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AUSTRALIAN CURRICULUM,
ASSESSMENT AND
REPORTING AUTHORITY

National Report

on Schooling in Australia

2012

**National Report on
Schooling in Australia 2012**

National Report on Schooling in Australia 2012

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National Report on Schooling in Australia 2012

Overview

The *National Report on Schooling in Australia 2012* is the annual report on Australia's school education sector. It is produced by the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) on behalf of the Education Council.[1]

The report highlights progress in 2012 towards the *Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians* agreed by Australian Education Ministers in 2008 and on Council of Australian Governments (COAG) initiatives for school education through the National Education Agreement (NEA).

The National Report on Schooling 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, outlines nationally agreed policy initiatives and reports against the nationally agreed key performance measures for schooling including enrolment, attendance, student achievement in national assessments and transitions to further education and work. These include key performance measures reflecting the educational goals for young Australians and measures reflecting COAG targets and indicators drawn from the performance reporting framework of the NEA.

Under the NEA, which came into effect in January 2009[2], the Australian state, territory and federal governments agreed to streamlined and consistent reports on national progress including the continued publication of an annual national report on the outcomes of schooling in Australia.

A variety of other statistical information on Australian schooling in 2012 and for the five-year period 2008–12 is included in the Additional Statistics tables.

This is the fourth annual *National Report on Schooling in Australia* to address the Melbourne Declaration and the NEA.

The report has been compiled by ACARA as required under its charter. The *National Report on Schooling in Australia 2009, 2010* and *2011* are available on the ACARA website. Editions prior to 2009 are available on the SCSEEC website.

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[1] The (COAG) Education Council replaced the Standing Council on School Education and Early Childhood (SCSEEC) in July 2014. SCSEEC replaced the former Ministerial Council for Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs (MCEECDYA) as the Ministerial Council with responsibility for schooling in Australia in January 2012. In this report, references to the council of Australian Education Ministers in 2012 are to SCSEEC. Historical references are to MCEECDYA, or to its predecessor until July 2009, the Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA).
[2] A review of the National Education Agreement performance framework was undertaken in 2012 and a revised agreement to reflect the outcomes of the review came into effect in July 2012. References and links to the NEA in this report are to the revised agreement.

National Report on Schooling in Australia 2012

Part 1

National policy context

Overview

Within Australia's federal system, constitutional responsibility for school education rests predominantly with the Australian States and Territories.[1] The six State and two Territory governments and the Australian Government have cooperated to develop and work towards agreed goals for improving the educational outcomes for all young Australians.

In Australia, joint decisions on shared priorities and agreed national initiatives are made through intergovernmental policy councils. For education in 2012, these councils are the Standing Council on School Education and Early Childhood (SCSEEC), the Standing Council on Tertiary Education, Skills and Employment (SCOTESE), and the Council of Australian Governments (COAG).

SCSEEC

The COAG Standing Council on School Education and Early Childhood (SCSEEC) was established in January 2012, replacing the previous Ministerial Council for Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs (MCEECDYA) as the Ministerial Council with responsibility for schooling.[2]

Membership of the Council comprises State, Territory, Australian Government and New Zealand Ministers with responsibility for the portfolios of school education, early childhood development and youth affairs.

SCSEEC's areas of responsibility include:
- primary and secondary education
- youth affairs and youth policy
- cross-sectoral matters including transitions and careers
- early childhood development including early childhood education and care.

SCSEEC provides a forum through which strategic policy on school education and early childhood development can be coordinated at the national level and is responsible for overseeing progress towards the *Melbourne Declaration on the Educational Goals for Young Australians*.

SCOTESE

The COAG Standing Council on Tertiary Education, Skills and Employment (SCOTESE) is responsible for higher education, vocational education and training, international education, adult and community education and employment. Its membership comprises Ministers responsible for these portfolios in all jurisdictions.

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[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] In this report, contemporary references to the council of Australian Education Ministers are to SCSEEC. Historical references are to MCEECDYA, or to its predecessor until July 2009, the Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA). In July 2014 SCSEEC was replaced by the COAG Education Council.

COAG

The Council of Australian Governments (COAG) is the peak intergovernmental forum in Australia. Its members are the Prime Minister, State Premiers, Territory Chief Ministers and the President of the Australian Local Government Association.

COAG's National Education Agreement includes a set of nationally agreed objectives, outcomes, targets and performance indicators to guide education reform across the country. It is one of six national agreements which seek to drive COAG's national reform agenda and to improve service delivery across the country.

SCSEEC and SCOTESE are standing councils of COAG.

National Report on Schooling in Australia 2012

National policy context

1.1 Educational goals

The *Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians*[1] sets the directions for Australian schooling for the ten-year period 2009–18 agreed by all Australian Education Ministers.

The Melbourne Declaration has two overarching educational goals[2] 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 socioeconomic backgrounds
- strengthening accountability and transparency.

The Melbourne Declaration was supported by its companion document, the *MCEETYA four-year plan 2009–2012,* which identified key strategies that Australian governments agreed to undertake in each area of action. This was aligned with key Council of Australian Governments (COAG) and other national agreements. Progress in implementing these strategies in 2012 is outlined in Part 2: National initiatives and achievements.

National Education Agreement

The Council of Australian Governments (COAG) National Education Agreement (NEA)[3] articulates the shared objective of Australian governments that all Australian school students acquire the knowledge and skills to participate effectively in society and employment in a globalised economy.

The agreement sets out conditions for the provision of Commonwealth school education funding to the Australian states and territories for the period 2009–13. It details the roles and

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[1] 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).
[2] For a full explanation of the goals, see the Melbourne Declaration, pp. 6–9.
[3] References and links to the National Education Agreement in this report are to the revised agreement, which came into effect in July 2012.

responsibilities of the Australian Government and the states and territories, and a framework for performance reporting. These, along with agreed policy and reform directions, are designed to contribute to the following outcomes:

- all children are engaged in, and benefiting from, schooling
- young people are meeting basic literacy and numeracy standards, and overall levels of literacy and numeracy achievement are improving
- Australian students excel by international standards
- schooling promotes social inclusion and reduces the educational disadvantage of children, especially Indigenous children
- young people make a successful transition from school to work and further study.

The performance reporting framework agreed by all governments includes the following elements:

- streamlined and consistent reports on national progress, including an annual national report on the outcomes of schooling in Australia (the *National Report on Schooling in Australia* – this report) and the biennial COAG report *Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage: Key Indicators*
- national reporting on performance of individual schools to inform parents and carers and for evaluation by governments of school performance with details as agreed by SCSEEC in March 2009
- provision by schools of plain language student reports to parents and carers and an annual report made publicly available to their school community on the school's achievements and other contextual information.

Under the provisions of the *Schools Assistance Act 2008* and regulations, the accountability framework for non-government schools and school systems is consistent with that of the NEA for the government school sector.

Achievement in 2012 against the NEA outcomes and indicators is reported in *Education in Australia 2012: Five Years of Performance – Report to the Council of Australian Governments* by the COAG Reform Council (CRC).

National Report on Schooling in Australia 2012

National policy context

1.2 Measuring and reporting performance

The Measurement Framework for Schooling in Australia

The *Measurement Framework for Schooling in Australia 2012* provides the basis for national reporting on the performance of schooling in Australia, as agreed by Education Ministers, and is the focus of the statistical data included in this report.

The *Measurement Framework for Schooling in Australia 2012* defines national key performance measures (KPMs) for schooling, specifies the data sources for the key performance measures and outlines the reporting cycle for the period 2012–17. The framework was revised during 2012 and the revised document replaces the *Measurement Framework for Schooling in Australia 2010.*

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

Key performance measures

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 and attainment
- 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.

The agreed areas of performance monitoring for which KPMs have been developed and approved are:

Participation:
- enrolment in school
- student attendance
- participation in National Assessment Program (NAP) assessments
- participation of young people in vocational education and training (VET) including VET in Schools
- participation by young people in other learning pathways;

Achievement in the National Assessment Program (NAP) in:
- literacy
- numeracy
- civics and citizenship

- ICT literacy
- science literacy;

Attainment:
- school completion and attainment
- attainment of young people in other learning pathways.

For national reporting purposes, measures of equity are derived by disaggregating KPMs for student participation, achievement and attainment by Indigenous status, sex, geolocation, socioeconomic status and language background, where it is possible and appropriate to do so.

Policy and reporting framework

The key national school education policy documents and reports including the Melbourne Declaration, the National Education Agreement (NEA), the *Measurement Framework for Schooling in Australia* and the *National Report on Schooling in Australia* relate to and reinforce each other. Their relationships and roles in policy formation, reporting, evaluation and review are summarised in Figure 1.1.
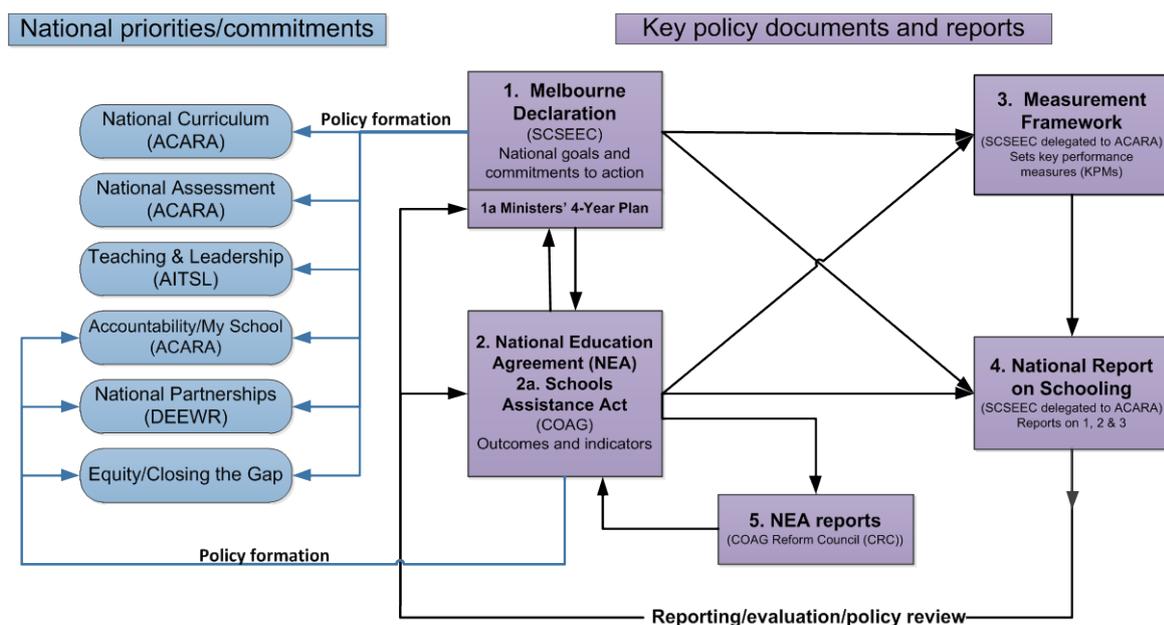
Figure 1.1   National school education policy and reporting framework

The Measurement Framework incorporates national key performance measures arising from the Melbourne Declaration goals and commitment to action, and key performance measures reflecting COAG targets and indicators drawn from the performance reporting framework of the NEA.

The performance reporting framework of the NEA includes an annual national report on the outcomes of schooling in Australia (the National Report on Schooling*)* covering the Melbourne Declaration and the Measurement Framework. The Measurement Framework is included as a schedule of the NEA.

The National Report on Schooling reports on national initiatives and achievements arising from the Melbourne Declaration and is the main vehicle for reporting the key performance measures defined in the Measurement Framework.

The COAG Reform Council (CRC) reports publicly and to COAG on performance against the objective and outcomes of the NEA. CRC reports cover NEA targets and indicators which are also reflected in the KPMs in the Measurement Framework.

National Report on Schooling in Australia 2012

Part 2

National initiatives and achievements

Overview

This section outlines key national strategies designed to address the Commitment to Action made by Australian Education Ministers in the *Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians*, together with initiatives for education agreed by the Council of Australian Governments (COAG), in particular through the National Education Agreement (NEA). It also reports on the implementation of these initiatives in 2012.

In this context, national initiatives are defined as those in which states, territories and the Australian Government are working together, at a national level, to progress their joint commitments.

States and territories are also committed to progressing work towards the educational goals for young Australians, and COAG targets and indicators specified in the NEA, on an individual basis. Information on the implementation of these programs within jurisdictions is available on state and territory education authority websites.

National Report on Schooling in Australia 2012

National initiatives and achievements

2.1   Developing stronger partnerships

Australian governments have committed to working with all school sectors to ensure that schools engage young Australians, parents, carers, families, other education and training providers, business and the broader community to support students' progress through schooling, and to provide them with rich learning, personal development and citizenship opportunities (*Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians* 2008).

Following this commitment, states and territories have worked on an individual basis to establish:

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

Through the Council of Australian Governments (COAG), the Australian Government and state and territory governments also entered into a set of formal national partnership agreements. These are outlined below.

Smarter Schools National Partnerships

National partnership agreements for:

- Improving Teacher Quality
- Education in Low Socio-economic Status School Communities
- Literacy and Numeracy

have contributed to achieving objectives, outcomes and targets for schooling outlined in the National Education Agreement (NEA). In addition to the Australian Government funding shown below, states and territories contribute to the implementation of national partnerships in money terms and in kind. Participation by non-government schools in these partnerships has been determined through collaboration between the non-government sectors and state and territory governments.

Improving Teacher Quality

Under the Teacher Quality National Partnership (2008–09 to 2012–13), governments and school sectors have implemented a range of reforms that aim to attract, train, place, develop and retain quality teachers and leaders in Australia's schools. Commonwealth funding of $550 million was committed to this partnership over the five-year period. Achievements include the establishment of the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership, and the development and adoption of the *Australian Professional Standards for Teachers*.

Further information on this partnership is included in Part 2.2: National initiatives and achievements – supporting quality teaching and school leadership.

Low Socio-economic Status School Communities

Through the Low Socio-economic Status School Communities National Partnership (2008–09 to 2014–15), participating schools are working with local communities and education authorities to improve educational outcomes for disadvantaged students, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, students from non-English speaking backgrounds and students with disabilities. Commonwealth funding of $1.5 billion has been allocated to states and territories over the seven-year period, to be matched by state and territory co-investment. Over the life of this national partnership, approximately 1,700 schools serving low socio-economic status communities have been targeted for support. Activities focus on supporting student engagement and attendance through both whole-of-school strategies and targeted intervention for particular groups. There has also been a focus on the establishment of external partnerships with parents and organisations to support student learning and wellbeing.

Further information on this initiative is included in Part 2.7: National initiatives and achievements – improving educational outcomes for Indigenous youth and disadvantaged young Australians.

Literacy and Numeracy

The $540 million Literacy and Numeracy National Partnership (2008–09 to 2011–12) aimed to deliver sustained improvement in literacy and numeracy outcomes for students, especially those needing support. Over the life of this national partnership, approximately 1,070 schools were targeted for support. Programs included individualised support for students and targeted professional learning for school leaders and classroom teachers.

The Literacy and Numeracy National Partnership sponsored the development of Teach Learn Share, an online database of effective strategies and approaches for improving literacy and numeracy, submitted by teachers, professional associations, academics and education authorities. Launched in June 2012, Teach Learn Share gives teachers access to evidence-based research and to strategies and interventions that have worked in improving student outcomes in other Australian schools and school systems.

The COAG Reform Council's report to COAG: National Partnership Agreement on Literacy and Numeracy: Performance report for 2011 was released on the Council's website in May 2012.

National Partnership Agreement on Youth Attainment and Transitions

The National Partnership on Youth Attainment and Transitions covering the period from July 2009 to December 2013 aims to increase participation of young people in education and training, increase attainment levels nationally and improve successful transitions from school.

Commonwealth funding of $706 million has been committed to this partnership over the life of the agreement, including up to $100 million in reward funding made available to jurisdictions on the achievement of agreed participation and attainment targets.

In its report to COAG: National Partnership Agreement on Youth Attainment and Transitions: Assessment of Attainment Target, the COAG Reform Council assessed the performance up to 2012 of state and territory governments against targets for young people attaining a Year 12 or equivalent qualification. This report, published in 2013, is available on the Council's website.

The national partnership includes the Compact with Young Australians and the implementation of the National Youth Participation Requirement, which took effect nationally in 2010. All states and territories have met their obligation to require young people to complete at least Year 10 and then remain in full-time study or work, or a combination of these, until age 17.

Programs implemented to support the achievement of this national partnership included School Business Community Partnership Brokers and Youth Connections.

Further information on this partnership is included in Part 2.5: National initiatives and achievements – supporting senior years of schooling and youth transitions.

National Partnership Agreement on Digital Education Revolution

This national partnership agreement was established to facilitate the implementation of the Digital Education Revolution (DER). $2.1 billion was provided by the Australian Government over six years, for new information and communication technology (ICT) equipment in secondary schools, for enhancing teaching resources in ICT and for providing technical advice and support to schools.

Further information on the Digital Education Revolution is provided in Part 2.5: National initiatives and achievements – supporting senior years of schooling and youth transitions.

National Partnership Agreement on Rewards for Great Teachers

The Rewards for Great Teachers National Partnership (2011–12 to 2018–19) was established in 2012 to implement the Australian Teacher Performance and Development Framework and a nationally consistent assessment and certification process for teachers performing at the higher levels of the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers.

National Partnership Agreement on Early Childhood Education

Through the National Partnership Agreement on Early Childhood Education, Commonwealth and state and territory governments committed to ensuring that, by 2013, all children would have access to a quality early childhood education program in the year before full-time schooling. The Commonwealth allocated $970 million over five years towards the implementation of this commitment. Of this funding, $955 million has been provided directly to state and territory governments to support their implementation of universal access and $15 million is being used to develop better data on early childhood education in Australia.

The national partnership has a particular emphasis on ensuring preschool education is available to Indigenous and disadvantaged children and is linked to other elements of early childhood education reform, including the Closing the Gap target and the Early Years Learning Framework.

State and territory annual reports for 2012 are available for viewing on the Department of Education website.

National Partnership Agreement on Indigenous Early Childhood Development

Through the National Partnership Agreement on Indigenous Early Childhood Development, the Australian Government has provided $292.6 million for the establishment of at least 35 Children and Family Centres across Australia by June 2014. The Children and Family Centres deliver integrated services, including early childhood learning, child care and family programs in areas where there is a demonstrated need for these services and a high proportion of Indigenous children under five years of age.

National Partnership Agreement on the Nation Building and Jobs Plan – Building the Education Revolution

In 2009, COAG agreed to the National Partnership Agreement on the Nation Building and Jobs Plan: Building Prosperity for the Future and Supporting Jobs Now incorporating Building the Education Revolution (BER). This agreement provided Commonwealth funding for the BER program over four years and expired on 31 December 2012. The $16.2 billion BER sought to provide economic stimulus through rapid construction and refurbishment of school infrastructure and built learning environments. BER funding was allocated to nearly 24,000 projects in approximately 9,500 schools under the three elements of the BER.

Empowering Local Schools National Partnership Agreement

Through the Empowering Local Schools National Partnership, the Australian Government provided $57.166 million to help enable principals, parents and school communities to make decisions that suited the local context of their schools. Schools from all states and territories participated.

This initiative focused on empowerment in:
- governance arrangements (including strategic planning, school operations decision-making structures and processes)
- funding and infrastructure (including allocation of resources, infrastructure management, planning and maintenance)
- workforce (including staffing profiles, recruitment, performance management).

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National initiatives and achievements

2.2   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 2008).

Among the key strategies in this area agreed by Education Ministers in 2008 were the creation of new professional standards, a framework to guide professional learning for teachers and school leaders, and national consistency in the registration of teachers. Improved pay dispersion to reward quality teaching, improved in-school support for teachers and leaders – particularly in disadvantaged Indigenous, rural/remote and hard-to-staff schools – and joint engagement with higher education to provide improved pre-service teacher education were other agreed strategies.

Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership

In 2012 the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) continued to provide national leadership for the Commonwealth, state and territory governments in promoting excellence in the profession of teaching and school leadership. AITSL has responsibility for professional standards and for fostering professional development for teachers and school leaders. AITSL works collaboratively across jurisdictions and engages with key professional bodies.

All states and territories will commence implementation of the *Australian Professional Standards for Teachers* from 2013. The *Australian Professional Standard for Principals* complements the professional standards for teachers and is supported by a clearinghouse for school leaders which provides an interactive research repository and online tools. Both standards support the commitment in the Melbourne Declaration and align with aspects of the National Partnership on Improving Teacher Quality.

In 2012, AITSL conducted the second annual Australian Awards for Outstanding Teaching and School Leadership.

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

National Partnership Agreement on Improving Teacher Quality

Under the Smarter Schools – Improving Teacher Quality National Partnership, state and territory governments have implemented a range of reforms to attract, train, place, develop and retain quality teachers and leaders in schools and classrooms.

In May 2012, state and territory governments received more than $170 million in reward payments under this partnership for their progress in implementing initiatives to lift teacher

quality, provide professional development opportunities and attract high-quality candidates into the profession.

Other key priorities in 2012 included the Rewards for Great Teachers National Partnership and initiatives relating to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Action Plan (2010–2014).

The Rewards for Great Teachers National Partnership (2011–12 to 2018–19) was established in 2012 to implement the Australian Teacher Performance and Development Framework and a nationally consistent assessment and certification process for teachers performing at the higher levels of the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers.

