Interpreting school profile data

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

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

School comments

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

School facts

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

School sector

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

School type

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

Year range

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

Total enrolments

Enrolments are counted in two ways. Firstly, through a head count of students and, secondly, through full-time equivalent enrolments of students. The total enrolment

figure uses the head count method and includes both full-time and part-time enrolments.

Location

Four categories of geographic location are used to describe school locations: metropolitan, provincial, remote or very remote. A 'metropolitan' area is the area in each state or territory within close proximity to its capital city; 'provincial' is an administration division within a state or territory; 'remote' is an area considered spatially distant from the capital city of that state or territory; and 'very remote' is an area considered spatially very distant from the capital city. More specific definitions are provided by the Australian Bureau of Statistics.

School staff

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

Teaching staff

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

Non-teaching staff

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

Full-time equivalent staff

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

School finances

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

Student background

A summary of student background data is provided in this section. Student background data is represented by a value assigned to each school on the Index of Community Socio-educational Advantage (ICSEA). ICSEA is a measure that enables fair and meaningful comparisons of the performance in literacy and numeracy of students in a given school with that of schools serving students from

similar backgrounds. It has been developed specifically for the *My School* website for the purpose of identifying schools serving statistically similar student populations.

Student background is also represented in the student distribution table. The table divides the school's student population into four general quarters by a measure of their socio-educational advantage. This measure is determined by students' family backgrounds and other characteristics. This gives contextual information about the composition of the student population.

Further information on ICSEA can be found on the *About ICSEA* Fact Sheet and in the *Guide to understanding 2012 Index of Community Socio-educational Advantage values*, available on the *More information* page.

Students

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

The student attendance rate is also displayed here. This data is collected by schools and supplied for an agreed comparative period during the 2012 school year. The student attendance rate is the total (aggregated) attendance rate across Year levels 1 to 10 for

the relevant school. It refers to the number of actual student days attended during the period as a percentage of the number of possible student days during the period. Definitions and method of collection may vary across states and territories.

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

Vocational Education and Training in Schools

A summary of student enrolment numbers in Vocational Education and Training in Schools (VETiS) and School-based apprenticeships is provided on a school's profile page where relevant. For these schools, additional detailed VETiS information has been added this year. This page displays the number of course enrolments and qualifications completed for students, displayed by qualification level and (if available) industry area.

VET in Schools programs are undertaken by students as part of the senior secondary certificate and in some states in Year 10. The programs provide a nationally recognised qualification within the Australian Qualifications Framework.

While students can commence VETiS programs at varying points during secondary schooling years, the outcomes are measured and reported in the senior years. VETiS focuses on providing general and specialised skills for work in particular industry sectors. VET courses are offered in schools and colleges, at community centres, in TAFE institutes and other registered training organisations.

In these organisations VET may be provided off-the-job and/or in a workplace environment. Workplace training is a significant part of all apprenticeships and traineeships. Caveat information is provided on the website to account for any differences in reporting the VETiS measures across states and territories.

A school-based apprenticeship or traineeship is a program under which students combine paid part-time employment with training towards a nationally accredited VET qualification under the Australian Qualifications Framework and other school studies. Students completing an apprenticeship can receive a senior school certificate and credits toward a vocational qualification. Depending on the pattern of study, an Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR) can be achieved.

Senior secondary outcomes

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

- awarding of senior secondary certificate;
- completion of senior secondary school; and
- post-school destinations.

Data on senior secondary outcomes is provided by the state and territory Australasian Curriculum, Assessment and Certification Authorities (ACACA). Caveats are provided to indicate where measures are not directly comparable between states and territories.

Post-school destinations information reports the proportions of graduating year students who gained university placements (excluding those who deferred a tertiary placement), engaged in TAFE/vocational study, or commenced employment.

It is important to note that not all states and territories currently collect information on post-school destinations. Currently Post-school destination data is published only for schools in Victoria and Western Australia, and government schools in the Australian Capital Territory and Queensland, and are not directly comparable.