

National Report on Schooling in Australia

2016



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Contact details

Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority
Level 13, Tower B, 280 Elizabeth Street Sydney NSW 2000
telephone: 1300 895 563
email: info@acara.edu.au
website: www.acara.edu.au

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Executive summary



Introduction

The *National Report on Schooling in Australia 2016* is the annual report on Australia's school education sector. It has been produced by the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) on behalf of the Education Council.

The report highlights progress in 2016 towards the [Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians](#) agreed by Australian education ministers in 2008.

The *National Report on Schooling in Australia 2016* addresses the eight areas of commitment to action specified in the Melbourne Declaration. It describes the national policy and reporting context for school education in Australia and reports against the nationally agreed key performance measures (KPMs) for schooling, covering student participation, student achievement in national assessments and student transitions to further education and work. A selection of other statistical information on Australian schooling in 2016 and for the eight-year period 2009–2016 inclusive is included in the report, with more extensive data sets accessible through the [National Report on Schooling data portal](#).

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



NATIONAL REPORT
ON SCHOOLING
DATA PORTAL

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

Editions of the report for the years 2009–2015 are available on the [ACARA website](#). Editions prior to 2009 are available on the [Education Council](#) website.

Overview of the report

Part 1, 'Schools and schooling', provides information on the status of Australian schooling in 2016, 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.¹

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.² 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 – 70.5 per cent – of schools are government schools, established and administered by state and territory governments through their education departments or authorities. The remaining 29.5 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 (65.4 per cent) of school students are enrolled in government schools and approximately one-third (34.6 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 64.0 per cent of school teachers³ employed by the government school sector and 36.0 per cent by non-government schools. Part 1.3 reports on staff numbers and student–teacher ratios.

School, student and teacher numbers in 2016 are shown for Australia, and by state and territory in figure 1.

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

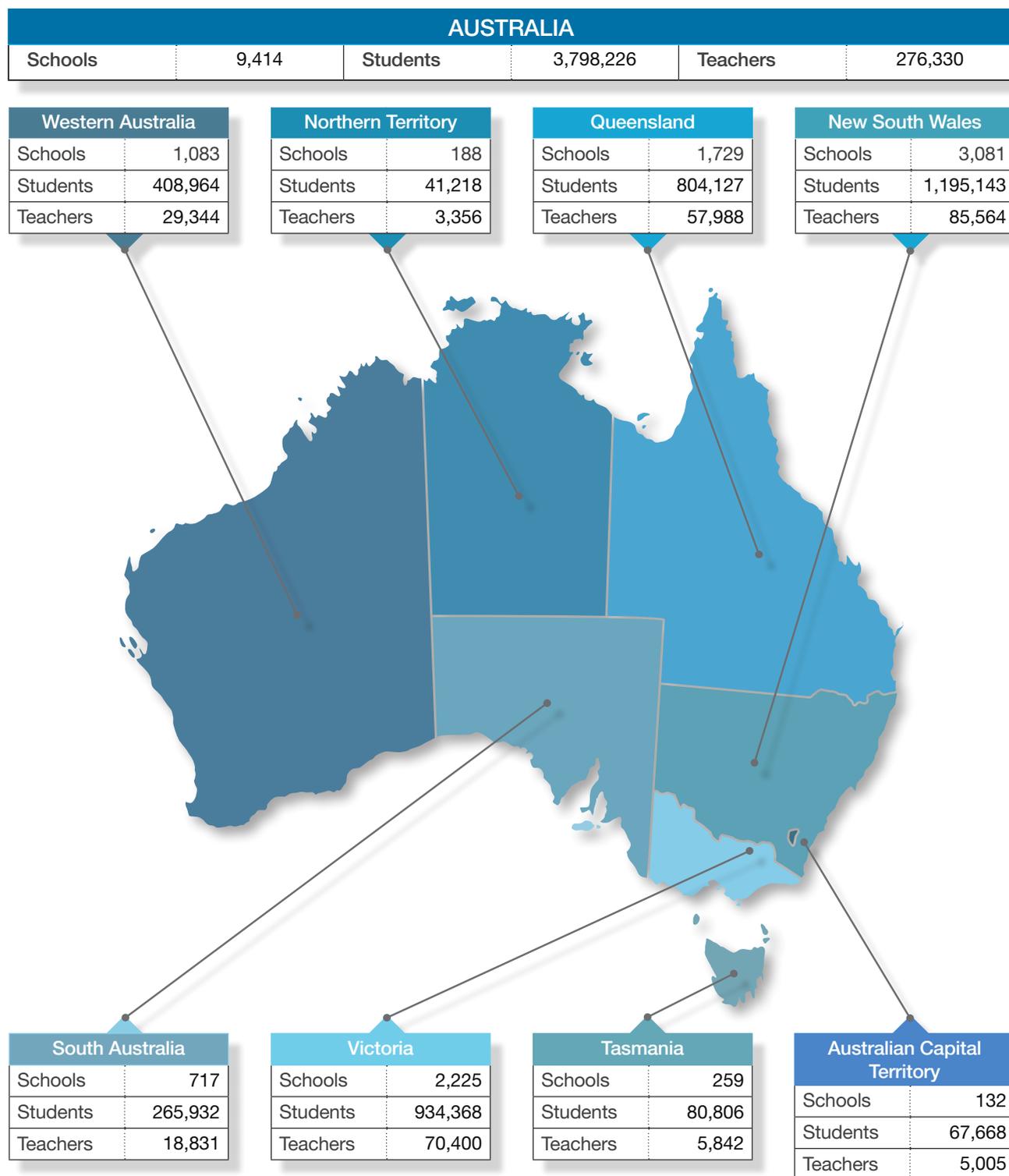
1 New South Wales (NSW), Victoria (Vic.), Queensland (Qld), South Australia (SA), Western Australia (WA), Tasmania (Tas.), Northern Territory (NT) and Australian Capital Territory (ACT).

2 SA is now the only jurisdiction to follow the eight-year/five-year pattern.

3 Full-time equivalent teaching staff.

Figure 1

Numbers of schools, students and teachers by state and territory, Australia, 2016



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*, 2016; National Report on Schooling data portal.

Part 2, 'Policies and priorities', outlines the national policy context for Australian schooling in 2016 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 state and territory policy initiatives for school education in 2016.

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

Parts 2.3–2.10 report on progress in implementing the Melbourne Declaration commitments to action with a focus on developments in 2016.

Progress towards the commitments to action reported for 2016 include:

- The Education Council endorsed new [Australian guidelines for teacher induction](#) into the profession.
- A number of states and territories implemented new initiatives for early childhood education, for the middle years of schooling and for senior secondary schooling.
- The first iteration of the Australian Curriculum for students from Foundation to Year 10 was completed in October 2016 with the publication of Auslan and Classical Languages curricula. Annual tests in literacy and numeracy for Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 were conducted through the National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) for the ninth time.
- Work was progressed on the transition of NAPLAN testing to an online assessment platform, as agreed by education ministers.
- The fourth three-yearly NAP sample assessment in Civics and Citizenship for Years 6 and 10 students was conducted online.
- The Education Council agreed to extend NAP – Science Literacy to Year 10 students from 2018, and to expand the NAP – Civics and Citizenship assessment to include History from 2019.
- A sample group of Australian students participated in the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) 2016.
- The seventh release of the [My School website](#) occurred.
- A report on Nationally Consistent Collection of Data for School Students with Disability (NCCD) was released by Education Council.

Part 3, 'Measuring and reporting performance', reports on the performance of Australian schooling in 2016, using the nationally agreed key performance measures (KPMs) for schooling specified in the Measurement Framework for Schooling in Australia 2015.

Part 3 reports on 19 of the 26 agreed KPMs⁴ 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 seven years 2009–2015 since the Melbourne Declaration are also included. Where relevant breakdowns or time series are not reported in Part 3, they are provided in the National Report on Schooling data portal.

Data reported for 2016 include that:

- The average national attendance rate for students in Years 1–10 was 92.5 per cent. Average attendance rates were lower for Years 8, 9 and 10 than for Years 1–7.
- At 83.4 per cent, the average attendance rate for Indigenous students was 9.7 percentage points lower than for non-Indigenous students (93.1 per cent). There was an increase in this gap of 0.3 percentage points in 2016.
- Based on data collected for 2016, which excluded NSW government school students, 77.7 per cent of Australian students in Years 1–10 attended school for at least 90 per cent of school days. However, only 49.0 per cent of Indigenous students within this group met the 90 per cent benchmark.
- NAPLAN participation rates for reading, writing and numeracy were over 90 per cent for each of Years 3, 5, 7 and 9, but were lower in each domain for Year 9 than for Years 3, 5 and 7.
- The proportion of students achieving at or above the national minimum standard in NAPLAN tests was over 90 per cent for all year groups tested in reading and numeracy, and for Years 3 and 5 in writing. In writing, the proportion of students achieving at or above the national minimum standard was 89.7 per cent for Year 7 and 82.9 per cent for Year 9.
- At 55 per cent, the proportion of Year 6 students achieving at or above the proficient standard in Civics and Citizenship was statistically similar to when this sample assessment was last conducted in 2013. However, there was a significant decrease in the proportion of Year 10 students achieving at or above the proficient standard, from 44 per cent in 2013 to 38 per cent in 2016.
- The achievement of a sample of Australian Year 4 in the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) 2016 improved significantly from the last time this assessment was

4 The remaining seven KPMs, covering student achievement in the NAP international assessments PISA and TIMSS and in NAP sample assessments in ICT Literacy and Science Literacy, do not apply to the 2016 reporting year. For 2016 (a Census year), agreed supplementary measures, based on data from the Australian Census of Population and Housing, are also reported for agreed KPMs for enrolment, participation and attainment.

conducted in 2011, from 76 per cent to 81 per cent of students at or above the proficient standard.

- The proportion of students proceeding to Year 12 (as measured by the apparent retention rate from Year 10 to Year 12) rose by 0.2 percentage points to 82.9 per cent. The apparent retention rate from Year 10 to Year 12 for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students rose by 0.3 percentage points to 60.9 per cent, with the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous rates narrowing marginally to 23.1 percentage points.
- The proportion of the 20–24-year-old population that has attained at least Year 12 or equivalent or AQF Certificate III or above, as measured by the ABS Survey of Education and Work, increased significantly from 87.1 per cent in 2015 to 89.2 per cent in 2016. The COAG target for this measure is 90 per cent by 2020. Data from the 2016 Census of Population and Housing show 87.9 per cent of 20–24-year-olds meeting this level of attainment (compared to 86.4 per cent in the 2011 Census).

Table 1 summarises the KPMs for 2016 in comparison with 2015 (or the most recent previous year for which comparable data exist).

Table 1.

Key performance measures for schooling, Australia, 2015–16

Key performance measures	2015 or previous year	2016	Comparison
1. Student participation			
(a) Enrolment Proportion of children aged 6–15 years who are enrolled in school	100.6%	100.6%	N/A
(a) Enrolment Proportion of children aged 6–15 years who are enrolled in school (supplementary Census measure)	99.3% (2011)	99.4%	↔
(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	92.6%	92.5%	↔
(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	77.8%	77.7%	↔
(d) NAPLAN participation Proportion of students participating in NAPLAN for Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 for reading, writing and numeracy:			
Reading			
Year 3	94.9%	95.0%	↔
Year 5	95.5%	95.4%	↔
Year 7	94.5%	94.5%	↔
Year 9	91.4%	91.2%	↔
Writing			
Year 3	94.8%	94.9%	↔
Year 5	95.4%	95.2%	↔
Year 7	94.7%	94.6%	↔
Year 9	91.7%	91.5%	↔
Numeracy			
Year 3	94.6%	94.7%	↔
Year 5	95.1%	95.0%	↔
Year 7	94.2%	94.1%	↔
Year 9	91.0%	90.7%	↔

(e) Apparent retention rates from Year 10 to Year 12 (Indigenous school students cf. non-Indigenous school students)			
Indigenous school students	60.6%	60.9%	↔
Non-Indigenous students	83.8%	84.0%	↔
All students	82.7%	82.9%	↔
(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			
	32.7%	32.1%	↔
(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			
	87.4%	88.4%	↔
(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 (supplementary Census measure)			
	86.0% (2011)	86.4%	↑
(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			
	73.6%	76.1%	↑
(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 (supplementary Census measure)			
	74.7% (2011)	72.2%	↔
(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			
	72.9%	75.5%	↑
(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 (supplementary Census measure)			
	73.0% (2011)	71.0%	↔

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	94.6%	95.1%	↔
Year 5 – Band 4	93.3%	93.0%	↔
Year 7 – Band 5	95.4%	94.6%	↔
Year 9 – Band 6	92.3%	92.8%	↔
(b) NAPLAN mean scale scores for reading:			
Year 3	425.5	425.6	↔
Year 5	498.5	501.5	↔
Year 7	546.0	540.8	↔
Year 9	580.2	580.8	↔

(c) Proportion of students achieving at or above the national minimum standard for writing:			
Year 3 – Band 2	95.5%	96.3%	↔
Year 5 – Band 4	92.3%	93.2%	↔
Year 7 – Band 5	87.3%	89.7%	↔
Year 9 – Band 6	80.5%	82.9%	↔
(d) NAPLAN mean scale scores for writing:			
Year 3	416.3	420.7	↔
Year 5	478.1	475.6	↔
Year 7	510.6	515.0	↔
Year 9	546.5	549.1	↔
(f) Proportion of students achieving at or above the proficient standard (Intermediate international benchmark) in PIRLS	76% (2011)	81%	↑

3. Student achievement: National Assessment Program – numeracy

(a) Proportion of students achieving at or above the national minimum standard for numeracy:			
Year 3 – Band 2	94.4%	95.5%	↔
Year 5 – Band 4	95.1%	94.3%	↔
Year 7 – Band 5	95.9%	95.5%	↔
Year 9 – Band 6	95.7%	95.2%	↔
(b) NAPLAN mean scale scores for numeracy:			
Year 3	397.8	402.0	↔
Year 5	492.5	493.1	↔
Year 7	542.5	549.7	↔
Year 9	591.7	588.9	↔

5. Student achievement: National Assessment Program – Civics and Citizenship

Proportion of students achieving at or above the proficient standard in Civics and Citizenship: Year 6 – Level 2, Year 10 – Level 3:			
Year 6	52% (2013)	55%	↔
Year 10	44% (2013)	38%	↓

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	88.4%	90.2%	↔
(a) Proportion of the 20–24-year-old population having attained at least Year 12 or equivalent or AQF Certificate II or above (supplementary Census measure)	85.3% (2011)	88.6%	↔
(b) Proportion of the 20–24-year-old population having attained at least Year 12 or equivalent or AQF Certificate III or above	87.1%	89.2%	↑
(b) Proportion of the 20–24-year-old population having attained at least Year 12 or equivalent or AQF Certificate III or above (supplementary Census measure)	84.6% (2011)	87.9%	↔

Notes:

Comparisons in Table 1 have been tested for statistical significance:

↑	means the increase in the measure was statistically significant
↓	means the decrease in the measure was statistically significant
↔	means that the change in the measure was not statistically significant
N/A	means not applicable. 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 above 100 per cent are not represented as changes.

The *Measurement Framework for Schooling in Australia 2015* specifies that supplementary measures drawn from the results of the Australian Census of Population and Housing 2016 be reported for KPMs for enrolment, participation and attainment for the 2016 reporting year. These are included in table 1 for KPMs 1(a), 1(g), 1(h), 1(i), 7(a) and 7(b).

Where possible, measures are expressed to one decimal place. Measures for NAP sample assessments 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 2016, including school, student and teacher numbers, school structures, and funds used for school education.

1.1 School numbers

In 2016 there were 9,414 schools in Australia.⁵ 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, 70.5 per cent were administered by state and territory governments⁶, 18.5 per cent identified as having Catholic affiliation⁷, and 11.1 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 2016 are shown in table 1.1. The proportion of schools by school sector in 2016 is illustrated in figure 1.1.



⁵ As at the National Schools Statistics Collection (NSSC) schools census, August 2016.

⁶ Independent public schools established in Western Australia and Queensland are counted as government schools in the NSSC and in this report.

⁷ Non-systemic Catholic schools are counted as Catholic.

Table 1.1

Number and proportion of schools by school type and school sector, Australia, 2016

	Government		Catholic		Independent		Total		All schools	
	No.	%								
Australia	No.	%								
Primary	4,780	50.8	1,239	13.2	214	2.3	1,453	15.4	6,233	66.2
Secondary	1,035	11.0	321	3.4	48	0.5	369	3.9	1,404	14.9
Combined	490	5.2	138	1.5	688	7.3	826	8.8	1,316	14.0
Special	329	3.5	40	0.4	92	1.0	132	1.4	461	4.9
Total	6,634	70.5	1,738	18.5	1,042	11.1	2,780	29.5	9,414	100.0

Notes:

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

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

primary – school delivers primary education

secondary – school delivers secondary education

combined – school delivers both primary and secondary education

special – students may include primary students, secondary students, ungraded students or a combination of primary, secondary and ungraded students.

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

See Part 4: Glossary for definition of school sector.

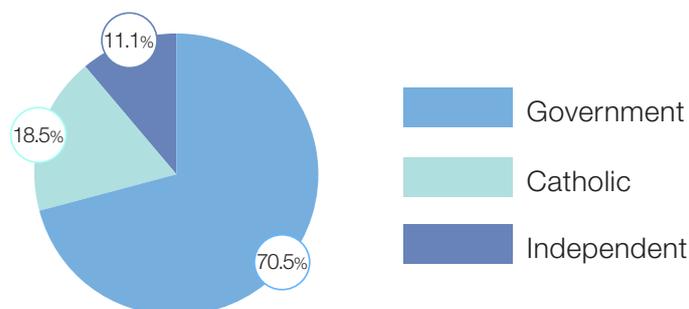
See Part 4: Glossary for definition of special school.

Source: ABS, Cat. No. 4221.0, Schools, Australia, 2016.

See also National Report on Schooling data portal.

Figure 1.1

Proportion of schools by school sector, Australia, 2016



Source: ABS, Cat. No. 4221.0, Schools, Australia, 2016.

The total number of schools by state and territory in 2016 is shown in table 1.2.

Table 1.2

Number of schools by school type and state/territory, Australia, 2016

School type	State/territory								Australia
	NSW	Vic.	Qld	SA	WA	Tas.	NT	ACT	
Primary	2,103	1,551	1,134	458	665	156	85	81	6,233
Secondary	511	333	255	81	135	42	23	24	1,404
Combined	304	236	264	155	205	55	75	22	1,316
Special	163	105	76	23	78	6	5	5	461
Total	3,081	2,225	1,729	717	1,083	259	188	132	9,414

Source: ABS, Cat. No. 4221.0, *Schools, Australia*, 2016. See also National Report on Schooling data portal.

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

For a breakdown by school sector of schools by school type in each state and territory in 2016, see the National Report on Schooling data portal.

The total number of schools in Australia rose from 9,404 in 2015 to 9,414 in 2016. There was a net fall of 115 (1.2 per cent) in the total number of schools over the period 2009–2016. The numbers and proportions of schools in the three school sectors over this period are shown in table 1.3.

Table 1.3

Number and proportion of schools by school sector, Australia, 2009–2016

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

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

Source: ABS Cat. No. 4221.0, *Schools, Australia*, 2016. See also National Report on Schooling data portal.

Changes in school numbers from year to year may be due to administrative or structural changes in school systems or individual schools, as well as to changes in school populations. The decrease in total school numbers in the period 2009–2016 did not reflect a decrease in total student numbers.

1.2 Student numbers

Enrolments by school level and sector

In total, 3.80 million individual students were enrolled in Australian schools in 2016. Of these, 2.18 million (57.4 per cent) were primary school students, and 1.62 million (42.6 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.⁸ Another contributing factor is that not all students complete Years 11 and 12. The numbers of students by school level and school sector for 2016 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, 2016

School level	School sector							
	Government		Catholic		Independent		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Primary	1,523,982	69.9	404,979	18.6	250,728	11.5	2,179,689	57.4
Junior secondary	656,961	59.3	249,562	22.5	200,966	18.1	1,107,489	29.2
Senior secondary	302,859	59.3	112,509	22.0	95,680	18.7	511,048	13.5
Total secondary	959,820	59.3	362,071	22.4	296,646	18.3	1,618,537	42.6
Total	2,483,802	65.4	767,050	20.2	547,374	14.4	3,798,226	100.0

Notes:

Primary education comprises a pre-Year 1 grade, followed by Years 1–6 in NSW, Vic., Qld, WA, Tas., NT and ACT. In SA, primary education comprises a pre-Year 1 grade followed by Years 1–7. 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 students at each level enrolled in that sector. The total row shows the number and proportion of Australian students enrolled in each sector. The total percentage column shows the proportions of Australian students enrolled at each level. Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding.

Source: ABS, Cat. No. 4221.0, *Schools, Australia, 2016*.

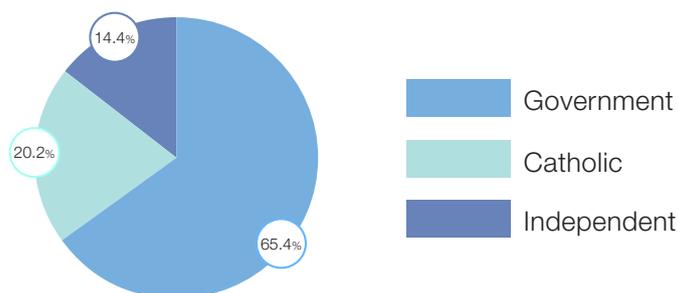
See also National Report on Schooling data portal.

As shown in table 1.4 and figure 1.2, 65.4 per cent of Australian school students in 2016 were enrolled in government schools, 20.2 per cent of students were enrolled in Catholic schools and 14.4 per cent of students were enrolled in independent schools.

⁸ 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, 2016 (per cent)



Source: ABS, Cat. No. 4221.0, *Schools, Australia, 2016*.

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

The proportion of students enrolled in government schools was higher for primary (69.9 per cent) than for secondary education (59.3 per cent). This suggests a movement of students from government to non-government schools, particularly between primary and secondary school. However, as the movement of individual students between sectors and between states and territories is not tracked, it is not currently possible to accurately measure the extent or timing of student movements between the three school sectors.

Part-time students accounted for only 0.5 per cent of total enrolments. They were concentrated in Years 11 and 12 (54.0 per cent), and in government schools (92.9 per cent).

