

Chapter 4: Enrolment and Attendance

This chapter reports on student enrolment, attendance, and apparent retention in 2025, using the nationally agreed key performance measures (KPMs) for schooling specified in the Measurement Framework for Schooling in Australia.

4.1 School enrolment rates

Key Facts

- At the 2021 Australian Census of Population and Housing, the national enrolment rate for 6–15-year-olds was 99.3%. Enrolment rates were 99.0% or higher in all states and territories except the NT, which had an enrolment rate of 98.6%.
- Data from the National Schools Statistics Collection indicates that in 2025, the proportion of 6–15-year-olds enrolled in school in Australia was 98.7% – up 0.1% from 2024, but down from 99.0% in 2021.

This section reports on the number of students enrolled, as a proportion of the Australian population in the corresponding age group, as a KPM for schooling.¹ The KPM is specified as the number of students aged 6–15 years enrolled in school, expressed as a proportion of the 6–15-year-old population. As this approximates the age range of students for whom schooling is compulsory, the enrolment rate for this group is close to 100%.

Key Performance Measure 1(a)

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

Data for this KPM is drawn from the Australian Census of Population and Housing (Census).² At the most recent Census (2021), the national enrolment rate for 6–15-year-olds was 99.3%. Enrolment rates were 99.0% or higher in all states and territories except the NT, which had an enrolment rate of 98.6%. At approaching 100%, KPM 1(a) provides evidence that longstanding policies for universal access to schooling and for compulsory education for this age group are implemented in practice.

Before 2019, an annual measure for the enrolment KPM, based on the National Schools Statistics Collection (NSSC), was also reported. From 2019, this measure was deleted as a measure of the KPM because of statistical inconsistencies (differences in enrolment definitions and administrative counting practices across sectors and jurisdictions). However, data drawn from this source is reported in the National Report on Schooling data portal. Based on this measure, the national enrolment rate for 6–15-year-olds in 2025 was 98.7% – up 0.1 percentage point from 2022–2024, but down from 99.0% in 2021.

¹ Section 2.1 of this report outlines the structure of Australian schooling, including age requirements for compulsory enrolment in school for children and teenagers living in each of the states and territories. Section 2.3 provides data on the number of students enrolled by school sector, by school level, by state and territory, and over time.

² The Census of Population and Housing is Australia's largest statistical collection undertaken by the ABS. It is conducted every 5 years.

Table 4.1 shows this KPM for the Census years 2016 and 2021; and the annual measure based on the NSSC. Data disaggregated by state and territory, and other disaggregations for the last 4 Census years is available in the National Report on Schooling data portal.

Table 4.1: Proportion of the population aged 6–15 years enrolled in school, Australia, 2015–2025

	KPM 1(a) Proportion of 6–15-year-olds enrolled in school, Australia (%) (Census of population and housing)	Number of children aged 6–15 years enrolled in school (NSSC)	Population, Australia (aged 6–15 years)	Proportion of 6–15-year-olds enrolled in school, Australia (%)
2015	–	2,930,612	2,919,394	100.4
2016	99.4	2,974,656	2,970,505	100.1
2017	–	3,022,905	3,024,364	100.0
2018	–	3,071,847	3,081,581	99.7
2019	–	3,131,591	3,143,378	99.6
2020	–	3,174,506	3,196,673	99.3
2021	99.3	3,198,158	3,229,459	99.0
2022	–	3,215,223	3,259,377	98.6
2023	–	3,242,001	3,287,156	98.6
2024	–	3,260,497	3,306,775	98.6
2025	–	3,274,994	3,317,382	98.7

Note: NSSC enrolment data for a state or territory include students who reside in other jurisdictions and cross state and territory boundaries to attend school. These students are counted in the population (ERP) of the jurisdiction in which they usually reside, not of the jurisdiction where they attend school. This allows enrolment rates to sometimes exceed 100%, and, in the case of ACT, to significantly exceed 100%.

Sources: ABS, Australian Census of Population and Housing, 2016, 2021; ABS, *Schools*, 2015–2025; ABS, National, state and territory population June 2025 (release date 18/12/2025).

4.2 Student attendance

Key Facts:

In Australia in 2025:

- The attendance rate for students in Years 1–10 was 88.8%, up from 88.3% in 2024.
- The student attendance level (the percentage of students with attendance at or above 90 per cent) was 62.1%, up from 59.8% in 2024.
- Attendance rates and attendance levels:
 - increased with the level of socio-educational advantage of the school
 - were higher among students in major cities than in remote areas
 - were lower among students from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander backgrounds than for non-Indigenous students.

Between 2024 and 2025, increases in attendance rates and attendance levels were smaller for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students than for non-Indigenous students. This resulted in a widening of the gaps between attendance rates and attendance levels of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and non-Indigenous students.

While student attendance rates and attendance levels were higher in 2025 than in 2022–2024, they have not returned to pre-COVID levels. In 2019, the national attendance rate was 91.4% and the attendance level was 73.1%.

Like enrolment rates, the national KPMs for attendance in the Measurement Framework for Schooling in Australia 2025 relate to students in the compulsory years of schooling. However, attendance measures are specified in terms of school year (Years 1–10) rather than by student age. Where KPM 1(a) reports on the proportion of children enrolled in school, KPMs 1(b) and 1(c) report on the proportion of available time that students spend at school once enrolled.