The More Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Teachers Initiative is aimed at structural reform of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander school workforce. Teach Remote supports strategies to develop a quality teacher workforce in remote communities including a teacher incentive package, development of a national leadership capacity and pre-service and in-service programs for teachers working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander English as an Additional Language/Dialect students.

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National initiatives and achievements

2.3 Strengthening early childhood education[1]

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

National Partnership Agreement on Early Childhood Education

Through the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) National Partnership Agreement on Early Childhood Education, Commonwealth and state and territory governments committed to ensuring that all children in the year before full-time schooling have access to a quality early childhood education program, delivered by a university-trained early childhood teacher, for 15 hours a week, 40 weeks a year.

The Commonwealth's commitment of $970 million over the five years to 30 June 2013 included $955 million directly to states and territories to support their implementation of universal access to early childhood education. Three million dollars each year (for five years) was also set aside for research, data development and evaluation. The National Partnership includes a specific focus on ensuring early childhood education is available to Indigenous and disadvantaged children.

State and territory annual reports for 2012 under the National Partnership Agreement on Early Childhood Education are available on the Australian Government Department of Education website.

National Partnership Agreement on Indigenous Early Childhood Development

Under the National Partnership Agreement on Indigenous Early Childhood Development, COAG agreed that at least 35 Children and Family Centres would be established across Australia by June 2014. Locations for 38 centres were agreed, and $292.6 million allocated to establish them.

The Children and Family Centres have been established in a mix of remote, regional and urban locations. They are concentrated in areas where there is demonstrated need for these services, high disadvantage and a high proportion of Indigenous children under five years of age. The centres deliver integrated services, including early learning, child care and family support programs.

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

The National Partnership Agreement on the National Quality Agenda for Early Childhood Education and Care contributes to improving outcomes for children attending education and

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[1] Early childhood education refers to programs which children may undertake in the years before they commence full-time schooling. In general, statistical and other information on early childhood education in Australia is not reported in the *National Report on Schooling in Australia.*

care services, including long day care, family day care, kindergarten/preschool[2] and outside school hours care.

National Information Agreement on Early Childhood Education and Care

The National Information Agreement on Early Childhood Education and Care facilitates the collection, sharing and reporting of early childhood education and care information. It was developed in consultation with the Australian Government, states and territories, as well as key data agencies. The agreement is a key element of the COAG monitoring and reporting arrangements, especially for children in the year before school under the National Partnership Agreement on Early Childhood Education, and for Indigenous children in that age group, under the Closing the Gap agenda.

Further information on the commitment for strengthening early childhood education is outside the scope of the *National Report on Schooling in Australia* but is available on the Australian Department of Education website.

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[2] In jurisdictions where preschool is currently delivered by government or non-government schools, there is an option of administering the National Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education and Care through existing government quality assurance processes with respect to preschools (*National Partnership Agreement on the National Quality Agenda for Early Childhood Education and Care,* Appendix B-8.53).

National Report on Schooling in Australia 2012

National initiatives and achievements

2.4   Enhancing middle years development

Australian governments are committed 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).

Jurisdictions are continuing to progress work in this area on an individual basis.

In addition, the Improving Teacher Quality National Partnership has supported a range of strategies and actions for students in the middle years of schooling, including:

- developing teaching and learning approaches and innovative learning technologies that respond to the needs and characteristics of this phase of education
- providing relevant experiences, excursions and school–community links.

The Low Socio-economic Status School Communities National Partnership has also assisted participating schools in engaging students in the middle years by providing support that addresses their personal circumstances and local contexts.

More information on these partnerships is available in Part 2.1: National initiatives and achievements – developing stronger partnerships.

The development and implementation of the Foundation to Year 10 Australian Curriculum is also central to the provision of challenging, engaging and rewarding programs in the middle years. This initiative is outlined in Part 2.6: National initiatives and achievements – promoting world-class curriculum and assessment and on the ACARA Australian Curriculum website.

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National initiatives and achievements

2.5   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 the provision of high-quality pathways to facilitate effective transitions between further study, training and employment (Melbourne Declaration 2008).

The Council of Australian Governments (COAG) has established targets to lift the Year 12 or equivalent attainment rate. Specifically, COAG agreed to a target for 2015 that 90 per cent of 20 to 24-year-olds will have achieved Year 12 or equivalent or an Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) Certificate II or above, and a target for 2020 that 90 per cent of 20 to 24-year-olds will have achieved Year 12 or equivalent or an AQF Certificate III or above.[1]

National Partnership on Youth Attainment and Transitions

To support achievement of the attainment targets, to increase the educational participation and attainment of young people and to improve their transition to post-school education, training and employment, COAG established the National Partnership on Youth Attainment and Transitions which includes the Compact with Young Australians. This national partnership runs from July 2009 to December 2013 and includes $708 million of project and reward funding.

Compact with Young Australians

The Compact with Young Australians includes three components designed to promote skills acquisition and ensure young people are 'learning or earning':

- A National Youth Participation Requirement, which requires all young people to participate in schooling (or an approved equivalent) until they have completed Year 10, and then participate full-time (at least 25 hours per week) in education, training or employment, or a combination of these activities, until age 17. Similar requirements had been introduced in Queensland, South Australia, Western Australia and Tasmania between 2006 and 2008, and, in 2010 the national participation requirement came into effect in New South Wales, Victoria, the Australian Capital Territory and the Northern Territory. This extended the period of compulsory education (or training) for young people in these jurisdictions, and effectively raised the minimum school (or approved equivalent) leaving age. The participation requirement raises expectations about the level of education and training undertaken by Australia's young people and makes those expectations consistent across the country.
- Strengthened participation requirements for some types of income support, by which people under 21 must have completed Year 12 or equivalent or be participating full-time in education or training in order to be eligible for a government youth allowance.
- An entitlement to an education or training place for 15 to 24-year-olds.This expired in December 2011, having been embedded in state and territory policies.

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

Since the introduction of the compact, there have been substantial increases in the apparent rates of student progression and retention to the later years of schooling and in the proportion of 15 to 19-year-olds participating in education and training overall. These developments are reported in Part 4.2: Student participation – progression and retention and Part 6.2: Senior schooling and youth transitions – participation in education and work.

Under the National Partnership on Youth Attainment and Transitions, the Australian Government is providing funding of $608 million over four years for improved youth engagement, attainment and transition arrangements. This is made up of:

- $288 million to provide services through the Youth Connections program to support young people at risk of not attaining Year 12 or an equivalent qualification. Since 2010, more than 55,000 young people have received support from Youth Connections and, of that number, over 30,000 have re-engaged with education, training or employment.
- $183 million for the School Business Community Partnership Brokers program, to improve community and business engagement with schools to extend learning beyond the classroom. Partnership Brokers supports 1,450 partnerships involving 4,700 partners (schools, training providers, business and industry community bodies, and parents and families).
- $106 million for states and territories to maximise engagement, attainment and successful transitions through the areas of career development, multiple learning pathways and mentoring.
- $30 million for national career development initiatives administered by the Commonwealth.

Trade Training Centres in Schools Program

The Trade Training Centres in Schools Program is providing $2.5 billion in the period 2008–18 to enable secondary students in Years 9 to 12 to access vocational education and training (VET) through new or upgraded trade training centres. More than $1.2 billion has been approved for more than 370 centres involving over 1,060 secondary schools across Australia.

This program supports and complements existing programs for VET in Schools and school-based apprenticeships and traineeships operating in all states and territories. Under these programs school students are able to combine school study with training towards an accredited AQF VET qualification.

Digital Education Revolution

Ensuring learning in the senior years is supported by access to computers, online tools and resources, and teaching expertise in using information and communication technologies (ICT) is an agreed strategy for supporting senior schooling and youth transitions under the Melbourne Declaration.

Through the National Partnership Agreement on the Digital Education Revolution (DER), the Australian Government is providing more than $2.1 billion over six years from 2008 to 2013 to:

- provide new ICT equipment for all secondary schools with students in Years 9 to 12 through the National Secondary Schools Computer Fund
- provide technical advice and support for national initiatives through the National Schools Interoperability Program
- support the implementation of the Australian Curriculum through the Australian Curriculum Connect project, enabling the use, sharing and discovery of digital resources aligned with the new curriculum.

Career Development Resources

The Australian Blueprint for Career Development is a joint initiative of the Australian and state and territory governments under SCSEEC, first published in 2008. It provides teachers, careers advisers, employment service providers and other careers practitioners with a nationally consistent framework for designing, implementing and evaluating career development programs for young people and adults. The blueprint identifies the skills, attitudes and knowledge that individuals need to make sound choices and to effectively manage their careers. A review of the blueprint was conducted in 2012.

Another joint initiative of Education Ministers is Australia's national career information and exploration service, the *myfuture* website. The *myfuture* website helps school students and others to make informed career decisions, plan career pathways and manage work transitions. In 2012, an extensive consultation process to update the website and improve its interactive functionality was begun.

Further information on senior schooling and transitions including the key performance measures related to this commitment is in Part 6: Senior schooling and youth transitions.

National Report on Schooling in Australia 2012

National initiatives and achievements

2.6   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 responsible for the delivery of key national reforms in curriculum and assessment including:

- development of a rigorous, world-class national curriculum, which builds on early childhood learning, from the first year of schooling to Year 12
- alignment between the Early Years Learning Framework and school-based curriculum frameworks that relate to the early years of schooling
- development of plans to improve the capacity of schools to assess student performance, and to link assessment to the national curriculum where appropriate
- managing the development and overseeing the delivery of assessments and reporting for the National Assessment Program (NAP), including national tests in Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) and sample assessments in Science Literacy, Civics and Citizenship, and Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Literacy.

ACARA is an independent statutory authority, established in December 2008 under the *Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority Act (2008)* (the ACARA Act), and is subject to the *Commonwealth Authorities and Companies Act (1997).*

ACARA is a cooperative enterprise between state and federal jurisdictions. It is responsible to the Standing Council on School Education and Early Childhood (SCSEEC) and its activities are jointly funded by Commonwealth, state and territory governments. The ACARA Board comprises members nominated by Commonwealth, state and territory Education Ministers, as well as the National Catholic Education Commission and the Independent Schools Council of Australia.

The authority's work is carried out in collaboration with a wide range of stakeholders, including teachers, principals, governments, state and territory education authorities, non-government education authorities, professional education associations, community groups and the general public.

ACARA's role in the reporting of educational information is outlined in Part 2.8: National initiatives and achievements – strengthening accountability and transparency.

In terms of curriculum and assessment, the functions of ACARA, as provided in Section 6 of the ACARA Act, are to:

- develop and administer a national school curriculum, including content of the curriculum and achievement standards, for school subjects specified in the Charter[1]
- develop and administer national assessments
- provide school curriculum resource services
- provide information, resources, support and guidance to the teaching profession.

The Australian Curriculum

Development of the Australian Curriculum from Foundation[2] to Year 12 (F–12) follows ACARA's *Curriculum Development Process* and *Curriculum Design* papers. Each phase of development involves substantial consultation with government and non-government education authorities, professional associations, teachers, academics, business, industry and parent and community groups across all states and territories, and comprehensive review and revision processes. The overall development of the Australian Curriculum is guided by the *Shape of the Australian Curriculum,* first published in 2009. The fourth version, *Shape of the Australian Curriculum v4.0,* was published in 2012. Further information on the curriculum development process is available on the ACARA website.

In 2010, Ministers approved the content of the Foundation to Year 10 Australian Curriculum in English, mathematics, science and history, subject to the validation of achievement standards. Revised achievement standards and refined curriculum content for F–10 English, mathematics, science and history were approved by Ministers and published on the ACARA website in 2011. Portfolios of student work for each of these subjects were also developed and published.

Responsibility for implementing the Australian Curriculum lies with each state and territory. Implementation of English, mathematics, science and history Australian Curriculum from Foundation to Year 10 commenced in some jurisdictions in 2011 with substantial implementation planned to occur by the end of 2013 in most states and territories.

In December 2012, Ministers endorsed the curricula for 14 senior secondary subjects for English, mathematics, science and history as the agreed and common base for development of state and territory senior secondary courses.

The second phase of the Australian Curriculum development involves the learning areas of geography, languages and the arts. National consultation on the draft F–10 curriculum for geography concluded in July 2012; for the arts, in September 2012; and for Chinese and Italian languages, in December 2012.

Development of Australian Curriculum for other languages, technologies, health and physical education, civics and citizenship, and economics and business was underway in 2012.

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[1]SCSEEC determines the ACARA Charter and specifies the subjects for development within the Charter and Letter of Expectations.
[2] The Foundation year is known as Preparatory in Victoria, Queensland and Tasmania, Kindergarten in New South Wales and the Australian Capital Territory, Reception in South Australia, Pre-primary in Western Australia and Transition in the Northern Territory.

In addition to its focus on learning areas, the Australian Curriculum pays particular attention to general capabilities. These encompass skills, behaviours and dispositions that students develop and apply to content. The Australian Curriculum includes seven general capabilities: literacy, numeracy, information and communication technology capability, critical and creative thinking, personal and social capability, ethical understanding and intercultural understanding. These are addressed in each learning area as appropriate.

The curriculum also gives special attention to three cross-curriculum priorities:
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures
- Asia and Australia's engagement with Asia
- sustainability.

The Australian Curriculum Consultation portal allows stakeholders and the general public to read and review draft curriculum materials as they become available.

Curriculum documents are progressively released on the ACARA Australian Curriculum website.

School curriculum resource services and information and support to the teaching profession. While implementation of the Australian Curriculum is a matter for each state and territory, ACARA is continuing to work with states and territories to facilitate implementation. This includes working with jurisdictions, non-government school sectors, other agencies and professional associations to provide tools and resources to support schools, teachers and the public in implementing and interacting with the Australian Curriculum.

Education Services Australia (ESA) is a ministerial company established by SCSEEC to support delivery of national priorities in the school, training and higher education sectors. A major function of ESA is to create, publish, disseminate and market curriculum and assessment materials. ACARA collaborates with ESA regarding online resource discovery and access, and with the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) regarding professional learning requirements in relation to the Australian Curriculum.

To ensure the Australian Curriculum is accessible to all students, ACARA has published advice under a new tab titled 'Student Diversity' on the Australian Curriculum website.

The National Assessment Program (NAP)
The National Assessment Program is an ongoing program of assessments to monitor progress towards the Educational Goals for Young Australians. The NAP encompasses the annual national literacy and numeracy tests (NAPLAN), three-yearly sample assessments in science literacy, civics and citizenship, and information and communication technology (ICT) literacy, and Australia's participation in international assessments. In 2012 ACARA undertook a review of the domestic sample assessments, and recommended to Ministers that the current cycle of assessments continue until 2015, with further advice on the long-term direction of the program to follow.

- ### National Assessment Program — Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN)

NAPLAN is an annual assessment for students in Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 in Australia in the areas of Reading, Writing, Language Conventions (spelling, punctuation and grammar) and Numeracy (number; function and pattern; measurement, chance and data; and space).

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

Information on results of the 2012 NAPLAN tests, including the key performance measures related to them, is included in Part 5.1: NAP – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN).

The *NAPLAN National Report* for 2012 is published on the ACARA National Assessment Program website. This report provides analyses of results including breakdowns by state and territory, and student background characteristics, including sex, language background, Indigenous status, geolocation and parental education and occupation. From 2011, these aggregated NAPLAN results have also been available directly from the results pages of the National Assessment Program website.

Further information about NAPLAN for parents, schools and students is also available on this website. This information includes samples of the individual student reports that are provided to all students who participate in the NAPLAN tests, and background information about the NAPLAN tests. Average NAPLAN results for schools are also reported on the *My School* website.

- ### The National Assessment Program – sample assessments

The national sample assessments test students' skills and understanding in Science Literacy (Year 6), Civics and Citizenship (Years 6 and 10) and Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Literacy (Years 6 and 10). Selected groups of students in Years 6 and 10 participate in these sample assessments, which are held on a rolling three-yearly basis.

Sample assessments began in 2003 with Science Literacy, followed by Civics and Citizenship in 2004 and ICT Literacy in 2005. The fourth Science Literacy assessment was undertaken by a sample of Year 6 students in October 2012.

Information on results of the 2012 Science Literacy assessment, including the key performance measures related to it, is included in Part 5.2: NAP: Science Literacy.

The public report on this sample assessment, *NAP Science Literacy Year 6 Report 2012,* is available on the ACARA National Assessment Program website.

- ### National Assessment Program – international assessments

There are two NAP sample assessments conducted by international organisations that are used as a basis for key performance measures in the *Measurement Framework for Schooling in Australia*: the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) and the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS).

PISA is conducted every three years by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and involves the assessment of a sample of 15-year-old students in reading, mathematical and scientific literacy. The most recent PISA assessment was conducted in 2012.

Information on results of the 2012 PISA assessment, including the key performance measures related to it, is included in Part 5.3: Programme for International Student Assessment. Reports and key findings from PISA 2012 are available on the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) website.

TIMSS is a four-yearly international sample assessment of student achievement in mathematics and science at Years 4 and 8 administered by the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA). The most recent TIMSS assessment was TIMSS 2011. Information on the performance of Australian students in TIMSS 2011 is available on the ACER website.

National Report on Schooling in Australia 2012

National initiatives and achievements

2.7 Improving educational outcomes for Indigenous[1] youth and disadvantaged young Australians, especially those from low socio-economic backgrounds

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

Within the Melbourne Declaration, Education Ministers acknowledged that:
- educational outcomes for Indigenous children and young people are substantially behind those of other students in key areas of enrolment, attendance, participation, literacy, numeracy, retention and completion
- students from low socio-economic backgrounds, those from remote areas, refugees, homeless young people, and students with disabilities often experience educational disadvantage
- Australian governments must support all young Australians to achieve not only equality of opportunity but also more equitable outcomes.

Ministers committed Australian governments to working with all school sectors to:
- 'close the gap' for young Indigenous Australians
- provide targeted support to disadvantaged students
- focus on school improvement in low socio-economic communities.

Agreed national strategies under the Melbourne Declaration include: the development of an action plan to close the gap for Indigenous children and young people; providing increased access to quality early childhood education programs for Indigenous children; supporting coordinated community services for Indigenous students and their families; strengthening school leadership and teaching in disadvantaged schools and generating meaningful pathways for all disadvantaged students.

The Council of Australian Governments (COAG) has set targets to lift educational attainment overall and to close the gap between the educational outcomes of Indigenous and non-Indigenous students that are incorporated in the National Education Agreement.

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.

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[1] The Melbourne Declaration and national data collections use the term 'Indigenous' to refer to Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Where possible, this report uses 'Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander' in preference to the term 'Indigenous'.

Progress towards these targets is discussed in Part 6.3: Senior school and transitions – attainment and Part 7: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education.

COAG has also set a target to ensure access to early childhood education for all Indigenous four-year-olds in remote communities by 2013.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth

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

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Action Plan 2010–2014 was developed as a commitment under the Melbourne Declaration and as part of the COAG reform agenda to improve life outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians. The plan was approved by Education Ministers in 2010 and endorsed by COAG in 2011.

The plan focuses on six priority areas identified as having the greatest impact on closing the gap:
- readiness for school
- engagement and connections
- attendance
- literacy and numeracy
- leadership, quality teaching and workforce development
- pathways to real post-school options.

The action plan endeavours to bring together existing commitments made through key reforms including the National Indigenous Reform Agreement (NIRA) and the National Education Agreement and builds on commitments by governments for structural and innovative reforms in early childhood education, schooling and youth engagement.

Funding of the plan is a shared responsibility of participating education providers and the Australian Government, which committed $128.6 million over the period 2010–14 to a range of measures in the action plan.

Under the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Action Plan, Education Ministers agreed to identify a key group of focus schools as sites for specific action. The Investing in Focus Schools project is a $40 million initiative over two years from 2012. Funding was provided as a one-off payment to states and territories under a project agreement. The initiative supports approximately 300 government and non-government schools (selected by states and territories) to complement and accelerate implementation of local actions in the 'Engagement and connections', 'Attendance' and 'Literacy and numeracy' domains of the action plan.

The Next Steps Focus Schools Initiative is an Australian Government commitment of $30 million under the *Indigenous Education (Targeted Assistance) Act 2000.* The funding, over two years finishing in 2014, aims to directly assist 101 schools (selected by states and

territories) in lifting the attendance, engagement and educational achievement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

Annual reports for 2012, 2011 and 2010 on progress against the *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Action Plan 2010–2014* are available on the SCSEEC website.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students have also benefited from the national partnership agreements in Literacy and Numeracy, Low Socio-economic Status School Communities, Improving Teacher Quality and Youth Attainment and Transitions. These agreements are for all Australians, but have Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander specific measures. More information on these partnerships is included in Part 2.1: National initiatives – developing stronger partnerships.

More information on initiatives for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth is available in the annual reports on the action plan and the Australian Government's Indigenous website. Information on schooling for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in 2012, including relevant key performance measures and performance indicators under the action plan is provided in Part 7: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education.

Low socio-economic status school communities

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

The National Partnership for Low Socio-economic Status School Communities facilitates a range of school-level and broader reforms addressing educational disadvantage associated with low socio-economic status school communities including:

- incentives to attract high-quality principals and teachers
- more flexible management and staffing arrangements
- more flexible school operational arrangements
- innovative and tailored learning opportunities for students
- strengthened school accountability to parents and the community
- external partnerships with parents, schools, businesses and local communities.