Enrolments by school level, and state and territory

Total enrolments (full-time plus part-time) by state and territory in 2016 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, 2016

School level	State/territory								Australia
	NSW	Vic.	Qld	SA	WA	Tas.	NT	ACT	
Primary	681,621	527,830	464,700	163,435	234,613	45,023	24,910	37,557	2,179,689
Junior secondary	364,061	280,881	224,358	60,255	120,691	24,974	12,141	20,128	1,107,489
Senior secondary	149,461	125,657	115,069	42,242	53,660	10,809	4,167	9,983	511,048
Total secondary	513,522	406,538	339,427	102,497	174,351	35,783	16,308	30,111	1,618,537
Total	1,195,143	934,368	804,127	265,932	408,964	80,806	41,218	67,668	3,798,226
Proportion of Australian total (%)	31.5	24.6	21.2	7.0	10.8	2.1	1.1	1.8	100.0

Notes: See table 1.4 for notes on school level.

Source: ABS, Cat. No. 4221.0, *Schools, Australia, 2016*.

See also National Report on Schooling data portal.

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

Growth in enrolments

The numbers of students enrolled in Australian schools grew by 47,253 (1.3 per cent) between 2015 and 2016 and by 313,422 (9.0 per cent) between 2009 and 2016. Enrolments in all three school sectors have risen over the past seven years, with the majority of growth over the period (60.4 per cent) occurring in government schools.

However, from 2009 to 2014, growth was proportionately higher in non-government schools, producing small shifts in the proportions of total enrolments per school sector from the government sector to the non-government sectors. This continued a long-term trend that began in 1977.⁹ Increases in the proportion of government school students in 2015 and 2016 may indicate a reversal of this trend.

In 2016, the share of student enrolments at the national level showed that the government share increased from 65.2 per cent in 2015 to 65.4 per cent in 2016. This was balanced by the Catholic share of enrolments dropping to 20.2 per cent, down from 20.4 per cent in 2015. The independent enrolment share remained steady at 14.4 per cent. Table 1.6 and figure 1.3 summarise these data.

Table 1.6

Number and proportion of students (full-time plus part-time) by school sector, Australia, 2009–2016

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

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

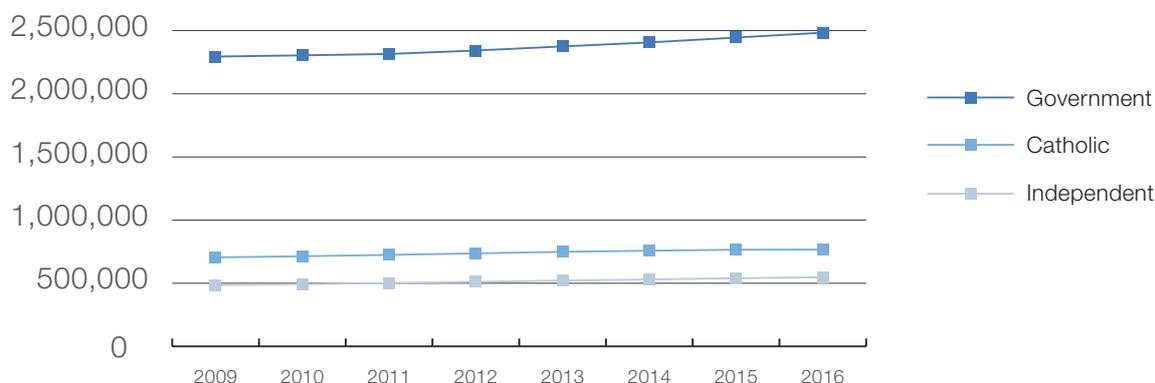
Source: ABS, Cat. No. 4221.0, *Schools, Australia*, 2016.

See also National Report on Schooling data portal.

9 ABS, *Schools Australia*, 2016, media release.

Figure 1.3

Number of students enrolled (full-time plus part-time) by school sector, Australia, 2009–2016



Source: ABS, Cat. No. 4221.0, *Schools, Australia, 2016*.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students

In 2016 there were a record 207,852 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (Indigenous)¹⁰ students enrolled in Australian schools, making up 5.5 per cent of the total school population. Table 1.7 shows the number and proportion of Indigenous students by school level and sector.

Table 1.7

Number and proportion of Indigenous students (full-time and part-time) enrolled in schools by school level and sector, Australia, 2016

School level	School sector						Total	
	Government		Catholic		Independent		No.	%
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Primary	110,203	87.2	11,535	9.1	4,710	3.7	126,448	60.8
Junior secondary	48,218	79.6	7,422	12.2	4,968	8.2	60,608	29.2
Senior secondary	15,879	76.4	2,854	13.7	2,063	9.9	20,796	10.0
Total secondary	64,097	78.7	10,276	12.6	7,031	8.6	81,404	39.2
Total	174,300	83.9	21,811	10.5	11,741	5.6	207,852	100.0

Notes:

See table 1.4 for notes on school level.

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

Source: ABS, Cat. No. 4221.0, *Schools, Australia, 2016*.

See also National Report on Schooling data portal.

¹⁰ 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.

Indigenous enrolments were more highly concentrated in government schools, with 83.9 per cent of Indigenous enrolments in government schools compared to 65.4 per cent of total enrolments (as shown in table 1.4).

Indigenous students were under-represented in senior secondary years: 13.5 per cent of all enrolments were in Years 11 and 12, but only 10.0 per cent of Indigenous students were enrolled in Years 11 and 12. However, this proportion rose by 0.2 percentage points in 2016 from 9.8 per cent in 2015. These figures reflect Year 10 to Year 12 apparent retention rates among used Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, which are lower than in the overall school population, but which have risen in absolute and relative terms in recent years.¹¹

Table 1.8

Number and proportion of Indigenous students (full-time plus part-time) enrolled in schools by school level and state/territory, Australia, 2016

School level	State/territory								Australia
	NSW	Vic.	Qld	SA	WA	Tas.	NT	ACT	
Primary (No.)	40,143	8,530	38,411	7,677	16,172	4,086	10,289	1,140	126,448
Secondary (No.)	27,146	6,039	24,160	4,433	9,772	2,789	6,239	826	81,404
Total (No.)	67,289	14,569	62,571	12,110	25,944	6,875	16,528	1,966	207,852
Proportion of Indigenous students per state (%)	32.4	7.0	30.1	5.8	12.5	3.3	8.0	0.9	100.0
Proportion of total enrolments (%)	5.6	1.6	7.8	4.6	6.3	8.5	40.1	2.9	5.5

Source: ABS, Cat. No. 4221.0, *Schools, Australia, 2016*.

See also National Report on Schooling data portal.

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

With 67,289 Indigenous students in 2016, NSW had both the highest number of Indigenous enrolments and the highest proportion (32.4 per cent) of the national total. This represented 5.6 per cent of the state's students, slightly more than the national average, and was 0.9 percentage points more than the NSW share of total enrolments nationally.

Victoria, with 24.6 per cent of all school students, had 7.0 per cent of all Indigenous students, representing 1.6 per cent of students in that state. Western Australia, with 10.8 per cent of total enrolments Australia-wide, accounted for 12.5 per cent of Indigenous students.

The highest concentration of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students is in the Northern Territory, which accounted for only 1.1 per cent of total school enrolments in 2016, but for 8.0 per cent of Indigenous enrolments. The 16,528 Indigenous students enrolled in Northern Territory schools made up 40.1 per cent of the Territory's school population. Because of this, data on

¹¹ Apparent retention rates are discussed in Part 3: Measuring and reporting performance.

Indigenous students have a much greater impact on overall statistics (including performance measures) for the Northern Territory than for any other state or territory.

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

1.3 Staff numbers

In 2016, there were 276,330 full-time equivalent (FTE)¹² teaching staff across primary and secondary schooling in Australia. The number of FTE teaching staff by school sector, school level and sex in 2016 is shown in table 1.9.

Table 1.9

Full-time equivalent (FTE) of teaching staff by school sector, school level and sex, Australia, 2016

Sector	Primary				Secondary				Total			
	M	F	Total	%	M	F	Total	%	M	F	Total	%
Government	18,205	82,894	101,099	70.5	29,201	46,519	75,720	57.0	47,406	129,413	176,819	64.0
Catholic	4,049	20,389	24,438	17.0	11,587	17,130	28,716	21.6	15,635	37,519	53,154	19.2
Independent	3,932	13,949	17,881	12.5	12,324	16,152	28,476	21.4	16,256	30,101	46,357	16.8
Total non-government	7,981	34,338	42,319	29.5	23,911	33,282	57,192	43.0	31,891	67,620	99,511	36.0
All schools	26,186	117,232	143,418	51.9	53,111	79,801	132,912	48.1	79,297	197,033	276,330	100.0

Notes:

M = male, F = female

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

Source: ABS, Cat. No. 4221.0, *Schools, Australia, 2016*.

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

Australia's teaching workforce continued to be predominantly female, with women making up 71.3 per cent of FTE teachers, and men making up 28.7 per cent. This difference was more pronounced at the primary level (81.7 per cent female) than at secondary level (60.0 per cent female).

Across Australia, 64.0 per cent of FTE teachers were employed by the government school sector, 19.2 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 (see table 1.4.).

The number of FTE teaching staff by state/territory in 2016 is shown in table 1.10.

¹² In the calculation of numbers of full-time equivalent (FTE) teaching staff, a part-time teacher is counted as a proportion of a full-time teacher according to the time spent in teaching activities compared to a full-time teacher in the same school system or school. (See part 4: Glossary for definitions of FTE and teaching staff.)

Table 1.10

Full-time equivalent (FTE) of teaching staff by state and school level, Australia, 2016

	State/territory								Australia
	NSW	Vic.	Qld	SA	WA	Tas.	NT	ACT	
Primary	43,254	36,096	30,772	10,693	15,221	2,988	1,915	2,478	143,418
Secondary	42,310	34,304	27,216	8,138	14,124	2,854	1,441	2,527	132,912
Total	85,564	70,400	57,988	18,831	29,344	5,842	3,356	5,005	276,330

Source: ABS, Cat. No. 4221.0, *Schools, Australia*, 2016.

See also National Report on Schooling data portal.

In 2016 the number of FTE teaching staff increased by 7,129 (2.6 per cent), substantially more than in any of the previous six years, and double the growth in student enrolments between 2015 and 2016 (1.3 per cent). Growth was concentrated in the government sector, in which the number of FTE teaching staff increased by 2.9 per cent in 2016.¹³

Between 2009 and 2016, the total number of FTE teaching staff grew by 27,134 (10.9 per cent). This was noticeably more than the growth in student enrolments (9.0 per cent) over the same period, largely due to the higher than usual growth in FTE teacher numbers in 2016.

Table 1.11

Full-time equivalent (FTE) of teaching staff by school sector, Australia, 2009–2016

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

Source: ABS, Cat. No. 4221.0, *Schools, Australia*, 2016.

See also National Report on Schooling data portal.

¹³ The growth in FTE teaching staff in 2016 was concentrated in the government sector in Victoria, Queensland and Western Australia. Victoria has reported that the growth in that state resulted from a significant increase in equity funding provided by the Victorian Government. This additional funding meant that around 1,600 teaching staff have been added to Victorian government schools since the start of 2016. In Western Australia, a growth in FTE teaching staff in 2015 was partly due to the departure of a 'half-cohort' (in Year 12 in 2014), which emanated from a change to the WA school starting age introduced in 2001. This meant an increase in total student numbers (of a 'half-cohort') and a consequent need to employ additional teachers.

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 2016 across the three school sectors.

Table 1.12

Full-time equivalent (FTE) student–teacher ratios, by school sector and school level, Australia, 2016

School sector	Primary	Secondary	All schools
Government	15.0	12.6	14.0
Non-government	15.5	11.5	13.2
Catholic	16.6	12.6	14.4
Independent	14.0	10.4	11.8
All schools	15.2	12.1	13.7

Source: ABS, Cat. No. 4221.0, *Schools, Australia, 2016*.

See also National Report on Schooling data portal.

For all Australian schools, the average FTE student–teacher ratio in 2016 was 13.7:1, a reduction from 13.9:1 in 2015. This resulted from the growth in the number of FTE teaching staff reported above.

The average ratio for government schools (14.0:1) was higher than for non-government schools overall (13.2:1), but lower than the average ratio for Catholic schools (14.4:1).

At the primary level, the average FTE student–teacher ratio was 15.2:1 compared to 12.1:1 at the secondary level. Student–teacher ratios are consistently higher for primary education than for secondary education in all school sectors.

Lower student–teacher ratios mean there is a smaller number of students per teacher and, therefore, potentially, smaller class sizes. However, ratios by themselves are not reliable indicators of class size because they do not take into account different requirements of different age groups, of special needs students, or of different school subjects, especially in secondary schools. These may include smaller maximum class sizes for practical subjects such as Technology, for senior secondary classes, and for special needs students.

Nor do the ratios take account of administrative or specialist duties undertaken by teaching staff, such as non-teaching principals and deputy principals, teacher librarians, careers advisers and counsellors, and subject head teachers in secondary schools. These factors help to explain the consistently higher average student–teacher ratios in primary than secondary schooling.

Time series data on student–teacher ratios by 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. In 2015, differences were further reduced with the implementation of decisions in Queensland and Western Australia to move Year 7 from a primary school year to a secondary school year. In 2016, South Australia was the only state where Year 7 students were primary school students.

In 2016, 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 8–12.¹⁴ The foundation year/first year of schooling has different names in the various jurisdictions.¹⁵

The age at which schooling becomes compulsory is six years in most states and territories.¹⁶ 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 17.¹⁷

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

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

15 The names of the first year of schooling used in each jurisdiction are listed in table 1.13. The Australian Curriculum uses the term ‘Foundation’ for this year of schooling.

16 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.

17 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 1.13

Primary and secondary school structures – minimum age of commencement for Year 1 and minimum school leaving age by state and territory, Australia, 2016

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

(a) State and territory requirements for the commencement of schooling are expressed in relation to Year 1.

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

(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, achieve the requirements for secondary graduation, or until they turn 18 years of age, whichever happens first.

Sources: ABS, Schools Australia, 2016; 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.¹⁸

¹⁸ 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.

Each state and territory also has an early childhood education sector that is separate from primary and secondary schooling¹⁹, 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.



¹⁹ 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, 2016](#) (Cat. No. 4240.0).

1.5 School funding

Part 1.5 provides information on five main areas:

- 1.5.1 Overview of government funding for school education
- 1.5.2 Government funding arrangements for school education
- 1.5.3 Government funding for government schools
- 1.5.4 Government funding for non-government schools
- 1.5.5 Capital expenditure
- 1.5.6 *My School* financial information for the 2015 calendar year.

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 profiles of recurrent funding information for the 2015 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 (March 2017) as *My School* non-finance data for the 2016 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 2015 – 30 June 2016.

Non-government school funding is reported on a calendar year basis and reflects funding and expenditure for the 2016 calendar year except for data sourced from the *Report on Government Services* (ROGS), which are calculated for the 2015–16 financial year.²⁰

1.5.1 Overview of government funding for school education

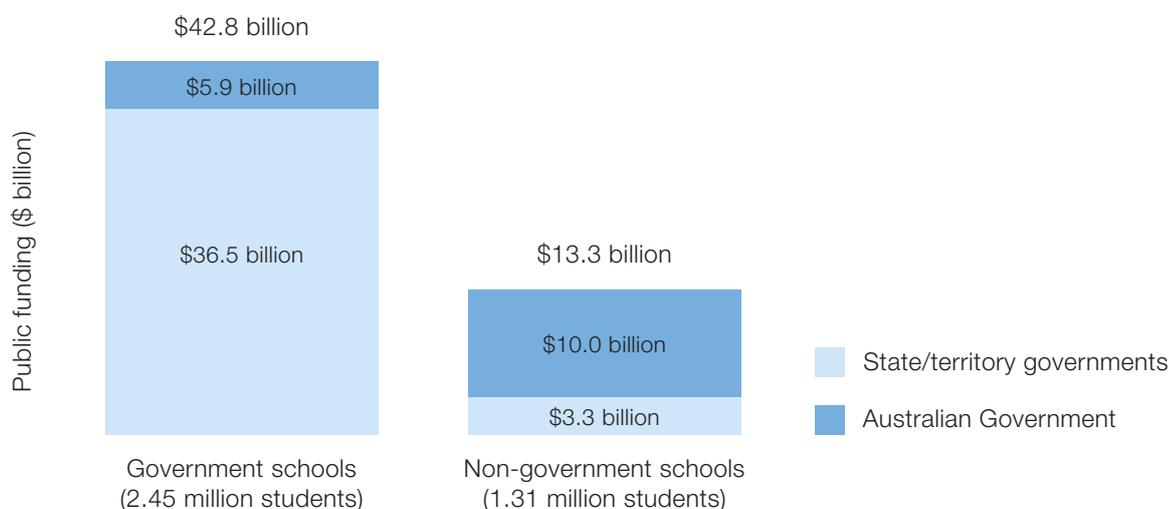
Australian, and state and territory government recurrent expenditure on school education in Australia for 2015–2016 was \$56.0 billion. Of this amount, \$39.8 billion (71.6 per cent) was provided through state and territory budgets, and \$15.8 billion (28.4 per cent) was provided through the Australian Government budget. The majority of state and territory funds was applied to government schools; the majority of Australian Government funds was applied to non-government schools. This is illustrated in figure 1.4.



²⁰ The cost per full-time equivalent student derived from these financial year figures uses the average of the full-time equivalent student numbers for the 2015 and 2016 calendar years.

Figure 1.4

Recurrent government funding for school education, Australia, 2015–16 (accrual basis).



Notes:

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. Australian Government expenditure data in figure 1.4 include the Students First funding and a range of National Partnership (NP) payments. Other Australian Government funding for schools and students is not included.

Student numbers are 2015–16 average full-time equivalent (FTE) school student populations. As such, they differ from the number of individual (full-time plus part-time) students for 2016 reported in Part 1.2.

Sources: Education Council, National Schools Statistics Collection (Finance), 2016; Steering Committee for the Review of Government Service Provision (SCRGSP), *Report on Government Services 2018*, Productivity Commission; ABS, Cat. No. 4221.0 *Schools, Australia*, 2016.

See also the National Report on Schooling data portal.

In overview, from 2014–15 to 2015–16, total (nominal) government recurrent expenditure on:

- all schools increased by 5.0 per cent, rising from \$53.0 billion in 2014–15 to \$55.7 billion in 2015–16, an increase of \$2.7 billion.
- Government schools increased by 5.3 per cent, rising from \$40.2 billion in 2014–15 to \$42.4 billion in 2015–16, an increase of \$2.1 billion.
- Non-government schools increased by 4.2 per cent, rising from \$12.8 billion in 2014–15 to \$13.3 billion in 2015–16, an increase of \$0.5 billion.

The government school sector received 76.0 per cent of recurrent government funding, while the non-government sector received 24.0 per cent.

Total recurrent school education funding, on a student per capita basis, was on average \$17,275 for the government sector and \$10,147 for the non-government sector.

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

Table 1.14

Recurrent government funding for school education, Australia, 2015–16 financial year (accrual basis)

2015–16 government funding to schools	Government		Non-government		Total	
	(\$ billion)	\$ per FTE student	(\$ billion)	\$ per FTE student	(\$ billion)	\$ per FTE student
State and territory governments	36.528	14,890	3.305	2,524	39.833	10,586
Australian Government	5.852	2,386	9.982	7,623	15.834	4,208
Total Australian/state/territory government funding	42.380	17,275	13.287	10,147	55.667	14,795
Average FTE students		2,453,187		1,309,442		3,762,629

Note:

Average FTE students is the number of full-time equivalent (FTE) students, averaged over the 2015 and 2016 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), 2016; Steering Committee for the Review of Government Service Provision (SCRGSP), *Report on Government Services 2018*, Productivity Commission; ABS, Cat. No. 4221.0, *Schools, Australia*, 2016.

See also National Report on Schooling data portal.

1.5.2 Government funding arrangements for school education

State and territory governments fund the bulk of government school costs for their jurisdictions under state and territory legislation.

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

The key components of Australian Government funding for school education in 2015–16 were provided through the Students First program.

In 2016, Australian Government recurrent funding for schools used the Schooling Resource Standard (SRS) funding arrangement levels. SRS funding is calculated with reference to a base-per-student amount plus additional loadings aimed at addressing disadvantage.

The total base amount for a school reflects:

- the number of students at the school
- the Schooling Resource Standard (SRS) funding amount for a student at the school
- the capacity of the school's community to contribute financially to the school. A school's capacity to contribute is determined by their socio-economic score (SES) on a sliding scale, where a higher SES score is translated into a lower public funding proportion of the SRS. Government schools, special schools, special assistance schools, majority Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander schools and sole provider²¹ schools have a zero capacity to contribute.

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

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

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

1.5.3 Government funding for government schools

State and territory governments are the major funders of government schools: in 2015–16 they contributed 86.2 per cent (\$36.5 billion) of total recurrent funding, with the Australian Government contributing the remaining 13.8 per cent (\$5.9 billion).

Figure 1.5

Total government recurrent expenditure per student, government schools, Australia, 2015–16 (per cent)



Sources: Education Council, National Schools Statistics Collection (NSSC) (Finance), 2016; ABS, Cat. No. 4221.0, *Schools, Australia*, 2016.

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

Government school recurrent expenditure

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

The NSSC (Finance) is a financial year, annual collection of total government funded expenditure data (expenditure on salary and non-salary costs) on government schools only, published on the National Report on Schooling data portal.

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

Table 1.15 shows a national overview of expenditure levels by states in 2015–16 in key operational areas such as the relative levels of salary and non-salary costs. The user cost of capital reflects the opportunity cost of being able to utilise capital funding for recurrent purposes (based on eight per cent of the written down value of capital assets).

- Excluding user cost of capital, teacher salaries expenditure accounts for 61.2 per cent of in-school expenditure.
- Excluding user cost of capital, in-school non-teacher salaries expenditure accounts for 14.4 per cent of in-school expenditure.
- Excluding user cost of capital, in-school non-salary costs account for 24.3 per cent of in-school expenditure. These expenditures include school materials, maintenance, cleaning and student transport costs.
- Out-of-school expenditure for government systems includes state office, regional and local functions supporting schools.
- In-school expenditure includes teaching, learning, school administration, and library functions within schools.
- Expenditure on out-of-school support functions represents approximately 4.6 per cent of total government funding on state and territory government schools. By far the major component of funding, some 95.4 per cent, goes to fund schools directly.