Key Performance Measure 1(b)

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

Key Performance Measure 1(c)

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

All school sectors in all states and territories use a common reference period – Semester 1 in each school year – for the collection of attendance data for national reporting. This is consistent with the [National Standards for Student Attendance Data Reporting](#), which came into operation for the 2014 data collection period and onwards.³

Attendance rates

Table 4.2 reports KPM 1(b) by state and territory and school sector for 2025. The average school attendance rate for Years 1–10 across Australia in 2025 was 87.6% for government schools, 90.5% for Catholic schools, 91.5% for independent schools and 88.8% for schools overall.

Table 4.2: Student attendance rates, Years 1–10, by state/territory and school sector, Australia, 2025 (%)

State/territory	NSW	Vic	Qld	SA	WA	Tas	NT	ACT	Australia
Government	88.2	87.8	87.3	88.1	86.9	85.8	74.4	88.7	87.6
Catholic	91.4	89.8	90.7	90.2	90.9	89.3	80.8	89.5	90.5
Independent	91.7	91.9	91.0	91.1	91.5	91.1	85.7	91.1	91.5
All	89.5	88.8	88.6	89.1	88.3	87.3	76.9	89.4	88.8

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

Source: ACARA, National Student Attendance Data Collection.

The average attendance rate for Years 1–10 in 2025 exceeded 85% in all states and territories except the NT, where, as in previous years, the much lower average attendance rate (58.3%) for the high proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students led to an average rate for all students of 76.9%.

There was little difference in the national average attendance rate for girls (88.9%) and boys (88.7%) in 2025. Average attendance rates were highest in major cities (89.8%) and lowest in very remote areas (65.1%).⁴ As in previous years, a common characteristic across all states and territories was lower average attendance rates in Years 7–10 than in Years 1–6. At the national level in 2025, the average attendance rate for Years 7–10 was 86.5% compared with 90.4% for Years 1–6.

Between 2024 and 2025, attendance rates increased in all states and territories except for Western Australia, where there was a slight decline of 0.1 percentage point. Increases ranged from 0.2 percentage points in Victoria and the Northern Territory to 0.9 percentage points in New South Wales.

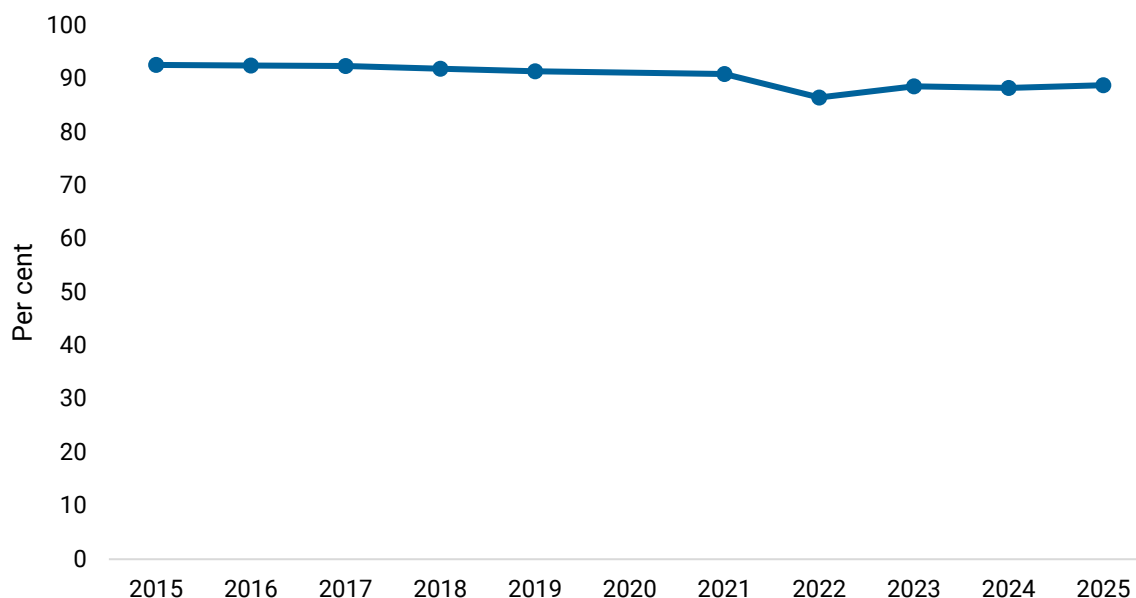
Student attendance rates from 2015 to 2025 are shown in Figure 4.1. After a 4.4 percentage point decrease from 2021 to 2022 – which was a result of the impact of the COVID-19 Omicron variant, high Influenza season outbreaks and floods in certain regions across Australia – student attendance rates across Australia increased by 2.1 percentage points nationally in 2023 before a small decline in 2024. While student attendance rates were higher in 2025 than in 2022–2024, they have not returned to pre-COVID levels.

³ The NSW government sector implemented the national standards in 2018. Attendance rates for NSW (and hence for Australia) for 2018 onward are not fully comparable to previous years, due to changes in the calculation method for NSW government schools in 2018.

⁴ Student attendance rates disaggregated by year level, gender and geolocation are available in the National Report on Schooling data portal, [Student Attendance](#) data set.

The [Key Performance Measures Dashboard](#) in the National Report on Schooling data portal reports a downward trend in student attendance rates over the period 2015–2025 of -0.5 percentage points per year. Further analysis of reasons for absences is required to determine the reason for this decline.

Figure 4.1: Student attendance rates, Years 1–10, Australia, 2015–2025 (%)



Note: See note for Table 4.2.

