection, compiled by the National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER) under the Australian Vocational Education and Training Management Information Statistical Standard (AVETMISS), release 7.0.