Table 1.15

Expenditure by government education systems, by level of education and area of expenditure by state and territory, 2015–16 (\$'000)

	NSW	Vic.	Qld	SA	WA	Tas.	NT	ACT	Australia
IN-SCHOOL, PRIMARY EDUCATION									
Salaries (teaching)	3,809,940	2,606,504	2,519,967	876,818	1,413,806	267,069	181,125	202,360	11,877,589
Salaries (non-teaching)	849,739	467,219	723,221	253,070	429,306	78,642	37,676	68,164	2,907,037
Redundancies	0	704	173	0	5036	0	471	0	6,384
Non-salary costs	1,659,587	894,736	806,665	327,946	567,890	115,590	114,459	79,341	4,566,214
User cost of capital	1,041,038	905,908	787,302	178,260	498,652	44,428	52,646	69,567	3,577,801
Total excl. user cost of capital	6,319,266	3,969,163	4,050,026	1,457,834	2,416,038	461,301	333,731	349,865	19,357,224
Total incl. user cost of capital	7,360,304	4,875,071	4,837,328	1,636,094	2,914,690	505,729	386,377	419,432	22,935,025
IN-SCHOOL, SECONDARY EDUCATION									
Salaries (teaching)	3,317,475	2,024,430	1,879,885	553,815	993,413	217,874	118,195	178,443	9,283,530
Salaries (non-teaching)	604,649	394,977	462,989	144,849	306,129	66,482	27,342	60,108	2,067,525
Redundancies	0	528	102	0	4884	0	269	0	5,783
Non-salary costs	1,370,846	835,510	699,706	239,204	430,437	109,312	84,584	72,821	3,842,420
User cost of capital	740,655	671,920	510,573	99,644	359,815	46,195	30,140	64,869	2,523,811
Total excl. user cost of capital	5,292,970	3,255,445	3,042,682	937,868	1,734,863	393,668	230,390	311,372	15,199,258
Total incl. user cost of capital	6,033,625	3,927,365	3,553,255	1,037,512	2,094,678	439,863	260,530	376,241	17,723,069
OUT-OF-SCHOOL									
Salaries (teaching)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Salaries (non-teaching)	220,346	105,922	302,411	126,585	128,083	20,898	43,449	22,887	970,581
Redundancies	16,017	3,797	666	6,214	892	0	0	0	27,586
Non-salary costs	46,357	211,119	234,256	69,573	69,700	10,394	28,734	6,953	677,086
User cost of capital	7,254	11,763	3,450	5,549	15,734	765	0	1,996	46,511
Total excl. user cost of capital	282,720	320,838	537,333	202,372	198,675	31,292	72,183	29,840	1,675,253
Total incl. user cost of capital	289,974	332,601	540,783	207,921	214,409	32,057	72,183	31,836	1,721,764
TOTAL – Primary, Secondary and Out-of-school									
Total excl. user cost of capital	11,894,956	7,545,446	7,630,041	2,598,074	4,349,576	886,261	636,304	691,077	36,231,735
Total incl. user cost of capital	13,683,903	9,135,037	8,931,366	2,881,527	5,223,777	977,649	719,090	827,509	42,379,858

Notes:

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

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

A notional user cost of capital based on 8 per cent of total written down value of capital assets as at 30 June 2016 is applied to all jurisdictions.

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

They specifically exclude items such as:

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

Source: Education Council, National Schools Statistics Collection (NSSC) (Finance), 2016.

See also National Report on Schooling data portal.

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

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

- Teaching salary costs represented 78.1 per cent of total salary costs in 2015–16 and 49.9 per cent of total expenditure.
- Teaching staff salaries changed marginally from 78.0 per cent of total salary costs in 2014–15 to 78.1 per cent of total salary costs in 2015–16.
- Non-teaching staff salaries changed marginally from 22.0 per cent of total salary costs in 2014–15 to 21.9 per cent of total salary costs in 2015–16.
- Non-salary costs changed marginally from 21.5 per cent of total government sector expenditure in 2014–15 to 21.4 per cent in 2015–16.

Table 1.16

Operating expenditure by government education systems, Australia, from 2011–12 to 2015–16 financial years (accrual basis) (nominal \$'000)

Area of expenditure	2011–12	2012–13	2013–14	2014–15	2015–16
In-school expenditure					
Salaries (teaching)	18,178,507	18,260,491	19,255,424	19,952,537	21,161,119
Salaries (non-teaching)	3,906,268	4,065,443	4,316,830	4,666,906	4,974,562
Redundancies	18,327	39,721	11,240	20,721	12,167
Non-salary costs	6,996,004	7,145,009	7,547,257	7,982,909	8,408,634
User cost of capital	5,623,590	5,565,745	5,629,094	5,922,211	6,101,612
Subtotal incl. user cost of capital	34,722,696	35,076,409	36,759,845	38,545,284	40,658,094
Out-of-school expenditure					
Salaries (non-teaching)	1,099,922	1,021,658	982,240	957,663	970,581
Redundancies	17,692	50,933	31,650	13,184	27,586
Non-salary costs	664,627	669,869	664,298	669,146	677,086
User cost of capital	27,961	33,932	32,120	46,264	46,511
Subtotal incl. user cost of capital	1,810,202	1,776,393	1,710,308	1,686,257	1,721,764
Total	36,532,898	36,852,802	38,470,152	40,231,541	42,379,858

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.

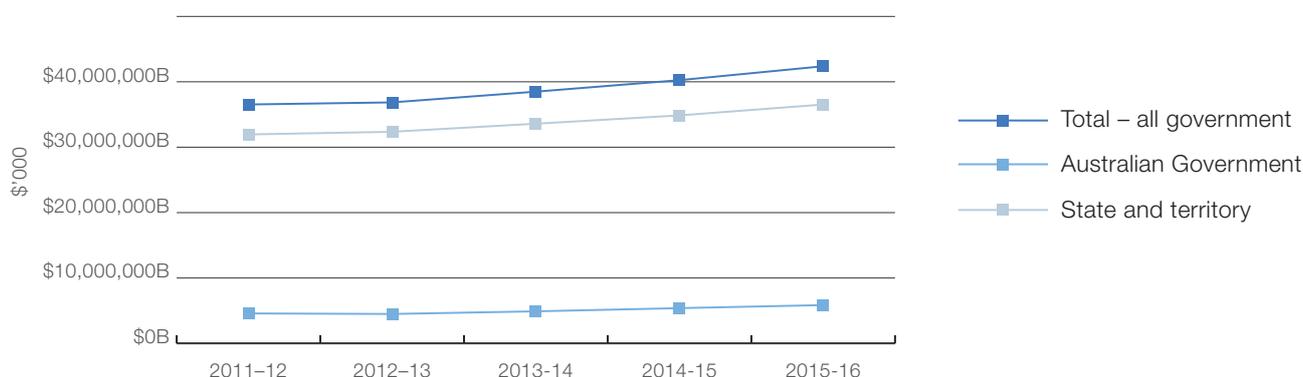
Sources: Education Council, National Schools Statistics Collection (NSSC) – Finance, 2016; *National Report on Schooling in Australia* (previous years).

See also National Report on Schooling data portal.

The total recurrent expenditure by government education systems over the past five years is provided at figure 1.6. It shows government school recurrent expenditure has increased from \$36.5 billion to \$42.4 billion from 2011–12 to 2015–16, an increase of 16.0 per cent or an annual average increase of about 4.0 per cent a year in nominal terms.

Figure 1.6

Australian, state and territory government recurrent expenditure (nominal \$'000), government schools, from 2011–12 to 2015–16



	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
State and territory	31,954,218	32,357,724	33,570,521	34,843,944	36,527,775
Australian Government	4,578,680	4,495,078	4,899,631	5,387,597	5,852,083
Total – all government	36,532,898	36,852,802	38,470,152	40,231,541	42,379,858

Sources: Education Council, National Schools Statistics Collection (Finance), 2016; Steering Committee for the Review of Government Service Provision (SCRGSP), *Report on Government Services 2018*, Productivity Commission.

See also National Report on Schooling data portal.

Primary and secondary school recurrent per capita expenditure

Table 1.17

Per capita expenditure on government schools, by school level, by state and territory, 2015–16 financial year (\$ per student)

State/territory	Primary	Secondary	Total
New South Wales	15,952	20,232	17,627
Victoria	14,335	17,698	15,656
Queensland	15,893	18,417	16,867
South Australia	16,361	18,093	16,990
Western Australia	18,146	21,491	19,404
Tasmania	15,993	19,158	17,320
Northern Territory	22,910	27,900	24,664
Australian Capital Territory	18,978	23,749	20,960
Australia (average)	15,964	19,350	17,275

Source: Education Council, National Schools Statistics Collection – Finance, 2016.

The per capita expenditure information provided in table 1.17 gives a nationally consistent basis for comparison of the levels of expenditure across states in government schools in 2015–16.

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 2015–16, this expenditure reached \$15,964 for primary students and \$19,350 for secondary students. This is 21.2 per cent more for a secondary student than for a primary student.

Table 1.18

Recurrent per capita expenditure on government schools, by school level, Australia, from 2010–11 to 2015–16 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

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

Sources: Education Council, National Schools Statistics Collection (NSSC), 2016; *National Report on Schooling in Australia* (previous years).

See also National Report on Schooling data portal.

Table 1.18 also shows a growth of 3.6 per cent in total per capita funding over 2014–15 to 2015–16 from \$16,662 to \$17,275.

Nationally, recurrent per capita expenditure for government primary schools increased by 4.7 per cent from 2014–15 to 2015–16, while funding over the same period increased by 2.1 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 lower class sizes, especially in the last two years of schooling.

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 1.19 funds both recurrent and capital applications.

Table 1.19

Non-government school per capita incomes, by source, Australia, 2016 calendar year

Income source	Catholic schools		Independent schools	
	Per capita amount (\$)	% of total income	Per capita amount (\$)	% of total income
Australian Government grants	8,505	54.3	6,881	32.4
State/territory grants	2,613	16.7	2,264	10.7
Total government grants	11,118	71	9,145	43.1
Private income	4,535	29	12,071	56.9
Total	15,652	100	21,207	100

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

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

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

Table 1.20

Non-government school per capita expenditure, by school sector and school type, Australia, 2016 (calendar year)

Affiliation	Per capita expenditure (\$)
Catholic	
Primary	12,574
Secondary	17,968
Combined	19,223
Independent	
Primary	16,578
Secondary	24,025
Combined	21,370

Notes:

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

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

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

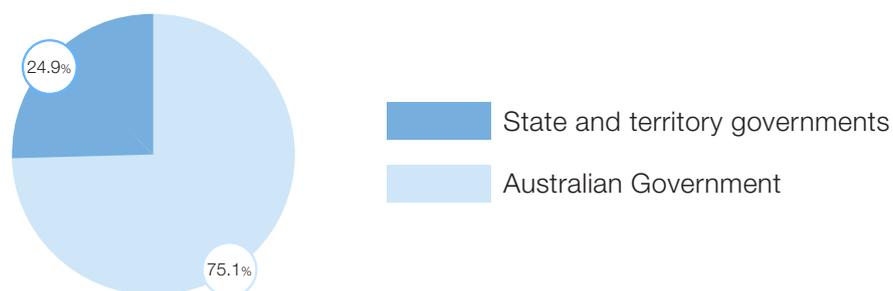
Source: Australian Government Department of Education and Training unpublished data.

See also National Report on Schooling data portal.

Total recurrent expenditure on non-government school education from the Australian Government, and state and territory governments in 2015–16 was approximately \$10,147 per student. Australian Government expenditure was \$7,623 per student, or 75.1 per cent of this total. State and territory recurrent expenditure was \$2,524 per student, or 24.9 per cent of the total. This is depicted in figure 1.7.

Figure 1.7

Total government recurrent expenditure per student, non-government schools, Australia, 2015–16 (per cent)



	2015–16	Percentage
State and territory governments	2,524	24.9%
Australian Government	7,623	75.1%
Total – all government	10,147	100.0%

Source: Steering Committee for the Review of Government Service Provision (SCRGSP), *Report on Government Services 2018*, Productivity Commission.

State and territory government recurrent funding for non-government schools

As well as providing recurrent grants to government schools, all states and territories contribute to funding for non-government schools. State/territory governments used a variety of mechanisms for allocating funding to non-government schools in 2016.

Table 1.21 below outlines total Australian, state and territory recurrent expenditure on non-government schools in 2015–16.

Total recurrent expenditure on non-government school education from the Australian Government, and state and territory governments in 2015–16 was approximately \$13.3 billion. Australian Government expenditure was \$10.0 billion, or 75.2 per cent of this total. State and territory recurrent expenditure was \$3.3 billion or 24.9 per cent of the total.

Table 1.21

Australian, state and territory government recurrent expenditure, non-government schools (\$'000), 2015–16

	Australia
Australian Government specific purpose payments (excluding capital grants)	9,981,908
State and territory government recurrent expenditure	3,305,142
Australian, state and territory government recurrent expenditure	13,287,050

Note:

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

Source: Steering Committee for the Review of Government Service Provision (SCRGSP), *Report on Government Services 2018*, Productivity Commission

1.5.5 Capital expenditure

Government schools

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

As shown in table 1.22, capital expenditure by state and territory governments in government schools was \$1.5 billion in 2016 (the 2015–16 financial year). This table combines funding provided from the Australian Government, and state and territory sourced funding.

The level of capital expenditure rose to unusually high levels in 2009–10 and 2010–11 due mainly to the injection of significant Australian Government funding under the former Building the Education Revolution (BER) program²² and other capital expenditure associated with national partnerships. This has reverted to reflect longer term average capital expenditure more closely, following the completion of projects funded through these programs. The variations in capital expenditure reflect specific initiatives by various state and territory governments to invest in school infrastructure.

22 The National Partnership Agreement on the Nation Building and Jobs Plan – Building the Education Revolution was implemented from 2008–09 to 2011–12.

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.

Table 1.22

Capital expenditure by state and territory governments in government schools, Australia, from 2009–10 to 2015–16 financial years (accrual basis) (\$'000)

Financial year	NSW	Vic.	Qld.	SA	WA	Tas.	NT	ACT	Australia
2009–10	2,567,386	1,269,900	1,977,011	488,650	690,849	223,232	154,695	199,437	7,571,161
2010–11	1,799,683	1,835,015	1,437,641	440,642	820,969	200,907	106,052	198,547	6,839,455
2011–12	584,824	720,258	434,002	144,570	668,824	36,746	54,187	96,735	2,740,147
2012–13	426,911	444,307	345,810	106,720	465,354	8,356	19,416	74,055	1,890,928
2013–14	399,794	387,953	428,176	134,026	520,537	20,071	33,589	61,418	1,985,564
2014–15	345,547	300,479	313,414	84,209	404,317	15,530	20,465	69,922	1,553,883
2015–16	404,588	288,033	313,630	39,118	287,789	34,957	75,989	53,292	1,497,396

Notes:

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

Components may not add to totals due to rounding.

Sources: Education Council, National Schools Statistics Collection (Finance), 2016; *National Report on Schooling in Australia*, 2011–2015.

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. The CGP provides supplementary funding to assist non-government primary and secondary school communities to improve capital infrastructure where these schools otherwise may not have access to sufficient capital resources. Special schools, special assistance schools, majority Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander schools and sole provider schools may also use Commonwealth recurrent funding for capital purposes.

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

1.5.6 *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.

This part provides high-level profiles of recurrent funding information for the 2015 calendar year, aggregated from school financial details published on the *My School* website in March 2017.

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

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

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

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

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

It also is important to note that the definitions and counting rules for schools and enrolments used for the *My School* website differ, in some respects, to those of the National Schools Statistics Collection (Non-finance)²³ used for the reporting of school and student data elsewhere in this report.

²³ The National Schools Statistics Collection (NSSC) (Non-finance) is the source of school number and student enrolment data reported elsewhere in this report. Data included in this section on a per-school, per-student or per-school sector basis cannot be directly compared to data reported elsewhere in this report. In particular, in the NSSC, Catholic non-systemic schools are classified as Catholic schools. In the *My School* data collection, a number of Catholic non-systemic schools in NSW, SA and WA are currently classified as independent schools. This affects comparisons between school sectors for those states and nationally. Further information on the NSSC (Non-finance) is included in Part 4: Glossary.

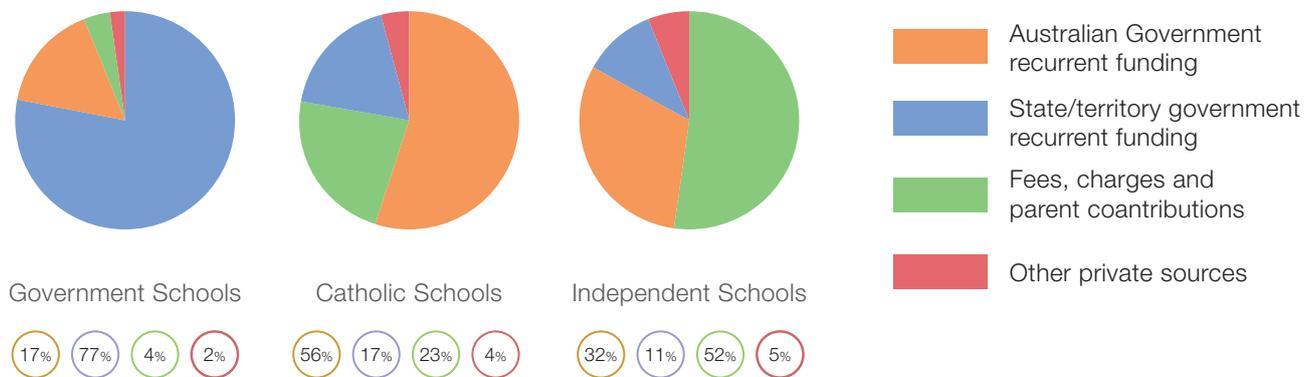
Recurrent income

For 2015, the Australian Government funding comprised 17 per cent of the total gross income for government schools with the majority, 77 per cent, being funded by state and territory governments.

For non-government schools, the Australian Government contributed 56 per cent of Catholic sector gross income and 32 per cent of independent sector gross income. Income from fees, charges and parent contributions contributed 52 per cent of independent sector income and 23 per cent of Catholic sector income.

Figure 1.8

Gross income by funding source, Australia, 2015 (per cent)



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

Table 1.23 shows the movements in recurrent income between 2014 and 2015 by funding source.

Table 1.23

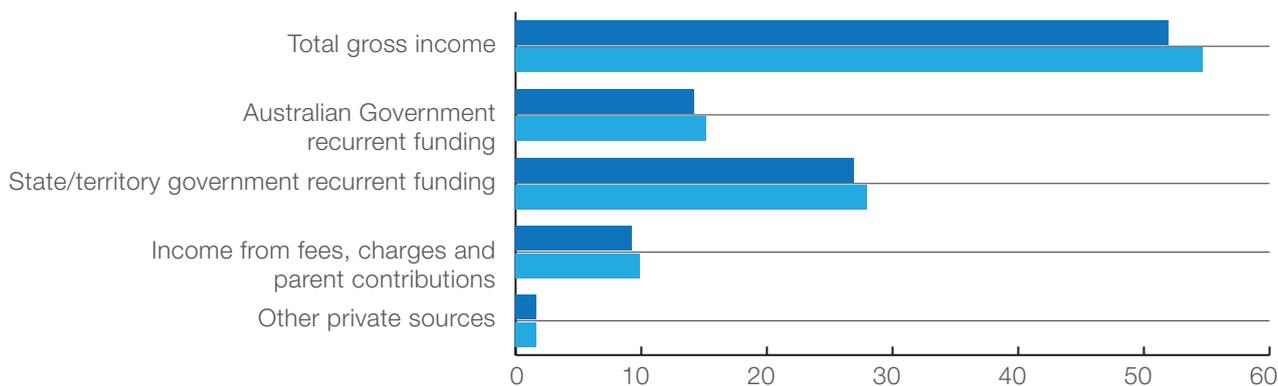
Movements in recurrent income between 2014 and 2015

Source	2014 (\$ billion)	2015 (\$ billion)	Change (\$ billion)	Movement
Australian Government recurrent funding	14.162	15.178	1.016	↑
State/territory government recurrent funding	26.906	27.947	1.041	↑
Income from fees, charges and parent contributions	9.252	9.888	0.636	↑
Income from other private sources	1.628	1.623	-0.005	↓
Total gross income	51.947	54.635	2.688	↑
Deductions (from recurrent to capital services)	1.866	1.942	0.076	↑
Total net recurrent income	50.082	52.693	2.611	↑

These data are depicted graphically in figure 1.9.

Figure 1.9

Total gross income between 2014 and 2015, by funding source (\$ billion)



	Income from other private source	Income from fees, charges and parent contributions	State/territory government recurrent funding	Australian Government recurrent funding	Total gross income
2015	1,622,650	9,887,722	27,947,227	15,177,632	54,635,231
2014	1,627,625	9,252,152	26,906,034	14,161,537	51,947,348

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)

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

In 2015, the net recurrent income per student (NRIPS) was \$14,033. This is an increase of 3.62 per cent over 2014.

Between 2014 and 2015, there was 3.08 per cent increase for the government sector (to \$13,167), a 4.24 per cent increase for the Catholic sector (to \$13,379), and a 4.62 per cent increase for the independent sector (to \$18,413).

Table 1.24

Movements in income per student between 2014 and 2015

Source	2014	2015	Change (%)	Movement
Australian Government recurrent funding	3,830	4,042	5.54%	↑
State/territory government recurrent funding	7,276	7,443	2.30%	↑
Fees, charges and parental contributions	2,502	2,633	5.24%	↑
Other private sources	440	432	-1.82%	↓
Total gross Income	14,047	14,550	3.58%	↑
Deductions [24]	504	517	2.58%	↑
Total NRIPS [25]	13,543	14,033	3.62%	↑
FTE student numbers	3,697,990	3,754,875	1.54%	↑
NRIPS (government.)	12,774	13,167	3.08%	↑
NRIPS (Catholic)	12,873	13,379	4.24%	↑
NRIPS (independent)	17,626	18,413	4.62%	↑

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

See also National Report on Schooling data portal.

24 Deductions from recurrent to capital services.

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

Part 2

Policies and priorities



Part 2 outlines the national policy context for Australian schooling in 2016 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. 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 2016, these councils are the Council of Australian Governments (COAG), the COAG Education Council, and the COAG Industry and Skills Council.