Attendance rates for NSW and Australia for 2018 onward are not fully comparable to previous years, due to changes in the calculation method for NSW government schools in 2018. Attendance data for 2021 to 2024 in NSW is not comparable with previous years due to changes to the attendance calculations for government schools to align with the revised 2020 National Standards for student attendance data reporting.

School attendance data for 2020 has not been published due to inconsistencies in the data as a result of the varying health advice and schooling arrangements across the country in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The inconsistencies in data collection have now been addressed through national agreement by schools and systems. However, the impact of the pandemic on the operation of individual schools varied considerably.

Source: ACARA, National Student Attendance Data Collection.

Table 4.3 reports KPM 1(b) by school sector, for 2015–2025. After small declines in national attendance rates in all sectors in 2024 (0.3 percentage points nationally), attendance rates increased by 0.5 percentage points nationally in 2025, with increases of 0.5 percentage points in government and independent schools and 0.4 percentage points in Catholic schools.

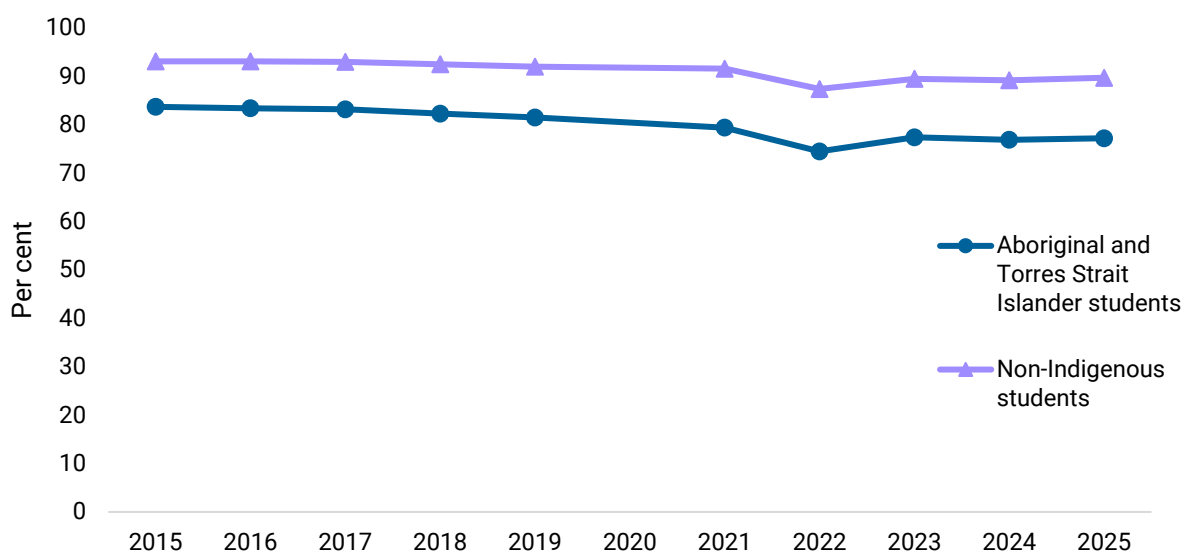
Table 4.3: Student attendance rates, Years 1–10, by school sector, Australia, 2015–2025 (%)

School sector	Government	Catholic	Independent	All
2015	92.0	93.6	93.9	92.6
2016	91.9	93.6	93.8	92.5
2017	91.8	93.4	93.7	92.4
2018	91.3	92.9	93.5	91.9
2019	90.7	92.4	93.1	91.4
2020	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
2021	90.0	92.3	93.0	90.9
2022	85.6	87.9	88.8	86.5
2023	87.5	90.3	91.2	88.6
2024	87.1	90.1	91.0	88.3
2025	87.6	90.5	91.5	88.8

Note: See notes for Figure 4.1.

Source: ACARA National Student Attendance Data Collection.

At a national level, the increase in attendance rates for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students between 2024 and 2025 (0.3 percentage points) was slightly smaller than that for non-Indigenous students (0.5 percentage points). This increased the national gap in attendance rates by 0.2 percentage points to 12.4 percentage points in 2025.

Figure 4.2: Student attendance rates, Years 1–10, Australia, by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander status, 2015–2025 (%)

Note: See notes for Figure 4.1.

Source: ACARA National Student Attendance Data Collection.

Table 4.4 shows comparative attendance rates for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous students in Years 1–10 by state and territory, and the gaps between them, in 2015, 2024 and 2025.⁵ In all 3 years, above average gaps in attendance rates were recorded in the Northern Territory, Western Australia, and South Australia.

Between 2015 and 2025, the gap between attendance rates of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and non-Indigenous students widened in all states and territories. At a national level, the gap widened by 3.0 percentage points. The largest increases in the attendance gap were in the Northern Territory (9.6 percentage points) and Western Australia (4.7 percentage points).

In Western Australia, attendance rates among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students decreased by 0.7 percentage points between 2024 and 2025, resulting in a 0.6 percentage point increase in the gap in attendance rates. In the Northern Territory, there was no change in attendance rates among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students between 2024 and 2025, while attendance rates among non-Indigenous students increased by 0.2 percentage points, resulting in a slight increase in the gap in attendance rates in the Northern Territory.

