Interpreting school profile data

Information on this page summarises key factors that distinguish a school, such as school sector, type and location. The school profile page includes a commentary provided by the school which describes its ethos, programs and achievements.

This page also provides the numbers of staff and students, attendance rates, information about the student population, a summary of school finances, and information about secondary school outcomes.

School comments

The school comments provide an opportunity for each school to give an account of its achievements, values and programs, such as programs supporting students with special learning needs or structures for post-school pathways, as well as other useful information, such as policies on enrolment (e.g. selective schools) and student welfare.

School facts 2010

The information included in this section comes from a number of different sources. Government school information has been provided by State and Territory education departments. For non-government schools, this information has been provided by the Australian Government Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) from data collected through the annual non-government school census.

School sector: Australia’s education system comprises government and non-government schools. Information on the type of non-government school may be available in the ‘School comments’ text if included by the school.

School type: In Australia, there are three general school types: primary schools, secondary schools, and combined schools (offering both primary and secondary schooling). There are also a range of special purpose schools. Schools identified as ‘Special purpose’ in this section include schools for students with disability or juvenile justice schools. Special schools do not include intensive language centres, academically selective schools, or schools not adhering to a formal curriculum.

Year range: The schooling years reported on My School include Year 1 to Year 10, senior secondary years, and the various provisions for education prior to Year 1 that are part of the schooling system in each State and Territory. The abbreviations used for school years prior to Year 1 are consistent with the abbreviations used by the school education systems. For example, K is kindergarten; P is preparatory. The ages at which children start school vary across States and Territories and are not reported on My School.

Total enrolments: Enrolments are counted in two ways. Firstly, through a head count of students and secondly, through full-time equivalent enrolments of students. The total enrolment figure uses the head count method and includes both full-time and part-time enrolments.
**Location**: Four categories of geographic location are used to describe school locations: metropolitan, provincial, remote or very remote. A ‘metropolitan’ area is the area in each State or Territory within close proximity to its capital city; ‘provincial’ is an administration division within a State; ‘remote’ is an area considered spatially distant from the capital city of that State or Territory; and ‘very remote’ is an area considered spatially very distant from the capital city. More specific definitions are provided by the Australian Bureau of Statistics.

**School staff 2010**

The numbers of school staff cited are provided by the school sector or system. Some school sectors or systems only provide numbers of staff employed by the sector or system authority. In these situations, staff employed directly by the school are additional to the figure stated. Staff figures are presented on the profile page in the following categories.

**Teaching staff**: The number shown is the head count of full-time and part-time teaching staff. Teaching staff spend the majority of their time in contact with students and have teaching duties; teaching staff provide educational services directly to students. Principals, deputy principals and senior teachers who have administrative duties are included here.

**Non-teaching staff**: The number shown is the head count of full-time and part-time staff employed at the school who are not teaching staff. Non-teaching staff support the school by providing educational services but do not directly teach students. These staff can be engaged at one or more schools and include: specialist support staff such as counsellors; teachers’ aides and assistants; administrative and clerical staff; building operations, general maintenance and other service staff.

**Full-time equivalent staff**: Full-time equivalent (FTE) is a different representation that measures the total level of staff resources used, where full-time staff are counted as 1.0 and part-time staff are represented as a proportion of the full-time load. For example, a staff member who teaches half-time is counted as 0.5. FTE figures are presented for teaching and for non-teaching staff.

**School finances 2009**

Key elements of the school's finances are provided in this section, together with a link to details on the ‘School finances’ page. More information can be found on the Interpreting Financial Data Fact Sheet.

**Student background 2010**

A summary of student background data is provided in this section. Student background data is represented by a value assigned to each school from the Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage (ICSEA). ICSEA is a measure that enables fair and meaningful comparisons of the performance in literacy and numeracy of students in a given school with that of schools serving students from similar backgrounds. It has been developed specifically for the My School website for the purpose of identifying schools serving similar student populations.
Student background is also represented in the student distribution table. The table divides the school’s student population into four general quarters by a measure of their socio-educational advantage. This measure is determined by students’ family backgrounds and other characteristics. This gives contextual information about the composition of the student population.

Further information on ICSEA can be found on the About ICSEA Fact Sheet and the 2010 ICSEA Generation Report.

**Students 2010**

The total enrolment figure for a school is presented as the head count of full-time and part-time students. The figure count of full-time equivalent enrolments is also shown. A full-time student is one who undertakes a workload equivalent to, or greater than that prescribed for a student of that year level. This may vary between States and Territories and from year to year. A full-time equivalent enrolment is registered as 1.0. A smaller enrolment is represented as a proportion of this; for example, a half-time enrolment is registered as 0.5.

The student attendance rate is also displayed here. This data is collected by schools and supplied for an agreed comparative period during the 2010 school year. The student attendance rate is the total (aggregated) attendance rate across Year levels 1 to 10 for the relevant school. It refers to the number of actual student days attended during the period as a percentage of the number of possible student days attended during the period. It does not include pre-Year 1 attendance, except in government schools in Victoria. Definitions and method of collection may vary across States and Territories.

Student enrolments are also broken down by gender, percentage of Indigenous students, and percentage of students from a language background other than English.

**Senior secondary outcomes for 2009**

The measures in this section reflect the following key areas of student achievement:

- awarding of senior secondary certificate
- completion of senior secondary school
- awarding of Vocational and Education and Training (VET) units of competency
- undertaking Australian School-based Apprenticeships (ASbA)
- post-school destinations—proportions (by percentage) of graduating year students who gained university placements, engaged in TAFE/vocational study, or commenced employment.

Data on senior secondary outcomes is provided by the Australasian Curriculum, Assessment and Certification Authorities (ACACA). It is important to note that the VET outcomes data are not comparable between States and Territories, as agencies use differing report conventions.

Also, not all States and Territories currently collect information on post-school destinations. This information is reported where it is available.
Vocational Education and Training (VET): While students can commence VET programs at varying points during secondary schooling years, the outcomes are measured and reported in the senior years. VET focuses on providing general and specialised skills for work in particular industry sectors. VET courses are offered in schools and colleges, at community centres, in TAFE institutes and other registered training organisations. In these organisations VET may be provided off-the-job and/or in a workplace environment. Workplace training is a significant part of all apprenticeships and traineeships.

VET in Schools programs are undertaken by students as part of the senior secondary certificate. The programs provide a nationally recognised qualification within the Australian Qualifications Framework.

Undertaking VET while at school offers students the integration of vocational options within their academic study program.

Australian School-based Apprenticeships (ASbA): Australian School-based Apprenticeships (ASbA) is a national term for arrangements which allow students to undertake a part-time apprenticeship or traineeship while still at school. Students can combine paid part-time employment with training towards a nationally accredited Vocational Education and Training (VET) qualification under the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) and other school studies. Depending on their pattern of study in the senior secondary certificate, students may be eligible for an Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR).

Post-school destinations: A measure of the main activity of students who finished school. These include university, TAFE, apprenticeships, traineeships, employed, seeking work or had deferred a tertiary place. This measure has a large degree of variation between States and Territories and should not be compared outside the State or Territory of collection.