COAG

COAG is the peak intergovernmental forum in Australia. Its members are the Prime Minister, state 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.²⁶ Membership of the Education Council consists of state, territory, Australian Government and New Zealand ministers with responsibility for the portfolios of school education, higher education and/or early childhood education.

The Education Council's scope of responsibility covers:

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

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

The Council's priority actions include²⁷:

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.

²⁶ In this report, contemporary references to the council of Australian education ministers are to the Education Council. Historical references are to the Standing Council on School Education and Early Childhood or to its predecessors, the Ministerial Council for Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs (MCEECDYA) and the Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA).

²⁷ COAG Education Council 2014 Terms of Reference.

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

State and territory policy initiatives²⁸

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 2016, state and territory policy initiatives included:

- The NSW Government announced the NSW Literacy and Numeracy Strategy 2017–2020, committing an additional \$340 million to ensure students in NSW schools have the essential literacy and numeracy skills they need for life. This cross-sectoral initiative focuses on early intervention, evidence-based learning progressions, diagnostic assessment and professional learning.
- Victoria provided a \$566 million boost to equity funding. This needs-based funding is designed to break the link between student disadvantage and low achievement. Schools can use this funding boost to invest in additional resources and expertise for the students who need them most.
- Queensland developed a School Improvement Model (SIM) to establish common language and processes to improve teaching and learning across schools. Queensland also implemented a range of strategies focused on improving literacy outcomes in the curriculum.
- The Aboriginal Cultural Standards Framework was introduced into Western Australian government schools. Aligned with the Australian Professional Standard for Principals and Australian Professional Standards for Teachers, the framework sets expected standards for staff when working with Aboriginal students, their families and communities.
- The Northern Territory continued to implement the Indigenous Education Strategy 2015–2024, delivering new and proven evidence-based programs to improve Indigenous student outcomes.

²⁸ Information on state and territory initiatives reported in part 2 are drawn from contributions received from state and territory education authorities.

2.2 Educational goals

The [*Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians*](#)²⁹ sets the directions for Australian schooling for the 10 year period from 2009 to 2018, as agreed to by all Australian education ministers.

The Melbourne Declaration has two overarching educational goals³⁰ 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 2016 in addressing the areas for action is outlined in the following sections.

²⁹ 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).

³⁰ For a full explanation of the goals, see the Melbourne Declaration, pp. 6–9.

COAG targets

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

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

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

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

In December 2015, COAG agreed to a new early childhood education target of 95 per cent of all Indigenous four-year-olds enrolled in early childhood education (by 2025).³¹

³¹ Reporting on this 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. Under these agreements, Australian Government funding was provided to states and territories. States and territories contributed to the implementation of the agreements in money terms and in kind.

National partnership agreements for:

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

were implemented over four or five years from 2009, concluding in 2012 or 2013. Detailed information on these partnerships is included in previous editions of this report.

Ongoing national partnerships in the early childhood education sector, the National Quality Agenda for Early Childhood Education and Care and Universal Access to Early Childhood Education, are reported in Part 2.5: Strengthening early childhood.

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

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

2.4 Supporting quality teaching and school leadership

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

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

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

Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership



The [Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership \(AITSL\)](#) is a public company owned and funded by the Australian Government. AITSL has responsibility for supporting the implementation of the [Australian Professional Standards for Teachers](#) and the [Australian Professional Standard for Principals](#). In 2016, AITSL continued to work closely with the states and territories, the non-government sector, universities and other key stakeholders in the implementation of the standards and to support and improve professional practice in the teaching profession.

In July 2016, the Education Council endorsed [Graduate to Proficient: Australian guidelines for teacher induction into the profession](#), produced by AITSL, for adoption from 2017. States and territories will use the guidelines to ensure their induction policies and strategies are aligned with effective practice, having regard to local needs and circumstances. To assist jurisdictions in supporting the uptake and impact of the guidelines, AITSL is developing resources, including an app and video case studies.

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

Initial teacher education

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

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

Teacher workforce data

Developments in the collection of teacher workforce data in 2016 are outlined in Part 2.10: Strengthening accountability and transparency.

The More Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Teachers Initiative

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

2.5 Strengthening early childhood education³²

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

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

The current National Partnership Agreement on Universal Access to Early Childhood Education makes \$840 million available to states and territories to support universal access to a quality preschool education in 2016 and 2017.

In December 2015, COAG renewed the early childhood education target, aiming for 95 per cent of all Indigenous four-year-olds enrolled in early childhood education by 2025.

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

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

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

State and territory initiatives

In 2016, the NSW Government announced the Start Strong funding scheme, allocating an additional \$115 million to community preschools and long day care centres. This will help services further reduce preschool fees for Indigenous children and children from low income backgrounds, to ensure that affordability is less of a barrier to accessing 600 hours of early childhood education before starting full-time schooling.

The Victorian Government is investing an additional \$4.4 million over four years to maintain the financial viability of small rural kindergartens.³³ This builds on the additional \$500,000 allocated for rural kindergarten services in 2016. In addition, further support was provided to eligible dairy farming and

³² Early childhood education refers to programs that children may undertake in the years before they commence full-time schooling. In general, statistical information on early childhood education in Australia is not reported in this report on school education.

³³ In Victoria and Queensland, Kindergarten is the name used for pre-school early childhood education.

drought affected families to participate in kindergarten in 2016.

In recognition of the challenges of providing access for families in rural and remote areas, the Queensland Government provided a pre-school program through the Remote Kindergarten Pilot in 38 remote state schools, in 35 remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities; and through eKindy, a distance education program.

The South Australian Government continues to invest in developing integrated children's centres that bring together care, learning, family support, community development and health services to strengthen parenting capacity and parent engagement in their child's development, wellbeing and learning. Currently there are 44 centres, with a commitment to 49 centres by 2022.

Learning Together is a South Australian program for families with children from birth to three years old, aimed at engaging families in their children's learning through supported playgroups and parenting groups, connecting families to other early childhood programs and services and to schools, and re-engaging parents in their own formal learning.

Western Australia continued to educate four-year-old Kindergarten³⁴ (preschool) children in schools, using the National Quality Standard to assure a cohesive, continuous learning program in the early years of school.

Also in Western Australia, state-funded child and parent centres located in public schools provided health, early learning and parent support services in 21 vulnerable communities across the state. The KindiLink pilot, for Aboriginal three-year-olds who attend play-and-learn sessions with a parent/caregiver, commenced at 37 government schools.

Catholic Education Western Australia provided programs for three-year-olds in over 80 schools across the state as well as out-of-school-hours care in a number of schools. The Western Australian independent school sector continued to provide its early childhood teachers with professional learning support.

The NT developed a whole-of-government plan, Great Start Great Future – Northern Territory Early Years Strategic Plan 2016 –2020, to improve the outcomes of all children from birth to eight years old through sustainable and coordinated investment. As part of this, the NT Preschool Curriculum was developed to provide a consistent approach to address the outcomes of the Early Years Learning Framework. The Families as First Teachers program continues to achieve successful outcomes for children, their families and the community.

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

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

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).

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

Victoria implemented a new student data transfer processes for Year 6–7 transitions to enhance the secure transfer of student wellbeing, health and achievement data between government schools. Resources to support student data transfer and primary and secondary school cluster approaches to transitions have been published.

Queensland launched *Schools of the future: A strategy for STEM in Queensland state schools* to build teacher capability, increase student participation and lift student achievement in STEM, through a suite of initiatives including Virtual STEM Academies, Queensland Coding Academy, STEM Girl Power Forum and Robotics for the Future.

In South Australia, the survey of wellbeing and student engagement collected information from students in Years 6–9 about their social and emotional development, social support and learning and engagement. The survey data informs schools, the community and government about the young people's strengths and the challenges they face. In 2016, over 36,500 government school students from 489 schools completed the survey.

Western Australia introduced a new model for supporting the most educationally at-risk students in government schools through 13 engagement centres and a new Learning Academy. Also in Western Australia, 2,017 government school students were selected for Primary Extension and Challenge courses, and 17 government secondary schools hosted gifted and talented programs.

Catholic Education Western Australia supported gifted and talented programs in its schools through the provision of resources and professional learning. The Scaffolding Adolescent Literacy professional learning program and an intervention program for struggling older readers were offered to independent schools through the Association of Independent Schools, Western Australia.

The Northern Territory implemented the Work Like the Best: Middle Years Teaching and Learning Strategy 2016–2018, which aims to ensure that government middle schools offer curriculum that develops resilience, life-long learning skills and a strong sense of self. During 2016, there was a focus on enhancing partnerships between schools to help students move successfully through the stages of schooling.

In December 2015, the Education Council endorsed the National Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) School Education Strategy 2016–2026. The strategy acknowledges that while there is a significant effort already underway within all jurisdictions to lift student outcomes in STEM, a renewed national focus on STEM education will provide fresh momentum to improve performance in this area.

2.7 Supporting senior years of schooling and youth transitions

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

Within the Melbourne Declaration (p. 12), education ministers agreed that:

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

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

In 2010, the minimum school (or approved equivalent) leaving age was raised, by national agreement, to 17 years of age. In the period 2010–2016, there were overall increases in apparent retention rates to senior years of schooling, in the proportion of 15–19-year-olds participating in education and training, and in Year 12 or equivalent attainment rates. These data are reported in Part 3: Measuring and reporting performance.

Preparing Secondary Students for Work

[Preparing Secondary Students for Work – A framework for vocational learning and VET delivered to secondary students](#), released by the Education Council in 2014, clarifies the distinction between vocational learning (career education and general work-related curriculum such as Work Studies) and vocational education and training (VET) (nationally recognised training described within an industry-developed training package or an accredited course). It emphasises that VET delivered to secondary students is the same as all other VET, and that the same quality standards apply. The framework uses the term ‘VET delivered to secondary students’ in preference to the existing term ‘VET in Schools’ (VETiS).³⁵

The [Preparing Secondary Students for Work framework](#), as well as an online career education self-assessment tool for schools and other resources have now been incorporated as a section of the Australian Government’s *My Skills* website. The framework and the associated resources have been developed by Australian and state and territory governments in partnership with the education and training sector and peak industry bodies.

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

35 In 2016, the term ‘VET in Schools’ (VETiS) continued to be used in the VET sector to identify VET delivered to senior secondary students/as part of a Senior Secondary Certificate of Education, including for data collection and reporting purposes. ‘VET in Schools’ continues to be the term used within the Australian Vocational Educational and Training Management Information Statistical Standard (AVETMISS).

VET delivered to secondary students

Programs for the delivery of VET to secondary students, including school-based apprenticeships and traineeships, operate in all states and territories. Under these programs, school students can combine school study with training towards an accredited Australian Qualifications Framework³⁶ (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 2016 is reported in Part 3: Measuring and reporting performance and in the National Report on Schooling data portal. VET course enrolments and VET qualifications completed by senior secondary students are reported at the school level on the [My School website](#).

Trade Training Centres in Schools Program

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

By 2016, 486 of these projects were operational with over 39,000 enrolments. The food/hospitality, building/construction, engineering, automotive and agriculture/horticulture training streams had the greatest number of enrolments.

Career education resources and initiatives

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

The myfuture website is managed by Educational Services Australia.



In May 2016, under the *Quality Schools, Quality Outcomes* policy, the Australian Government committed \$3 million for a National Career Education Strategy to ensure that students are 'work ready', prepared for life beyond school and equipped with the skills needed for the jobs of today and into the future. The strategy is being developed in collaboration with schools, employers, industry, career practitioners and parents and will build on existing career-related initiatives.

Pathways in Technology pilot

In May 2016 the Australian Government committed \$4.6 million to expand the Pathways in Technology (P-TECH) pilot from two sites in Victoria to 14 sites across Australia, bringing total investment in the pilot program to \$5.1 million. This initiative is part of a broader strategy to improve Australia's STEM capability and the quality of related post-school qualifications and vocational pathways.

The P-TECH pilot establishes partnerships between industry, schools and tertiary education providers, which enable businesses to play an active role in the learning and career development of their future workforce. These include mentoring and providing pathways from school to further education, training and employment, as well as opportunities for employment with the schools' industry partners.

36 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.

Students engage in hands-on, project-based activities, both at school and in a workplace.

State and territory initiatives

Victoria continued to develop and implement system approaches that support effective pathways and enhance work readiness, including a Structured Workplace Learning Statewide Portal to assist schools locate work placements. Victoria also commenced scoping improvements for the delivery of VET to school students, including school-based apprenticeships and traineeships. The Navigator program, which funds organisations to assist disengaged learners back into education, was also established.

In 2016, the Queensland Government confirmed that new senior assessment and tertiary entrance procedures will begin with Year 11 students in 2019. Queensland also set specific targets for Year 12 student completion including for closing the gap for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

In South Australia, the South Australian Certificate of Education (SACE)³⁷ Improvement Strategy utilises partnerships between the SACE Board and government school leaders and teachers to collate and analyse student engagement data. This informs processes to improve SACE retention and achievement. The South Australian Student Pathways Strategy builds business and industry partnerships with schools.

New certification requirements in 2016 set a higher standard for attainment of the revised Western Australian Certificate of Education (WACE)³⁸, including minimum standards for literacy and numeracy. Western Australia provided continued support for improved outcomes for senior secondary students in light of the revised WACE.

The Western Australian Catholic and independent school sectors continued to support 15 Curriculum and Reengagement in Education (CARE) schools (some with multiple campuses) to cater for the education of secondary-aged students who have significant difficulty in accessing mainstream education. Using dedicated state funding, Western Australia's 14 independent Aboriginal community schools continued to provide programs designed to support secondary Aboriginal students to attend and participate in school and training programs.

The Northern Territory has a range of flexible options available to students in the senior years, including the Northern Territory Certificate of Education and Training (NTCET)³⁹, which recognises community learning and programs such as VET and school-based apprenticeships, as well as other senior subjects.

Students in remote and very remote schools, who wish to access mainstream secondary education, are supported by the Transition Support Unit to prepare for, and enrol in, Northern Territory and interstate boarding schools. Some of these schools offer the NTCET via distance education through the Northern Territory School of Distance Education. Students wishing to remain on Country can access Employment Pathways, an optional secondary education curriculum designed specifically for very remote schools.

37 SACE is the name of the Senior Secondary Certificate of Education issued by South Australia.

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

39 The NTCET is the Senior Secondary Certificate of Education issued to Northern Territory students.

2.8 Promoting world-class curriculum and assessment

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

The Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority



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

In terms of curriculum and assessment, the functions of ACARA⁴⁰ are to:

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

The ACARA Charter⁴¹ specifies strategic directions for the authority in the key areas of curriculum and assessment as follows:

Curriculum

ACARA will:

- provide a world-class curriculum from Foundation⁴² to Year 12 in specified learning areas agreed to by Council
- assemble the evidence base required to review, develop and refine curriculum.

Assessment

ACARA will provide a quality, comprehensive and cohesive suite of national assessments.

In delivering this strategic direction, ACARA will initially address the following priorities:

- ensure ACARA's resources and attention are focused on its assessment function, in particular ACARA's responsibilities for the successful transition to NAPLAN online

40 Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority Act (2008), Section 6. (ACARA's functions in data collection and reporting are outlined in Part 2.10: Strengthening accountability and transparency.)

41 The Education Council determines the ACARA Charter. In 2016, the Education Council issued a revised charter to take effect from 23 November 2016, replacing the August 2012 version of the charter.

42 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.

- ensure that the suite of online assessments are directly linked to the national curriculum, to improve the understanding of educational outcomes for Australian students.

The Charter also provides that:

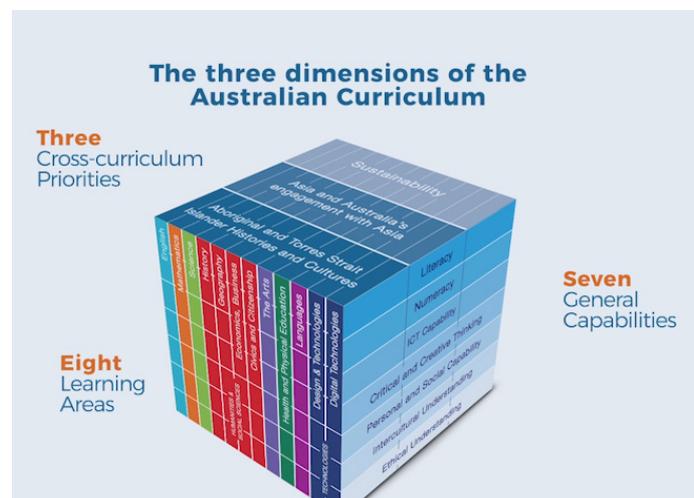
In the context of an emerging period of curriculum stability at a national level, ACARA's highest priority is to ensure successful transition to online assessment, particularly NAPLAN online.

2.8.1 The Australian Curriculum



There are eight learning areas in the Australian Curriculum, corresponding to those listed by education ministers in the Melbourne Declaration⁴³:

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



In addition to its focus on learning areas, the Australian Curriculum includes seven general capabilities: literacy, numeracy, information and communication technology capability, critical and creative thinking, personal and social capability, ethical understanding, and intercultural understanding. Teachers are expected to teach and assess general capabilities to the extent that they are incorporated within learning area content.

The Australian Curriculum also focuses on three cross-curriculum priorities identified in the Melbourne Declaration: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures; Asia and Australia's Engagement with Asia; and Sustainability. As with the general capabilities, these are addressed through the learning areas.

In October 2016, ACARA completed the first iteration of the Australian Curriculum for students from Foundation to Year 10 with the publication of Auslan and Classical Languages curricula. The Foundation – Year 10 Australian Curriculum is now a complete, web-based curriculum that can be accessed by teachers, parents, students and educators across Australia and internationally.

In addition, 15 senior secondary Australian Curriculum subjects across English, Mathematics, Science, History and Geography have been developed, approved and published. State and territory curriculum, assessment and certification authorities are responsible for determining

⁴³ Schedule 1 of the ACARA Charter specifies subjects in each of these learning areas for Foundation to Year 10 and for the areas of English, Mathematics, Science, and Humanities and Social Sciences for Years 11 and 12.

how the senior secondary Australian Curriculum content and achievement standards are to be integrated into their courses.

Curriculum projects

The Curriculum Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) project, undertaken by ACARA in partnership with the Australian Association of Mathematics Teachers, was completed in June 2016. The project reflected the work of 13 schools from around Australia, whose objective was to demonstrate ways in which the STEM disciplines could be integrated for Year 9 and Year 10 students. The final report and the videos are available on the Australian Curriculum website.

In November 2016, work began on a three-year project to support the implementation of the Australian Curriculum: Digital Technologies in disadvantaged schools. The Australian Government is investing \$50.6 million under the National Innovation and Science Agenda to support this project. The focus is on ensuring that students at risk of falling behind are given opportunities to participate and engage in digital literacy in primary and secondary school settings.

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

In 2015–16, ACARA partnered with schools in four jurisdictions to film illustrations of practice, which would support access to the Australian Curriculum for students with disability. This project was undertaken in response to the review of the Australian Curriculum and was designed to enable each school to tell its story about the use of the Australian Curriculum's general capabilities to personalise learning. Filming was completed in June 2016 and the videos are available on the [Australian Curriculum website](#).

In 2016, ACARA commenced drafting of the National Literacy and Numeracy Learning Progressions document, consulted with literacy and numeracy experts nominated by Australian school and curriculum authorities, and mapped NAPLAN test items to draft progression indicators. The ACARA Board considered an early version of the National Literacy and Numeracy Learning Progressions in December 2016 and approved school trialling in 2017.

2.8.2 The National Assessment Program



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

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

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

National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN)

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

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

The ninth annual NAPLAN assessments were conducted in 2016.

For national reporting purposes, key performance measures (KPMs) have been approved by ministers for reading, writing, numeracy and participation. These KPMs are reported for NAPLAN 2016 in Part 3: Measuring and reporting performance.

In December 2016, the Education Council noted ACARA's development process and progress to date in establishing new proficiency standards for NAPLAN; however, Council decided that no changes to existing NAPLAN reporting would take place until agreed by the Council.

The [2016 NAPLAN National Report](#) provides nationally comparable data on the 2016 national and state/territory results for each test domain. It provides comparisons of performance by student characteristics such as gender, Indigeneity, language background other than English, parental occupation, parental education and school characteristics such as location.

The 2016 NAPLAN National Report and test incidents report were both published in December 2016. NAPLAN result data are also available in interactive form on the results page of the [ACARA National Assessment Program website](#).

The National Assessment Program – sample assessments

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

The fifth cycle of the NAP Sample – Civics and Citizenship (NAP–CC) sample assessment was conducted online in October and November 2016. More than 10,000 students participated in the sample assessment. The KPMs for NAP–CC 2016 are reported in Part 3: Measuring and reporting performance.

In July 2016, the Education Council determined that it would expand the NAP – Civics and Citizenship assessment to include History from 2019. The Melbourne Declaration notes that if students are to become active and informed citizens, they must have 'an understanding of Australia's system of government, history and culture', and that such understanding helps to develop a society that values Australia's Indigenous cultures as a key part of the nation's history, present and future.

In July 2016, the Education Council also agreed to extend NAP – Science Literacy to Year 10 students from 2018. The Council identified scientific literacy, the ability to engage with scientific concepts and principles, as essential to help meet the complex environmental, social and economic pressures of the future. Ministers acknowledged the continuing importance of a national measure of student performance in scientific literacy as illustrated by their endorsement of the STEM School Education Strategy in December 2015 and supported by the expansion of the NAP – Science Literacy program.

Ministers requested ACARA to further explore the proposal that from 2017, schools not included in the NAP sample in a given year would be able to access tests voluntarily, via the online platform, at a time of their choosing. This will enable all schools to benefit from NAP tests as an additional teaching and learning resource, if they choose.

The Education Council has directed ACARA to continue working with internal and jurisdictional experts on improvements to the NAP sample program. This work includes alignment with the Australian Curriculum, updating assessment frameworks, developing innovative items, improved reporting and providing ongoing access to each sample assessment for all non-sample schools on an opt-in basis.

National Assessment Program – international assessments

Three international [NAP Sample Assessments](#) are used as a basis for key performance measures in the Measurement Framework for Schooling in Australia. These are the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) and the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS).

- PISA is a triennial assessment of 15-year-old students in reading, mathematical and scientific literacy administered by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). The most recent cycle was in 2015, with the next assessment scheduled for 2018.