In all other states and territories, attendance rates among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students increased between 2024 and 2025. Increases ranged from 0.1 percentage point in Queensland to 1.2 percentage points in South Australia. These increases resulted in reductions in the gap in attendance rates in Victoria (0.1 percentage point), Tasmania (0.4 percentage points) and South Australia (0.5 percentage points).

Geographic differences in attendance rates were much more marked for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students than for non-Indigenous students. For non-Indigenous students, the average attendance rate in 2025 was 90.1% in major cities, 88.7% in remote areas and 86.9% in very remote areas. Among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, attendance rates were 80.4% in major cities, 66.6% in remote areas and 54.2% in very remote areas. This results in a difference of 9.7 percentage points between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and non-Indigenous students in major cities, 22.1 percentage points in remote areas, and 32.7 percentage points in very remote areas.⁶

The average attendance rate for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students was lower for older year groups. In 2025, the average attendance rate for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students was 81.1% for Years 1–6, compared to 71.3% for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in Years 7–10.

⁵ Changes in the gaps in attendance rates and attendance levels over time should be interpreted with caution. Over the past decade, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student cohort has increased at a higher proportional rate than the non-Indigenous cohort. As a result, observed changes in the attendance gap may partly reflect the increase in the number of students identifying as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, rather than true shifts in attendance behaviour. The ABS (2025) has recently updated population estimates of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population, increasing the count of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the Census, noting that less than half (43.5%) of this increase can be accounted for by demographic factors (births, deaths and migration) with the remainder due to other factors, including changes in the propensity of people to identify as an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander person. For further information refer to: <https://www.pc.gov.au/closing-the-gap-data/explain/population-revisions/>.

⁶ National Report on Schooling data portal, [Student Attendance](#) data set.

Table 4.4: Student attendance rates, Years 1–10, by state and territory and Indigenous status, Australia, 2015, 2024 and 2025 (%)

	NSW	Vic	Qld	SA	WA	Tas	NT	ACT	Australia
2015									
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students	86.9	87.8	85.7	81.4	77.1	88.5	70.9	86.5	83.7
Non-Indigenous students	93.2	93.5	92.9	92.4	93.1	92.1	92.3	92.9	93.1
All students	92.8	93.4	92.3	91.9	92.0	91.8	83.5	92.7	92.6
Gap: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander/non-Indigenous students (percentage points)	6.3	5.7	7.2	11.0	16.0	3.6	21.4	6.4	9.4
2024									
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students	79.8	79.4	78.7	75.8	69.8	81.5	58.3	79.2	76.9
Non-Indigenous students	89.4	88.8	89.1	89.2	89.9	87.5	89.2	88.9	89.2
All students	88.6	88.6	88.1	88.4	88.4	86.8	76.7	88.6	88.3
Gap: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander/non-Indigenous students (percentage points)	9.5	9.4	10.4	13.4	20.1	6.0	30.9	9.7	12.3
2025									
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students	80.6	79.7	78.8	77.0	69.2	82.4	58.3	80.0	77.2
Non-Indigenous students	90.3	89.0	89.6	89.9	89.9	88.0	89.4	89.7	89.7
All students	89.5	88.8	88.6	89.1	88.3	87.3	76.9	89.4	88.8
Gap: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander/non-Indigenous students (percentage points)	9.7	9.3	10.9	12.9	20.7	5.5	31.0	9.8	12.4
Change in gap 2015–25 (percentage points)	3.4	3.6	3.7	1.9	4.7	1.9	9.6	3.4	3.0
Change in gap 2024–25 (percentage points)	0.1	-0.1	0.4	-0.5	0.6	-0.4	0.1	0.1	0.2

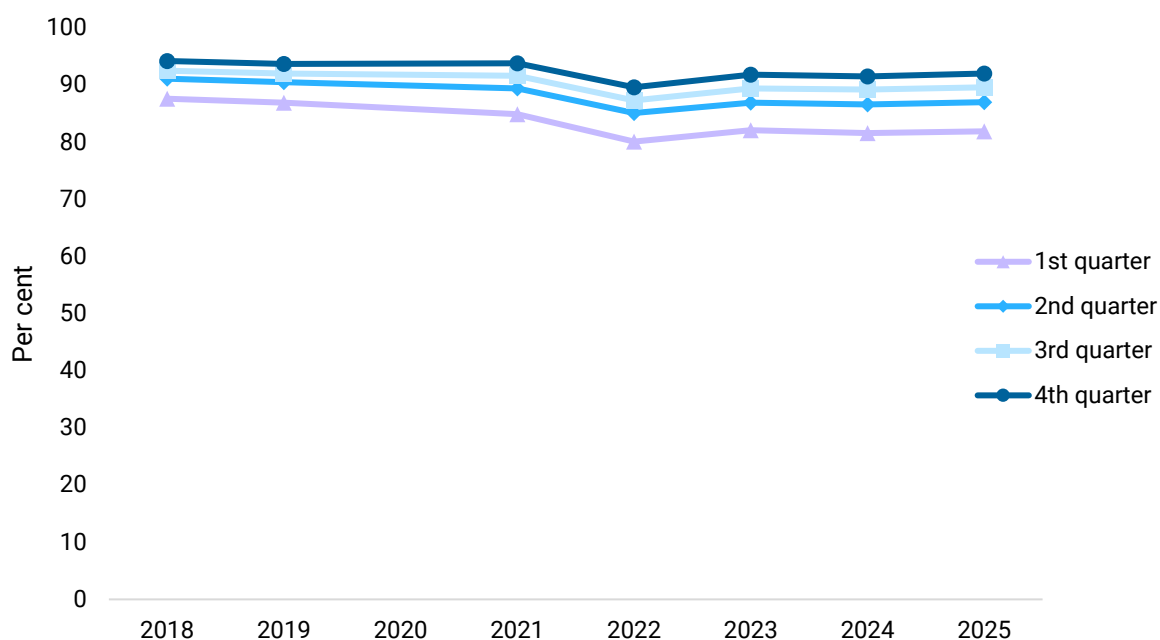
Note: See notes for Figure 4.1. Apparent inconsistencies in percentage differences for subpopulations can occur because values are rounded to one decimal place.