Commonwealth funding of $1.5 billion is being provided to states and territories over a seven-year period, to be matched by state and territory co-investment. Over the life of this national partnership, approximately 1,700 schools serving low socio-economic status communities will be targeted for support. This national partnership is supporting student engagement and attendance through whole-of-school strategies as well as targeted intervention for particular cohorts, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, students from a non-English speaking background and students with disabilities. There has been a strong focus on the establishment of external partnerships with parents and organisations to support student learning and wellbeing.

The needs of students from low socio-economic backgrounds (whether or not they attend a school participating in the Low Socio-economic Status School Communities National

Partnership), as well as those experiencing other forms of educational disadvantage, are also addressed in the national partnerships for Literacy and Numeracy and for Improving Teacher Quality. Further information on these partnerships is included in Part 2.1: National initiatives and achievements – developing stronger partnerships.

The National Partnership on Youth Attainment and Transitions, including the Compact with Young Australians and the National Youth Participation Requirement, works to address outcomes for educationally disadvantaged young Australians. In particular, the Youth Connections program provides an individualised and responsive service to support those most at risk of disengaging from education, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people. These initiatives are outlined in Part 2.5: National initiatives and achievements – supporting senior years of schooling and youth transitions.

National Report on Schooling in Australia 2012

National initiatives and achievements

2.8 Strengthening accountability and transparency

Both the *Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians* and the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) National Education Agreement (NEA) emphasise transparency in reporting educational information and accountability for the use of public resources for education as core reforms.

This includes reporting to schools, families and students about student achievement and school performance as well as public reporting of individual and comparative school performance and reporting on the performance of Australian schooling overall.

In the Melbourne Declaration, Australian governments committed to working with all school sectors to ensure that public reporting of education:
- focuses on improving performance and student outcomes
- is both locally and nationally relevant
- is timely, consistent and comparable.

Under the NEA (government schools) and the *Schools Assistance Act 2008* (non-government schools), all schools must provide plain language student reports to parents and carers and an annual report made publicly available to their school community on the school's achievements and other contextual information.

The NEA performance reporting framework also includes:
- streamlined and consistent reports on national progress, including an annual national report on the outcomes of schooling in Australia covering the *Melbourne Declaration* and the *Measurement Framework for Schooling in Australia* [1] and the biennial COAG report *Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage: Key Indicators*
- national reporting on performance of individual schools to inform parents and carers and for evaluation by governments of school performance.

A review of the NEA performance reporting framework was undertaken in 2012 and a revised agreement to reflect the outcomes of the review came into effect in July 2012.

Under the *Schools Assistance Act 2008*, the performance information and reporting framework for non-government schools and school systems is consistent with that of the NEA.

The Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority

The Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) is responsible for implementing the majority of national strategies for accountability and transparency agreed by Education Ministers under the Melbourne Declaration.

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[1] The *National Report on Schooling in Australia*, i.e. this report

In terms of data collection and reporting[2], the functions of ACARA, as provided in Section 6 of the *Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority Act (2008),* 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 priorities under its charter include: the monitoring and review of the *Measurement Framework for Schooling in Australia,* which sets out agreed national key performance measures (KPMs) for schooling; producing a comprehensive and authoritative *National Report on Schooling in Australia* related to the *Melbourne Declaration* and national KPMs; developing, or supporting the development of, national definitions and managing the collection, quality assurance and reporting of school information through the *My School* website.

Measurement Framework for Schooling in Australia

In 2012 ACARA conducted a review of the *Measurement Framework for Schooling in Australia 2010*, in consultation with jurisdictions, school sectors and relevant government agencies. This review coincided with the review of the NEA performance reporting framework. The revised measurement framework, the *Measurement Framework for Schooling in Australia 2012*, reflects revisions to the NEA indicators and was published on the ACARA website in early 2013 following its approval by Education Ministers.

National Report on Schooling in Australia

In 2012, ACARA published the *National Report on Schooling in Australia 2010* and undertook the preparation of the *National Report on Schooling in Australia 2011* on behalf of the Standing Council on School Education and Early Childhood (SCSEEC) in consultation with representatives of state and territory education authorities, the non-government sectors and other relevant agencies. The 2011 report was the third to be published by ACARA and to report on progress in the reporting year towards the Melbourne Declaration Commitment to Action, on NEA indicators and against the *Measurement Framework for Schooling in Australia 2010.*

Development of national definitions and measures

In October 2012, ACARA published the *Data Standards Manual: Student Background Characteristics* for use by schools and school systems, test administration authorities and assessment contractors. This is the sixth edition of the manual and replaced the *2010 Data Standards Manual – Student Background Characteristics* and previous editions published on the SCSEEC/MCEECDYA website.

The manual provides standard definitions and technical specifications for the student background characteristics (sex, Indigenous status, socio-economic background and language background) required for use by government and non-government schools and

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[2] ACARA's role in developing the Australian Curriculum and administering the National Assessment Program is outlined in Part 2.6.

systems in designing enrolment forms, collecting information from parents, maintaining student records and providing student information for National Assessment Program (NAP) assessments.

Significant progress was also made towards the collection and reporting of nationally consistent student attendance data for both NEA and KPM reporting. This was the culmination of several years of collaboration between ACARA, jurisdictions and the non-government school sectors. This work resulted in the publication of the *National Standards for Student Attendance Data Reporting* on the ACARA website in December 2012, following national agreement.

My School

ACARA is also responsible for the national data collection on individual schools housed on the *My School* website. *My School* reporting addresses Education Ministers' strategy to establish fair, public, comparable national reporting on individual school performance and the requirement under the NEA to report on performance of individual schools to support school evaluation, accountability, resource allocation and policy development.

Developed by ACARA and first launched in January 2010, the *My School* website introduced a new level of transparency and accountability to schooling in Australia by providing extensive information on approximately 9,500 schools. The website includes a profile of each school and data on enrolment, attendance, staff numbers and senior secondary outcomes as well as summary data on student performance in the National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) tests for Years 3, 5, 7 and 9. These data are provided, directly or indirectly, by jurisdictions, non-government school authorities and individual schools.

The *My School* website introduced the Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage (ICSEA), developed specifically for the purpose of identifying schools serving similar student populations. This enables students' results on NAPLAN tests to be understood in a fair and meaningful way, and allows schools seeking to improve their students' performance to learn from other schools with statistically similar populations.

An enhanced version of the website, *My School* 2.0, released in 2011, provided additional data on schools' recurrent income and capital expenditure and depicted students' gains in literacy and numeracy between NAPLAN tests.

The third version of *My School* was launched on 24 February 2012. The updated site provided:
- an additional year of information for each school, with four years of performance data now available
- richer information on students' literacy and numeracy achievement gains as they progress through school
- enhanced information about Vocational Education and Training (VET) in schools.

National Assessment Program reporting

As well as reporting NAPLAN results for each school on the *My School* website, ACARA is responsible for national reporting to the Australian public on the outcomes of the National Assessment Program. The *NAPLAN National Report 2012* is published, along with previous reports for 2008–2011, on the ACARA National Assessment Program website. The report provides analyses of NAPLAN results including breakdowns by state and territory, sex, language background, Indigenous status, geolocation and parental education and occupation. Further information about NAPLAN for parents, schools and students is also available on this website. This includes information on NAPLAN tests and on the individual student reports provided to the parents/carers of all students who participate in the NAPLAN tests.

The NAP – Science Literacy public report and the technical report for the NAP sample assessment in Science Literacy conducted in 2012 are also available on the reports page of the ACARA National Assessment Program website.

National Report on Schooling in Australia 2012

Part 3

Schools and schooling

Overview

Within Australia's federal system, constitutional responsibility for school education rests predominantly with the six state and two territory governments.

All states and territories[1] provide for 13 years of formal school education. Primary education, including a preparatory year, lasts for either seven or eight years and is followed by secondary education of six or five years respectively. Typically, schooling commences at age five, is compulsory from age six until age 17 (with provision for alternative study or work arrangements in the senior secondary years) and is completed at age 17 or 18.

The majority of schools, 71 per cent, are government schools, established and administered by state and territory governments through their education departments or authorities. The remaining 29 per cent are non-government schools, made up of 18 per cent Catholic schools and 11 per cent independent schools. Non-government schools are established and operated under conditions determined by state and territory governments through their registration authorities.

[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)

National Report on Schooling in Australia 2012

Schools and schooling

3.1   School structures

While there are some differences in school structures and age requirements for student enrolment in Australia between the states and territories, such differences have been substantially reduced in recent years. School structures and age requirements are summarised in Table 3.1.

In New South Wales, Victoria, Tasmania, the Northern Territory and the Australian Capital Territory, primary education consists of a preparatory year followed by Years 1–6. Secondary education consists of Years 7–12. In Queensland, South Australia and Western Australia, primary education consists of a preparatory year followed by Years 1–7 and secondary education consists of Years 8–12. The preparatory year has different names in the various jurisdictions.[1]

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

Prior to 2010, the minimum school leaving age in most jurisdictions was 15 or 16. However, in January 2010, the National Youth Participation Requirement, agreed by the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) in 2009, came into effect across all states and territories. This includes a mandatory requirement for all 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 the age of 17.

This requirement had already existed in Queensland, South Australia, Western Australia and Tasmania. From 2010, it also applied in New South Wales, Victoria, the Northern Territory and the Australian Capital Territory, effectively lengthening the period of compulsory education for young people in these jurisdictions. The National Youth Participation Requirement is part of the National Partnership on Youth Attainment and Transitions and is a major step in achieving national consistency in the structure of schooling. In 2012, the participation requirement came into full effect for senior secondary students across Australia, with the 2010 Year 10 cohort entering Year 12.

The move for Australian governments to raise the minimum school leaving year level/age (while accepting vocational training and employment as acceptable alternatives to senior secondary schooling) recognises the need for higher levels of education and skill in the modern globalised economy. It reflects the policy intent expressed in the *Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians* that to maximise their opportunities for healthy, productive and rewarding futures, Australia's young people should be encouraged not only to complete secondary education or equivalent, but also to proceed into further training or higher education.

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[1] These are listed in Table 3.1. The Australian Curriculum uses the term 'Foundation' for this year of schooling.

More information on the National Partnership on Youth Attainment and Transitions is provided in <u>Part 2.5: National initiatives and achievements – supporting senior years of schooling and youth transitions</u>.

Table 3.1 summarises school structures and requirements for school enrolment by jurisdiction.

Table 3.1   Primary and secondary school structures – minimum age of commencement for Year 1 and minimum school leaving age by state and territory, 2012

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

(a) From 2010 all NSW students must complete Year 10. 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.

(b) From 2010 all Victorian students are required to complete Year 10 and remain in some form of education, training or employment until the age of 17.

(c) From 2006 Queensland students are required to participate in 'learning or earning' for two years after completing compulsory schooling, or until they turn 17 or until they attain a Senior Secondary Certificate or a Certificate III (or higher) vocational qualification.

(d) From 2007 South Australian students who have turned 16 are required to remain at school or undertake an approved learning program until they turn 17 or gain a Senior Secondary Certificate or equivalent or a Certificate II (or higher) vocational qualification.

(e) From 2008 Western Australian students are required to remain at school or undertake an approved combination of training and employment until the end of the year in which they turn 17.

(f) From 2008 Tasmanian students are required to continue participating in education, training or full-time employment until they turn 17.

 (g) From January 2010, it is compulsory for all Northern Territory students to complete Year 10 and then participate in education, training or employment until they turn 17.

(h) From 2010 ACT students are required to complete Year 10 and then participate full time in education, training or employment until they complete Year 12 or equivalent, or reach age 17.

Sources: ABS, *Year Book Australia 2012;* States and Territories

Within the overall structure of primary and secondary education there is further scope for variation in the structure of individual schools. Both government and non-government 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. In some jurisdictions, separate Year 11 and 12 institutions may be known as colleges or senior secondary schools. Government and some non-government school authorities operate special schools for students with disabilities and other special needs, while in some jurisdictions a high proportion of students with special needs are integrated into mainstream schools. (See Part 10: Glossary for definition of special schools.)

Children may be exempted from attending a school if they live too far away from an appropriate institution. These children receive tuition through various means, including distance education, School of the Air, and use of computer, facsimile and satellite technologies. Boarding facilities are available at some non-government schools, mainly in cities and regional centres. A small number of government schools, in particular those catering for groups such as Indigenous students, have residential hostels located close by. Children may be home-schooled if they have met the criteria set down by the relevant state or territory education authority. They must be enrolled as a student at a day school and be available when required for assessment against the regular school curriculum *(Year Book Australia,* 2012).

Each state and territory also has a preschool sector that is separate from primary and secondary schooling, although preschools are sometimes attached to or accommodated in primary schools. A preschool program is a structured, play-based learning program, usually for children in the year or two before commencing full-time school. In general, data on preschools and on preschool education within schools are excluded from this report. Data on secondary education provided by adult learning institutions such as colleges of technical and further education (TAFE) are also excluded from this report, except for VET in Schools programs undertaken by secondary school students.

National Report on Schooling in Australia 2012

Schools and schooling

3.2   School numbers

In 2012 there were 9,427 schools in Australia.[1] This total included primary, secondary, combined (primary and secondary) and special schools, across government (71 per cent) and non-government (29 per cent) sectors. (See Part 10: Glossary for definitions of school levels and sectors.)

Of the total number of schools, 71 per cent were administered by state and territory governments, 18 per cent identified as having Catholic affiliation and 11 per cent were classified as independent. Most independent schools provide a religious-based education or promote a particular educational philosophy.

Seventy-seven per cent of primary schools, 74 per cent of secondary schools and 78 per cent of schools for students with special needs were in the government sector. The Catholic sector accounted for 20 per cent of primary schools and 22 per cent of secondary schools while half of all combined schools were in the independent sector.

The number and proportion of schools by sector and school category in 2012 is shown in Table 3.2.

Table 3.2	Number and proportion of schools by sector and school category, Australia, 2012							
School sector								
School category	**Government**		**Catholic**		**Independent**		**Total**	
	No.	**%**	**No.**	**%**	**No.**	**%**	**No.**	**%**
Primary	4,827	51.2	1,228	13.0	235	2.5	6,290	66.7
Secondary	1,029	10.9	305	3.2	58	0.6	1,392	14.8
Combined	511	5.4	153	1.6	657	7.0	1,321	14.0
Special	330	3.5	27	0.3	67	0.7	424	4.5
Total	6,697	71.0	1,713	18.2	1,017	10.8	9,427	100.0

Note: Primary education comprises a pre-Year 1 grade followed by Years 1–6 in NSW, Vic., Tas., NT and ACT. In Qld., SA and WA, primary education comprises a pre-Year 1 grade followed by Years 1–7.

Source: ABS, Cat. No. 4221.0*, Schools, Australia,* 2012

See also Additional Statistics, Table 1

The proportion of schools in each sector in 2012 is shown in Figure 3.1.

[1] As at the National Schools Statistics Collection (NSSC) census, August 2012

Figure 3.1: Proportion of schools by sector, Australia, 2012
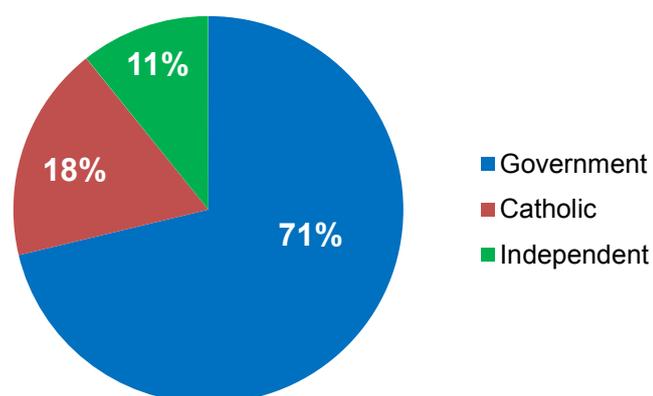
Source: ABS, Cat. No. 4221.0*, Schools, Australia,* 2012

For the number of schools by sector by state and territory 2012 see Part 9: Additional Statistics Table 1.

The total number of schools fell by 1.4 per cent over the period 2008–12. This consisted of falls of 2.0 per cent in the number of government schools and 0.7 per cent in the number of independent schools, which were partially offset by a rise of 0.5 per cent in the number of Catholic schools. This is reflected in a slight change in the proportions of schools in the three sectors within this period shown in Table 3.3.

Table 3.3	Number and proportion of schools by sector, Australia, 2008–12							
School sector								
	Government		**Catholic**		**Independent**		**Total**	
Year	**No.**	**%**	**No.**	**%**	**No.**	**%**	**No.**	**%**
2008	6,833	71.5	1,705	17.8	1,024	10.7	9,562	100.0
2009	6,802	71.4	1,705	17.9	1,022	10.7	9,529	100.0
2010	6,743	71.2	1,708	18.0	1,017	10.7	9,468	100.0
2011	6,705	71.1	1,710	18.1	1,020	10.8	9,435	100.0
2012	6,697	71.0	1,713	18.2	1,017	10.8	9,427	100.0

Source: ABS Cat. No. 4221.0*, Schools, Australia,* 2012

See also Additional Statistics Table 1

Overall, the number of schools, in total and within each sector, has remained stable over recent years. Some caution is required when interpreting time series for numbers of schools, as the number of schools from year to year may vary because of structural changes in individual schools or groups of schools. For example: several schools at the same level of education may be amalgamated; primary schools and secondary schools may merge to create combined schools; secondary schools may split to create junior and senior secondary

schools. Each of these scenarios may affect the number of schools reported from year to year.

Figure 3.2 shows the number of schools in each sector over the period 2008–12.

Figure 3.2 Number of schools by sector, Australia, 2008–12
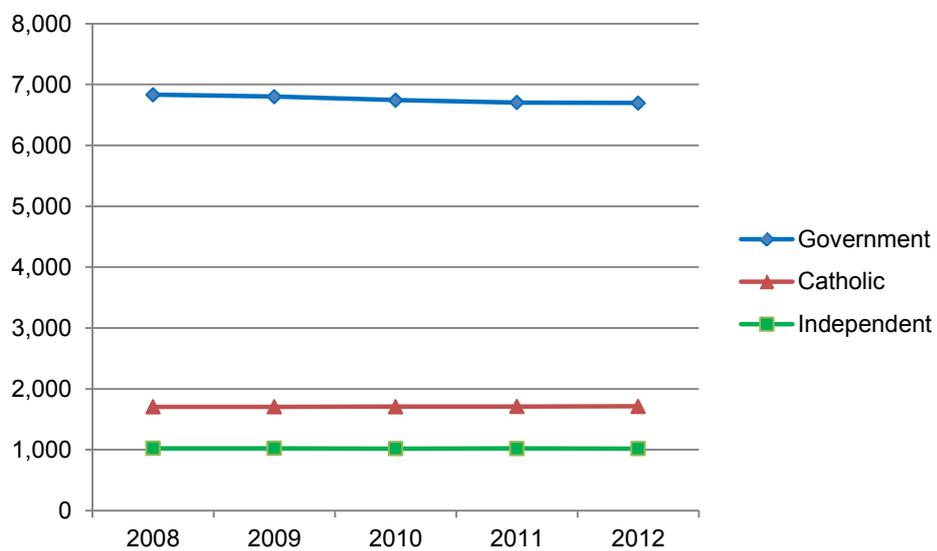
Source: ABS, Cat. No. 4221.0, *Schools, Australia,* 2012

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Schools and schooling

3.3   Staff

Staff numbers

At the time of the schools census in August 2012, there were 258,986 full-time equivalent (FTE)[1] teaching staff across primary and secondary schooling in Australia. The number of FTE teaching staff by school sector, school level and sex is shown in Table 3.4.

Table 3.4   Full-time equivalent (FTE) of teaching staff by school sector, school level and sex, Australia, 2012

Sector	Primary			Secondary			Total		
	Males	Females	Persons	Males	Females	Persons	Males	Females	Persons
Government	17,796	76,107	93,903	29,764	43,485	73,249	47,560	119,592	167,152
Catholic	4,078	19,135	23,212	10,941	15,274	26,215	15,018	34,409	49,427
Independent	3,863	12,812	16,675	11,434	14,298	25,732	15,296	27,110	42,407
Total non-government	7,940	31,947	39,887	22,375	29,572	51,947	30,315	61,519	91,834
All schools	25,736	108,054	133,790	52,138	73,058	125,196	77,874	181,111	258,986

Notes:
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,* 2012

See also Part 9: Additional Statistics Table 2 and Table 3

Australia's teaching workforce was predominantly female, with women accounting for 70 per cent of FTE teachers and men making up 30 per cent. This was most pronounced at the primary level where FTE teaching staff was made up of 81 per cent females and only 19 per cent males. In secondary schooling, the balance between male and female teachers was closer, but females still accounted for 58 per cent of the total.

Across Australia, 65 per cent of FTE teachers were employed by the government school sector, 19 per cent by the Catholic school sector and 16 per cent by the independent sector.

The numbers of FTE teaching staff by school sector from 2008 to 2012 are shown in Table 3.5. Between 2008 and 2012 the total number of FTE teaching staff grew by 11,879 or 4.8 per cent. The rise in teaching staff numbers was concentrated in non-government schools with 6,078 extra teachers (a rise of 7.1 per cent) compared to 5,801 (an increase of 3.6 per cent) in government schools.