- TIMSS is a four-yearly assessment of Year 4 and Year 8 students' achievement in mathematics and science administered by the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA). The most recent cycle was in 2015, with the next assessment scheduled for 2019.⁴⁴
- PIRLS is a five-yearly assessment of Year 4 students' reading literacy administered by the IEA. Australia participated for the first time in 2011. The most recent cycle of PIRLS was 2016, in which 50 countries and 11 benchmarking entities participated. In Australia, more than 6,900 students from 286 schools took part. Australian students' results in PIRLS 2016 are reported as a KPM for schooling for the first time in Part 3: Measuring and reporting performance.

National online assessment

Education ministers have agreed that NAPLAN will move online over a two to three-year period from 2017.⁴⁵ This means moving NAPLAN from the current paper-based tests to computer-based assessments. Jurisdictions, school systems and schools will determine the timeframe for implementation, based on readiness, to ensure an effective and efficient transition.

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

NAPLAN Online is expected to provide better assessment, more precise results and faster turnaround of information.

National platform

Online assessment will be introduced using a national platform built by Education Services Australia (ESA), with funds from the Australian Government. In September 2016, 80,000 students in over 1,000 schools participated in the NAPLAN Online platform trial and readiness test. The majority of schools participating in the trial demonstrated that they were ready to take part in NAPLAN Online. While there were some technical issues requiring resolution, students were engaged, and student survey results showed that the majority of students liked using a computer for the assessments.



The platform was also used to trial online assessment through the NAP – Civics and Citizenship sample assessment 2016.

Further information on online assessment is available on ACARA's [NAP website](#).

44 TIMSS 2019 will be conducted in the Southern Hemisphere in October 2018.

45 Participating states and territories subsequently decided to postpone the transition to NAPLAN Online until 2018.

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.

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

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



COAG has set targets to close the gap between the educational outcomes of Indigenous and non-Indigenous students. Progress towards these targets for attendance, literacy and numeracy and Year 12 or equivalent attainment is reported in Part 3: Measuring and reporting performance.

In December 2015, a revised Closing the Gap target for early childhood was agreed between Australian governments. The new target focuses on increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children's participation in quality early childhood education programs nationally, extending beyond the original focus on remote communities.

Needs-based school funding

Under the Students First funding arrangements, in place from 2014, Australian Government recurrent funding for schools has been calculated using a base-per-student amount plus loadings aimed at addressing disadvantage.

For most non-government schools, 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.

From 2018, the student with disability loading will be based on the Nationally Consistent Collection of Data on School Students with Disability (NCCD).⁴⁶

National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Strategy

The National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Strategy, endorsed by the Education Council in September 2015, maintains a strong national focus on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education, while enabling jurisdictions and communities to determine and implement localised approaches. The strategy includes a set of principles and priorities to inform jurisdictional approaches to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education and identifies national collaborative actions grouped under five key themes for collective implementation by the Australian Government, states and territories to complement the efforts of individual jurisdictions: attendance and engagement, transition points (including pathways to post-school options), early childhood transitions, workforce, and the Australian Curriculum.

⁴⁶ Information on the NCCD is reported in Part 2.10: Strengthening accountability and transparency.

A number of the national collaborative actions were completed in 2016, and the Education Council will consider proposed new collaborative actions in 2017.

Framework for Aboriginal Languages and Torres Strait Islander Languages

The Australian Curriculum: [Framework for Aboriginal Languages and Torres Strait Islander Languages](#) Foundation – Year 10 was endorsed by the Education Council and published on the Australian Curriculum website in December 2015.

The framework is designed to support schools at the local level across Australia, offering guidance in developing curriculum to teach an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander language. The framework is intended to develop the cultural awareness of all students, while strengthening cultural identity for Indigenous students.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures

In May 2016 the Australian Government commissioned ACARA to develop illustrations of practice for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures cross-curriculum priority as a way of improving teaching and learning of this priority from Foundation to Year 10. During 2016 ACARA developed the illustrations of practice as a series of videos in consultation with representatives from Indigenous advisory groups. These videos, to be published on the [Australian Curriculum website](#), will showcase effective implementation of the cross-curriculum priority across a range of teaching and school settings.

ABSTUDY

ABSTUDY is a long-standing Australian Government scheme that provides a living allowance and other supplementary benefits to Indigenous students in school and higher education. During 2015-16, an average of 20,526 school students received ABSTUDY assistance. ABSTUDY includes special measures to address the specific circumstances of Indigenous students and their families, particularly those from regional and remote areas.

Remote School Attendance Strategy

The Remote School Attendance Strategy (RSAS), established in 2014, was developed in partnership with communities to lift school attendance levels in remote communities, where attendance rates are often very low. RSAS employs local Indigenous people to develop culturally appropriate strategies to support families in ensuring that children go to school. It currently supports approximately 14,500 students in 78 schools across remote Northern Territory, New South Wales, Queensland, South Australia and Western Australia. Since the introduction of RSAS, attendance rates have improved in 48 per cent of RSAS schools.⁴⁷

The Northern Territory Employment Pathways Program delivers secondary educational options that meet the needs of students from remote communities in the Territory. In 2016 the Northern Territory also constructed a new contemporary Northern Territory School of Distance Education and Dawarr regional boarding facility.

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

47 Closing the Gap Prime Minister's report 2018, p. 56

2.10 Strengthening accountability and transparency

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

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

The Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority

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

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

ACARA's strategic priorities for data and reporting as set out in its Charter⁴⁸ are:

ACARA will:

- provide and apply a comprehensive and reliable national measurement framework
- facilitate the use and dissemination of data for research and policy development in accordance with agreed protocols
- present detailed, accessible, timely and meaningful school education performance information.

In delivering this strategic direction, ACARA will initially address the following 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.

⁴⁸ The Education Council determines the ACARA Charter. In 2016, the Education Council issued a revised charter to take effect from 23 November 2016, replacing the August 2012 version.

National Report on Schooling in Australia

In 2016, ACARA published the *National Report on Schooling in Australia 2013* and prepared the *National Report on Schooling in Australia 2014* in consultation with representatives of state and territory education authorities other government agencies, and non-government school sectors.

The 2014 report (published in mid-2017) was the first to adopt the new interactive format, including the [National Report on Schooling data portal](#), in addition to a written report. ACARA substantially developed the data portal during 2016.

The National Report on Schooling data portal provides access to a much wider range of national, and state and territory data on schooling in Australia than was possible in the static tables of previous reports, including general statistics on enrolments and funding, and data on the agreed KPMs. In most cases, the portal allows readers to download data at the national level, but also by state and territory, by school sector, by calendar year and by other breakdowns such as gender and Indigenous status.

Several new data sets have been added to the data portal for the *National Report on Schooling in Australia 2016*.

My School

ACARA is responsible for the national data collection on individual schools housed on the [My School website](#). *My School* was updated on 9 March 2016, with 2015 school profile and population data, NAPLAN results and student attendance data. *My School* now includes up to eight years of performance data.

The 2016 *My School* release included a new landing page to present more concise and accessible information for a range of users, including video material and revised text on all pages, fact sheets and glossary.

Teacher workforce data

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

In response, the Education Council endorsed the development by AITSL of the National Initial Teacher Education and Teacher Workforce Data Strategy and, in December 2016, approved the first stage of its implementation. When implemented from 2018, this national data set will assist with workforce planning, assessing the outcomes of initial teacher education, and evaluating the impact and effectiveness of teaching. AITSL also produces an annual data report on initial teacher education.

During 2016 work continued towards Australia's participation in the OECD Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS) in 2018. TALIS collects comparable international data on the learning environment and working conditions of teachers. Further international reports and working papers from the 2013 TALIS were released in 2016.

In April 2016 jurisdictions agreed to Australia's participation in the OECD Initial Teacher Preparation Study.

Historical and current data on enrolments and qualifications in teacher education courses are included in the National Report on Schooling data portal. These data are drawn from Australian Higher Education Statistics and provide information on the numbers 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.

Nationally Consistent Collection of Data on School Students with Disability (NCCD)

In 2013, education ministers endorsed a model for a Nationally Consistent Collection of Data for School Students with Disability (NCCD). This data collection aims to recognise all students with disability who are being provided with an adjustment to participate in education on the same basis as other students, whether or not they receive targeted funding or support. Under the NCCD model, teachers use their professional, informed judgement, based on evidence, to determine the level of adjustment that students with disability are being provided with, and the broad category of disability under which each student best fits.

Since 2013, the NCCD has been progressively implemented in Australian schools, with 2015 marking the first year that all schools participated in the NCCD. Following an independent review, commissioned by the Australian Government, of the quality and consistency of data collected through NCCD, an initial report [*Improving educational outcomes: Emergent data on students with disability in Australian schools*](#) was released by the Education Council in December 2016. Selected statistics from the NCCD are available through the National Report on Schooling data portal.

From 2018, the NCCD will be used to calculate the school funding loading for students with disability.

Part 3

Measuring and reporting performance



Part 3 reports on the performance of Australian schooling in 2016, using the nationally agreed key performance measures 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 2016, 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 2014–2018.⁴⁹

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.

⁴⁹ Most KPMs are reported annually, but some are collected and reported on a cyclical basis of three, four or five years. Nineteen KPMs are reported for 2016.

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.⁵⁰

⁵⁰ 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

Part 1.2 of this report provides data on the number of students enrolled by school sector, by school level, by state and territory, and over time. This section (3.2.1) reports on the number of students enrolled, as a proportion of the Australian population in the relevant age group, as specified as a KPM for schooling. This is a measure of the coverage of Australian schooling and of the extent to which young people have access to school education. The KPM is specified as the number of students aged 6–15 years enrolled in school, expressed as a proportion of the 6–15-year-old population. This approximates the age range of students for whom schooling is compulsory.

Key Performance Measure 1(a)

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

The numerator for 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.

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, and this source is specified in the measurement framework as a supplementary data source for reporting this KPM for census years, from 2016. KPM 1(a) is reported by state and territory for 2016 in table 3.1 Both data sources are included in the table.

Table 3.1

Number and proportion of the population aged 6–15 years enrolled in school, by state and territory, 2016

	NSW	Vic.	Qld	SA	WA	Tas.	NT	ACT	Australia
Number of children aged 6–15 years enrolled in school ^(a)	940,425	725,530	638,973	201,461	319,669	63,541	33,178	51,879	2,974,656
6–15-year-old population ^(b)	939,732	715,836	631,508	198,271	325,178	63,705	34,602	46,550	2,955,718
Proportion of 6–15-year-olds enrolled in school (%) ^(c)	100.1	101.4	101.2	101.6	98.3	99.7	95.9	111.4	100.6
Proportion of 6–15-year-olds enrolled in school (%) (supplementary Census measure) ^(d)	99.5	99.3	99.3	99.5	99.3	99.4	98.9	99.6	99.4

- (a) Enrolment data are drawn from the National Schools Statistics Collection (NSSC) published in ABS, Cat. No. 4221, *Schools, Australia*. Includes students enrolled full-time or part-time. Jervis Bay enrolments are included with ACT; Norfolk Island enrolments are included with NSW. 'Other territory' enrolments are excluded. Data include students who cross state and territory boundaries to attend school 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 the most recent release of 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 ERP numbers will not add to Australian totals.
- (c) When developing an indicator using data from different sources, significant 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. As such, differences in the annual measure of this KPM should be interpreted with care.
- (d) Supplementary measure for this KPM based on data collected in the Australian Census of Population and Housing, 2016. Individuals are counted in the state/territory in which they usually reside and are identified as attending primary or secondary school.

Sources: ABS, Cat. No. 4221.0, *Schools, Australia*, 2016; ABS, Cat. No. 3101.0, *Australian Demographic Statistics, Australian States and Territories*, March 2017, ACARA, National Report on Schooling data portal; ABS, *Australian Census of Population and Housing*, 2016.

KPM 1(a) for the period 2009–2016 is reported in table 3.2. In addition, census data for this measure are reported for the years 2011 and 2016.

Table 3.2

Number and proportion of the population aged 6–15 years enrolled in school, Australia, 2009–2016

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
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
Population, Australia (6–15 years) ^(b)	2,746,766	2,755,102	2,769,311	2,803,166	2,837,100	2,875,953	2,913,696	2,955,718
Proportion of 6–15-year-olds enrolled in school, Australia (%) ^(c)	100.1	100.0	100.0	99.9	100.3	100.5	100.6	100.6
Proportion of 6–15-year-olds enrolled in school, Australia (%) (supplementary Census measure) ^(d)			99.3					99.4

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

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

(c) When developing an indicator using data from different sources, significant data comparability issues can emerge that will affect the accuracy of the indicator. These differences can have unexpected effects such as producing an estimate greater than 100 per cent of the population. Changes to 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 directly comparable.

Sources: ABS, Cat. No. 4221.0, *Schools, Australia*, 2016; ABS, Cat. No. 3101.0, *Australian Demographic Statistics, Australian States and Territories*, March 2017, ACARA, National Report on Schooling data portal; ABS, *Australian Census of Population and Housing*, 2011 and 2016.

Using administrative data on school enrolments (NSSC) and estimated resident population (ERP), the rate of enrolment in schooling of 6–15-year-olds as measured by KPM 1(a) is very close to 100 per cent in most jurisdictions in 2016, and across Australia for each of the eight years 2009–2016. This reflects universal access to schooling, and its compulsory nature for this age group.

The variation in enrolment rates between jurisdictions in 2016 (and previous years), most notably in the ACT, is mainly due to 'cross-border enrolments'. The NSSC records the number of students in the target age group, who are enrolled in schools located in a particular state or territory (numerator of the measure), whereas the ERP estimates the number of children of that age group, who are resident in the state or territory (denominator of the measure).

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 staff⁵¹) attending ACT schools causes the proportion of 6–15-year-olds enrolled in school to significantly exceed 100 per cent.

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 can give rise to significant data comparability issues that may 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.
- 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 particularly relevant in remote and very remote areas where the population is highly mobile.⁵² This may partly account for enrolment rates exceeding 100 per cent.
- As estimates, ERP figures are subject to error and to periodic revision. Periodic revisions to ERP data are reflected in revisions of time series for this KPM in different editions of this report.

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

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, and of each state and territory, is enrolled in school. Because the numerator and denominator are both drawn from the census, this measure avoids the problem of comparing administrative data to population estimates. By counting students in the state/territory in which they normally reside, the census measure may also provide a more realistic indicator of the school participation rate of resident 6–15-year-olds per jurisdiction. 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. At a jurisdiction level, the census data reflect school participation by children residing in that state and territory rather than the investment in schools located in that jurisdiction.⁵³

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

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

53 For these reasons, table 3.1 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.

3.2.2 Attendance

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

Key Performance Measure 1(b)

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

Key Performance Measure 1(c)

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

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

This is consistent with the [National Standards for Student Attendance Data Reporting](#)⁵⁴, which came into operation for the 2014 data collection period and onwards.

In 2016, nationally comparable student attendance data were collected, as set out in the national standards, for non-government schools in all jurisdictions, and for government schools in all jurisdictions except NSW. NSW government schools are working towards implementing the standards.



⁵⁴ The standards were revised in 2015 to incorporate KPM 1(c), which is reported from 2015. The standards include full definitions and counting rules for the collection and reporting of attendance data. In interpreting data, note that attendance rates and levels take into account explained absences, such as for illness, as well as unexplained absences/absenteeism.

Attendance rates

Table 3.3 reports KPM 1(b) by state and territory for 2016. Table 3.4 reports this KPM nationally, by school sector, for 2014–16.

Table 3.3

Student attendance rates, Years 1–10, by state and territory Australia, 2016 (per cent)

School sector	NSW	Vic.	Qld	SA	WA	Tas.	NT	ACT	Australia
Government	92.4	92.8	91.7	91.0	91.1	91.1	81.1	91.7	91.9
Catholic	93.6	93.9	94.1	93.0	92.9	93.2	83.0	92.9	93.6
Independent	93.7	94.2	93.9	93.7	93.8	94.1	87.1	94.0	93.8
All sectors	92.8	93.2	92.4	91.8	91.8	91.8	82.2	92.4	92.5

Notes:

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

In 2016, NSW government school data were not collected on a comparable basis with other states and territories.

Therefore, comparisons with other jurisdictions should be made with caution. NSW government schools are working towards implementing the standards.

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

Table 3.4

Student attendance rates, Years 1–10, by school sector, Australia, 2014–2016 (per cent)

School sector	2014	2015	2016
Government	91.9	92.0	91.9
Catholic	93.9	93.6	93.6
Independent	94.3	93.9	93.8
All sectors	92.7	92.6	92.5

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.

In summary:

- The average school attendance rate for Years 1–10 across Australia in 2016 was 92.5 per cent. The fall from 92.6 per cent in 2015 was not significant.
- There was little difference in the national average attendance rate for girls (92.6 per cent) and boys (92.4 per cent).
- The average attendance rate for Years 1–10 exceeded 90 per cent in all states and territories except the Northern Territory, where a low average attendance rate (68.6 per cent) for the high proportion⁵⁵ of Indigenous students caused the territory average to be below 90 per cent.
- The average attendance rate in the government school sector was 1.7 percentage points lower than in the Catholic sector, and 1.9 percentage points lower than in the independent sector.
- A common characteristic across all states and territories in 2016 was lower average attendance rates in Years 8, 9 and 10 than in earlier years of schooling. At the national level, the average attendance rate for Years 1–6 was 93.5 per cent compared to 91.1 per cent for Years 7–10.
- 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 93.4 per cent, in remote schools 91.9 per cent and in very remote schools 91.1 per cent. But for Indigenous students, these rates were 86.3 per cent (major cities), 75.9 per cent (remote) and 66.4 per cent (very remote), a difference of 19.9 percentage points between Indigenous students in major cities and in very remote schools, and a gap of 24.7 percentage points between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students in schools in very remote areas.

The Council of Australian Governments (COAG) has agreed to a target to close the gap in school attendance between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students by the end of 2018. The base year for this target is 2014.

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 2016.

⁵⁵ As at August 2016, 41.3 per cent of full-time students in Years 1–10 in the Northern Territory were identified as Indigenous, compared to 5.7 per cent of full-time students in Years 1–10 across Australia. (ABS, *Schools Australia, 2016*)

Table 3.5

Student attendance rates, Years 1–10, by state and territory and Indigenous status, Australia, 2014 and 2016 (per cent)

State/territory	NSW	Vic.	Qld	SA	WA	Tas.	NT	ACT	Australia
2014									
Indigenous	87.5	86.8	85.2	81.1	77.4	88.5	70.2	85.2	83.5
Non-Indigenous	93.9	93.1	92.8	92.6	92.7	92.4	90.9	92.5	93.2
Gap (percentage points)	6.4	6.3	7.6	11.5	15.3	3.9	20.7	7.3	9.7
2016									
Indigenous	86.8	87.1	85.6	81.1	76.6	88.2	68.6	85.4	83.4
Non-Indigenous	93.2	93.3	93	92.4	92.9	92.2	91.8	92.6	93.1
Gap (percentage points)	6.4	6.2	7.4	11.3	16.3	4.0	23.2	7.2	9.7
Change in gap 2014–16 (percentage points)	0.0	–0.1	–0.2	–0.2	1.0	0.1	2.5	–0.1	0.0

Notes:

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

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

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

- There was little change in the average Indigenous school attendance rate from 2014 (83.5 per cent) to 2016 (83.4 per cent).
- In 2016, at the national level, there was a 9.7 percentage point gap between the average attendance rates for Indigenous and non-Indigenous students, a rise of 0.3 points from 2015. This cancelled out a reduction of 0.3 percentage points in 2014–15. In Western Australia, the gap rose by 1.0 percentage points between 2014 and 2016, and in the Northern Territory by 2.5 percentage points. Above average gaps in attendance rates were again recorded in the Northern Territory, Western Australia and South Australia, particularly in very remote areas.
- The average attendance rate for Indigenous students was lower for older year groups: 86.2 per cent for Years 1–6 but 78.6 per cent for Years 7–10. Attendance rates for Indigenous students in remote and very remote areas fell off more sharply for older students than in other groups, with an average national attendance rate of only 51.8 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.

Based on 2014–2016 data, the COAG target for closing the gap in attendance rates by the end of 2018 is unlikely to be met.

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

Attendance levels

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

Table 3.6 shows KPM 1(c) by state and territory, by school sector, for 2016.

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, 2016 (per cent)

State/territory	NSW ^(a)	Vic.	Qld	SA	WA	Tas.	NT	ACT	Australia
Sector	(non-govt)								
Government	-	78.2	74.0	72.6	73.4	74.0	48.6	74.0	74.8
Catholic	80.5	82.7	83.4	78.1	79.5	78.1	55.4	77.6	81.2
Independent	82.3	84.3	82.9	80.9	82.6	82.4	67.7	82.7	82.6
Total non-government	81.3	83.3	83.2	79.6	81.1	79.9	61.8	79.9	81.8
All	81.3	79.9	76.9	75.1	75.8	75.7	52.1	76.4	77.7

(a) Data on student attendance levels for 2015 and 2016 could not be collected for NSW government schools. As a result, the level of attendance (KPM 1 (c)) reported for NSW is for non-government school students only. Because government school students account for 65.9 per cent of the target population for this KPM in NSW, this does not truly reflect the attendance level for that state overall, and should not be compared with measures for other states and territories. The omission of NSW government school data also affects the national KPM for all schools and for the government sector.

Sources: National Report on Schooling data portal, ACARA National Student Attendance Data Collection; ABS, Cat. No. 4221.0, *Schools, Australia, 2016*.

Based on data collected for 2016, 77.7 per cent of Australian students in Years 1–10 attended school for at least 90 per cent of school days. However, the data do not include NSW government school students⁵⁶, who made up the largest single group by state and school sector, representing 21.0 per cent of full-time students in Years 1–10 across Australia, and 65.9 per cent of these students in NSW⁵⁷. As a result, the measure for NSW reflects a minority of the target population (34.1 per cent) and is not comparable to the measures shown for other jurisdictions. National measures of the KPM for the government sector, and for all schools, are also affected.

The proportion of students whose attendance rate was at least 90 per cent was between 75.1 and 79.9 per cent in the states and territories for which full data were available, except for the Northern Territory, where it was 52.1 per cent. As with KPM 1(b), this result is due to significantly lower levels of attendance by Indigenous students in remote and very remote areas of the Territory. The proportions in states and territories were consistently higher for non-government than for government school students.