Source: ACARA, National Student Attendance Data Collection.

Attendance rates in 2025 for older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in remote and very remote areas were lower than for older students in other locations, with an average national attendance rate of only 39.1% for Year 10 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in very remote areas, compared to 79.7% for non-Indigenous Year 10 students in very remote areas. As a result, the attendance gap is larger at higher year levels in these areas.

Across all states and territories, attendance rates increased with socio-educational advantage (measured by the Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage (ICSEA)), as shown in Figure 4.3. In 2025, the average attendance rate for schools in the lowest ICSEA quarter was 81.9%, compared to 92.0% for students in schools in the highest ICSEA quarter. This difference was more pronounced in the Northern Territory than in other states and territories, with average attendance rates of 63.6% among students in schools in the lowest ICSEA quarter, compared to 91.6% for students in schools in the highest ICSEA quarter.

Figure 4.3: Student attendance rates, Years 1–10, by ICSEA quarter, Australia, 2018–2025 (%)



Note: See notes for Figure 4.1.

Source: ACARA, National Student Attendance Data Collection.

Attendance levels

The attendance level is a measure of the proportion of full-time students in Years 1–10, whose attendance rate in Semester 1 is greater than or equal to 90%. Several studies have shown that learning outcomes and educational achievement decline markedly when student attendance is below 90%.⁷ KPM 1(c) aims to identify populations or groups for whom attendance is over 90%. Conversely, it identifies groups whose lower levels of attendance may put them at a disadvantage. Table 4.5 shows KPM 1(c) by state and territory, by school sector, for 2025.

⁷ For more information about the impact of student attendance on student outcomes, see: Centre for Education Statistics and Evaluation (2022), *Understanding attendance – A review of the drivers of school attendance and best practice approaches*, NSW Department of Education, education.nsw.gov.au/cese.

Table 4.5: Student attendance levels: proportion of students in Years 1–10 whose attendance rate is equal to or greater than 90%, by state and territory and school sector, Australia, 2025 (%); Change 2024–2025 (percentage points)

	NSW	Vic	Qld	SA	WA	Tas	NT	ACT	Australia
2025									
Government	60.3	55.9	57.8	61.5	59.6	54.7	41.8	61.6	58.3
Catholic	69.8	63.6	66.9	65.2	69.0	61.8	46.8	61.4	66.6
Independent	71.4	72.8	69.5	69.2	71.9	69.8	58.6	68.6	71.1
All	64.2	60.0	61.4	63.7	63.3	58.4	44.9	63.0	62.1
Change 2024–2025									
Government	4.5	-0.5	2.2	3.1	0.0	1.0	0.5	4.8	2.0
Catholic	6.0	1.0	2.1	1.4	0.0	1.4	2.0	3.0	2.8
Independent	3.6	2.5	2.3	0.4	0.2	2.3	2.7	3.3	2.5
All	4.7	0.3	2.3	2.4	0.1	1.3	1.0	4.2	2.3

Note: See notes for Tables 4.2 and Figure 4.1.

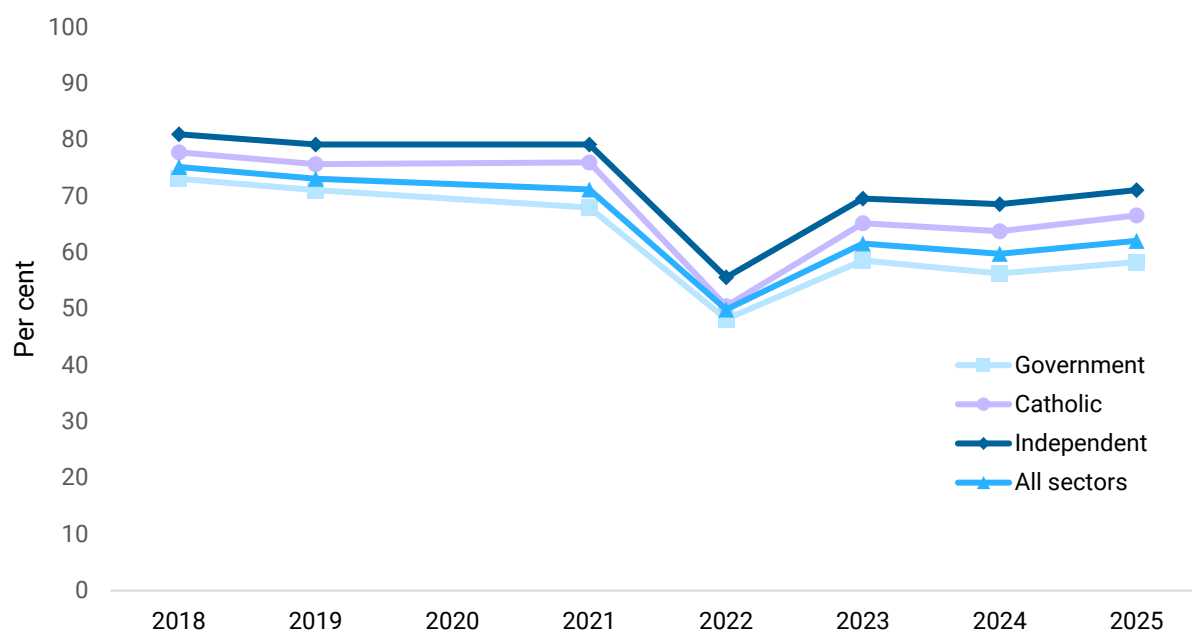
Source: ACARA, National Student Attendance Data Collection.