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[1] 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 10: Glossary for definitions of FTE and teaching staff.)

Table 3.5   Full-time equivalent (FTE) of teaching staff by school sector, Australia, 2008–12

Sector	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Government	161,351	162,566	163,697	165,272	167,152
Catholic	46,390	46,807	47,391	48,393	49,427
Independent	39,366	39,823	40,333	41,445	42,407
Total non-government	85,756	86,630	87,724	89,838	91,834
All schools	247,107	249,196	251,421	255,110	258,986

Source: ABS, Cat. No. 4221.0*, Schools, Australia,* 2012

See also Part 9: Additional Statistics Table 3

Student–teacher ratios

The student–teacher ratio is calculated as the number of full-time equivalent (FTE) students per FTE teaching staff. A lower student–teacher ratio means there is a smaller number of students per teacher. However, while lower student–teacher ratios would tend to allow smaller class sizes, ratios are not, by themselves, reliable indicators of class size. Average student–teacher ratios do not take into account the different requirements of different age groups/school years, of special needs students or of different subjects, especially in secondary schools. Nor do they reflect other administrative or specialist duties undertaken by teaching staff. These factors help to explain the consistently higher average student–teacher ratios in primary compared to secondary schooling.

Table 3.6 summarises average student–teacher ratios in Australia in 2012 across the three school sectors.

Table 3.6   Full-time equivalent (FTE) student–teacher ratios, by sector and school level, Australia, 2012

Sector	Primary	Secondary	All schools
Government	15.2	12.3	13.9
Catholic	17.4	12.7	14.9
Independent	14.6	10.3	12.0
Total non-government	16.2	11.5	13.6
All schools	15.5	12.0	13.8

Source: ABS, Cat. No. 4221.0*, Schools, Australia,* 2012

See also Part 9: Additional Statistics Table 4

For all Australian schools, the average FTE student–teacher ratio in 2012 was 13.8, with little overall difference between government schools (13.9) and non-government schools (13.6). However, within the non-government sector, student–teacher ratios were noticeably lower in independent schools.

Across all primary schools in 2012 the average FTE student–teacher ratio was 15.5 compared to 12.0 for secondary schools, and there were higher ratios for primary than

secondary schools in all three sectors. Overall, the student–teacher ratio was lower in government primary schools than non-government primary schools but higher in government than non-government secondary schools.

As shown in Table 3.7, the average student–teacher ratio across all schools decreased marginally from 13.9 students per teacher in 2008 to 13.8 students per teacher in 2012. Ratios fell or remained constant in all sectors and levels of schooling over this period.

Table 3.7 **Full-time equivalent (FTE) student–teacher ratios, by sector and level of education, Australia, 2008–12**

School sector and level	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Government primary	15.6	15.5	15.4	15.3	15.2
Government secondary	12.3	12.3	12.3	12.2	12.3
Catholic primary	17.6	17.6	17.6	17.5	17.4
Catholic secondary	12.8	12.8	12.8	12.8	12.7
Independent primary	14.7	14.8	14.9	14.8	14.6
Independent secondary	10.5	10.6	10.5	10.4	10.3
All schools	13.9	13.9	13.9	13.8	13.8

Source: ABS, Cat. No. 4221.0*, Schools, Australia,* 2012

See also Part 9: Additional Statistics Table 4

International comparisons

On average, in Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) member countries in 2011 (the latest year available), there were 15.4 students for every teacher in primary schools and 13.6 students per teacher at the secondary level. Most, but not all, OECD countries conformed to the pattern of higher student–teacher ratios for primary than for secondary schooling. Australia's average student–teacher ratio in 2011 of 15.6 for primary was slightly higher than the OECD average. Australia's average student–teacher ratio of 12.0 for secondary was lower than the OECD average. Ratios for Australia were lower than the United Kingdom (19.9 and 16.3), Japan (18.1 and 13.1) and Germany (16.3 and 14.0) but higher than ratios for Spain (13.2 and 10.1) and Norway (10.4 and 9.8).[2] A comparison of student–teacher ratios in OECD countries and other Group of 20 nations for 2011 is included as Table 5 in Part 9: Additional Statistics.

[2] Source: OECD, *Education at a Glance 2013: OECD Indicators*, Table D2.2 based on UNESCO Institute for Statistics (World Education Indicators Programme)

National Report on Schooling in Australia 2012

Part 4

Student participation

Overview

Goal 1 of the *Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians* is that Australian schooling promotes equity and excellence. The first condition set down for achieving this goal is that 'all Australian governments and all school sectors must provide all students with access to high-quality schooling that is free from discrimination…'[1]

The extent to which young people access and participate in schooling is thus one component of measuring progress towards this goal.

Participation in schooling is also central to the first agreed outcome of the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) National Education Agreement (NEA) that all children are engaged in and benefiting from schooling.

Two measures of participation in schooling specified as key performance measures for schooling in the *Measurement Framework for Schooling in Australia 2012* are:

- enrolment: the number and proportion of children enrolled in school
- attendance: the rate at which children attend school.

Attendance at school is also a performance indicator within the reporting framework of the NEA, and the number of students enrolled in school, while no longer a performance indicator[2], remains as a stated output.[3]

This section provides data and commentary on enrolment and attendance in Australian schools in 2012, including these performance measures. It also includes data and commentary on the apparent progression and retention of students through secondary school.

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[1] Melbourne Declaration, p. 7
[2] Enrolment in school was deleted as a performance indicator from the revised NEA of July 2012.
[3] National Education Agreement, July 2012, p. 5

National Report on Schooling in Australia 2012

Student participation

4.1   Enrolment

Enrolment rates

The proportion of children who are enrolled in school is a measure of the reach and coverage of Australian schooling and of the extent to which all students have access to school education. It is specified as a key performance measure (KPM) in the *Measurement Framework for Schooling in Australia 2012*.

This KPM, specified as the number of students aged 6 to 15 years enrolled in school, expressed as a proportion of the 6 to 15-year-old population, has been retained in the Measurement Framework for 2012 but is no longer a performance indicator within the performance framework of the National Education Agreement (NEA).[1]

KPM 1(a) for the period 2008–12 is reported in Table 4.1.

Key Performance Measure 1(a)
Proportion of children aged 6 to 15 years who are enrolled in school

Table 4.1   Number and proportion of children aged 6–15 years enrolled in school, 2008–12

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
School enrolments, Australia (6–15 years)(a)	2,739,205	2,748,736	2,755,893	2,768,177	2,801,751
Population, Australia (6–15 years) (b)(c)	2,736,802	2,746,766	2,755,102	2,769,311	2,802,367
Proportion of 6–15-year-olds enrolled in school, Australia (%)(d)	100.09	100.07	100.03	99.96	99.98

(a) School data include students who cross state and territory boundaries to attend school. Includes children enrolled full time or part time. Jervis Bay enrolments and Norfolk Island enrolments are included. 'Other territory' enrolments are excluded.

(b) Estimates for the total population are sourced from ABS, Cat. No. 3101.0, *Australian Demographic Statistics*, *30 June 2013.* The Australia total includes 'other territories' including Jervis Bay and Norfolk Island.

(c) Estimates for the total population of 6–15-year-olds for 2008, 2009, 2010 and 2011 have been rebased to the 2011 Census of Population and Housing. As such, these estimates and the proportions of 6–15-year-olds enrolled in schools for these calendar years differ from those published in previous editions of *the National Report on Schooling in Australia.*

(d) Proportions are calculated using a numerator from the National Schools Statistics Collection and a denominator from Estimated Resident Population data. 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.

Sources: ABS, Cat. No. 4221.0, *Schools, Australia, 2012;* ABS, Cat. No. 3101.0, *Australian Demographic Statistics*, *Australian States and Territories*, June 2013

See also Part 9: Additional Statistics Table 9

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[1] Enrolment in school was removed as a performance indicator from the performance framework of the revised NEA of July 2012.

The rate of enrolment in schooling of 6–15-year-olds approximates 100 per cent in each of the five years (2008–12) for which this measure is reported, reflecting the compulsory nature of schooling for this age group.

However, it is acknowledged that the KPM is an approximation, not an exact measure, of the rate of participation in schooling by students of compulsory school age/year level.

First, KPM 1(a) excludes some students for whom schooling is now compulsory. Participation in school education is compulsory for Australian children in all states and territories at least from the age of six until they complete Year 10. Participation full time in some form of education, training or employment, but not necessarily schooling, is mandatory until the age of 17.[2] The age range specified in KPM 1(a), of 6–15 inclusive (as of 1 July in the reporting year), captures nearly all students of compulsory school age/year level. However, it excludes those students who were 16 and over by midway through the calendar year but had not yet completed Year 10.[3]

Secondly, the numerator and denominator for KPM 1(a) are drawn from different types of data source. The count of 6–15-year-old school students that forms the numerator of the KPM is administrative data drawn from the annual schools census. The denominator for the 6–15-year-old population is drawn from the Estimated Residential Population (ERP) for this group, which is 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. As a result, and because of data comparability issues between the two data sets, proportions may exceed 100 per cent.

As noted in footnote (c) of Table 4.1, ERP data for 2008, 2009, 2010 and 2011 have been rebased from the 2006 Census of Population and Housing to the 2011 Census of Population and Housing. The estimates for the 6–15-year-old population have been adjusted downwards for each of these years, raising the KPM for these years by 1.4, 1.3, 1.1 and 0.8 percentage points respectively from the figures reported in the *National Report on Schooling in Australia 2011*. As a result, the KPM proportions for 2008, 2009 and 2010 reported in 2012 slightly exceed 100 per cent.

Part 9: Additional Statistics Table 9 reports KPM 1(a) for 2012 by state and territory.

Enrolments by school level and sector

Students in the 6–15 years age group made up 78 per cent of total enrolments in schools. The remaining 22 per cent (approximately 788 thousand students) were either under six or 16 and over at 1 July 2012, the age reference date for the annual schools census of August 2012.

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[2] This has applied since the implementation of the National Youth Participation Requirement across all states and territories in 2010. (See Table 3.1: Primary and secondary school structures, minimum age of commencement for Year 1 and minimum school leaving age by state and territory, 2012 for a summary of enrolment requirements in each jurisdiction.)

[3] The age at which students typically complete Year 10 varies between jurisdictions because of historical differences in requirements for school commencement, but for most students it is 15 or 16. As at 1 July 2012 (the age reference date for the annual schools census), the average age of Year 10 students ranged from 14.7 years (Qld) to 15.5 years (Tas.), with the Australian average at 15.1 years. In 2012, 22.6 per cent of the Year 10 cohort and 0.6 per cent of the Year 9 cohort were 16 or over at 1 July.

In total, nearly 3.6 million individual students were enrolled in Australian schools in 2012. Of these, approximately 2.1 million (58 per cent) were primary school students and approximately 1.5 million (42 per cent) were secondary school students. This difference is mainly due to schooling structures, in which primary schooling comprises more year groups/cohorts than secondary schooling. The number of students by school level and sector for 2012 are summarised in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2   Number and proportion of students (full-time plus part-time) enrolled in schools by school level and sector, Australia, 2012

School level	Sector							
	Government		Catholic		Independent		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Primary	1,435,587	68.9	403,055	19.3	244,477	11.7	2,083,119	58.0
Junior secondary	609,054	60.1	228,149	22.5	175,784	17.4	1,012,987	28.2
Senior secondary	297,738	60.3	105,391	21.3	90,751	18.4	493,880	13.8
Total secondary	906,792	60.2	333,540	22.1	266,535	17.7	1,506,867	42.0
Total	2,342,379	65.2	736,595	20.5	511,012	14.2	3,589,986	100.0

Notes:

Primary education comprises a pre-Year 1 grade followed by Years 1–6 in NSW, Vic., Tas., NT and ACT. In Qld., SA and WA, 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 grade or school level where identified. Where the grade 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 Part 10: Glossary for definition of special schools.

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

Source: ABS, Cat. No. 4221.0, *Schools, Australia,* 2012

See also Part 9: Additional Statistics Table 10

Part 9: Additional Statistics Table 10 reports the number of students in 2012 by full-time and part-time status and by state and territory, as well as by school level and sector.

As shown in Table 4.2 and Figure 4.1, almost two-thirds (65.2 per cent) of Australian school students in 2012 were enrolled in government schools, approximately one-fifth (20.5 per cent) of students were enrolled in Catholic schools and the remainder (14.2 per cent) attended independent schools.

Figure 4.1   Proportion of students (full-time plus part-time) enrolled in schools by sector, Australia, 2012 (%)
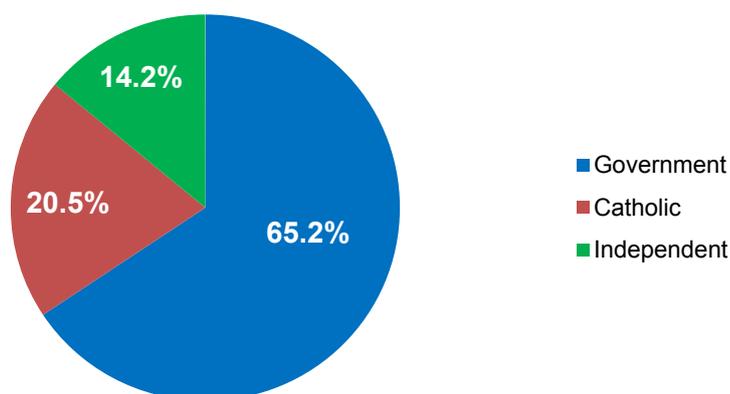
Note: Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding.

Source: ABS, Cat. No. 4221.0*, Schools, Australia,* 2012

However, as shown in Table 4.2, the proportions of students enrolled in each sector differed between levels of education. The proportion of primary students enrolled in government schools (68.9 per cent) was higher than the proportion of junior secondary students (60.1 per cent). The proportion of primary students enrolled in non-government schools (31.1 per cent) was lower than the proportion of junior secondary students (39.9 per cent).

This implies a movement of students from the government to the non-government sectors, particularly between primary and secondary schooling. However, as the movement of individual students between sectors and over time is currently not tracked, it is not clear to what extent this is the net effect of larger student movements among the three sectors. The enrolment of overseas students in independent secondary schools may also contribute to this difference.

The higher proportion of senior secondary students in the independent sector, shown in Table 4.2, is consistent with higher Year 10 to Year 12 apparent retention rates for this sector. Apparent progression rates and apparent retention rates are discussed in Part 4.2: Progression and retention.

As shown in Figure 4.2, more government and Catholic school students were enrolled in primary years than in secondary years, while most independent school students were secondary students.

Figure 4.2   Number of students (full-time plus part-time) enrolled by school level and sector, Australia, 2012
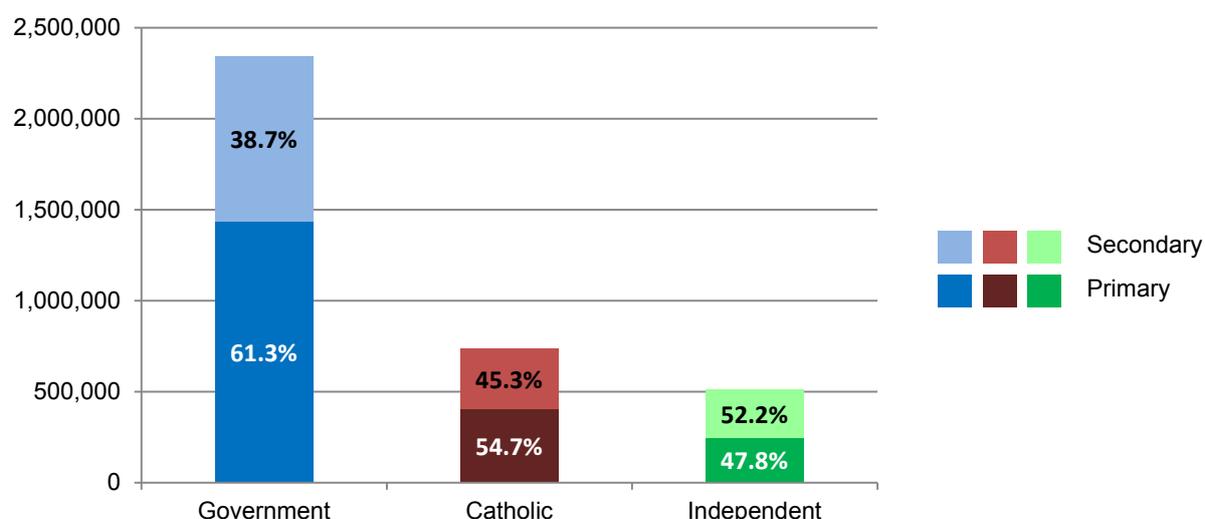
Source: ABS, Cat. No. 4221.0*, Schools, Australia,* 2012

The numbers of students enrolled in all three sectors have risen over the last four years, but with proportionately greater growth in the non-government sectors. Total enrolments in government schools rose by 57,578, in Catholic schools by 39,241 and in independent schools by 36,117. However, the proportion of students enrolled in government schools has fallen by 0.9 percentage points over this period, whereas the proportion of students in independent schools has risen by 0.5 percentage points. The proportion of students enrolled in Catholic schools has risen by 0.3 percentage points. Table 4.3 and Figure 4.3 summarise these data.

Table 4.3   Number and proportion of students enrolled (full-time plus part-time) by school sector, Australia, 2008–12

|	Sector							
	Government		Catholic		Independent		Total	
Year	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
2008	2,284,801	66.1	697,354	20.2	474,895	13.7	3,457,050	100.0
2009	2,294,638	65.8	704,837	20.2	485,329	13.9	3,484,804	100.0
2010	2,304,259	65.6	713,911	20.3	492,705	14.0	3,510,875	100.0
2011	2,315,253	65.4	724,594	20.5	501,962	14.2	3,541,809	100.0
2012	2,342,379	65.2	736,595	20.5	511,012	14.2	3,589,986	100.0

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

Data are drawn from the most recent ABS series and may differ from those in previous publications.

Source: ABS, Cat. No. 4221.0*, Schools, Australia,* 2012

See also Part 9: Additional Statistics Table 10

Figure 4.3   Number of students enrolled (full-time plus part-time) by school sector, Australia, 2008–12
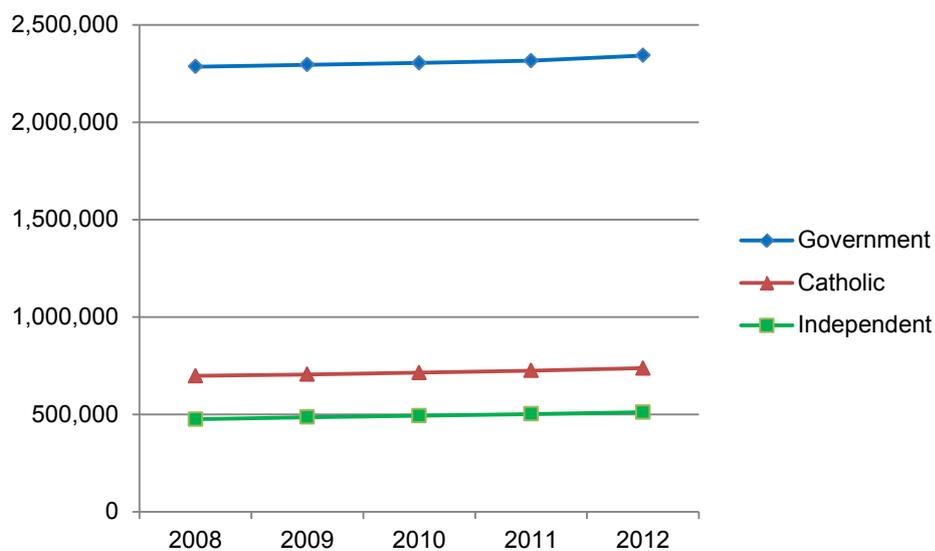
Source: ABS, Cat. No. 4221.0, *Schools, Australia,* 2012

Data on full-time equivalent (FTE) enrolments by state and territory, by school sector and by level of education, are included in Part 9: Additional Statistics Table 12 and Table 13.

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Student participation

4.2   Progression and retention

Increased student progression and retention to Year 10 and Year 12 (or approved alternative) are in line with the policy intent of Australian governments in establishing the National Youth Participation Requirement.[1]

Apparent grade progression rates estimate the progression of students from one school grade/year level to the next. An apparent progression rate is calculated as the number of full-time students in a designated grade/year level as a percentage of the number enrolled in the grade/year level below in the previous calendar year.

Apparent retention rates estimate the progression of students through school over several calendar years and several grades/year levels, from the beginning to the end of a stage/level of schooling; for example, retention from Year 7/8 to Year 10, or across stages; for example, from Year 10 to Year 12. An apparent retention rate is calculated as the number of full-time students in a designated grade/year level as a percentage of their respective cohort group in a base year.

It is important to note that progression and retention rates are 'apparent' only. They are based on aggregate enrolment data and do not record the progression of individual students. As such, they do not take into account that some students may repeat a grade or be promoted (moving between cohorts) or that new students may join a cohort through immigration. Apparent retention rates do not take account of changes in the cohort that may have occurred in the years between the base year and the designated reporting year.

When apparent progression and retention rates are disaggregated, for example by state and territory or by school sector, they are less meaningful, as they do not take into account movements of students between jurisdictions or sectors.