⁵⁶ Data on student attendance levels KPM 1(c) for 2015 and 2016 could not be collected for NSW government schools. NSW government schools are working towards collecting nationally consistent data for this KPM.

⁵⁷ As at August 2016 (ABS, Cat. No. 4221.0, *Schools, Australia, 2016*).

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 2016 confirms that a much higher proportion of Indigenous than non-Indigenous students were present at school for less than 90 per cent of the expected number of days. Table 3.7 shows KPM 1(c) by state and territory, by Indigenous status, for 2016, and the gap in this measure for Indigenous and non-Indigenous students.

Table 3.7

Student attendance levels: proportion of students in Years 1–10 whose attendance rate is equal to, or greater than, 90 per cent, by state and territory and Indigenous status, Australia, 2016 (per cent)

State/territory	NSW ^(a)	Vic.	Qld	SA	WA	Tas.	NT	ACT	Australia
2016	(non-govt)								
Indigenous	63.4	58.4	54.7	43.7	38.9	64.3	25.3	51.9	49.0
Non-Indigenous	81.8	80.3	78.8	76.6	78.5	76.9	71.1	77.2	79.3
All students	81.3	79.9	76.9	75.1	75.8	75.7	52.1	76.4	77.7
Gap Indigenous/ non-Indigenous (percentage points)	-	21.9	24.1	32.9	39.6	12.6	45.8	25.3	30.3

(a) Data on student attendance levels for 2015 and 2016 could not be collected for NSW government schools. As a result, the level of attendance (KPM 1 (c)) by Indigenous status is reported for NSW non-government school students only. The 'percentage point gap' for NSW is not reported in table 3.7, as the available data exclude 84.8 per cent of Indigenous full-time students in Years 1–10 in NSW. The omission of NSW government school data also affects the national KPM by Indigenous status for all schools and the national gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students.

Sources: National Report on Schooling data portal, ACARA National Student Attendance Data Collection; ABS, Cat. No. 4221.0, *Schools, Australia, 2016*.

Based on the data collected for 2016 (excluding NSW government schools), less than half of Australia's Indigenous students attended school for 90 or more per cent of the time, with a gap of 30.3 percentage points between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students. The gap was above the national average in the Northern Territory, Western Australia and South Australia, particularly in remote and very remote areas.

3.2.3 Apparent retention

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

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

Retention rates are designated as ‘apparent’ and are estimates only, as they are based on aggregate enrolment data and do not record the progression of individual students.⁵⁸ They do not take into account that some students may repeat a grade or be promoted, thus moving between cohorts; that students may choose to adopt flexible study patterns in senior years; or that new students may join or leave a cohort through migration.

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 2009–2016.

Table 3.8

Apparent retention rates, Year 10 to Year 12, by school sector, Australia, 2009–2016 (per cent)

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

Notes:

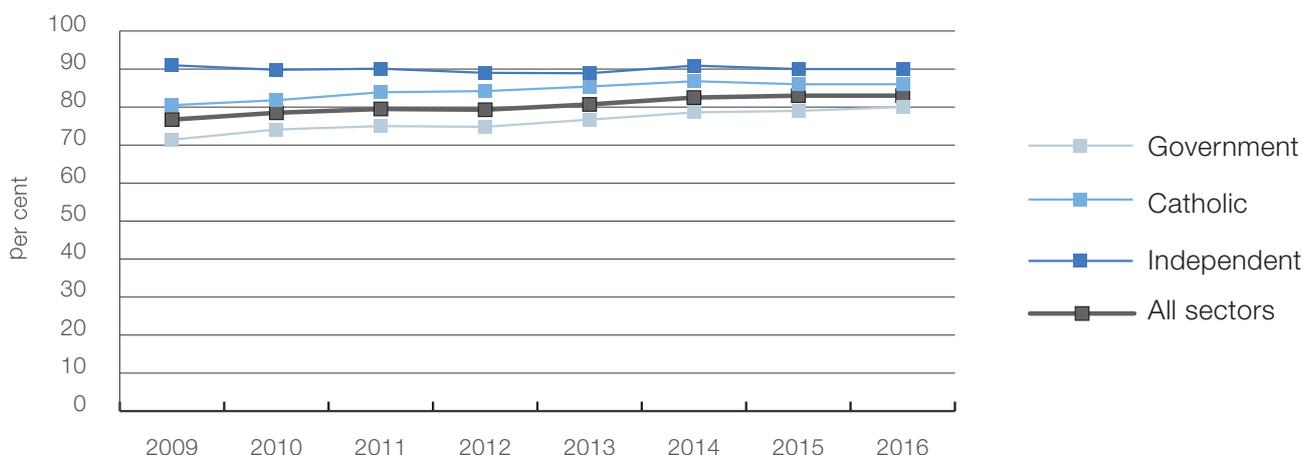
The apparent retention rate measures the number of full-time school students in a designated level/year of schooling as a percentage of their respective cohort group in a base year. The base year for apparent retention rates Year 10 to Year 12 is Year 10, two years before. Part-time students are not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

Source: ABS, Cat. No. 4221.0, *Schools, Australia, 2016*.

⁵⁸ Unit record enrolment data by student is not currently collected at the national level.

Figure 3. 1

Apparent retention rates, Year 10 to Year 12 by school sector, Australia, 2009–2016



Source: ABS, Cat. No. 4221.0, Schools, Australia, 2016.

The national apparent retention rate from Year 10 to Year 12 increased for the fourth successive year between 2015 and 2016. The 0.2 percentage point rise in 2016 contributed to a net rise of 6.2 percentage points from 76.7 per cent in 2009 to 82.9 per cent in 2016. This is a substantial rise in this measure.

As noted in previous reports, this series records upward movements in apparent retention from Year 10 to Year 12, following the implementation of strengthened education participation requirements for 15- and 16-year-olds.⁵⁹

Apparent retention rates from Year 10 to Year 12 rose by 8.1 percentage points for the government school sector and by 5.9 percentage points for the Catholic sector in the period 2009–2016. The gap between apparent retention from Year 10 to Year 12 for government and independent schools narrowed from 19.6 percentage points in 2009 to 10.2 percentage points in 2016.

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

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

⁵⁹ The National Youth Participation Requirement includes the mandatory requirement for all young people to participate in schooling until they complete Year 10, and the requirement to participate full time in education, training or employment, or a combination of these activities, until the age of 17. These were implemented in Queensland, South Australia, Western Australia and Tasmania between 2006 and 2008; and in New South Wales, Victoria, the Northern Territory and the Australian Capital Territory in 2010. From 2014, the age requirement in Western Australia was lifted to 'until the end of the year in which the child reaches the age of 17 years and 6 months or the child reaches the age of 18, whichever happens first'.

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

Table 3.9

Apparent retention rates, Year 10 to Year 12 by state and territory, Australia, 2010, 2015 and 2016 (per cent) and changes 2010–2016 and 2015–16 (percentage points)

Calendar year	NSW	Vic.	Qld	SA	WA	Tas.	NT	ACT	Australia
2010	74.5	82.1	81.0	80.6	76.5	70.7	61.4	91.8	78.5
2015	77.5	84.8	86.7	92.2	81.0	72.1	63.8	95.1	82.7
2016	77.2	85.0	87.3	94.5	80.5	70.8	64.2	92.2	82.9
Change 2010–2016	2.7	2.9	6.3	13.9	4.0	0.1	2.8	0.4	4.4
Change 2015–16	-0.3	0.2	0.6	2.3	-0.5	-1.3	0.4	-2.9	0.2

Notes:

The apparent retention rate measures the number of full-time school students in a designated level/year of schooling as a percentage of their respective cohort group in a base year. The base year for apparent retention rates Year 10 to Year 12 in 2016 is Year 10 in 2014. 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, 2016*.

All states and territories have recorded rises in this rate over the period 2010–2016 with the largest increase, of 13.9 percentage points, in South Australia. Four jurisdictions – Victoria, Queensland, South Australia and the Northern Territory – recorded increases in the rate in 2016.

A number of factors may contribute to differences between states and territories in apparent retention rates from Year 10 to Year 12:

- Rates at the state and territory level can be inflated or deflated by interstate migration, including students transferring from one state to another to undertake senior secondary schooling. These changes are not taken into account in calculating apparent retention rates.
- Differential rates of international immigration, including the temporary entry of overseas students for Years 11 and 12, 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 retention rates, as a higher proportion of their student population is required to remain at school until the second half of Year 12.⁶⁰

⁶⁰ 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.

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

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

KPM 1(e) in the *Measurement Framework for Schooling in Australia 2015* measures retention to Year 12, but its target population is Indigenous students (compared with non-Indigenous 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 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 the target.⁶¹

Table 3.10 and figure 3.2 report this KPM for the period 2009–2016.

Table 3.10

Apparent retention rates, Year 10 to Year 12, by Indigenous status (per cent) and gap Indigenous/non-Indigenous (percentage points) Australia, 2009–2016

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

Notes:

The apparent retention rate measures the number of full-time school students in a designated level/year of schooling as a percentage of their respective cohort group in a base year. The base year for apparent retention rates Year 10 to 12 in 2016 is Year 10 in 2014. Part-time students are not included. Ungraded students are not included.

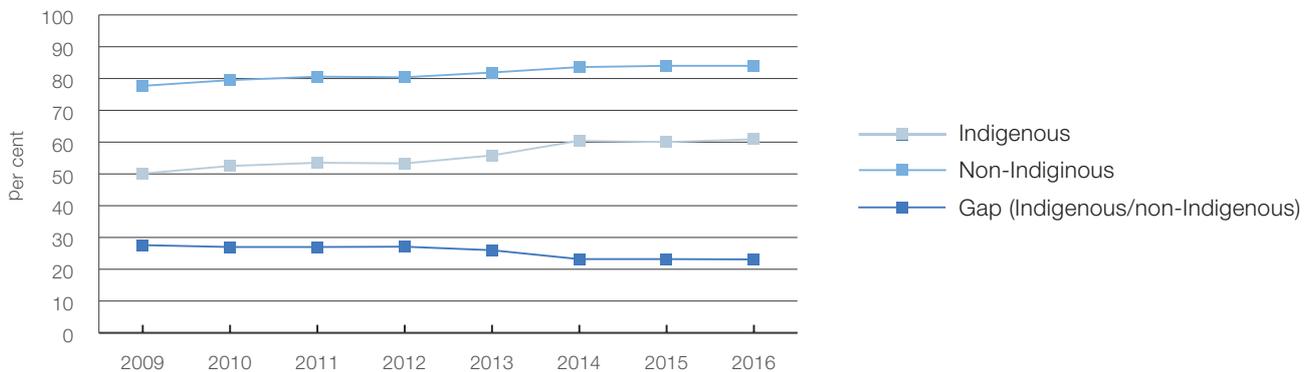
Apparent retention rates for Indigenous students can be affected by changes over time in whether individuals identify (or are identified) as Indigenous.

Source: ABS, Cat. No. 4221.0, *Schools, Australia*, 2016.

⁶¹ Measures for Year 12 or equivalent attainment for 20–24-year-olds are reported in Part 3.4: Senior schooling and youth transitions.

Figure 3.2

Apparent retention rates, Year 10 to Year 12, by Indigenous status, Australia, 2009–2016 (per cent)



Based on these data, retention from Year 10 to Year 12 for Indigenous students has increased substantially – by 10.8 percentage points since 2009, from 50.1 per cent in 2009 to 60.9 per cent in 2016. This exceeds the rise for non-Indigenous students of 6.3 percentage points over this period, leading to a narrowing of the gap by 4.5 percentage points. However, at 23.1 percentage points, the gap remains considerable, with Indigenous students still significantly less likely to proceed to Year 12 than other students. There was a 0.1 percentage point decrease in the gap in 2016.

Apparent changes in 2016 were more marked in individual states and territories. In most jurisdictions, the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students continued to narrow, including a 3.9 percentage point fall in the gap for the Northern Territory. But in Queensland and Western Australia, apparent retention from Year 10 to 12 for Indigenous students decreased, and the gap with apparent retention rates for non-Indigenous students widened by 1.1 and 4.1 percentage points respectively.

Table 3.11 reports KPM 1 (e) by state and territory for 2010, 2015 and 2016.

Table 3.11

Apparent retention rates, Year 10 to Year 12, by Indigenous status, by state and territory (per cent), and gap Indigenous/non-Indigenous (percentage points), 2010, 2015 and 2016

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
2015	NSW	Vic.	Qld	SA	WA	Tas.	NT	ACT	Australia
Indigenous	49.3	66.8	72.4	87.6	56.1	52.6	42.1	87.4	60.6
Non-Indigenous	78.9	85.0	87.7	92.4	82.5	73.7	76.6	95.3	83.8
Gap (Indigenous/non-Indigenous)	29.6	18.2	15.3	4.8	26.4	21.1	34.5	7.9	23.2
2016	NSW	Vic.	Qld	SA	WA	Tas.	NT	ACT	Australia
Indigenous	50.7	68.6	72.0	92.6	51.4	52.1	45.0	93.2	60.9
Non-Indigenous	78.6	85.2	88.4	94.6	82.3	72.4	75.6	92.2	84.0
Gap (Indigenous/ non-Indigenous)	27.9	16.6	16.4	2.0	30.9	20.3	30.6	-1.0	23.1
Change in gap 2010–2016	-2.3	-14.5	-1.6	-14.2	-2.1	-10.7	0.1	-18.1	-3.9
Change in gap 2015–16	-1.7	-1.6	1.1	-2.8	4.5	-0.8	-3.9	-8.9	-0.1

Notes:

The apparent retention rate measures the number of full-time school students in a designated level/year of schooling as a percentage of their respective cohort group in a base year. The base year for apparent retention rates Year 10 to 12 in 2016 is Year 10 in 2014. 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 can affect results at the state and territory level.

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

Source: ABS, Cat. No. 4221.0, *Schools, Australia*, 2016.

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

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

- the number and proportion of Indigenous students within each population
- changes over time in whether individuals identify (or are identified) as Indigenous
- movement of Indigenous students between states and territories (for example, through scholarship programs for senior schooling)
- the age profile of the Indigenous student population in relation to age participation requirements
- the extent of training and employment programs that provide alternative options to senior schooling

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- different rates between states/territories of (non-Indigenous) international immigration including overseas students
- the geographic distribution of the Indigenous population, in particular its concentration in rural and remote communities.

In most states and territories, apparent retention from Year 10 to Year 12 in 2016 was higher for Indigenous girls than for boys.

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

- [Closing the Gap – Prime Minister’s Report 2018](#)
- [Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage: Key Indicators 2016](#)

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 2016, this includes KPMs for NAP – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN), for the sample assessment in civics and citizenship and for the international sample assessment, the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS).

3.3.1 NAP – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN)

In 2016, the ninth year of national literacy and numeracy testing, Year 3, 5, 7 and 9 students in Australia were assessed on reading, writing, language conventions (spelling, grammar and punctuation) and numeracy.

The [2016 NAPLAN National Report](#) and the [NAPLAN results page of the NAP website](#) provide nationally comparable information on the 2016 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, parental education and school characteristics such as location.

Data are presented for the years 2008–2016 by state and territory, sex, Indigenous status, language background other than English, geolocation, parental education and parental occupation at each year level and for each domain of the tests on the results page of the NAP website.

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

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 2016 in the tables below.

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 2016.

Table 3.12

Proportion of students participating in NAPLAN for Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 for reading, writing and numeracy, 2016 (per cent)

	Year 3	Year 5	Year 7	Year 9
Proportion of students participating in reading tests	95.0	95.4	94.5	91.2
Proportion of students participating in writing tests	94.9	95.2	94.6	91.5
Proportion of students participating in numeracy tests	94.7	95.0	94.1	90.7

Notes:

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

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

Sources: ACARA, *National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy, Achievement in Reading, Writing, Language Conventions and Numeracy, National Report for 2016*.

In summary:

- In 2016, as in previous years, NAPLAN participation rates exceeded 90 per cent for all years for all domains.
- In 2016, NAPLAN participation rates were similar across Years 3, 5 and 7, but lower in Year 9 by 3–4 percentage points. In all year levels, participation rates in reading were slightly higher than in numeracy.
- For Year 9, compared to other year levels, absence is a substantial contribution to non-participation, with absence rates at 6.2 per cent in reading and 6.7 per cent in numeracy.
- As with previous years, participation rates in NAPLAN in 2016 were lower for Indigenous students than for non-Indigenous students across all cohorts and key domains.
- Nationally, there has been a small but steady decrease in participation rates in NAPLAN over the period from 2008 to 2016, with an average decrease across the four year levels in reading and numeracy of approximately 0.2 percentage points per year.
- Since 2011, there has been a general increase in the withdrawn rate. However, the large percentage (more than 90 per cent) of students participating each year in all domains ensures that results are reliable and valid at all levels.

Reading

<p>Key performance measure 2(a) Proportion of students achieving at or above the national minimum standard for reading</p>
<p>Key performance measure 2(b) NAPLAN mean scale scores for reading</p>

Table 3.13 reports KPMs 2(a) and 2(b) for Years 3, 5, 7 and 9, 2016.

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), 2016

	Year 3	Year 5	Year 7	Year 9
Percentage of students at or above national minimum standard (%)	95.1	93.0	94.6	92.8
CI \pm	0.2	0.2	0.3	0.3
Mean scale score	425.6	501.5	540.8	580.8
(standard deviation)	(85.6)	(77.1)	(67.6)	(65.8)

Notes:

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

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

Confidence intervals cited should be used to compare data within 2016 only.

Sources: ACARA, *National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy, Achievement in Reading, Persuasive Writing, Language Conventions and Numeracy, National Report for 2016*; ACARA (unpublished data).

Summary of trends in reading:

- At the national level, between 2015 and 2016, there was no statistically significant change in the proportion of students achieving at or above the national minimum standard for reading across all year levels. There was also no statistically significant change in the NAPLAN mean scale scores for reading for any year level.
- Nationally, there have been significant improvements in Year 3 reading from 2008 to 2016 in both the national mean and in the proportion of Year 3 students attaining the national minimum standard.
- Among Indigenous students in Year 3 and 5, there was a significant increase in the proportion of students attaining the national minimum standard between 2008 and 2016.



- For Year 5, nationally there was a significant increase in the mean reading achievement scores between 2008 and 2016. Improvements were evident in mean reading scores in Victoria, Queensland, Western Australia and Tasmania. There was also an increase between 2008 and 2016 in the proportion of Year 5 Queensland students achieving the national minimum standard, from 86.9 to 93.4 per cent.
- There was no overall improvement in national mean scale scores or in the proportion of students at or above the national minimum standard for reading for Year 7 from 2008 to 2016 or from 2015 to 2016.
- At Year 9, reading achievement was stable from 2008 to 2016 in the mean scale score and the proportion of students achieving the national minimum standard. There was a significant increase in the reading mean scale scores for Year 9 students in Western Australia. However, there were no other examples of changes in mean reading scores for Year 9.

Writing

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

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

Table 3.14 reports on KPM 2(c) and 2(d) for Years 3, 5, 7 and 9, 2016.

Table 3.14

Summary for persuasive writing for Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 for Australia: (proportion of students achieving at or above the national minimum standard (per cent); mean scale scores, 2016

	Year 3	Year 5	Year 7	Year 9
Percentage of students at or above national minimum standard (%)	96.3	93.2	89.7	82.9
CI ±	0.2	0.2	0.4	0.6
Mean scale score	420.7	475.6	515.0	549.1
(standard deviation)	(62.0)	(63.0)	(70.6)	(77.0)

Notes:

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

CI = Confidence interval. Confidence intervals reflect the level of uncertainty associated with the measurement of achievement. They define a range of values within which the true level of achievement is likely to lie. This table shows 95 per cent confidence intervals for percentages of students at or above the national minimum standard. This means, for example, that where the percentage shown is 90% ± 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 2016 only.

Results for the persuasive writing task are reported on a separate persuasive writing scale that is not comparable with the original narrative writing scale. Student performances in writing 2011–2016 should not be compared with those from 2008–2010.

Sources: ACARA, *National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy, Achievement in Reading, Persuasive Writing, Language Conventions and Numeracy, National Report for 2016*

The writing genre assessed in NAPLAN 2016 was persuasive writing. Students and teachers were not advised in advance whether the genre would be narrative or persuasive writing. As in 2015, there were two writing prompts: one for Years 3 and 5; and one for Years 7 and 9.

Summary of trends in writing:

- At the national level, between 2015 and 2016, 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 2015 and 2016, there were significant increases in writing mean achievement for Year 3 students in South Australia and in the proportion of Year 3 students achieving at or above the national minimum standard in Queensland.
- Between 2011 and 2016, there was a significant decrease in persuasive writing mean achievement for Year 9 students overall.
- There were significant increases in writing mean achievement in 2016 relative to 2011 for Year 3 students in Victoria and Tasmania and in the proportion of Year 3 students achieving at or above the national minimum standard in Queensland.

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, 2016.

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, 2016

	Year 3	Year 5	Year 7	Year 9
Percentage of students at or above national minimum standard (%)	95.5	94.3	95.5	95.2
CI ±	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.3
Mean scale score	402.0	493.1	549.7	588.9
(standard deviation)	(73.4)	(70.6)	(70.4)	(66.8)

Notes:

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

CI = Confidence interval. Confidence intervals reflect the level of uncertainty associated with the measurement of achievement. They define a range of values within which the true level of achievement is likely to lie. This table shows 95 per cent confidence intervals for percentages of students at or above the national minimum standard. This means, for example, that where the percentage shown is 90% ± 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 2016 only.

Sources: ACARA, *National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy, Achievement in Reading, Persuasive Writing, Language Conventions and Numeracy, National Report for 2016*; ACARA (unpublished data).

Summary of trends in numeracy:

- Numeracy achievement at the national level in Years 3, Year 7 and Year 9 has remained largely unchanged from 2015 to 2016 and from 2008 to 2016.
- Between 2015 and 2016, there was a significant increase in the proportion of Year 3 students achieving at or above the national minimum standard in Tasmania.
- There was an improvement in mean numeracy achievement at Year 5 across six jurisdictions – Queensland, Western Australia, Tasmania, South Australia and the ACT – between 2008 and 2016.
- Between 2008 and 2016, there were instances of change in some jurisdictions at other year levels. In Queensland, there were statistically significant improvements in numeracy in Year 3 and in the proportion of students achieving at or above the national minimum standard for Year 9. In Western Australia, there was a significant increase in numeracy mean achievement for Year 7 students, and there were statistically significant improvements in numeracy in Year 9.