In 2025, 62.1% of Australian students in Years 1–10 attended school for at least 90% of school days (in Semester 1), up 2.3 percentage points from 59.8% in 2024. Attendance levels increased across all school sectors between 2024 and 2025, with larger increases for non-government schools (2.8 percentage points in Catholic schools and 2.5 percentage points in independent schools) than in government schools (2.0 percentage points).

Between 2024 and 2025, attendance levels increased in all states and territories, with increases ranging from 0.1 percentage point in Western Australia to 4.7 percentage points in New South Wales. However, in Western Australia there was no change in attendance levels in government or Catholic schools, and in Victoria there was a 0.5 percentage point decline in attendance levels in government schools.

Figure 4.4 shows changes in student attendance levels, by school sector, from 2018 to 2025.⁸ The increase in attendance levels in 2025 follows a slight decline in 2024. In 2023, attendance levels rose significantly, after a substantial drop in 2022 resulting from the spread of COVID-19 and its impact on school operations in that year. This included public health advice that students with cold and flu symptoms should not attend school.

Figure 4.4: Student attendance levels: proportion of students in Years 1–10 whose attendance rate is equal to or greater than 90%, by school sector, Australia, 2018–2025 (%)



Notes: See notes for Table 4.2.

Source: ACARA, National Student Attendance Data Collection.

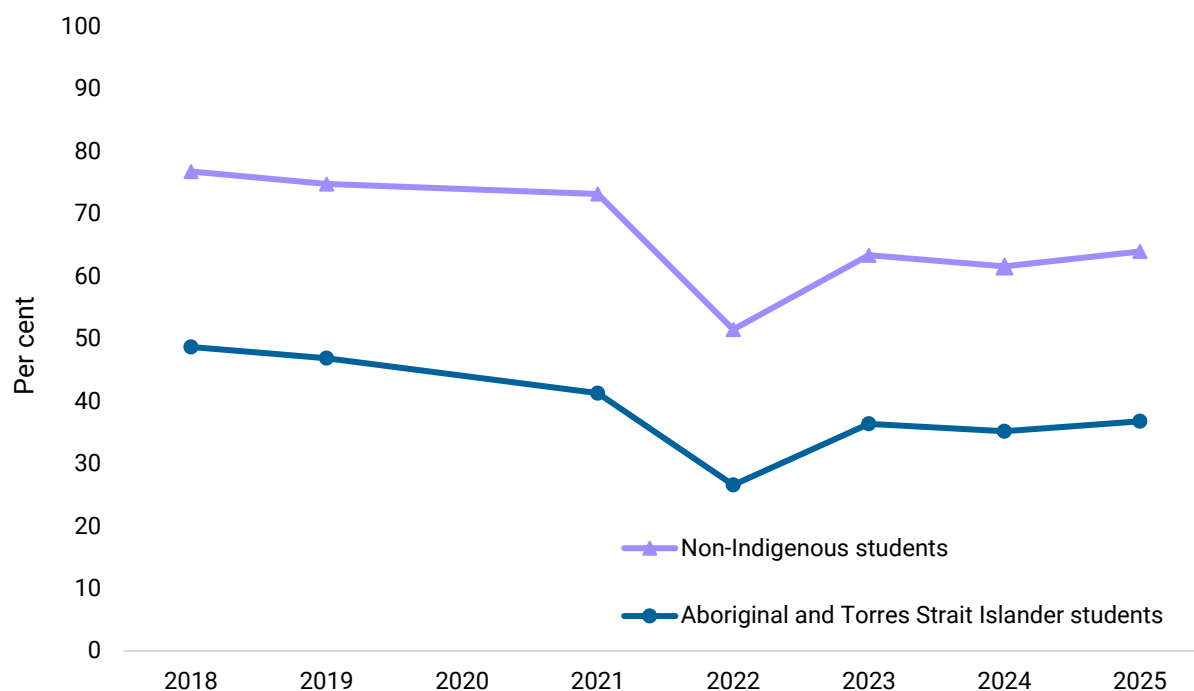
As was the case for student attendance rates, student attendance levels in 2025 are still lower than pre-COVID levels. While attendance levels have increased since 2022, the Key Performance Measures Dashboard in the National Report on Schooling data portal reports a downward trend in student attendance levels over the period 2018–2025 of -2.4 percentage points per annum.

⁸ For NSW government schools, attendance level data is only available from 2018. For this reason, changes in student attendance levels are only described for the 7-year period from 2018 to 2025.

KPM 1(c) is intended to monitor progress in Australia's priority to close the gaps in educational outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people. The measure for 2025 confirms that a much lower proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander than non-Indigenous students were present at school for 90% or more of the expected number of days.