National apparent progression rates (but not apparent retention rates) for Australia include a weighting for the proportion of students in each state/territory and are adjusted to factor in changes in the population.[2]

Apparent progression rates reported in *Schools, Australia* 2012 have been rebased from the 2006 Census of Population and Housing to the 2011 Census of Population and Housing. However, data have been back-cast only to 2010, so a break in the series occurs between 2009 and 2010. For this reason, Table 4.4 includes two sets of data series describing national apparent progression rates from Year 9 to Year 10, from Year 10 to Year 11 and from Year 11 to Year 12 for the period 2008–12.

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[1] 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.
[2] For more information, see ABS, Cat. No. 4221.0, *Schools, Australia,* 2012, Explanatory Notes; ABS, Cat. No. 4221.0, *Alternative Measures of Engagement in Secondary Education, 2009*

Table 4.4 Apparent progression rates, Year 9 to Year 10, Year 10 to Year 11 and Year 11 to Year 12, Australia, 2008–12 (%)

Australia	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Year 9 to 10 (2006 based ERP)[a]	97.1	96.9	98.1	98.7	
Year 9 to 10 (2011 based ERP)[b]			98.1	98.1	97.9
Year 10 to 11 (2006 based ERP)[a]	86.6	87.9	89.3	90.0	
Year 10 to 11 (2011 based ERP)[b]			89.4	89.1	90.2
Year 11 to 12 (2006 based ERP)[a]	82.6	83.6	84.3	84.6	
Year 11 to 12 (2011 based ERP)[b]			82.3	82.0	82.5

(a) Rates for years 2008–11 are calculated using estimated resident population (ERP) data based on the 2006 Census of Population and Housing.

(b) Rates for 2010 onwards are calculated using ERP data based on the 2011 Census of Population and Housing.

Sources: ABS, Cat. No. 4221.0*, Schools, Australia,* 2011*,* 2012

The series noted as (a), 2008–11, replicate the data which were shown graphically in the *National Report on Schooling in Australia 2011* and are calculated using estimated resident population (ERP) data based on the 2006 Census of Population and Housing. These data are illustrated in Figure 4.4a.

Figure 4.4a Apparent progression rates, Year 9 to Year 10, Year 10 to Year 11 and Year 11 to Year 12, Australia, 2008–11
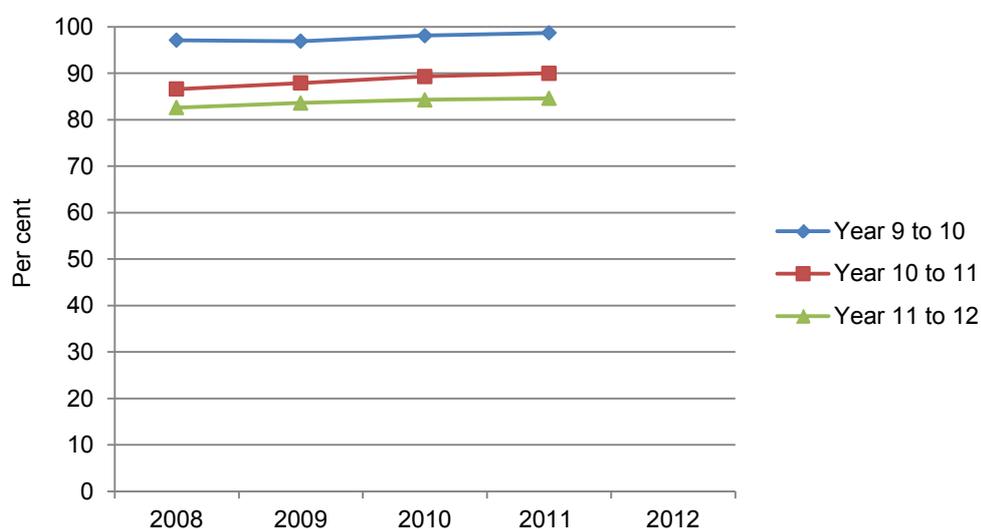

Source: ABS, Cat. No. 4221.0*, Schools, Australia,* 2011

As noted in the 2011 report, these series record upward movements in apparent progression rates from Year 9 to Year 10 and from Year 10 to Year 11 that coincided with the implementation of strengthened participation requirements for 15 and 16-year-olds, including through the National Youth Participation Requirement in 2010 and 2011.

The apparent progression rate (2006 base) from Year 9 to Year 10 rose by 1.7 percentage points from 97.0 per cent in 2007 to 98.7 per cent in 2011, when the requirement for compulsory completion of Year 10 took full effect in all jurisdictions. Apparent progression from Year 10 to Year 11 rose by 3.0 percentage points from 87 per cent to 90 per cent over the same period, although the potential impact of the post-Year 10 participation requirement on Year 11 enrolments was not yet fully felt in all jurisdictions in 2011.[3]

Figure 4.4b Apparent progression rates, Year 9 to Year 10, Year 10 to Year 11 and Year 11 to Year 12, Australia, 2010–12
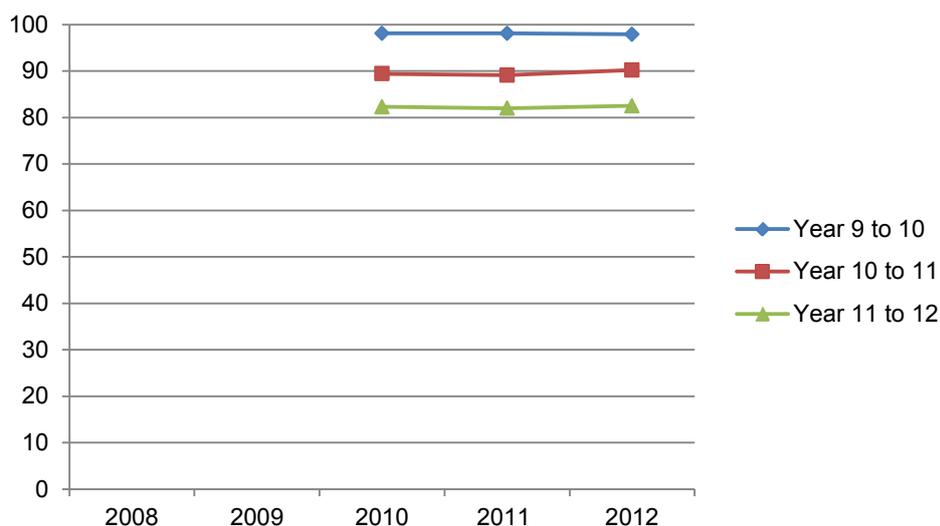
Source: ABS, Cat. No. 4221.0*, Schools, Australia,* 2012

Figure 4.4b shows apparent progression rates 2010–12 rebased for the 2011 Census of Population and Housing, noted in Table 4.4 as series (b). The main impact (between 2009 and 2010) on Year 9 to Year 10 progression of a rise in the effective school leaving age in 2010 is not observable from these data, but a flow-through effect to 2012 may be a factor in increased progression from Year 10 to Year 11 and from Year 11 to Year 12 over the period 2010–12.

Data on apparent progression rates in each state and territory are available in the ABS publication *Schools, Australia* (Table 65a).

The effects of strengthened participation requirements for older school students are also observable in rising retention rates over the last five years, especially for the government school sector.

Table 4.5 and Figure 4.5 illustrate national apparent retention rates by school sector from the first year of secondary school (Year 7 or Year 8 depending on jurisdiction) to Year 10 over the period 2008–12. (Detail from Figure 4.5 is also shown below the main graph.)

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[3] The effect on Year 11 and 12 enrolments will also depend on the proportion of students who pursue approved alternative pathways to senior schooling following Year 10.

Table 4.5   Apparent retention rates, Year 7/8 to Year 10 by sector, Australia, 2008–12 (%)

Australia	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Government	98.6	99.6	101.3	102.1	103.1
Catholic	97.6	96.9	97.6	97.3	97.2
Independent	104.8	104.1	103.1	102.6	100.6
All students	99.4	99.8	100.8	101.1	101.3

Source: ABS, Cat. No. 4221.0*, Schools, Australia,* 2012

Figure 4.5   Apparent retention rates, Year 7/8 to Year 10 by sector, Australia, 2008–12
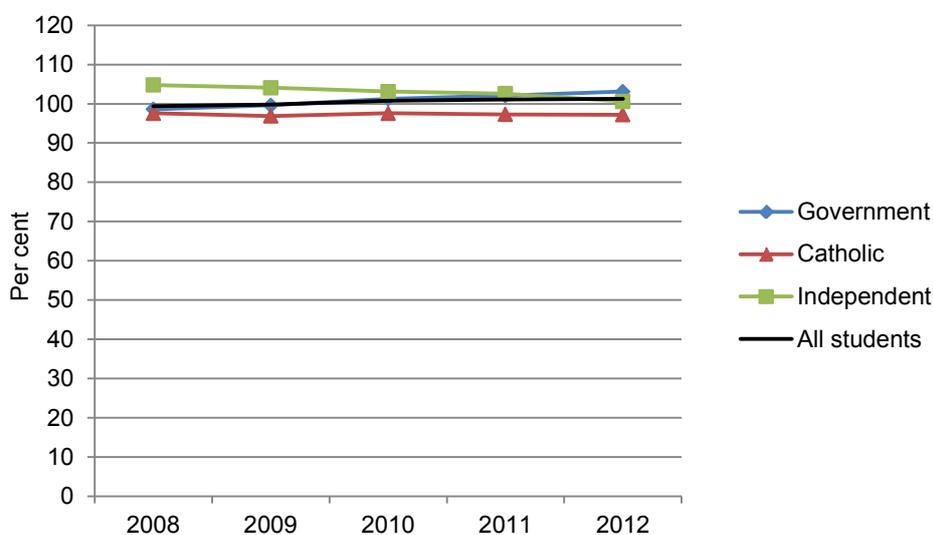
Source: ABS, Cat. No. 4221.0*, Schools, Australia,* 2012

Figure 4.5 (Detail)   Data are identical to above – the vertical axis has been truncated for enhanced visibility
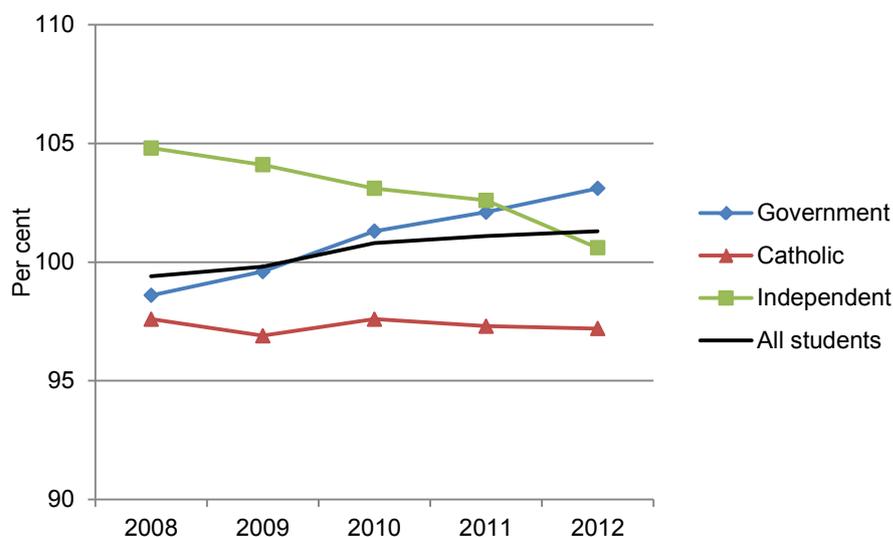
During this period, the apparent retention rate from Year 7/8 to Year 10 for all students rose by 1.9 percentage points from 99.4 per cent to 101.3 per cent. (Percentages exceeding 100 per cent for national apparent retention rates are possible because of net immigration to Australia of secondary students.) This resulted from a rise in the apparent retention rate in the government school sector by 4.5 percentage points from 98.6 per cent to 103.1 per cent which coincided with the strengthened participation requirements making Year 10 compulsory in the two most populous states, New South Wales and Victoria. Over the same period, Year 7/8 to 10 apparent retention rates for the Catholic sector fell slightly to 97.2 per cent while that for the independent sector was reduced from 104.8 per cent to 100.6 per cent. (Percentages exceeding 100 per cent for national apparent retention rates by sector are possible because of net immigration to Australia and movements of students between sectors.) A fall, since 2008, in the number of overseas students enrolled in independent schools[4] may have contributed to the decline in the apparent Year 7/8 to 10 retention rate in that sector.

As noted above, comparisons between sectors are inconclusive, as sector-specific apparent retention rates can mask a variety of student movements between sectors. However, the increase in the Australian apparent Year 7/8 to 10 retention rate to more than 100 per cent is a strong indicator of success for the policy objective of universal participation in Year 10.

Table 4.6 and Figure 4.6 describe national apparent retention rates from the first year of secondary school (Year 7 or Year 8 depending on jurisdiction) to Year 12 over the period 2008–12.

Table 4.6   **Apparent retention rates, Year 7/8 to Year 12 by sector, Australia, 2008–12 (%)**

Australia	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Government	68.3	70.1	73.1	74.7	75.8
Catholic	78.4	78.6	79.8	81.3	82.1
Independent	94.0	94.9	94.2	93.7	91.8
All students	74.6	76.0	78.0	79.3	79.9

Source: ABS, Cat. No. 4221.0*, Schools, Australia,* 2012

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[4] Reported by the Independent Schools Council of Australia

Figure 4.6 Apparent retention rates, Year 7/8 to Year 12 by sector, Australia, 2008–12
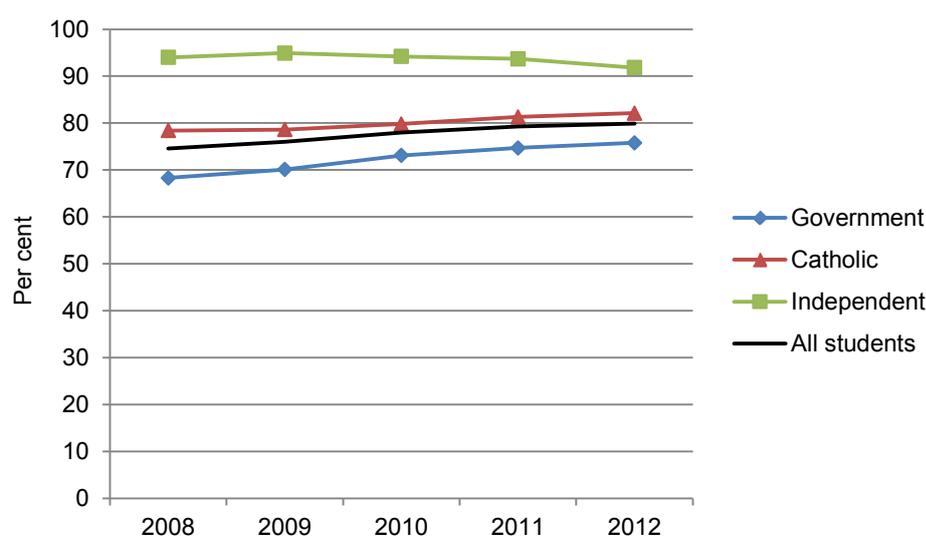
Source: ABS, Cat. No. 4221.0*, Schools, Australia,* 2012

During this period there was a marked increase in the overall Year 7/8 to Year 12 apparent retention rate, which rose by 5.3 percentage points, from 74.6 per cent to 79.9 per cent, and a convergence of rates for the three sectors. The greatest rise of 7.5 percentage points to 75.8 per cent was for the government sector, narrowing the gap in apparent retention to Year 12 between government and non-government schools, with apparent retention for Catholic schools up 3.7 percentage points to 82.1 per cent. Independent schools continued to record the highest apparent Year 7/8 to Year 12 retention rate of 91.8 per cent but with a fall of 2.2 percentage points over the period. The convergence of these rates between sectors suggests both a rise in the proportion of government school students continuing to Year 12 and a reduction in students transferring from government to non-government schools for Years 11 and 12. A fall in the enrolments of overseas students in Years 11 and 12 in the independent sector may have also contributed to the fall in apparent Year 7/8 to 12 retention rates for this sector. However, as noted above, sector-specific retention rates should be interpreted with caution.

Table 4.7 and Figure 4.7 show national apparent retention rates from Year 10 to Year 12 by sector over the period 2008–12.

Table 4.7   Apparent retention rates, Year 10 to Year 12 by sector, Australia, 2008–12 (%)

Australia	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Government	70.1	71.4	74.1	75.0	74.8
Catholic	80.3	80.5	81.8	83.9	84.2
Independent	90.2	91.0	89.8	90.1	89.0
All students	75.6	76.7	78.5	79.5	79.3

Source: ABS, Cat. No. 4221.0*, Schools, Australia,* 2012

Figure 4.7   Apparent retention rates, Year 10 to Year 12 by sector, Australia, 2008–12
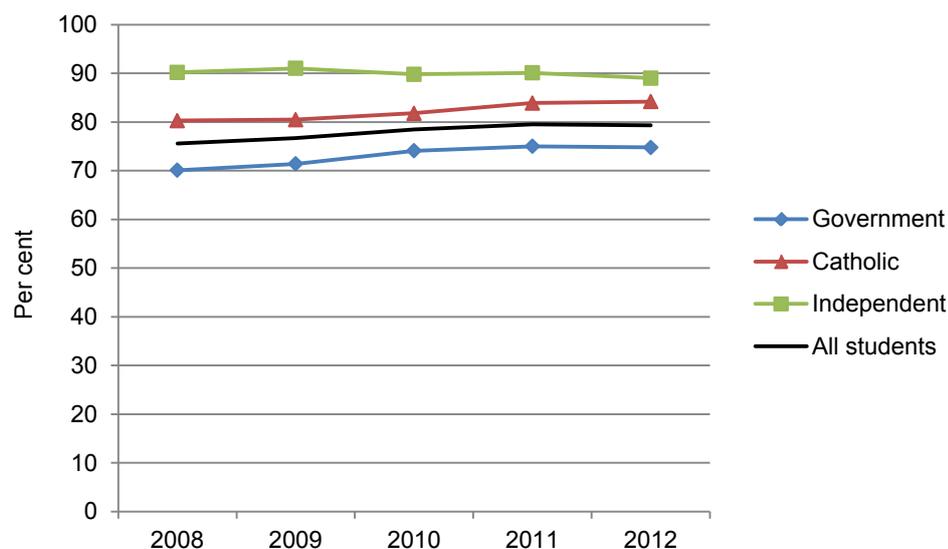
Source: ABS, Cat. No. 4221.0*, Schools, Australia,* 2012

Apparent retention rates from Year 10 to Year 12 rose for the government and Catholic sectors in the period 2008–12. The overall apparent retention rate rose 3.7 percentage points to 79.3 per cent in 2012 and the apparent rate for government schools rose 4.7 percentage points to 74.8 per cent. The gap between apparent retention from Year 10 to Year 12 for government and independent schools narrowed from 20.1 percentage points in 2008 to 14.2 percentage points in 2012. These data are also subject to the caveat that they do not take into account movement of students between sectors, but the overall increase in retention to Year 12 is in line with the policy intention of governments in strengthening requirements for 15–17-year-olds to participate in education and/or training.

National Report on Schooling in Australia 2012

Student participation

4.3   Attendance

The National Education Agreement (NEA) and the *Schools Assistance Act 2008* adopt the key performance measure (KPM) for attendance as agreed to by Education Ministers and included in the *Measurement Framework for Schooling in Australia 2012* as KPM 1(b).

KPM 1(b) is defined as:

> The number of actual full-time equivalent student-days attended by full-time students in Years 1 to 10 as a percentage of the total number of possible student-days attended over the period.

The NEA also specifies that this KPM will be disaggregated by state/territory and school sector for all students, Indigenous status students and by socio-economic status and that the period for this collection will be Semester 1 of each school year for government school systems (Term 1 for Tasmania) and the last 20 school days in May of each school year for non-government schools.

In 2012, all school sectors in all states and territories collected and reported attendance data for Years 1–10 for the specified period.

However, because the definitions and methodologies used by jurisdictions and sectors to collect the data are not yet uniform, accurate comparisons between jurisdictions and sectors cannot currently be made. Nor can the data collected in 2012 be aggregated or averaged to calculate KPM 1(b) at the national level.

In 2012, agreement was reached by all jurisdictions and sectors on new standards for the collection and reporting of nationally consistent student attendance data. This resulted from work undertaken by all states, territories and the non-government school sectors in collaboration with the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA). The new *National Standards for Student Attendance Data Reporting* were published on the ACARA website in December 2012.

These standards will enable consistent and comparable reporting of attendance rates, including the calculation of KPM 1(b) at the national level, for students in Years 1–10 (including ungraded students where applicable) across all sectors and jurisdictions in Australia for the 2014 data collection period and onwards. The non-government sectors have agreed to conform to the national standards from the 2013 data collection period.

For 2012, each jurisdiction has provided explanatory notes about the methods used to collect and report on student attendance data. These explanatory notes, which serve to highlight where differences in methodology still exist, are attached to the glossary of this report.

Tables 17, 18 and 19 in Part 9: Additional Statistics show 2012 attendance data by:
- school sector
- state and territory

- year level
- sex.

These tables depict data for the government, Catholic and independent sectors respectively. They also include by summary data for 2008–12 for each sector by state and territory. The comments below for each sector should be read in conjunction with these tables and with the explanatory notes on attendance data.