Detailed data on NAPLAN 2016 are available in the [2016 NAPLAN National Report](#), and in interactive form and for previous years on the 'Results' page of the NAP website.

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

Closing the gap in literacy and numeracy

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

Closing the Gap target

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

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

The [Closing the Gap Prime Minister's Report 2017](#) notes that in 2016, only one of the eight areas (Year 9 numeracy) was consistent with the required trajectory point (on target) at the national level. Results in the other seven areas were below the required trajectory points, meaning that progress needs to accelerate for this target to be met.

However, while progress in closing the gap is slow, there have been some statistically significant improvements in the proportion of Indigenous students at or above the national minimum standard in reading and numeracy since 2008: in Year 3 and 5 reading, and Year 5 and 9 numeracy. There has been no significant improvement in the performance of Indigenous students relative to the minimum standard in Year 7 and 9 reading or Year 3 and Year 7 numeracy since 2008.

In 2016, as in previous years:

- Female Indigenous students performed better than males.
- NAPLAN results for Indigenous students varied considerably according to geolocation/remoteness, with significantly poorer results in remote and very remote schools.

For further information on Closing the Gap targets, see the [Closing the Gap Prime Minister's Report 2017](#).

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

3.3.2 NAP Sample – Civics and Citizenship

The National Sample Assessment in Civics and Citizenship (NAP-CC) commenced in 2004 and is held every three years. It assesses samples of Year 6 and Year 10 students in civics and citizenship education.

The NAP-CC assessment measures students' skills, knowledge and understandings of Australia's system of government and civic life, and also student attitudes, values and participation in civic-related activities at school and in the community.

In 2016, the NAP–CC assessment was administered online in October and November 2016. The sample comprised 5,624 Year 6 students in 336 schools and 4,776 Year 10 students in 308 schools.

The proportion of students achieving at or above each proficient standard (level 2 for Year 6 and level 3 for Year 10) is the KPM for Civics and Citizenship at each year level.

Key performance measure 5

Proportion of students achieving at or above the proficient standard in Civics and Citizenship:

Year 6 – level 2

Year 10 – level 3

KPM 5 for 2016 and for the years 2004, 2007, 2010 and 2013 is reported in table 3.16. The proportions of students achieving at each proficiency level are also reported for 2016.

Table 3.16

Proportion of students achieving at each proficiency level and at or above the proficient standards (level 2 in Year 6, level 3 in Year 10) in Civics and Citizenship, 2016 (per cent); proportion of students achieving at or above the proficient standard (level 2 in Year 6, level 3 in Year 10) in Civics and Citizenship, 2004–2016 (per cent)

	Proficiency level						At or above the proficient standard
	Below 1	1	2	3	4 (or above for Year 6)	5 (for Year 10 only)	
Year 6 Australia (%)	16	30	39	14	1		55
CI ±	2.1	1.9	2.0	1.7	0.5		2.4
Year 10 Australia (%)	6	18	38	30	8	0	38
CI ±	1.3	1.9	2.3	2.2	1.5	0.3	2.7
At or above the proficient standard							
	2004	2007	2010	2013	2016		
Year 6 Australia (%)	50	53	52	52	55		
CI ±	3.0	2.8	2.4	2.4	2.4		
Year 10 Australia (%)	39	42	49	44	38		
CI ±	2.8	2.6	3.7	2.6	2.7		

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.

Source: ACARA, NAP Sample Assessment Civics and Citizenship 2016 Report.

See also National Report on Schooling data portal

In summary:

- Nationally in 2016, 55 per cent of Year 6 students achieved at or above the proficient standard. This is statistically similar to previous years.
- Nationally in 2016, 38 per cent of Year 10 students achieved at or above the proficient standard. This is significantly lower than in each of the two previous cycles (44 per cent in 2013 and 49 per cent in 2010).

Data on KPM 5 by state and territory is provided on the National Report on Schooling data portal.

The detailed NAP Sample Assessment years 6 and 10 Civic and Citizenship Report 2016 is available on the [National Assessment Program website](#). A technical report on NAP-CC 2016 is also available on this site.

3.3.3 Progress in International Reading Literacy Study

The Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) is an international assessment of the reading literacy achievement of a sample of students in Year 4. The study collects internationally comparable data about the reading concepts, processes and attitudes of students. Australia participated in 2011 and 2016; however, 2016 is the first year for which PIRLS is specified as a key performance measure for schooling.

Over 580,000 students from 50 countries and 11 benchmarking entities took part in PIRLS. In Australia, more than 6,900 students from 286 schools participated in the study.

Key performance measure 2 (f)

Proportion of students achieving at or above the proficient standard (Intermediate international benchmark) in PIRLS

KPM 2 (f) for 2016 is reported in table 3.17. The proportion of students achieving at each proficiency level and mean scale score are also reported for 2016.

Table 3.17

Proportion of students achieving at or above the proficient standard (Intermediate international benchmark) in PIRLS (per cent), proportion achieving at each proficiency level (per cent), mean scale score, Australia, 2016

	Proficiency level					At or above the proficient standard
	Below low	Low	Intermediate	High	Advanced	
Year 4 Australia (%)	6	13	30	35	16	81
Mean scale score	544					
(standard error)	(2.5)					

Source: Sue Thomson, Kylie Hillman, Marina Schmid, Sima Rodrigues, Jessica Fullarton, *PIRLS 2016: Reporting Australia's results*, Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER), 2017.

In 2016, 81 per cent of students' reading achievement was at or above the proficient standard (Intermediate international standard). This is an improvement over performance in 2011 when 76 per cent of Australian students were at or above the proficient standard.

The mean reading score of Australian students was 544. This was significantly higher than in 24 other countries and lower than the mean scale score in 13 other countries.

There was also a significant improvement of 17 points in the average reading score over Australian students' performance in PIRLS in 2011.

The Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) is responsible for managing the assessment in Australia. Further information is available on the ACER website.

3.4 Senior schooling and youth transitions

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

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

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

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

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

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

The requirements for each level of VET qualification are set out in the [Australian Qualifications Framework \(AQF\)](#)⁶², which also provides guidelines for senior secondary certificates of education (Year 12 qualifications) and qualifications in the higher education sector.

Secondary school students in all states and territories can undertake accredited VET courses as part of their school program (VET in Schools⁶³ courses), usually in the senior years of schooling as a part of the Senior Secondary Certificate of Education in each jurisdiction.

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

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

62 The AQF is the national framework of qualifications in the school, 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.

63 [Preparing Secondary Students for Work – A framework for vocational learning and VET delivered to secondary students](#) released by the Education Council (December 2014) adopts the term ‘VET (delivered to secondary students)’ to replace the term VET in Schools (VETiS) used for these programs. However, in 2016, the term ‘VET in Schools’ (VETiS), continued to be used in the VET sector to identify VET delivered to senior secondary students and for data collection and reporting purposes. ‘VET in Schools’ continues to be the term used within the Australian Vocational Educational and Training Management Information Statistical Standard (AVETMISS).

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

The KPM for participation in VET includes all 15–19-year-old VET students (whether or not they are enrolled in school) as a proportion of the 15–19-year-old population. The specification for participation is the completion of at least one unit of competency in a VET qualification at AQF Certificate II or above.⁶⁴

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

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

Table 3.18 and figure 3.3 show national data for this KPM for the period 2009–2016. There is a break in the series between 2013 and 2014, when reporting requirements for VET providers were extended to include privately funded accredited VET training. This change contributes to the higher numbers and proportions of 15–19-year-olds reported as participating in VET from 2014 than in previous years.

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

⁶⁴ The specification of the successful completion of a unit of competency in the KPM is a marker for genuine participation in a VET course (as opposed to an initial enrolment, which may not be followed through). It is not intended that the KPM be regarded as a measure of attainment. AQF Certificate II is regarded as entry level training for employment.

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, 2009–2016

Australia	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Number of 15–19-year-olds successfully completing at least one unit of competency at AQF Certificate II or above ('000)	359.1	374.0	399.2	418.5	395.5	494.8	481.5	474.0
15–19-year-old population ('000)	1,462.4	1,460.0	1,453.5	1,459.7	1,466.7	1,474.7	1472.8	1476.0
Proportion of 15–19-year-olds successfully completing at least one unit of competency at AQF Certificate II or above (per cent)	24.6	25.6	27.5	28.7	27.0	33.6	32.7	32.1

Notes:

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

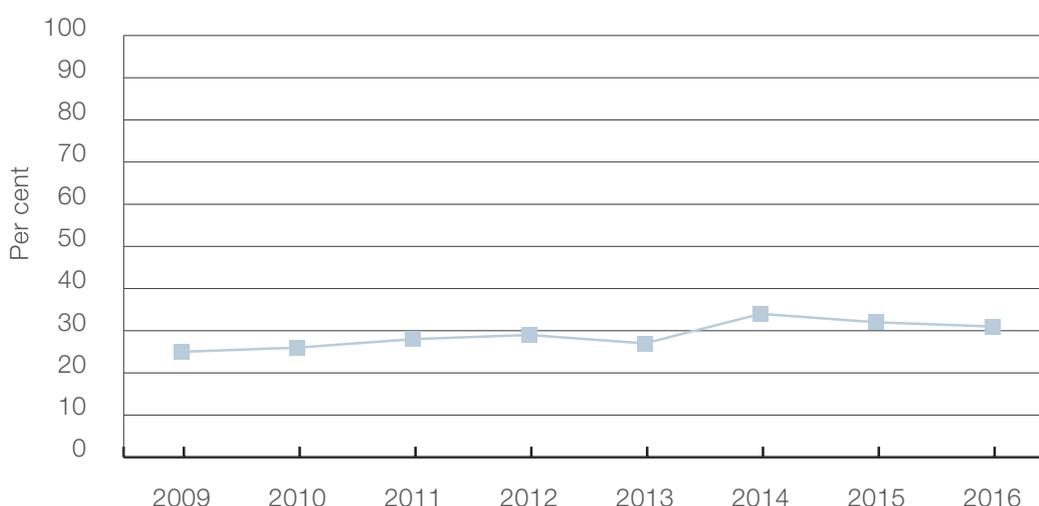
The KPM is derived by calculating student numbers in the 15–19-year age group as a percentage of the estimated resident population in the corresponding group.

From January 2014, all registered training organisations (RTOs), including private providers, were required to collect and report full AVETMISS⁶⁵ data on all nationally accredited training. This represents a break in the series.

Sources: NCVER, National VET in Schools Collection 2009–16; NCVER, National VET Provider Collection 2009–16; ABS, Cat. No. 3101.0, *Australian Demographic Statistics*.

Figure 3.3

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



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

65 Australian Vocational Education and Training Information Management Statistical Standard

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 2016 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.

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, 2016

Field of education	Number of students
01 – Natural and physical sciences	2,379
02 – Information technology	17,242
03 – Engineering and related technologies	67,619
04 – Architecture and building	45,367
05 – Agriculture, environmental and related studies	15,418
06 – Health	21,661
07 – Education	6,111
08 – Management and commerce	87,049
09 – Society and culture	81,721
10 – Creative arts	33,022
11 – Food, hospitality and personal services	73,307
12 – Mixed field programmes	23,138
Total	474,034

Notes:

Field of education is according to ABS, Cat. No. 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 2016; NCVER, National VET Provider Collection 2016.

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

VET qualifications completed by 15–19-year-olds, by qualification level of major course, Australia, 2016

Qualification level	Number
Certificate I	27,750
Certificate II	102,261
Certificate III	62,162
Certificate IV	12,186
Diploma or higher	12,509
Non-AQF	572
Total	217,440

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 are most likely to be issued in the final year of school. In addition, a student may intend to complete only a partial qualification while at school.

Sources: NCVER, National VET in Schools Collection 2016; NCVER, National VET Provider Collection 2016.

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

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

KPM 1(f) and the VET program measures include all 15–19-year-old students undertaking VET. The information below refers to VET delivered to 15–19-year-old secondary school students. For the purposes of the national VET in Schools data collection⁶⁶, these are students who are undertaking accredited VET as a part of a Senior Secondary Certificate of Education.⁶⁷ 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 year 2009–2016 with school-based apprentices and trainees disaggregated.

66 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.

67 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.

Table 3.21

Number of 15–19-year-old students undertaking VET in Schools programs, Australia, 2009–2016

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
School-based apprentices and trainees ^(a) ('000)	20.9	17.3	18.1	22.5	21.7	20.5	19.7	16.9
Other VET in Schools program students ('000)	195.8	203.6	218.3	219.8	218.1	216.1	226.8	216.8
Total VET in Schools students ('000)	216.7	220.9	236.4	242.3	239.7	236.6	246.5	233.7

(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, 2016; NCVER, *VET in Schools 2016*; NCVER, *Australian vocational education and training statistics: Young people in education and training 2016* and previous editions.

In the 2016 calendar year, there were 233,705 students aged 15–19 years enrolled in VET in Schools programs. Of these students:

- 53.8 per cent were male and 46.2 per cent were female.
- 56.5 per cent were enrolled in Certificate II qualifications and a further 32.2 per cent were enrolled in Certificate III qualifications.
- 7.2 per cent were undertaking a school-based apprenticeship or traineeship.

The most popular training packages were Tourism, Travel and Hospitality followed by Sport, Fitness and Recreation, and Business Services.

Between 2015 and 2016, the number of VET in Schools students aged 15–19 years decreased by 5.2 per cent but the proportion enrolled in Certificate II or above qualifications increased by 1.8 percentage points. This is in line with a policy emphasis on encouraging participation in higher level qualifications.

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

Further detailed information, including data disaggregated by state and territory, data definitions and data quality issues, is provided in the NCVER publication [Australian vocational education and training statistics: Young people in education and training 2016](#).

3.4.2 Participation in education and work

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

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

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

For 2016, the *Measurement Framework for Schooling in Australia 2015* specifies that data drawn from the 2016 Census of Population and Housing⁶⁸, conducted in August 2016, are also to be reported for these measures.

Key performance measure 1(g)

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

Key performance measure 1(h)

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

KPMs 1(g) and 1(h) are shown for the period 2009–2016 and for Census years 2011 and 2016 in table 3.22. Figure 3.4 illustrates KPMs 1(g) and 1(h), as measured by SEW, over the period 2009–2016.

⁶⁸ 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.

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, 2009–2016 (per cent)

Calendar year	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
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
CI±	1.4	1.5	1.4	1.0	1.2	1.1	0.3	1.3
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
CI±	2.0	1.6	1.5	1.7	1.1	1.6	1.7	1.5
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 of 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 increase in the SEW measure for 15–19-year-olds from 2015 to 2016 is not statistically significant. The increase in the SEW measure for 20–24-year-olds from 2015 to 2016 is statistically significant.

Data reported from the Census of Population and Housing excludes 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 2016; ABS, Census of Population and Housing, 2011, 2016; 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 full-time school students for whom full-time participation in education, training or work is compulsory. Based on SEW data, 83.2 per cent of 15–19-year-olds in 2016 were engaged in formal study. This was unchanged from 2015, but a rise from 76.4 per cent in 2009.

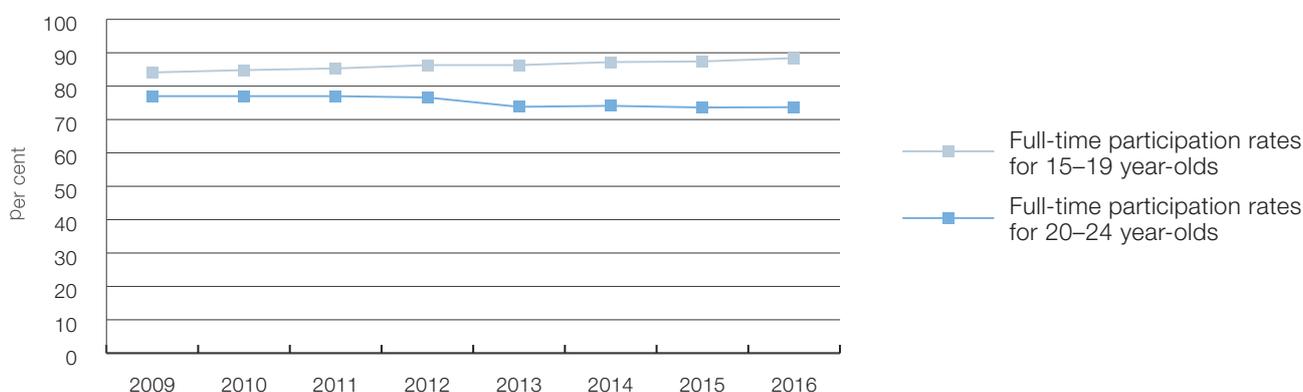
As measured by SEW, since 2009, there has been an increase in full-time participation for 15–19-year-olds from 84.1 per cent to 88.4 per cent, but a net fall in the participation rate for 20–24-year-olds from 77.1 per cent to 76.1 per cent, despite a rise over this period in participation in full-time education.⁶⁹

The Census full-time participation measure for 15–19-year-olds increased from 86.0 per cent to 86.4 per cent between 2011 and 2016 but decreased from 74.7 per cent to 72.2 per cent for 20–24-year-olds. The falls in both data sets in full-time participation rates for 20–24-year-olds may reflect that these rates are more sensitive to changes in employment conditions than those for 15–19-year-olds.

Given the differences in scope and size of the SEW and the Census, the participation measures derived from them are similar at the national level.

Figure 3.4

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, 2009–2016 (per cent)



Source: ABS, Cat. No. 6227.0, *Education and Work*, May 2016.

Data on KPMs 1(g) and 1(h) by state and territory are provided on the National Report on Schooling data portal. However, because of sample size and other factors, SEW data for particular age groups are less reliable when disaggregated by state and territory, especially for smaller jurisdictions. 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.

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. It excludes people who were still at school from both the numerator and the denominator.

Data for this KPM are reported for the period 2009–2016 in table 3.23 and figure 3.5.

⁶⁹ This fall is partly due to the expansion of the sample population of the SEW 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

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, 2009–2016 (per cent)

Calendar year	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
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
CI±	1.7	1.5	1.4	1.3	1.1	1.4	1.4	1.2
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 of 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 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 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 2015 to 2016 is statistically significant.

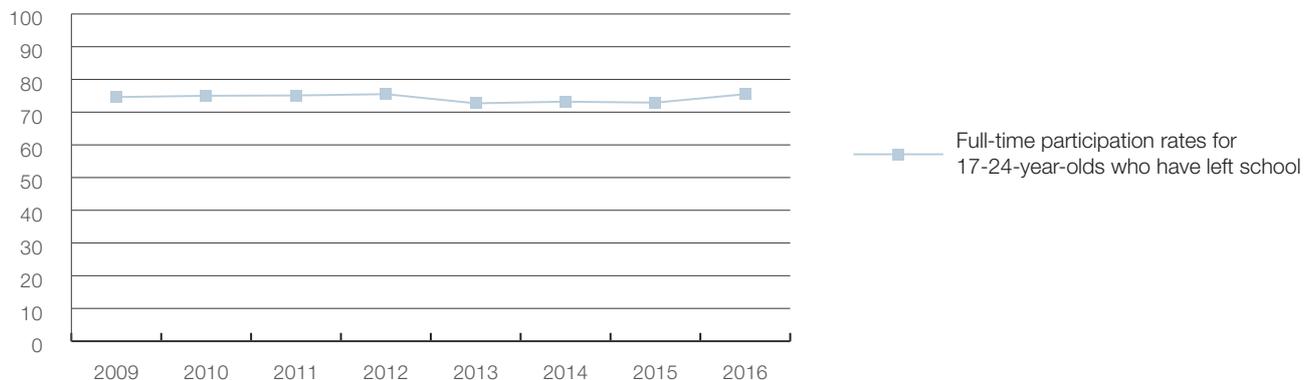
Data reported from the Census of Population and Housing excludes respondents who provided incomplete or insufficient information on their participation in education and work. As such, the data do not encompass the full Census count of 17–24-year-olds.

The change in the Census measure from 2011 to 2016 is not statistically significant.

Sources: ABS, Cat. No. 6227.0, *Education and Work*, May 2016; ABS, Census of Population and Housing, 2011, 2016; National Report on Schooling data portal.

Figure 3.5

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, 2009–2016 (per cent)



Source: ABS, Cat. No. 6227.0, *Education and Work*, May 2016.

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 to mid-twenties. These measures reflect the COAG targets for youth attainment in education and training:

Key performance measure 7(a)

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

Key performance measure 7(b)

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

The measures are based on the [ABS Survey of Education and Work](#) (SEW), which is conducted in May each year.

For 2016, the *Measurement Framework for Schooling in Australia 2015* specifies that supplementary data drawn from the 2016 Census of Population and Housing, conducted in August 2016, are also to be reported for these measures.

Table 3.24 reports KPMs 7(a) and 7(b) at the national level for the period 2009–2016.

For comparison purposes, the table also reports the proportion of the 20–24-year-old population in each of these years that had completed Year 12 or equivalent. This is not, by itself, a KPM for schooling, but is the main component of both KPMs 7(a) and 7(b).

Table 3.24

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, 2009–2016 (per cent)

Year	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
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
CI±	1.6	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.5	1.5	1.1	1.6
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
CI±	1.7	1.5	1.3	1.3	1.5	1.5	1.1	1.6
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
CI±	1.7	1.7	1.7	1.6	1.6	1.8	1.6	1.9
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 SEW 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 increase in the SEW measure of KPM 7(a) from 2015 to 2016 is not statistically significant. The increase in the SEW measure of KPM 7(b) from 2015 to 2016 is 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.

The increase in the Census measure for KPM 7(a) from 2011 to 2016 is not statistically significant. The increase in the Census measure for KPM 7(b) from 2011 to 2016 is not statistically significant.

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 2016; 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 88.4 per cent in 2015 and to 90.2 per cent in 2016. The COAG target for this measure of 90 per cent by 2015 was, therefore, not met⁷⁰, but the target was reached in 2016.

According to Census data, KPM 7(a) increased from 85.3 per cent in 2011 to 88.6 per cent in 2016, still slightly short of the 90 per cent target.

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 to 89.2 per cent between 2009 and 2016, with a significant increase of 2.1 percentage points in 2016.

Based on these data, the COAG target for this measure of 90 per cent by 2020 is likely to be met. Increased retention to Year 12⁷¹ and increased participation in education and training by 15–19-year-olds in 2016⁷² are also likely to lead to higher levels of attainment for these students as 20–24-year-olds in 2020.