Figure 4.5 compares student attendance levels of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and non-Indigenous students, from 2015 to 2025.⁹

Figure 4.5: Student attendance levels: proportion of students in Years 1–10 whose attendance rate is equal to or greater than 90%, by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander status, Australia, 2018–2025 (%)



Notes: See notes for Table 4.2.

Source: ACARA, National Student Attendance Data Collection.

Table 4.6 shows comparative attendance levels for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous students in Years 1–10 by state and territory, and the gaps between them, in 2018, 2024 and 2025.

In 2025, 36.8% of Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students attended school for 90% of the time or more, with a gap of 27.2 percentage points between the attendance levels of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous students. The gaps in the Northern Territory, Western Australia and South Australia were above the national average.

At a national level, increases in attendance levels between 2024 and 2025 were larger for non-Indigenous students (2.4 percentage points) than for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students (1.6 percentage points), resulting in a 0.8 percentage point increase in the gap in attendance levels since 2024. During this time, the gap in attendance levels widened in all states and territories except for the Australian Capital Territory, with Queensland and New South Wales experiencing the largest increases in the attendance level gap.

⁹ Changes in the gaps in attendance rates and attendance levels over time should be interpreted with caution. For more details please refer to footnote 3 above.

Table 4.6: Student attendance levels: proportion of students in Years 1–10 whose attendance rate is equal to, or greater than 90%, by state and territory and Indigenous status, Australia, 2018, 2024 and 2025 (%)

	NSW	Vic	Qld	SA	WA	Tas	NT	ACT	Australia
2018									
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students	53.9	56.2	50.7	43.4	39.7	63.3	23.0	48.0	48.7
Non-Indigenous students	77.3	77.9	74.8	75.7	79.0	75.4	71.0	73.7	76.8
All students	75.9	77.5	72.8	74.1	76.3	74.3	51.5	72.9	75.2
Gap: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander/non-Indigenous students (percentage points)	23.5	21.7	24.1	32.4	39.3	12.1	48.0	25.6	28.2
2024									
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students	37.1	38.2	37.1	33.8	28.7	44.2	18.5	35.5	35.2
Non-Indigenous students	61.4	60.2	61.5	63.0	66.0	58.7	60.9	59.6	61.6
All students	59.5	59.7	59.1	61.3	63.2	57.1	43.9	58.8	59.8
Gap: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander/non-Indigenous students (percentage points)	24.3	22.0	24.4	29.1	37.2	14.6	42.4	24.1	26.4
2025									
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students	40.7	37.8	37.9	35.8	28.5	44.5	19.0	39.9	36.8
Non-Indigenous students	66.3	60.5	64.0	65.4	66.1	60.2	62.3	63.9	64.0
All students	64.2	60.0	61.4	63.7	63.3	58.4	44.9	63.0	62.1
Gap: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander/non-Indigenous students (percentage points)	25.6	22.7	26.1	29.6	37.7	15.7	43.4	24.0	27.2
Change in gap 2018–2025 (percentage points)	2.1	1.0	2.0	-2.8	-1.6	3.6	-4.6	-1.6	-1.0
Change in gap 2024–2025 (percentage points)	1.3	0.7	1.7	0.5	0.5	1.2	1.0	-0.1	0.8

Note: See notes for Table 4.4.

Source: ACARA, National Student Attendance Data Collection.

Over the 7-year period from 2018 to 2025, attendance levels among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students dropped by 11.9 percentage points, from 48.7% to 36.8%. Attendance levels among non-Indigenous students also declined during this period, from 76.8% in 2018 to 64.0% in 2025 (a 12.8 percentage point decrease). This has resulted in a 1.0 percentage point decrease in the gap in attendance levels since 2018.

4.3 Apparent retention

Key Facts

- Apparent retention rates estimate the progression of students through school over several years through several year levels.
- In 2025:
 - The national apparent retention rate from Year 10 to Year 12 was 81.5%, an increase of 1.6 percentage points from 2024.
 - The apparent retention rate from Year 10 to Year 12 for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students increased by 2.7 percentage points, from 57.0% in 2024 to 59.7%.
 - The gap between Year 10 to Year 12 apparent retention rates for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students compared to non-Indigenous students was 23.2 percentage points, the same as it was in 2015.

Apparent retention rates estimate the progression of students through school over several years through several year levels. They measure the proportion of a year group or cohort that is still enrolled in that cohort after one or more calendar years. These rates are designated as ‘apparent’ because they are based on aggregate enrolment data and do not record the progression of individual students.

It is important to note that apparent retention is not a measure of the proportion of students who commence Year 10 and complete Year 12, but rather a measure of net changes in cohort size over time. Apparent retention rates do not distinguish between students progressing at a ‘normal’ rate of one grade per calendar year and students who repeat a grade or are promoted, thus moving between cohorts; students who choose to adopt flexible study patterns in senior years; or students who join or leave a cohort through migration.

As such, apparent retention rates measure the net change in the size of a cohort as students leave or join it. This provides a measure of student progression for the majority of a year group. This measure is more reliable at the national level than at the state and territory level or sector level, and less reliable for geographic areas with mobile populations and for individual schools.

KPM 1(e) in the Measurement Framework for Schooling in Australia 2020 measures the apparent retention of students from Year 10 to Year 12.