Attendance for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students is discussed in Part 7.

Although differences in methodology currently prevent direct comparisons of attendance data between jurisdictions and sectors, a common characteristic is an apparent fall in attendance rates as students move from primary to secondary school and through secondary school to Year 10.

In 2012, Year 10 attendance rates were lower than those for the first year of secondary school in all sectors in all jurisdictions (with the exception of Northern Territory Catholic schools). The differences between Year 7/8 and Year 10 attendance rates were typically between two and five percentage points. More specific comments on attendance rates for each sector are below.

Government school sector

For the 2012 collection period, student attendance rates for all states and the Australian Capital Territory were consistently in the range of 92–94 per cent for Years 1–7 dropping to between 86 and 92 per cent for Years 8, 9 and 10. Rates for the Northern Territory were lower across all years. All jurisdictions exhibited similar patterns, with the lowest attendance rates recorded for Year 10. Differences in rates between year levels ranged between three and eight percentage points. There were smaller variations in attendance rates between year levels in Victoria with up to a three percentage point variation, compared to eight percentage point variations in Tasmania and the Northern Territory.

The attendance rates for male and female government school students during the 2012 collection period were fairly even within year levels, within most jurisdictions. Variations, where they occurred, were no more than three percentage points.

Between 2008 and 2012, there was limited change in student attendance rates for specific year levels in the government sector in most jurisdictions.

Catholic school sector

For the 2012 collection period, student attendance rates were consistently in the 93–95 per cent range for Years 1–7/8, with some decline in junior secondary years. The exception was the Northern Territory, where all rates were lower.

Between 2008 and 2012, there was little change in student attendance rates for specific year levels in the Catholic sector in most jurisdictions, with variations up to four percentage points. The exception was the Northern Territory, where there were variations of up to 10 percentage points. The attendance rates for male and female Catholic school students during the 2012 collection period were fairly even within year levels, within most jurisdictions, with slightly higher male attendance rates for Years 2, 9 and 10. Variations, where they

occurred, were generally no more than three percentage points. The exceptions were for the Northern Territory where the Year 3 female attendance rate was five percentage points higher than the male attendance rate, and the Australian Capital Territory where the Year 10 male attendance rate was five percentage points higher than the female attendance rate.

Independent school sector

For the 2012 collection period, student attendance rates were consistently 93–95 per cent for primary school years (1–7/8) except for the Northern Territory where rates were marginally lower. Rates for Years 7/8–10 were 92–94 per cent except for the Northern Territory and the Australian Capital Territory where they dropped below 90 per cent.

Between 2008 and 2012, there was little change in student attendance rates for specific year levels in the independent sector in most jurisdictions, with variations up to three percentage points. The exceptions were the Northern Territory and the Australian Capital Territory where some larger variations occurred.

The attendance rates for male and female independent school students during the 2012 collection period were fairly even within year levels for most jurisdictions, with variations up to two percentage points. The exception was for the Australian Capital Territory, where there were higher male attendance rates for all year levels except for Year 2.

National Report on Schooling in Australia 2012

Part 5

Student achievement – National Assessment Program

Overview

The *Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians* identifies literacy and numeracy and the knowledge of key disciplines as the cornerstones of schooling. Goal 2 is that 'All young Australians become successful learners, confident and creative individuals, and active and informed citizens'. Having the 'essential skills in literacy and numeracy' is among the attributes of successful learners listed under this goal.

The declaration commits all Australian governments to work with all school sectors and the broader community to achieve the educational goals for young Australians. As part of the commitment to promote world-class curriculum and assessment, Ministers agreed that 'together the national curriculum and curriculum specified at the State, Territory and local levels will … include a strong focus on literacy and numeracy skills'.

The Council of Australian Governments (COAG) National Education Agreement also articulates high-level policy and reform directions for measuring and improving the literacy and numeracy achievement of young people. As part of its commitment to ensuring that young people are meeting basic literacy and numeracy standards, in 2008 COAG agreed to the Literacy and Numeracy National Partnership, which was implemented over the period 2009–12.

The *Measurement Framework for Schooling in Australia 2012* defines the national key performance measures (KPMs) for schooling arising from the Melbourne Declaration goals and commitment to action and reflecting COAG targets and indicators.[1] These include measures of student achievement in the National Assessment Program (NAP) in literacy, numeracy, science literacy, civics and citizenship, and information and communication technology literacy. The Measurement Framework also specifies the annual assessment and reporting cycle for the National Assessment Program.

The National Assessment Program

The Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) is directed, through its charter, to manage the development and oversee the delivery, of assessments and reporting for the National Assessment Program (NAP) including the National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN), and domestic NAP sample assessments as directed by the Standing Council on School Education and Early Childhood (SCSEEC). The NAP also includes Australia's participation in international assessments.

The NAP, as specified in the Measurement Framework, encompasses all assessments endorsed by Education Ministers:

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[1] Relationships between the Melbourne Declaration, the NEA and the Measurement Framework for Schooling in Australia are more fully explained in Part 1.2: Measuring performance.

- annual full student cohort literacy and numeracy assessments in Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 (NAPLAN)
- 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) (to 2015)
- participation in international sample student population assessments, including the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) and the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS). PISA is conducted every three years by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and assesses the reading, mathematical and scientific literacy of a sample of 15-year-old students. TIMSS is conducted every four years by the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA) and assesses performance of a sample of Year 4 and Year 8 students in mathematics and science.

NAP assessments conducted for 2012 were:
- annual full cohort literacy and numeracy assessments in Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 (NAPLAN). Key performance measures for NAPLAN 2012 are reported in Part 5.1: Student achievement – National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN).
- NAP – Science Literacy Year 6 sample assessment. Key performance measures for 2012 are reported in Part 5.2: Student achievement – National Assessment Program – Science Literacy.
- PISA sample assessments in reading, mathematics and scientific literacy for 15-year-olds. More than 14,000 Australian students took part in PISA 2012. Key performance measures for PISA are reported in Part 5.3: Student achievement – Programme for International Student Assessment.

ACARA publishes nationally comparable information on student achievement in national assessments to support accountability, policy development and resource allocation. NAPLAN National Reports for each year summarise student achievement in NAPLAN at the national, state and territory, and student subgroup levels. These are published on ACARA's National Assessment Program website. The website also allows users to specify and download tables from its results page. Student achievement in NAPLAN is reported at the school level on the *My School* website.

Reports on each three-yearly NAP sample assessment are also published on the National Assessment Program website.

The national report for PISA 2012 is available on the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) website. The most recent TIMSS testing of Australian students was in late 2010, for TIMSS 2011. The international and Australian reports were released in December 2012. Key performance measures for TIMSS 2011 were reported in the *National Report on Schooling in Australia 2011.*

National Report on Schooling in Australia 2012

Student achievement – National Assessment Program

5.1   NAP – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN)

In 2012, the fifth 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. These tests, known as the National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN), were first conducted in May 2008.

NAPLAN assesses the sorts of skills that are essential for every child to progress through school and life. The same tests are used in each state and territory, and the results provide nationally comparable data on student performance in reading, writing, spelling, grammar and punctuation, and numeracy.

The test results provide schools, states and territories with information about how education programs are working and which areas need to be prioritised for improvement. They also give parents and schools an understanding of how individual students are performing at the time of the tests.

A key aspect of NAPLAN test design is the single scale of achievement across 10 bands from Years 3 to 9 in each domain. Each band for each domain has a summary of skills assessed at each year level. The introduction of the 10 achievement bands from Year 3 to Year 9 means that, as a student advances through schooling, it is possible to see how much progress has been made in each domain.

In the first three years of testing (2008–2010), Writing was assessed by testing students' ability to respond to a narrative writing task. In 2011, a change of genre was introduced, and the narrative task was replaced with a persuasive one. Results for the persuasive writing task are reported on a separate persuasive writing scale that is not comparable with the narrative writing scale. As a consequence, student performance in Writing from 2011 and 2012 cannot be compared with that from previous years.

In December 2012, Education Ministers released the 2012 *National Assessment Program Literacy and Numeracy – Achievement in Reading, Writing, Language Conventions and Numeracy* report (the 2012 NAPLAN National Report). The results contained in this report (and previous reports) are also available in interactive form on the *NAP* website. Preliminary national results were also released in September 2012 at around the same time parents received an individual report on their child's achievement in the NAPLAN tests. The student report shows student performance against the national average and relative to the achievement band scale.

The final national results are reported as mean scale scores and by performance in bands, and may be viewed by gender, Indigenous status, language background other than English status, geolocation (metropolitan, provincial, remote and very remote), parental occupation and parental education at each year level and for each domain of the test. Other data available include participation rates. Results are also available for: the performance of each

state and territory relative to other states and territories, and to Australia; time series; and cohort gain across year levels.

NAPLAN results are reported at the school level on the *My School* website.

Key performance measures

The mean scale scores and proportion of students achieving at or above the national minimum standard in each domain and year level are measures of literacy and numeracy achievement in Australian schooling. These are specified as performance indicators in the National Education Agreement and as key performance measures (KPMs) in the *Measurement Framework for Schooling in Australia 2012*.

More information about the assessment scale can be found on the NAP website scales page.

More information about national minimum standards can be found on the NAP website standards page.

For 2012, the proportions of students achieving at or above the national minimum standard and mean scale scores at the national level are reported for Reading in Table 5.1, for Persuasive Writing in Table 5.2 and for Numeracy in Table 5.3.

The proportion of students participating in NAPLAN for Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 for Reading, Writing and Numeracy is also a key performance measure. These proportions for 2012 are reported in Table 5.4.

Key Performance Measure 2(a)
Proportion of students achieving at or above the national minimum standard for Reading
Key Performance Measure 2(b)
NAPLAN mean scale scores for Reading

Table 5.1   Summary for Reading for Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 for Australia (% at or above national minimum standards; mean scale scores), 2012

		Year 3	Year 5	Year 7	Year 9
Percentage of students at or above national minimum standard		93.6	91.6	94.1	91.4
	CI±	0.2	0.3	0.2	0.4
Mean scale score (standard deviation)		419.6 (87.9)	493.6 (77.6)	541.5 (68.3)	574.8 (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% and 90.5%.

Confidence intervals cited should be used to compare data within 2012 only.

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 5.2   Summary for Persuasive Writing for Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 for Australia (% at or above national minimum standards; mean scale scores), 2012

		Year 3	Year 5	Year 7	Year 9
Percentage of students at or above national minimum standard		95.3	92.1	89.9	81.7
	CI±	0.2	0.3	0.4	0.6
Mean scale score (standard deviation)		415.8 (67.1)	477.0 (68.9)	518.3 (74.9)	553.7 (85.8)

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% and 90.5%.

Confidence intervals cited should be used to compare data within 2012 only.

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 5.3   Summary for Numeracy for Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 for Australia (% at or above national minimum standards; mean scale scores), 2012

		Year 3	Year 5	Year 7	Year 9
Percentage of students at or above national minimum standard		93.9	93.3	93.8	93.7
	CI±	0.2	0.2	0.3	0.3
Mean scale score (standard deviation)		395.5 (72.6)	488.7 (70.9)	538.1 (73.9)	584.2 (72.4)

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% and 90.5%.

Confidence intervals cited should be used to compare data within 2012 only.

Sources: ACARA, *National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy, Achievement in Reading, Persuasive Writing, Language Conventions and Numeracy, National Report for 2012;* ACARA (unpublished data)

Key Performance Measure 1(c)

Proportion of students participating in NAPLAN for Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 for Reading, Writing and Numeracy

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Table 5.4   **Proportion of students participating in NAPLAN for Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 for Reading, Persuasive Writing and Numeracy, 2012 (per cent)**

	Year 3	Year 5	Year 7	Year 9
Proportion of students participating in Reading	95.3	95.9	95.5	92.1
Proportion of students participating in Persuasive Writing	95.2	95.8	95.6	92.4
Proportion of students participating in Numeracy	95.0	95.5	95.1	91.5

Notes:

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

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

Sources: ACARA, *National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy, Achievement in Reading, Persuasive Writing, Language Conventions and Numeracy, National Report for 2012*

National Report on Schooling in Australia 2012

Student achievement – National Assessment Program

5.2   NAP – Science Literacy

The National Sample Assessment in Science Literacy commenced in 2003, and assesses Year 6 students only. This science assessment is complemented for secondary students by the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) and the Trends in Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS).

Every three years, samples of Year 6 students from across Australia are tested on their scientific literacy. This is the application of broad conceptual understandings of science to make sense of the world, understanding natural phenomena and interpreting media reports about scientific issues. The assessment also includes asking investigable questions, conducting investigations, collecting and interpreting data and making decisions.

The 2012 NAP – Science Literacy assessment was undertaken by more than 13,000 Year 6 students from government and non-government schools. This represented approximately five per cent of the total Australian Year 6 student population. The school reports for each school were released to schools in December 2012.

Proficient standard in science literacy

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

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

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

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

Key performance measures

The proportion of students achieving at or above the proficient standard (Level 3.2) in Science Literacy in Year 6 is key performance measure (KPM) 4(a) in the *Measurement Framework for Schooling in Australia 2012*.

The proportions of Year 6 students achieving at each proficiency level are reported in Table 5.5.

Key Performance Measure 4(a)
Proportion of students achieving at or above the proficient standard (Level 3.2) in Science Literacy

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Table 5.5   **Proportion of students achieving at each proficiency level and at or above the proficient standard (Level 3.2) in Science Literacy, 2012 (per cent)**

| | Proficiency level | | | | | At or above the proficient standard |
	Level 2 or below	3.1	3.2	3.3	Level 4 and above	
Year 6						
Australia (%)	9.0	39.6	42.1	9.0	0.3	51.4
CI±	1.0	1.6	1.7	1.1	0.2	2.0

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. 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% and 90.5%.

Source: ACARA, *National Assessment Program – Science Literacy Report 2012*

The results show that 51.4 per cent of Year 6 students met or exceeded the proficient standard in 2012.

The *National Assessment Program – Science Literacy Report 2012* is available on ACARA's National Assessment Program website.

KPM 4(b) Proportion of students achieving at or above the proficient standard (Level 3) on the OECD PISA combined Scientific Literacy scale for 15-year-old students is reported in Part 5.3 Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA).

KPM 4(c) Proportion of students achieving at or above the proficient standard (Intermediate) on the TIMSS science scales for Years 4 and 8 was reported in Part 5.3 National Assessment Program – Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) of the *National Report in Schooling in Australia 2011* and will next be reported for 2015.

National Report on Schooling in Australia 2012

Student achievement – National Assessment Program

5.3   Programme for International Student Assessment

The Organisation of Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) compares the performance of 15-year-old students internationally, using the same assessment tasks. PISA measures how well 15-year-old students are prepared to use their knowledge and skills in particular areas to meet real-life challenges.

More than 510,000 students from 65 countries and economies participated in PISA 2012 and more than 14,000 Australian students took part.

PISA assessments are triennial. Three domains are tested: reading literacy, mathematical literacy and scientific literacy. In each cycle of PISA, one domain is selected as the main focus on a rotating basis. In PISA 2012, mathematical literacy was the major domain. Mathematical literacy was also the major domain in 2003. Once a domain has been a main focus, reliable comparisons can be made between the results in the focus year and results in subsequent testing years.

The Australian Government and all state and territory governments contribute funding for Australia's participation in PISA. The Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) is the national project manager for PISA in Australia.

PISA is one of the international assessments in Australia's National Assessment Program and provides data for key performance measures specified in the Measurement Framework for Schooling in Australia. As such, PISA results are used to evaluate progress towards the Educational Goals for Young Australians and the National Education Agreement outcome that Australian students excel by international standards.

PISA enables reporting on comparable performance data every three years, with student achievement able to be disaggregated by sex, Indigenous status, geographic location and indicators of socio-economic background.

Information about the background of PISA, the framework that is used to design the assessments, the management of PISA and further technical information is available from ACER. A national report, which provides information about the performance of Australian students, is published for each PISA assessment. Key findings from the 2012 report are available on the ACER website.

Key performance measures

The proportion of students in the bottom and top levels of performance in international testing is a performance indicator for schooling in the National Education Agreement. The proportions achieving at or above the proficient standard agreed for Australia on the PISA scales are key performance measures (KPMs) in the *Measurement Framework for Schooling in Australia 2012*.

The proportions achieving at or above the proficient standard (Level 3) on the OECD PISA combined reading, mathematical and scientific literacy scales are reported in Table 5.6.

Key Performance Measures

2(e) Proportion of students achieving at or above the proficient standard (Level 3) on the OECD PISA combined Reading scale

3(c) Proportion of students achieving at or above the proficient standard (Level 3) on the OECD PISA combined Mathematics scale

4(b) Proportion of students achieving at or above the proficient standard (Level 3) on the OECD PISA combined Scientific Literacy scale

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Table 5.6 **Achievement on OECD PISA scales: Proportion of students achieving at each proficiency level; proportion of students achieving at or above the proficient standard (Level 3); Australia, 2012 (per cent); proportion of students achieving at or above the proficient standard, OECD average, 2012 (per cent)**

	Proficiency level Australian students (%)							At or above the proficient standard: Australia (%)	At or above the proficient standard: OECD average (%)
	Below 1	1	2	3	4	5	6		
Reading literacy	1	13	22	29	23	10	2	64	58
Mathematical literacy	6	14	22	25	19	11	4	59	54
Scientific literacy	3	10	21	29	23	11	3	66	57

Note: The OECD average represents OECD countries as a single entity and each country contributes to the average with equal weight.

Source: Sue Thomson, Lisa De Bortoli and Sarah Buckley, *Highlights from the full Australian report: PISA 2012: How Australia measures up*, ACER, 2013, pp. 13–15

National Report on Schooling in Australia 2012

Part 6

Senior schooling and youth transitions

Overview

The national key performance measures (KPMs) for schooling, specified in the _Measurement Framework for Schooling in Australia 2012_, include measures for participation and attainment, including:

- student enrolment
- attendance at school
- participation of young people in vocational education and training (VET) including VET in Schools
- participation of young people in education, training and employment
- attainment of young people in education and training.

The KPMs for the enrolment and attendance of students in primary and junior secondary school are reported in Part 4: Student participation, which also reports on apparent progression and apparent retention rates for secondary school students.

This section of the report deals with the participation and attainment of older students, including those in senior secondary school. For school students, it outlines participation in senior secondary education and in VET as part of Senior Secondary Certificates of Education (VET in Schools). It also deals with the participation of young people in education, training and work beyond school, and their attainment in post-school education and training.

These measures reflect the policy intent of the Melbourne Declaration to define educational goals, not just for school students, but for all young Australians, and the role of the _National Report on Schooling in Australia_ in reporting on the outcomes of schooling.

VET participation and attainment are reported in terms of qualifications within the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF). The AQF is the comprehensive national framework of qualifications in the school, VET and higher education sectors. It was introduced in 1995 to underpin the national system of qualifications in Australia. The AQF was significantly revised in 2010 and the strengthened AQF First Edition was released in July 2011. A modified AQF Second Edition was released in January 2013.

Qualifications within the AQF include:

- Senior Secondary Certificates of Education issued by state and territory school curriculum, assessment and certification authorities to students meeting requirements on completion of Year 12
- VET qualifications at various certificate and diploma levels delivered by institutes of technical and further education (TAFEs) and other registered training organisations (RTOs)
- higher education diplomas and degrees provided through Australian universities and other educational institutions.

Detailed information on qualification levels is contained in the Australian Qualifications Framework document.

The KPMs reported in this section indicate progress towards the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) targets for Year 12 or equivalent attainment and progress in achieving the agreed outcome in the National Education Agreement and the National Partnership Agreement on Youth Attainment and Transitions that young people make a successful transition from school to work and further study. They are also indicators of the success of Australian schooling in preparing and empowering young people to do so.

National Report on Schooling in Australia 2012

Senior schooling and youth transitions

6.1   Participation in vocational education and training including VET in Schools

The Australian vocational education and training (VET) sector provides nationally consistent vocational training and qualifications for those entering or already engaged in the workforce. Competency standards (units of competency) for vocational qualifications in different industries and occupations are set out in nationally endorsed training packages, which also define the qualifications in each industry. The requirements for each level of VET qualification are set out in the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF), which also sets out guidelines for Senior Secondary Certificates of Education (Year 12 qualifications) and qualifications in the higher education sector. Qualifications delivered through the VET sector range from Certificate I (AQF level 1) to Graduate Diploma (AQF level 8).

Secondary school students in all states and territories are able to undertake VET courses as part of their school program (VET in Schools courses), usually in the senior years of schooling as part of the Senior Secondary Certificate of Education in each jurisdiction. Secondary students can also take VET courses in addition to their school studies, or move from school to full-time VET study or a combination of part-time VET and work.

Until 2008, the proportion of senior secondary students undertaking VET in Schools courses was a key performance measure (KPM) for schooling. From 2009, this KPM was broadened to all 15 to 19-year-old VET students (whether or not they were enrolled in school) as a proportion of the 15 to 19-year-old population. The measure of participation adopted is the completion of at least one unit of competency in a VET qualification at AQF Certificate II or above.[1]

This measure, KPM 1(e) in the *Measurement Framework for Schooling in Australia 2012,* includes VET in Schools students, but also includes school-aged students who have left school and are still engaged in education and training through a campus of technical and further education (TAFE) or other registered training organisation (RTO). Broadening the KPM is consistent with the Compact with Young Australians and the National Youth Participation Requirement, which came into force across all jurisdictions in January 2010. These initiatives are outlined in Part 2.5: Initiatives and achievements – supporting senior years of schooling and youth transitions.