According to Census data, KPM 7(b) increased from 84.6 per cent in 2011 to 87.9 per cent in 2016.

Given the differences in scope and size of the SEW and the Census, the attainment measures derived from them are similar at the national level.

Figure 3.6 depicts the annual movement in the two attainment measures from 2009 to 2016, as drawn from SEW, along with the proportion of 20–24-year-olds having attained at least Year 12 or equivalent.

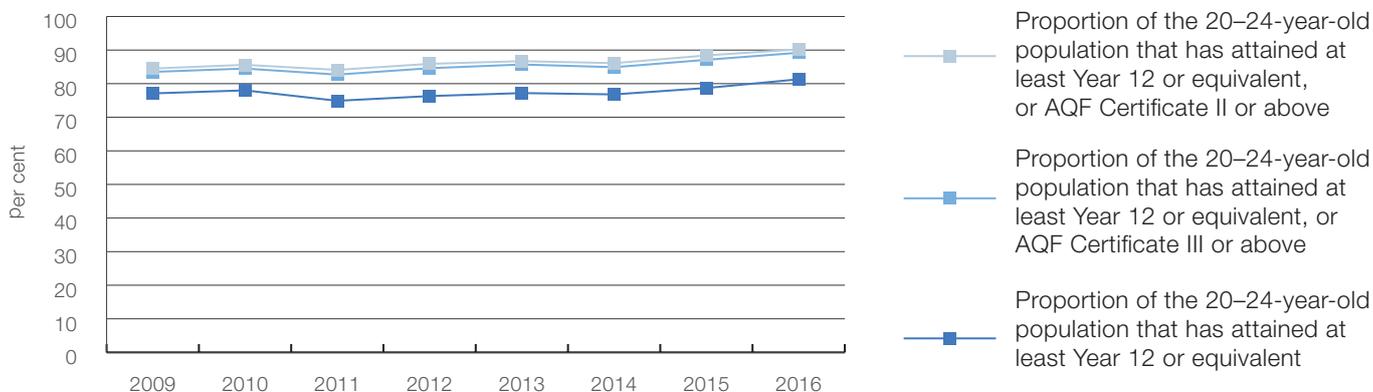
70 Council of Australian Governments Report on Performance 2016, p23

71 As reported in Part 3.2.3: Student participation – retention.

72 As reported in Part 3.4.2: Senior schooling and youth transitions – participation in education and work.

Figure 3.6

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, 2009–2016 (per cent)



Note:

Refer to table 3.24 for confidence intervals.

Source: ABS, Cat. No. 6227.0, *Education and Work*, May 2016.

See also National Report on Schooling data portal.

In each of the years 2009–2016, there is little difference between the two attainment KPMs (a maximum difference of 1.4 percentage points occurred in 2011), and there is parallel movement of the KPMs over the period.⁷³

Both KPMs closely parallel movements in the proportion of 20–24-year-olds that has attained at least Year 12 or equivalent. In 2016, 81.3 per cent of 20–24-year-olds had attained at least Year 12 or equivalent. A further 7.9 per cent, who had not attained Year 12, had attained Certificate III or above, and a further 1.0 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 3.6, it is the main component of KPMs 7(a) and 7(b), with variations in the two KPMs closely following variations in Year 12 or equivalent attainment.

This has implications for predicting and influencing the COAG measures, as the rate of Year 12 completion for current secondary students can be used as an indicator for the future attainment rates for Year 12 or Certificate II / Certificate III or above among 20–24-year-olds.

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.

⁷³ For the three SEW data sets shown in table 3.24 and figure 3.6, the falls in 2011 data are not statistically significant and may reflect sampling variability in the SEW. Decreases in KPMs 7(a) and 7(b) in 2014 are not statistically significant.

Census of Population and Housing data for the years 2006, 2011 and 2016 are also published on the data portal and may provide more robust measures for disaggregations by jurisdiction and Indigenous status of the KPMs for these years.

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, they cannot, on their own, be used to report on the COAG target to at least halve the gap in Year 12 or equivalent⁷⁴ attainment between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous 20–24-year-olds by 2020.

Using data from the 2016 Census of Population and Housing⁷⁵, the [*Closing the Gap – Prime Minister’s Report 2018*](#) (p. 64) reports that this target was on track in 2016:

The target to halve the gap in Year 12 attainment by 2020 is on track, and the gap has narrowed by 12.6 percentage points over the past decade (from 36.4 percentage points in 2006 to 23.8 percentage points in 2016).

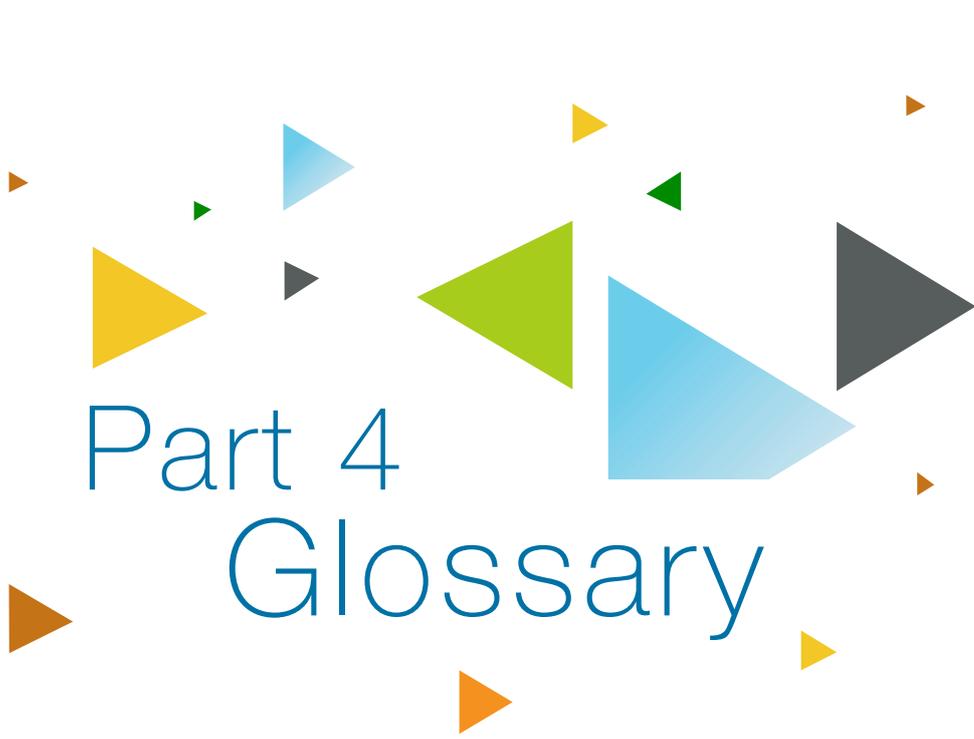
Nationally, the proportion of Indigenous 20–24-year-olds who had achieved Year 12 or equivalent has increased from 47.4 per cent in 2006 to 65.3 per cent in 2016.

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.⁷⁶

74 The measure used for Year 12 or equivalent for this target is the attainment of Year 12 or AQF Certificate II or above.

75 The main data source used to assess progress against this target is the ABS Census of Population and Housing.

76 The volume of learning required to attain an AQF Certificate II is typically 0.5–1 year; for Certificate III it is typically 1–2 years, and for a Senior Secondary Certificate of Education it is typically 2 years (AQF second edition, p. 14). In some instances, VET in Schools students have the opportunity to complete several Certificate II qualifications as a part of a Senior Secondary Certificate of Education.



Part 4 Glossary



Note on data sources and terms: A main source of data reported in the *National Report on Schooling in Australia 2016* and through the National Report on Schooling data portal is the National Schools Statistics Collection (NSSC) (non-finance). The NSSC includes statistics on students, schools, and staff involved in the provision or administration of primary and secondary education, in government and non-government schools, for all Australian states and territories. The school census date for the collection, for all states and territories and all school sectors (affiliations), is the first Friday in August each year.

The NSSC is a joint undertaking of the Australian state and territory departments of education, the Australian Government Department of Education and Training, the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) and the COAG Education Council.

The methodologies used in compiling government school sector data vary between the different state and territory departments of education. Data may be accessed from central administrative records or collected directly from schools. Data are provided to the ABS, generally in aggregated form, for the compilation of statistics. The Australian Government Department of Education and Training collects data directly from schools in the non-government sector for all states and territories.

Data from the collection are published by the ABS in [Schools, Australia](#) (Cat. No. 4221.0). Definitions of terms in this glossary are, for the most part, quoted or adapted from the *Schools, Australia* glossary and explanatory notes; and from the *Notes, Instructions and Tabulations* document, which is available on request from the ABS.

Other major data sources for the 2016 report and the National Report on Schooling data portal include the National Student Attendance Data collection (ACARA), the Survey of Education and Work (ABS), Australian Demographic Statistics (ABS), Census of Population and Housing (ABS), the NSSC (finance) collection (states and territories), National Assessment Program (NAP) national reports (ACARA) and National VET Provider and National VET in Schools collections (National Centre for Vocational Education Research – NCVER).

Apparent retention rates

Apparent retention rates are indicative measures of student progression through secondary school. To calculate actual rates for all students in a given population, information on the status of every student between years would be needed to determine whether they progressed as expected, repeated a school year, transferred to another school in a different school sector or state, or left school entirely. At present, linking individual student enrolment information between different years and across states and territories is not possible. Apparent measures, based on aggregate student data, have been developed to provide indicative measurements of student progress through secondary education.

An apparent retention rate is an indicative measure of the number of full-time school students who have stayed at school, as at a designated year level and calendar year. It is calculated by dividing the number of students in a cohort in a specific calendar year by the number of students in the same cohort in a previous reference year and is expressed as a percentage. For example, an apparent retention rate for Year 10 to 12 in 2016 measures the proportion of Year 10 students in 2014 that continued to Year 12 in 2016. 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% capped to a maximum value of 100.0 (capped), and one where rates exceeding 100% continue to be reported as the raw calculated value (uncapped). This report continues to report uncapped rates for apparent retention.

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, and these are included in this report.

Estimated resident population

The Estimated Resident Population (ERP) series is used as a denominator to calculate students as a proportion of the population. The ERP is an estimate of the population of Australia, based on data from the quinquennial ABS Census of Population and Housing, and is updated quarterly using information on births, deaths, and overseas and interstate migration provided by state, territory and Australian government departments. For further details see ABS, Cat. No. 3101.0, [Australian Demographic Statistics, June 2016](#).

Full-time equivalent student

A full-time student is one who undertakes a workload equivalent to, or greater than, what is prescribed for a full-time student of that year level. This may vary between states and territories

and from year to year. The prescribed minimum workload for a full-time student would ensure that a student could complete a given year level in a calendar year.

A part-time student is one who undertakes a workload less than that specified as full-time. The full-time equivalent (FTE) value of a part-time student is calculated by dividing a student's workload into what is prescribed by the state or territory to be the minimum full workload for a full-time student. Methods for estimating the FTE value of part-time students vary between states and territories due to different policy and administrative arrangements. The recorded FTE value for a student is capped at 1. The FTE of students is calculated by adding the number of full-time students and the FTE value of part-time students.

Full-time equivalent student–teacher ratios

Full-time equivalent (FTE) student/teacher ratios are calculated by dividing the FTE student figure by the FTE teaching staff figure. Student/teacher ratios are an indicator of the level of staffing resources used and should not be used as a measure of class size. They do not take account of teacher aides and other non-teaching staff who may also assist in the delivery of school education or of non-teaching duties of teaching staff.

Full-time equivalent teaching staff

The full-time equivalent (FTE) value of staff is a measure of the level of staffing resources. Staff who are employed full-time and engaged solely on activities that fall within the scope of the NSSC have an FTE value of 1.0. All FTE values are rounded to one decimal place.

For staff not employed on a full-time basis, and/or engaged in a combination of in-scope and out-of-scope activities, the FTE value is calculated on the basis of the proportion of time spent on in-scope activities compared with staff who would be considered full-time.

Indigenous status

For the purposes of the NSSC, a student is classified as being of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander origin, based on information provided by the student, or their parent/guardian, on the school enrolment form. The Melbourne Declaration uses the term 'Indigenous' to refer to Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. This report uses both the terms 'Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander', and 'Indigenous' to describe students identifying as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander, with 'Indigenous' or 'Indigenous status' used in tables and graphs.

The Measurement Framework for Schooling in Australia

The [Measurement Framework for Schooling in Australia 2015](#), as agreed by education ministers, provides the basis for national reporting on the performance of schooling in 2016, and is the main focus of the statistical data included in this report.

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

The framework is maintained by the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) on behalf of the Education Council and is published on the ACARA website. It is periodically revised by ACARA in consultation with jurisdictions and sectors

National Assessment Program (NAP)

The NAP, as specified in the *Measurement Framework for Schooling in Australia 2015*, encompasses all assessments endorsed by education ministers for participation by students nationally:

- the National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) – annual, full student cohort literacy and numeracy assessments in Years 3, 5, 7 and 9
- NAP sample assessments – triennial domestic sample student population assessments in science literacy (Year 6), information and communication technology literacy (Years 6 and 10) and civics and citizenship (Years 6 and 10)
- Australia's participation in international sample student population assessments: the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA); the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS); and the and Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS).

ACARA is delegated to manage the development and oversee the delivery of assessments and reporting for NAPLAN, and for domestic NAP sample assessments, as directed by the Education Council. PISA is conducted by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). TIMSS and PIRLS are conducted by the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA).

National Schools Statistics Collection

The scope of the National Schools Statistics Collection (NSSC) consists of all establishments that have as their major activity the administration or provision of full-time day primary, secondary and/or special education, or primary or secondary education by distance education. Major activity is based on the activity of students, or where this is not appropriate, for example, in administrative offices, on the activity of staff. The statistics in this publication do not include establishments, students or staff engaged in school-level education conducted by other institutions, in particular Technical and Further Education (TAFE) establishments.

The NSSC consists of government and non-government statistics. Government comprises all establishments (as defined), administered by departments/ministries of education under directors-general of education (or equivalent). Non-government comprises all such establishments not administered by the departments of education, including those establishments administered by any other government authority.

The two main sections of the NSSC are:

- non-finance statistics (numbers of schools, students and staff) collected for both government and non-government schools and published by the Australian Bureau of Statistics in its annual *Schools, Australia* (Cat. No. 4221.0) publication

- finance statistics (expenditure on salaries and non-salary costs collected for government schools) and published by ACARA in this report and through the National Report on Schooling data portal.

Primary education

See *School level and school year*.

School

A school is an education establishment that satisfies all of the following criteria:

- its major activity is the provision of full-time day primary or secondary education or the provision of primary or secondary distance education.
- it is headed by a principal (or equivalent) responsible for its internal operation.
- it is possible for students to enrol and be active in a course of study for a minimum of four continuous weeks, excluding breaks for school vacations.

The term 'school' in this publication includes schools in institutions and hospitals, mission schools and similar establishments.

The term 'school' in this publication excludes preschools, kindergarten centres, pre-primary schools or pre-primary classes in, or attached to, non-special schools, senior technical and agricultural colleges, evening schools, continuation classes and institutions such as business or coaching colleges.

Multi-campus arrangements are counted as one school. Changes to school counts in this publication can occur when multiple schools amalgamate into a single multi-campus school, or multi-campus schools divide into separate schools.

School level and school year

All states and territories provide for 13 years of formal school education. Typically, schooling commences at age five, is compulsory from age six until at least the completion of Year 10, and is completed at age 17 or 18. Primary education, including a pre-Year 1 / foundation year⁷⁷, 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 Australia⁷⁸.

77 The pre-Year 1 / 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.

78 Year 7 became part of secondary education in Queensland and Western Australia from 2015. This change affects some comparisons with previous years of student and staff data by school level.

Junior secondary education includes the years from commencement of secondary schooling to Year 10, including ungraded secondary.

Senior secondary education comprises Years 11 and 12 in all states and territories.

Categories used in tables and graphs showing 'School level' are 'Primary' and 'Secondary'. In some tables, the categories 'Primary', 'Junior secondary', 'Senior secondary' and 'Total secondary' are used.

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

See also *Special school*.

Schools, Australia uses the term 'grade' to denote school year. Ungraded students (ungraded primary and ungraded secondary) are those who have not been placed in a specific year level.

See also *School type*.

School sector

This report and the National Report on Schooling data portal use the term 'school sector' to distinguish between government schools, which are established and administered by state and territory governments through their education departments or authorities, and non-government schools, usually with some religious affiliation, which are established and operated under conditions determined by state and territory governments through their registration authorities.

'School sector' is also used to further distinguish between non-government schools as Catholic or independent. Catholic schools make up the largest group of non-government schools. Independent schools may be associated with other religions, other denominations, particular educational philosophies, or operate as single entities.

Schools, Australia uses the term 'affiliation' rather than the term 'school sector' to make these distinctions.

A further distinction is sometimes made between systemic and non-systemic non-government schools. Systemic schools are formally affiliated with a group or system of schools. Non-systemic non-government schools do not belong to a system.

In *Schools, Australia* and in this report, Catholic non-systemic schools are counted as Catholic rather than as independent.

Categories used in tables and graphs showing 'School sector' are 'Government', 'Catholic' and 'Independent'. In some tables, the category 'Total non-government' (total of Catholic and independent data) is also used.

School type

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

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

See also *Special school*.

Secondary education

See *School level and school year*.

Special school

A special school satisfies the definition of a school and requires one or more of the following characteristics to be exhibited by the student before enrolment is allowed:

- mental or physical disability or impairment
- slow learning ability
- social or emotional problems
- in custody, on remand or in hospital.

Special schools include special assistance schools, as defined under the *Australian Education Act, 2013*. These are non-government schools that are:

- likely to be recognised by the state minister as a special assistance school, and
- primarily established to cater for students with social, emotional or behavioural difficulties.

Staff

Staff are people engaged in the administration and/or provision of day primary, secondary or special school education, or primary or secondary education by distance education at in- scope education establishments.

The functional categories for school staff are as follows:

(a) Teaching staff are staff who spend the majority of their time in contact with students. They support students either by direct class contact or on an individual basis, and are engaged to impart school curriculum. For the purposes of this report, teaching staff includes principals, deputy principals, campus principals and senior teachers mainly involved in administration.

(b) Specialist support staff are staff who perform functions to support students or teaching staff. While these staff may spend the majority of their time in contact with students, they are not employed or engaged to impart the school curriculum.

(c) Administrative and clerical staff are staff whose main duties are generally of a clerical/administrative nature. Teacher aides and assistants are included in this category, as they are seen to provide services to teaching staff rather than directly to students.

(d) Building operations, general maintenance and other staff are staff involved in the maintenance of buildings and grounds. Also included are staff providing associated technical services, other janitorial staff and staff who service equipment. School cleaners, whether salaried or employed on contract, are excluded.

For further details on the definition of staff, see [Schools, Australia 2016 Glossary](#).

States and territories

Australia has a federal system of government comprising a national government, and the governments of the six states and two territories. In this report, the national government is generally referred to as 'the Australian Government'. In tables and graphs in this report and the National Report on Schooling data portal, states and territories are listed in the order of New South Wales (NSW), Victoria (Vic.), Queensland (Qld), South Australia (SA), Western Australia (WA), Tasmania (Tas.), the Northern Territory (NT) and the Australian Capital Territory (ACT). This is the order used in ABS publications, including *Schools, Australia*.

Student

A student is a person who, on the school census date, is formally enrolled at a school and is active in a primary, secondary and/or special education program at that school. Students may be enrolled at more than one school; however, jurisdictions employ strategies that ensure that, as far as possible, students are reported only once in this collection.

Persons not present at a school on the NSSC census date are included as students if they were expected to be absent for less than four continuous weeks (excluding school vacations).

Students undertaking VET in Schools (including through TAFE), school-based apprenticeships or traineeships, work placements or tertiary extension studies as a part of the student's school enrolment are in scope for the NSSC. The workload of these subjects/programs (which may take place outside the school premises) is included in a student's aggregate workload to determine whether a student is classified as full-time or part-time, and in calculating the full-time equivalent for part-time students.

Student attendance

The National Student Attendance Data Collection is undertaken by ACARA in collaboration with state and territory education departments (which collect and collate attendance data from government schools in each jurisdiction), the non-government school sectors and the Australian Government Department of Education (which collects and collates attendance data from non-government schools). The collection is conducted for students in Years 1–10 over the Semester 1 period in each school year.

There are two agreed national key performance measures (KPMs) in 2015 for student attendance:

- Attendance rate: The number of actual full-time equivalent student-days attended by full-time students in Years 1–10 as a percentage of the total number of possible student-days attended over the period.
- Attendance level: The proportion of full time students in Years 1–10 whose attendance rate in Semester 1 is equal to or greater than 90 per cent.

ACARA has developed the [National Standards for Student Attendance Data Reporting](#) to establish a nationally consistent set of parameters for the collection and reporting of student attendance data across jurisdictions and school sectors. The national standards have been endorsed by all states and territories and are published on the ACARA website. The standards came into effect formally from the 2014 reporting year.

Survey of Education and Work

The Survey of Education and Work (SEW), conducted annually by the ABS, provides selected information on participation in education, highest educational attainment, transition from education to work, and current labour force and demographic characteristics for the population aged 15–74 years. Data from *Education and Work* are used to report participation and attainment data, including key performance measures for schooling, in this report.

See [ABS, Cat. No. 6227.0, Education and Work, May 2016, Explanatory Notes](#) for further information.

Teaching staff

Teaching staff are staff who spend the majority of their time in contact with students. They support students either by direct class contact or on an individual basis, and are engaged to impart school curriculum.

For the purposes of this report, teaching staff includes principals, deputy principals, campus principals and senior teachers mainly involved in administration. Teacher aides and assistants, and specialist support staff are excluded, except assistant teachers working in homeland learning centres and community schools in the Northern Territory.

User cost of capital

In the government budget context, the user cost of capital is usually defined as the opportunity cost of funds tied up in capital assets used to deliver government services.

Capital charging is the actual procedure used for applying this cost of capital to the asset management process. As such, it is a means of representing the cost of capital used in the provision of government budgetary outputs.

VET in Schools

Data on vocational education and training delivered to secondary students/VET in Schools were derived from the National VET in Schools Collection and the National VET Provider Collection, compiled by the National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER) under the Australian Vocational Education and Training Management Information Statistical Standard (AVETMISS), release 7.0.