Table 6.1 shows the Australian data for this KPM for the period 2009–12. Part 9: Additional Statistics Table 20 shows state and territory data for this KPM for 2012.

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[1] 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 formal enrolment which is not followed through). It is not intended that the KPM be regarded as a measure of attainment.

Key Performance Measure 1(e)

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

Table 6.1   Number and proportion of 15 –19-year-olds who successfully completed at least one unit of competency as part of a VET qualification at AQF Certificate II or above, Australia, 2009–12

| Australia	2009	2010	2011	2012
Number of 15–19-year-olds successfully completing at least one unit of competency at AQF II or above ('000)	360.3	375.2	400.1	419.4
15–19-year-old population ('000)	1,462.4	1,460.0	1,453.5	1,458.5
Proportion of 15 –19-year-olds successfully completing at least one unit of competency at AQF II or above (%)	24.6	25.7	27.5	28.8

Notes:

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

The KPM is derived by calculating student numbers in the 15–19 year age group as a percentage of the estimated residential population in the corresponding group. The estimated residential population of 15–19-year-olds in 2009–11 has been revised by the Australian Bureau of Statistics based on the 2011 Census of Population and Housing. For this reason, data for the 15–19-year-old population for 2009, 2010 and 2011 and for the KPM for 2009 and 2010 differ from data published in previous editions of this report.

Sources: NCVER, National VET in Schools Collection 2009–12; NCVER, National VET Provider Collection 2009–12; NCVER, *School-aged youth in vocational education and training 2012;* ACARA, *National Report on Schooling in Australia, 2011;* ABS, Cat. No. 3101.0, *Australian Demographic Statistics,* Dec. 2012

See also Part 9: Additional Statistics Table 20

Figure 6.1   Proportion of 15–19-year-olds successfully completing at least one unit of competency at AQF II or above (%)
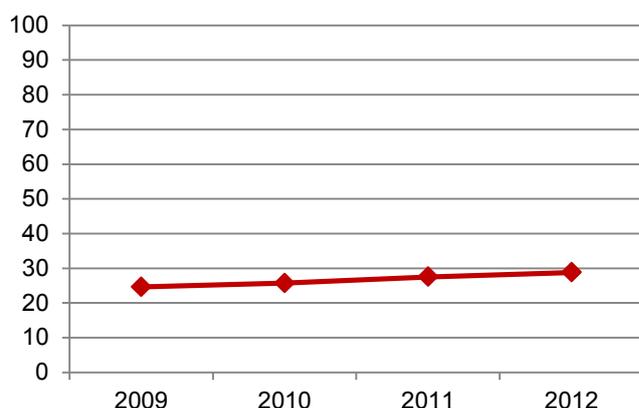
In addition to KPM 1(e), Education Ministers approved two program measures for young people's participation and attainment in VET, disaggregated by industry area and by qualification level. These are reported for 2012 in Tables 6.2, 6.3 and 6.4.

VET program measure 1

The 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 part of a VET qualification at AQF Certificate II or above

Table 6.2   Number of 15–19-year-olds who have successfully completed at least one unit of competency/module as part of a VET qualification at AQF Certificate II or above, by major field of education, Australia, 2012 ('000)

Field of education	Australia
Natural and physical sciences	1.1
Information technology	11.2
Engineering and related technologies	67.2
Architecture and building	41.9
Agriculture, environmental and related studies	13.1
Health	14.2
Education	0.9
Management and commerce	96.4
Society and culture	54.4
Creative arts	25.9
Food, hospitality and personal services	75.2
Mixed field programs	17.7
Total	419.4

Note: These figures relate only to characteristics of each student's major course.

Sources: NCVER, *National VET in Schools Collection, 2012;* NCVER, *National VET Provider Collection, 2012;* reported in NCVER, *School-aged youth in vocational education and training 2012*

Table 6.3   Number of 15–19-year-olds who have successfully completed at least one unit of competency/module as part of a VET qualification at AQF certificate II or above, by major qualification, Australia, 2012 ('000)

Major qualification	Australia
Diploma or higher	25.5
Certificate IV	28.5
Certificate III	192.2
Certificate II	173.2
Total	419.4

Note: These figures relate only to characteristics of each student's major course.

Sources: NCVER, *National VET in Schools Collection, 2012;* NCVER, *National VET Provider Collection, 2012;* reported in NCVER, *School-aged youth in vocational education and training 2012*

> **VET program measure 2**
> The level of AQF certification for 15–19-year-olds who in the calendar year successfully completed a VET qualification

Table 6.4   Qualification completions for 15–19-year-olds by qualification level, Australia ('000), 2012

Qualification level	Australia
Diploma or higher	7.0
Certificate IV	12.0
Certificate III	56.5
Certificate II	84.7
Certificate I	38.0
Total	198.2

Sources: NCVER, *National VET in Schools Collection, 2012;* NCVER, *National VET Provider Collection, 2012*; reported in NCVER, *School-aged youth in vocational education and training 2012*

As stated above, KPM 1(e) and the VET program measures include all 15–19-year-old students. The information below refers to students who are identified as VET in Schools students. For the purposes of the VET in Schools data collection, these are students who are undertaking VET as part of a Senior Secondary Certificate of Education.[2] These data are not restricted to Certificate II or above or to students who have successfully completed at least one unit of competency.

VET in Schools includes school-based apprentices and trainees. These are students who, as well as undertaking an accredited VET qualification as 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. Table 6.5 shows the number of 15–19-year-old school students undertaking VET in Schools programs each year 2008–12 with school-based apprentices and trainees disaggregated.

Table 6.5   Number of 15–19-year-old students undertaking VET in Schools programs, Australia, 2008–12

Australia	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
School-based apprentices and trainees[a] ('000)	25.2	20.9	17.3	18.1	22.5
Other VET in Schools program students ('000)	183.5	195.8	203.6	218.3	219.8
Total VET in Schools students ('000)	208.6	216.7	220.9	236.4	242.3

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

Source: NCVER, *Australian vocational education and training statistics: young people in education and training 2012*

See also Part 9: Additional Statistics Table 21 and Table 22

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[2] In most, but not all, jurisdictions these are also students who are enrolled in secondary schools.

In 2012 there was a 2.5 per cent increase in the number of 15–19-year-old[3] VET in Schools students, from approximately 236 thousand in 2011 to approximately 242 thousand in 2012. This included a 24 per cent increase in the number of school-based apprentices and trainees with this number recovering from significant falls in 2009 and 2010.

The VET qualifications attempted by school students are most commonly at AQF Certificate II, but there is an increased policy emphasis on encouraging participation in AQF Certificate III and above, especially for school-based apprentices and trainees. In 2011 there was a noticeable shift from lower to higher level qualifications. This was even more pronounced in 2012, with a 36.4 per cent rise in the number of students undertaking Certificate III qualifications and a 23.5 per cent fall in the number undertaking Certificate I.[4]

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.

Tables 21 and 22 in Part 9: Additional Statistics provide extra information on the participation and attainment of young people in VET, including VET in Schools, in 2012 and for the period 2008–12. Further detailed information is contained in the National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER) publications *Australian vocational education and training statistics: young people in education and training 2012* and *School-aged youth in vocational education and training 2012*.

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[3] Approximately ten thousand students recorded in the VET in Schools data collection 2012 who were outside the 15 to 19-year-old age range are excluded from this data.
[4] Part 9: Additional Statistics Table 22 drawn from NCVER, *Australian Vocational Education and Training Statistics: young people in education and training 2012*

National Report on Schooling in Australia 2012

Senior schooling and youth transitions

6.2   Participation in education and work

The key performance measures (KPMs) for participation specified in the _Measurement Framework for Schooling in Australia 2012_ reflect not only the participation of young Australians in schooling, but their participation in post-school education, training and employment. As such, these measures indicate the success of schooling in preparing students for further education and work. This addresses both the Melbourne Declaration commitment to facilitate effective transitions and the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) National Education Agreement (NEA) outcome that young people make a successful transition from school to work and further study.

KPMs 1(f) and (g) measure the full-time participation in education, training and employment of two groups of young people. Full-time participation is defined as participation in full-time education or training or full-time work, or a combination of both part-time education or training and part-time work. The measures are based on the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Survey of Education and Work, which is conducted in May each year.

KPM 1(f) measures the full-time participation of young people from the age of 15 to 19, and includes students who are still at school. It also includes 15 to 19-year-olds who have left school and have moved into tertiary study or the workforce. KPM 1(g) measures the full-time participation of 20 to 24-year-olds, who may be undertaking vocational education and training (VET) or university study, working, or a combination of these activities. KPMs 1(f) and 1(g) are shown for the period 2008–12 in Table 6.3.

Key Performance Measure 1(f)
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(g)
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

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Table 6.6   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, 2008–12 (%)

Year		2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
		%	%	%	%	%
Full-time participation rates for 15–19-year-olds		87.3	84.1	84.8	85.3	86.5
	CI±	1.1	1.4	1.5	1.4	1.0
Full-time participation rates for 20–24-year-olds		80.1	77.1	77.2	77.0	76.6
	CI±	1.4	2.0	1.6	1.5	1.7

Notes:

CI = Confidence Interval

The percentages reported in this table include 95 per cent confidence intervals. Confidence intervals are a way of expressing the degree of sampling and measurement error associated with survey estimates. For example, an estimate of 80 with a 95 per cent confidence interval of ±2 means that if the total population were 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, data cubes on participation and engagement published by ABS to report the results of the Survey of Education and Work have been limited to study for a qualification only, instead of all study. This change affects the data cubes:

- Study for a qualification, persons aged 15–64 years; and
- Fully engaged through study for a qualification and/or employment, persons aged 15–24 years.

For this reason, full-time participation rates for 15–19 year-olds and 20–24 year-olds shown in Table 6.6 and Figure 6.2 for the calendar years 2008–2011 are marginally lower than those reported in previous editions of this report.

Source: ABS, Cat. No. 6227.0, *Education and Work,* May 2012

See also Part 9: Additional Statistics Table 24 and Table 25

As shown in Table 6.6, full-time participation rates for young people in their mid to 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. In particular, it includes 15 and 16-year-olds who, from 2010, are subject to the National Youth Participation Requirement[1] for all 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 the age of 17.

The falls in these youth participation rates between 2008 and 2009 reflect falls in participation in employment in these age groups rather than falls in participation in education and training.[2]

Since 2009 there has been an apparent recovery in participation for 15–19-year-olds but, based on the Survey of Education and Work, no noticeable change in participation rates for 20–24-year-olds.

Figure 6.2 illustrates KPMs 1(f) and 1(g) over the period 2008–12.

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[1] The National Youth Participation Requirement is a component of the National Partnership on Youth Attainment and Transitions which includes the Compact with Young Australians. Further information on this National Partnership is provided in Part 2.5: Supporting senior years of schooling and youth transitions.
[2] COAG Reform Council, *National Education Agreement: Performance Report for 2009, Report to the Council of Australian Governments,* 30 September 2010, p. xv

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Key Performance Measures 1(f) and 1(g)

Figure 6.2   **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, 2008–12 (%)**
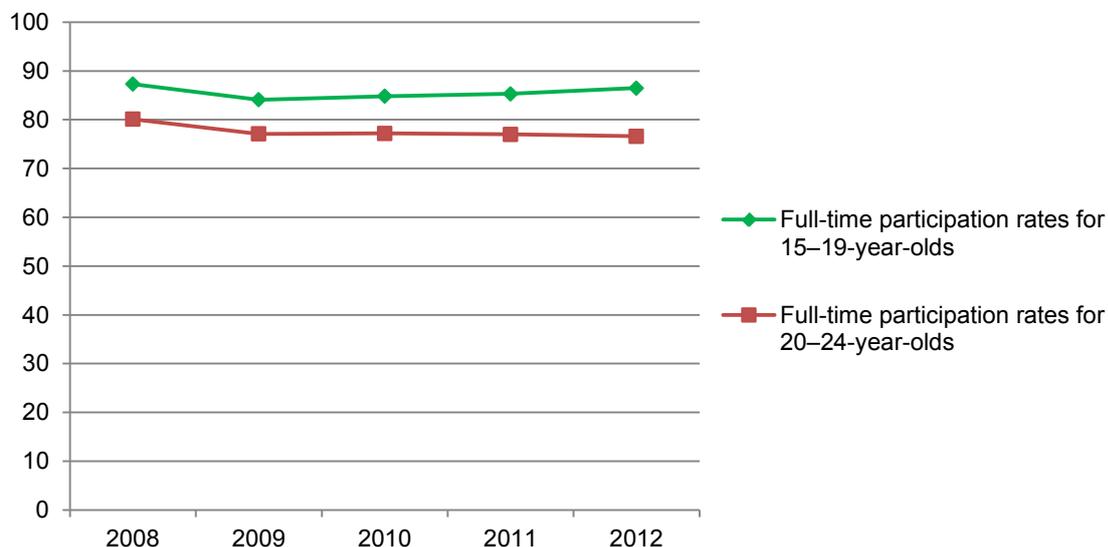
Source: ABS, Cat. No. 6227.0, *Education and Work*, May 2012

The National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER) has estimated that 81.9 per cent of 15–19-year-olds were engaged in education and training as at August 2012. This was made up of school students (55.1 per cent), higher education students (15.1 per cent) and publicly funded VET students, including apprentices and trainees (11.6 per cent).[3] This compares to the estimate of participation of Australians aged 15–19 years in education and training for August 2009 of 75.9 per cent, for 2010 of 78.8 per cent and for 2011 of 81.9 per cent.[4] These estimates do not include employment, but indicate that participation in education and training by 15–19-year-olds rose in both 2010 and 2011 and remained steady in 2012.

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[3] NCVER, *Australian Vocational Education and Training Statistics: young people in education and training 2012* (see Part 9: Additional Statistics, Table 21)
[4] NCVER, *Australian Vocational Education and Training Statistics: young people in education and training,* 2009–12 (see also Part 9: Additional Statistics, Table 21, *National Report on Schooling in Australia,* 2009–12)

National Report on Schooling in Australia 2012

Senior schooling and youth transitions

6.3   Student attainment

The attainment key performance measures (KPMs) specified in the _Measurement Framework for Schooling in Australia 2012_ measure the level of educational attainment achieved by young Australians by the time they have reached their early to mid-twenties.

KPM 7(a) and 7(b) measure the proportions of 20 to 24-year-olds who have completed Year 12 or equivalent[1] or attained an Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) Certificate II or III or above. These measures reflect the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) targets for youth attainment in education and training.

Key Performance Measure 7(a)
Proportion of the 20 to 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 to 24-year-old population having attained at least Year 12 or equivalent or AQF Certificate III or above

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Table 6.7 reports KPMs 7(a) and 7(b) for the period 2008–12. For comparison purposes, the table also reports the proportions of the 20–24-year-old population in this period who had completed Year 12 or equivalent.

Table 6.7   Proportion of the 20–24-year-old population having attained at least Year 12 or equivalent or AQF Certificate II or above; proportion of the 20–24-year-old population having attained at least Year 12 or equivalent or AQF Certificate III or above; proportion of the 20–24-year-old population having attained at least Year 12 or equivalent; Australia, 2008–12 (%)

Year	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
	%	%	%	%	%
Proportion of the 20–24-year-old population having attained at least Year 12 or equivalent or AQF Certificate II or above	84.2	84.5	85.6	84.1	85.9
CI±	1.2	1.6	1.3	1.3	1.3
Proportion of the 20–24-year-old population having attained at least Year 12 or equivalent or AQF Certificate III or above	83.2	83.5	84.5	82.7	84.6
CI±	1.3	1.7	1.5	1.3	1.3
Proportion of the 20–24-year-old population having attained at least Year 12 or equivalent	75.5	77.1	78.0	74.9	76.3
CI±	1.6	1.7	1.7	1.7	1.6

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[1] 'Year 12 or equivalent' includes the attainment of AQF Senior Secondary Certificates of Education issued by Australasian Curriculum, Assessment and Certification Authorities in each state and territory, senior secondary qualifications issued in other countries and other recognised tertiary preparation qualifications such as the International Baccalaureate. Data collected through the Survey of Education and Work also include some respondents who identify Year 12 as their highest level of schooling completed but who may not have attained a formal Year 12 qualification.

Notes:

CI = Confidence Interval

The percentages reported in this table include 95 per cent confidence intervals. Confidence intervals are a way of expressing the degree of sampling and measurement error associated with survey estimates. For example, an estimate of 80 with a 95 per cent confidence interval of ±2 means that if the total population were surveyed rather than a sample, there is a 95 per cent chance that the result would lie between 78 and 82.

Source: ABS, Cat. No. 6227.0, *Education and Work*, May 2012

See also Part 9: Additional Statistics Tables 31 and 32

The proportion of 20 to 24-year-olds who had attained Year 12 or equivalent or AQF Certificate II or above – KPM 7(a) – rose from 84.2 per cent in 2008 to 85.9 per cent in 2012.

The COAG target for this measure is for it to reach 90 per cent by 2015. Based on 2008–12 data, it appears unlikely that this target will be met at the national level by 2015. However, increased participation in education and training by 15–19-year-olds since 2010, as a result of the Youth Participation Requirement and reported in Part 6.2: Senior schooling and youth transitions – participation in education and work, is likely to translate to increased attainment levels for these students as they move to the 20–24-year-old age bracket. If so, the 2015 target of 90 per cent for the attainment of Year 12 or equivalent or Certificate II by 20–24-year olds may still be achievable.

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 83.2 per cent to 84.6 per cent between 2008 and 2012.

The COAG target for this measure is for it to reach 90 per cent by 2020. Based on the current trend this target is on track to be met at the national level. As is the case for KPM 7(a), KPM 7(b) is likely to move upwards as increased participation in education and training by 15 and 16-year-olds flows on to their levels of attainment in later years.

Figure 6.7 depicts the movement in the two attainment measures from 2008 to 2012, along with the proportion of 20–24-year-olds having attained at least Year 12 or equivalent.

Key Performance Measures 7(a) and 7(b)

Figure 6.3   **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-old population having attained at least Year 12 or equivalent; Australia, 2008–12 (%)**
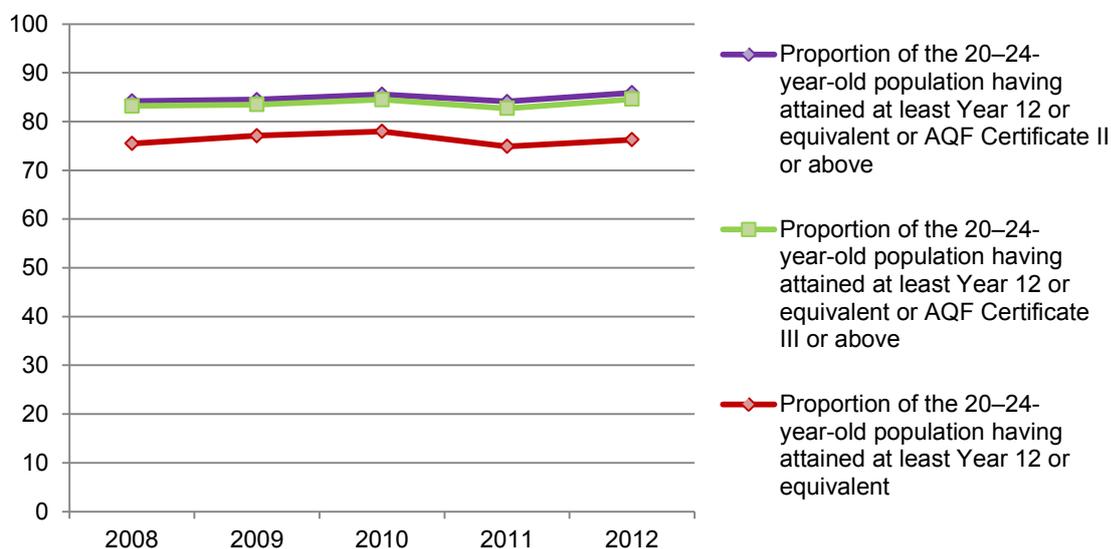
Source: ABS, Cat. No. 6227.0, *Education and Work*, May 2012

See also Part 9: Additional Statistics Table 31 and 32

In each of the years 2008–12 there is little difference between the two attainment KPMs (a maximum difference of 1.4 percentage points), and there is parallel movement of the KPMs over the period.[2]

Both KPMs also closely parallel changes in the proportion of the 20–24-year-olds having attained at least Year 12 or equivalent, which forms the major component of both measures. In 2012, 76.3 per cent of 20–24-year-olds had attained at least Year 12 or equivalent. A further 8.3 per cent who had not attained Year 12 had attained Certificate III or above and a further 1.3 per cent had attained Certificate II or above, but not Year 12 or Certificate III. This is similar to the proportions for the measures in previous years.

The proportion of young people completing Year 12 is not itself a KPM for schooling, as pursuing a vocational 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 6.3, it is not only a major component of KPMs 7(a) and 7(b), but is also a determining component, 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 Year12 completion for current secondary students can be used as an indicator for the future

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[2] For the three data sets shown in Table 6.7 and Figure 6.3 the falls in 2011 data are not statistically significant and may reflect sampling variability in the Survey of Education and Work.

attainment rates for Year 12 or Certificate II or Certificate III or above among 20–24-year-olds.

It is important to note that 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. The Senior Secondary Certificate of Education is an AQF qualification but it has not been allocated to a particular level within the AQF. The AQF does not specify equivalence between Senior Secondary Certificates and other AQF qualifications.[3]

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[3] The volume of learning required to attain an AQF Certificate II is typically 0.5 to 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 part of their Senior Secondary Certificate of Education.

National Report on Schooling in Australia 2012

Part 10

Glossary

Note on Terms: The majority of data reported in the National Report on Schooling 2012 is sourced from the National Schools Statistics Collection (NSSC). 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 Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR), the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) and the Standing Council on School Education and Early Childhood (SCSEEC). Data from the collection are published by the ABS in Schools, Australia, 2012 (cat. no. 4221.0). Definitions of terms in this glossary are, for the most part, quoted or adapted from the NSSC Glossary; and the *Notes, Instructions and Tabulations* document, which is available on request from the ABS.

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, interstate migration and net overseas migration provided by state and federal government departments. For further details see ABS, Cat. No. 3101.0, Australian Demographic Statistics, Jun 2012.

Full-time equivalent teaching staff
The full-time equivalent (FTE) value is a measure of the level of staffing resources. All full-time staff engaged solely on activities that fall within the scope of the National Schools Statistics Collection have an FTE value of 1.0.

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 that would be considered full time.

Some states and territories are not able to calculate FTE values on a time-spent basis for all staff functions but use wages paid as a fraction of the full-time pay rate, or a resource allocation based formula. Some also use a pro-rata formula based on student or staff numbers to estimate aggregate FTE for some categories of staff. This includes staff at combined schools who are allocated to primary or secondary categories.

Full-time equivalent student
A full-time student is one who undertakes a workload equivalent to or greater than that prescribed for a full-time student of that year level. This may vary between states and territories and from year to year. The minimum workload for a full-time student would ensure that a student could complete a given year level in a 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 the student's workload into that which is considered to be the minimum full workload for a full-time student by that state or territory. Methods for estimating the FTE value of part-time students vary between states and territories due to different policy and administrative arrangements. The FTE of students is calculated by adding the number of full-time students and the FTE value of part-time students.

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.

Level of education

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 age 15, and is completed at age 17 or 18. Primary education, including a preparatory year[1], 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 grade followed by Years 1 to 6 in NSW, Victoria, Tasmania, Northern Territory and the Australian Capital Territory. For national reporting purposes, primary education comprises a pre-Year 1 grade followed by Years 1–7 in Queensland, South Australia and Western Australia.

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

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

Students attending special schools are allocated to either primary or secondary education on the basis of grade or school level where identified. Where the grade 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 below for definition of special schools.)

Combined schools include both primary and secondary students.

Major function of staff

In some tables, staff have been categorised according to their major function, which is based on the duties in which they spend the majority of their time.

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. 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.

(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.

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[1] In some jurisdictions, part-time programs that precede the preparatory year are conducted in primary schools (for example, Kindergarten in Western Australia). However, these programs are outside the scope of the National Schools Statistics Collection (NSSC) and the *National Report on Schooling in Australia* and data on them are not, in general, included in this report.

(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.

The functional categories for staff not generally active in schools are as follows:

(a) Executive staff are staff generally undertaking senior administrative functions that are broader than those of a secondary school principal. Executive staff salaries generally exceed those of a secondary school principal.

(b) Specialist support staff are staff who manage or are engaged in curriculum development and research activities, assisting with teaching resources, staff development, and student and teacher support services.

(c) Administrative and clerical staff are staff whose main duties are of a clerical/administrative nature. This category includes office staff in state/territory and regional offices.

(d) Building operations, general maintenance and other staff are staff involved in the maintenance of buildings, grounds, etc. Also included are staff providing associated technical services, and janitorial staff.

National Schools Statistics Collection

The scope of the National Schools Statistics Collection (NSSC) consists of all establishments which 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 the department/ministry of education under directors-general of education (or equivalent) (as defined by membership of the Conference of Education Systems Chief Executive Officers).

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) published by ACARA in the *National Report on Schooling in Australia*. Reports prior to 2009 were published by MCEECDYA.

Primary education
See *Level of education.*

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, Homeland Learning Centre schools in the Northern Territory 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. Multiple schools that amalgamate into a single multi-campus school will decrease school counts in this publication.

School sector

The *National Report on Schooling in Australia* uses 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 are affiliated with the Catholic Church and 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.

The NSSC 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 this publication Catholic non-systemic schools are counted as Catholic.

Secondary education
See *Level of education.*

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 or situations to apply before enrolment is allowed:
- mental or physical disability or impairment
- slow learning ability
- social or emotional problems
- in custody, on remand or in hospital.

A student enrolled in both a hospital (or prison) school and another school should be counted once.

Special schools include Special Assistance Schools, as defined under the *Schools Assistance Act 2008.*

Staff

Staff are persons 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.

Staff absent from a position for a period of less than four continuous weeks (excluding school vacations for teaching staff) as at the census date are included. If they have been, or are expected to be, absent from a position for a period of four continuous weeks or longer, their replacement is counted unless the replacement has not occupied, or is not expected to be occupying, the position for four continuous weeks or longer (excluding school vacations for teaching staff).

Included in the definition of staff are:
- staff teaching evening secondary students attending secondary colleges in Queensland, Western Australia, Tasmania and the Northern Territory
- staff paid from school grant payments
- staff employed under various government-sponsored employment schemes.

Excluded from the definition of staff are:
- persons not under the control of the director-general (or equivalent), e.g. nurses or therapists working for the state or territory department of health (or equivalent)
- persons responsible to a state, territory or Commonwealth minister of education but not to the director-general (or equivalent)
- persons under the control of the director-general (or equivalent) who satisfy one or more of the following criteria:
  - are cleaners, whether salaried or employed on contract
  - are involved in the management and/or maintenance of boarding or hostel facilities for students
  - are paid from privately raised funds
  - have been occupying, or expect to be occupying, a position for a period of less than four continuous weeks (excluding school vacations for teaching staff) at the census date
  - persons replacing those who are temporarily absent.

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 the *National Report on Schooling in Australia,* the national government is generally referred to as either 'the Australian Government' or 'the Commonwealth Government'. The states and territories are listed in the order of New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland, South Australia, Western Australia, Tasmania, the Northern Territory and the Australian Capital Territory. This is the order used in ABS data collections including Schools Australia and in ABS publications including *Yearbook Australia*.

Student

A student is a person who, on the 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 which 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 TAFE, tertiary studies, apprenticeships, work placements, VET in schools or a combination of such pathways, in addition to school-based subjects, are in the scope of the NSSC, regardless of which year of schooling these alternative pathways are undertaken. The workload of both the school-based subject(s) and alternative pathways are aggregated to determine whether a student is classified as full-time or part-time and in calculating the full-time equivalent for part-time students.

Survey of Education and Work

The Survey of Education and Work, 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 the *National Report on Schooling in Australia.*

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 the 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.

Explanatory notes for the 2012 student attendance data

Collection period

Government sector
The collection period for government schools is Semester 1 of each school year, except in Tasmania, where Term 1 is used.

Non-government sectors
The collection period for non-government schools is specified as the last 20 school days in May of each school year. In practice, data are usually collected for 20 consecutive school days in May that form four complete school weeks. For 2012, this was the four-week period beginning Monday 30 April and ending Friday 25 May.

Collection methods

Government sector
Student attendance data for government schools were collected by government school authorities in each State and Territory and provided to ACARA. There were variations in the methodologies employed for collecting data and for calculating attendance rates. Explanatory notes on methodology, provided by each jurisdiction, are included below.

Non-government sectors
Data for the Catholic and independent school sectors were collected through the Australian Government's online data collection system, known as the Student Attendance System and provided to ACARA by DEEWR. Individual non-government schools entered 2012 student attendance information directly into this system. The non-government sectors were also able to add data for all of their systemic schools. The collection system does not impose any limitations on the collection methodology used by the non-government school sectors.

The following notes refer to government schools only.

Collection methodology

In New South Wales, returns of absences were collected for full-time, Years 1–10 students. All government school students in Years 1–10 were regarded as full time. Schools run two Oasis reports on absences at their school, specifying Semester 1:
(1) all students by gender and by scholastic year
(2) Indigenous students by gender and by scholastic year.

These Semester 1 Oasis reports are uploaded via the Data Collections Return of Absences website. Absences data are then presented back to schools for review. Schools sign off on the accuracy of the returns. Various validations are performed against the data collected, which include but are not limited to: high absences, unexpected high/low days open, variations in enrolment numbers.

In Victoria, attendance data are collected at the individual student level for all students in Years Prep–12, although only the data for students in Years 1–10 are used for national reporting. Government schools in Victoria may use a variety of software packages to collect attendance data. The data are then uploaded to Computerised Administrative System Environment in Schools (CASES). CASES21 is the software component of CASES which is the package provided to Victorian government schools to support school administration, finance and central reporting. CASES21 also provides a list of absence codes for schools to record the reasons for the absence.

In Queensland, the student attendance rates for government schools were based on the attendance information for individual students in Years 1–10 recorded on the OneSchool system. Absence details were recorded on the OneSchool system against student records for each full-day or half-day of absence. Absence data for students enrolled in any part of Semester 1 and who were still enrolled as at the August census collection were collected centrally from the OneSchool system.

In South Australia, absence data held in government school administrative systems at the student unit record level are centrally collected through the Central EDSAS Data Store. A snapshot of whole and half-day absences for Semester 1 is taken and stored in the department's Student Census System as part of the Term 3 annual census collection.

Attendance data are calculated for Semester 1 (Term 1 and Term 2) and include SA government students who meet the following criteria:
- full-time students only (FTE ≥ 0.89)
- students in Years 1–10 and Years 1–10 ungraded
- enrolled during Semester 1 2012 (Terms 1 and 2)
- active or had left at the time of the Term 3 census
- include those who have not missed a day.

Absences included are on or after the student's enrolment date and on or before the leaving date. Absences are recorded as morning, afternoon or whole-day absences.

In Western Australia, the data were for all full-time students in Years 1–10. Attendance data held in school systems were centrally accessed and stored through the Student Attendance Monitoring database. Attendance/absence data in primary schools were recorded on a half-day basis. For secondary schools, the data were initially recorded on a 'period' basis and then converted to half-days. In secondary schools the half-day cut-off is set to ensure that the period structure reflects the minimum amount of instructional hours for both the morning and afternoon sessions.

Any day where a student is absent from the school site is recorded as an absence. This excludes circumstances where students are participating in an approved educational activity off the grounds. A suspension is treated as a type of absence.

The collection is based on current students as at the end of the collection period.

In Tasmania, attendance data were collected at individual student record level for each school via the Schools Administration Computer System (SACS) or the new web-based reporting system, EduPoint. These data were collected centrally and stored in a data warehouse. Data on whole-day absences for Tasmanian government primary, high, district high and special schools students in Years 1–10 were extracted for Term 1.

Any whole day absence categorised as explained, unexplained, unauthorised or truant is counted as an absence. The following are not counted as days absent:
- when students are away from school on an alternative learning activity
- when a student has a certificate of part-time attendance and is not required to attend
- short and long-term suspensions.

Students identifying as Indigenous are allocated up to five days per year for cultural leave to participate in cultural activities. Such days are not counted as absences.

Absence data are recorded for all schools at which a student is actively enrolled during the sample period. Absences are only counted at the school where the absence occurred.

In the Northern Territory, enrolment and attendance data were collected for individual students through the Schools Administration and Management system. The data were collected at most government schools on a weekly basis, processed centrally and stored in a data warehouse. Attendance data were reported for students in year/grade levels 1–10 attending a government school at any time during Semester 1. Only full-time students in Years 1–10 (i.e. with an FTE of 1.0) were included (i.e. part-time students were excluded). Where attendance/absence data are initially recorded more frequently than on a half-day basis, they are converted to half-days, e.g. secondary schools recording period attendance.

Full-time students attending for all or part of the collection period (Semester 1) were included, as were students who moved between government schools during the collection period (i.e. any component of attendance in a government school was included, regardless of whether a student was enrolled at the one school for the full semester, for part of the semester, or at a number of government schools over the duration of the semester).

In the Australian Capital Territory, enrolment and attendance data were collected through the electronic school management system at the school. For primary school attendance data, teachers recorded student attendance daily (to the level of half-day attendance), and the absence data were aggregated at the end of each term, entered in the school management system and swept into the central database. Secondary school attendance data were recorded at each teaching period, entered into the school electronic system and then swept into the central database. Students whose Indigenous status was recorded as unknown have been included as Non-Indigenous when calculating Indigenous/Non-Indigenous attendance rates. Students who moved schools during the collection period were tracked via the Central Administration System and their attendance was derived by possible days attended.

Three new absence codes have been added to schools absence programs for recording absences in relation to the H1N1 virus. These additional absence codes will be made available until the virus threat is no longer present. This information is very important for reporting purposes and also ensures that any student absences relating to the H1N1 virus receives the appropriate recognition, particularly for assessment considerations. Students will be marked absent in the normal manner, when parents have decided to keep the students at home because of a H1N1 threat.

Absences with and without parental approval, truanting and suspensions are counted as absences. Absences due to work experience, excursions and alternative sanctioned programs are not counted as absences.

Inclusion/exclusion

In New South Wales, data were for full-time, Years 1–10 students only. All government school students in Years 1–10 are regarded as full-time. All schools must submit a return, except those classified as schools for specific purposes (SSP), intensive English centres (IEC), or distance education schools/centres (DEC). Students with Indigenous status of 'unknown/not provided' are included under 'all students'.

For Victoria, the figures for Years 1–10 include students in primary, secondary and combined primary and secondary schools.

In Queensland, absences were collected from each school at which the student had an active enrolment. Attendance was calculated for full-time students only, therefore students enrolled at multiple schools were excluded from the calculation.

In South Australia, the data include students who were enrolled during Semester 1, regardless of school, and who were active or had left at the time of the Term 3 census. The

calculation includes full-time students (≥0.89 FTE) in Years 1–10 and Years 1–10 ungraded students in all South Australian government schools. Indigenous attendance rates include students indicated as being of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander origin. Non-Indigenous attendance rates include all other students.

In Western Australia, schools for specific purposes were included, students enrolled in intensive English centres were included in data for their host schools and students in hospital schools or detention centres were counted in their home school as undertaking an alternative educational activity and were not counted as absent. Data for students in migrant detention centres, hostels or refugee camps were not included.

In Tasmania, students in distance education centres and detention centres were excluded. In the Northern Territory, special schools are included, as are special education annexes reported as part of schools. Some hospital students and intensive language students are included as part of a school. Year 10 students in senior colleges are included in the data. Students who attended the Northern Territory School of Music or the Northern Territory Language Centre are excluded (dual enrolments). Distance education centres (including Schools of the Air and the Northern Territory Open Education Centre) are excluded as attendance is not recorded. Remand students were excluded, as remand schools cannot provide identifiable student level information due to the privacy principles of the *Juvenile Justice Act 1987*.

In the Australian Capital Territory, absences were collected from each school at which the student had an active enrolment. There were no students enrolled at more than one ACT public school during the collection period. Students in intensive English centres and schools for specific purposes were included.

Ungraded students

There was variation in the treatment of ungraded students across the jurisdictions.

In New South Wales, ungraded students in mainstream schools were classified as either primary or secondary according to their level of education. Students enrolled in schools for specific purposes were not included in the absence collections.

In Victoria, ungraded figures include students in special schools only and they are classified as primary or secondary according to their age. Primary Ungraded are classified as < 12 years of age, while Secondary Ungraded are classified as >=12 years of age as at 1 July.

In Queensland, from 2012, ungraded students were recorded in their age-specific year levels.

In South Australia, ungraded includes full-time students who were enrolled in Years 1–10 special classes on the basis of disability, personal and other health care needs, or due to intensive English support needs. Expected age for each year level is provided to schools as a guide, however ability is taken into account in assigning to ungraded year levels.

In Western Australia, ungraded secondary students are assigned to 'ungraded secondary' category.

In Tasmanian government schools, ungraded students were assigned to a grade based on age or ability.

In the Northern Territory, students were allocated to a grade by the school, based on a student's age or current level of schooling. In situations where a student had recently enrolled and a grade had not yet been determined, or the school was unable to allocate a specific

year level, e.g. the student had special needs or participated in an intensive English program, they were allocated to ungraded primary or ungraded secondary by the school. The attendance for these students was reported under Ungraded Primary or Ungraded Secondary based on this identifier.

In the Australian Capital Territory, special needs students were assigned a year level and their attendance data were included in the year level calculation, i.e. there were no ungraded students in the public school system.

Part-day attendance

In New South Wales, only full-day absences were centrally collected and reported in the attendance measures.

In Victoria, both full and half-day absences were collected.

In Queensland, full-day and half-day absences were included in the attendance rates. Schools were required to mark students on the roll as either present or absent from their educational program at least twice daily, once in the morning and once in the afternoon, which directly informed how a student's attendance was recorded in the OneSchool system. Days absent were recorded in the OneSchool system as morning, afternoon or all-day absences.

In South Australia, full and half-day absences counted towards absence rates. Part-day absences, i.e. late arrivals and early departures were not included as absences, therefore are counted as attendance.

In Western Australia, attendance/absence data in primary schools were recorded on a half-day basis. In secondary schools data were initially recorded on a period basis and were converted to half-days. All attendance rate calculations were based on half-days.

Students may enrol in one school but may attend at multiple settings through a formal arrangement.

In Tasmanian government schools, any absence for students in Years 1–10 was recorded in two half-day sessions or in a single whole-day session. Part-day absence was not included in Tasmanian attendance data.

In the Northern Territory, if a student attended school for 50 per cent of the day or more, they were classified as present for the day. If the student attended less than half a day, they were classified as absent. Primary schools generally mark attendance twice daily, secondary schools for every period, and other schools to suit their operational requirements. All variations were converted to half-day attendance.

In the Australian Capital Territory, primary school students were recorded in the class roll as either present or absent from their educational program at least twice daily. Half-day absences were either morning or afternoon. In secondary school (Years 7–10) student attendance was recorded for every teaching session during the day in the school management system.

Students attending multiple settings as part-time attendees were included in the analysis. The number of days attended by each student was calculated as the difference between the maximum possible days equivalent to FTE and the aggregate number of full-day and half-day absences at multiple schools.

Methodology for calculation

In New South Wales government schools, the attendance rate was calculated as follows:

Attendance equals (1 minus absences divided by enrolled days) multiplied by 100, where:
- absences equals 'all full day absences for the period in question'
- enrolled days equals 'enrolments multiplied by days open'
- enrolments equals 'all students Years 1–10 enrolled at any time during the period'
- days open equals 'any day that the school was open for teaching during the period'
- period equals 'Semester 1 comprised of Term 1 and Term 2'.

In Victoria, the data represented the number of actual full-time equivalent 'student days' attended in Semester 1 2012 as a percentage of the total number of possible student days attended over that period.

In Queensland, the attendance data (from the OneSchool system) were used to determine for each student the number of days it was possible for the student to attend in Semester 1. This calculation was based on analysis of the school calendar together with the student's enrolment and exit dates. Only school days were counted, with local holidays and public holidays being removed. The totals of the full and half-day absences for each student were calculated and then subtracted from the days possible to arrive at the number of days in attendance at each school. The attendance rate calculation was based on information for all full-time students enrolled in Years 1–10 at a government school.

In South Australia, an absence rate is calculated by aggregating the number of days of absence (including aggregating half-days) and dividing by the aggregated number of 'potential days of attendance', based on the student enrolled days. Rates are rounded to the nearest whole number, therefore rounding error should be considered if comparing to decimal precision figures or comparing rounded absence and attendance rates.

In Western Australia, the attendance data were aggregated from individual student data using the enrolment commencement and cessation dates and based on available half-days minus half-day absences, divided by the available half-days, multiplied by 100.

For Tasmanian government school students, the attendance rates were calculated for all students on a full-time equivalent basis by the following method: potential days at school minus number of days absent divided by potential days at school. The number of days absent for each student is counted at student level. The number of potential days absent for each student is calculated at school level, i.e. all students enrolled in the reference period are assumed to have had the opportunity to attend school for the whole reference period.

In the Northern Territory, the attendance rate was calculated as follows:
Each enrolment on each day was counted as a *student attendance day* if 50 per cent or more of the expected sessions were attended by a student. *Total actual student attendance days* was calculated for each cohort of students (e.g. Year 3 girls) by summing the *student attendance days* across the time period. Each enrolment on each day was counted as an *expected attendance day* (considering enrolment date and departure date of each student). *Total expected attendance days* was calculated for each cohort of students (e.g. Year 3 girls) by summing the *expected attendance days* across the time period. *Total actual student attendance days* divided by *total expected attendance days* derives the attendance rate for each cohort.

In Australian Capital Territory primary schools, the number of days attended by each student was calculated as the difference between the total number of days possible to attend and the aggregate number of full-day (1.0) and half-day (0.5) absences. In high schools, the aggregate number of days absent for each student was generated by dividing the number of sessions absent by the number of teaching sessions per day and totalling the days it was possible to attend in Semester 1. The number of days attended by each student was calculated as the difference between the total number of days possible to attend and the aggregate number of days absent (or part thereof). The average student attendance rate for each year level was generated by dividing the total number of days attended by all students within the year level by the total number of days possible, expressed as a percentage.