Key Performance Measure 1(e)

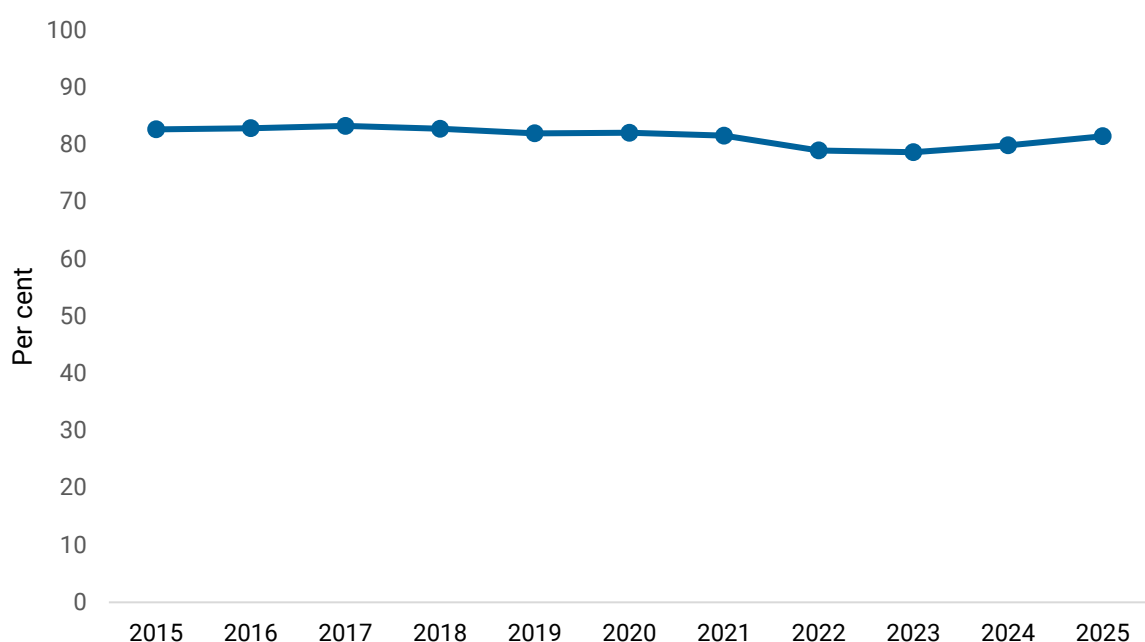
Apparent retention rate from Year 10 to Year 12

The national apparent retention rate from Year 10 to Year 12 for the period from 2015 to 2025 is shown in Figure 4.6.

After an increase of 0.6 percentage points between 2015 and 2017, the national apparent retention rate from Year 10 to Year 12 fell in 2018 and 2019.¹⁰ It then rose by 0.1 percentage point in 2020 before falling by 0.5 percentage points in 2021, 2.6 percentage points in 2022 and 0.3 percentage points in 2023. In 2024, the apparent retention rate rose by 1.2 percentage points to 79.9%, and in 2025 it rose by a further 1.6 percentage points to 81.5%.

The [Key Performance Measures Dashboard](#) in the National Report on Schooling data portal reports a long-term flat/neutral trend in this measure of 0.02 percentage points per annum for the period 2010–2025.

Figure 4.6: Apparent retention rates (uncapped), Year 10 to Year 12, Australia, 2015–2025 (%)



Notes:

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

Since 2015, ABS Schools, has included apparent retention rates that are capped at 100%, as well as the uncapped apparent retention rates reported historically. This report continues to publish uncapped apparent retention rates because, due to student movements and international migration, it is quite possible for a state, school sector or school to have higher enrolments in Year 12 than in Year 10 two years before, resulting in apparent retention rates above 100%. Uncapped rates are more suitable for undertaking time series analysis of the data than capped rates.

Declines in the numbers of full fee-paying overseas students (FFPOS), resulting from the ongoing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on immigration, may have impacted the numerator and/or the denominator for this measure for 2020, 2021 and 2022.

For NSW Government schools: from 2020, students in mainstream support classes (previously excluded from the data) are reported by their underlying grade of enrolment, affecting the calculation of retention rates.

Source: ABS, *Schools*, 2025 and previous releases.

¹⁰ The increase between 2015 and 2017 was preceded by a 3.4 percentage point increase between 2012 and 2015, following the implementation of strengthened participation requirements for 15- and 16-year-olds in 2010. These included the mandatory requirement for all young people to participate in schooling until they complete Year 10, and the requirement to participate full time in schooling or other education, training or employment, or a combination of these activities, until the age of 17. These were implemented progressively in all states and territories between 2006 and 2010.

Sector-specific apparent retention rates should be interpreted with caution, as the rates do not distinguish between students continuing to Year 12 within a sector and students moving between sectors to complete their senior secondary schooling.

Caution is also advised when comparing apparent retention rates between states and territories, as they do not distinguish students progressing from Year 10 to 12 within a state from students moving between jurisdictions or from overseas.

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

- Rates at the state and territory level can be inflated or deflated by interstate migration, including students transferring from one state to another to undertake senior secondary schooling. These movements are not taken into account when calculating rates.
- Differential rates of international immigration, including the temporary entry of overseas students for Years 11 and 12, inflate apparent retention rates in the jurisdictions where these incoming students are concentrated.
- The age distribution of the school population affects the year level (Year 11 or Year 12) to which most students must remain at school in order to meet age-based participation requirements. This varies between states and territories because of historical differences in enrolment requirements and practices. States and territories with younger year cohorts have the potential to achieve relatively high Year 10 to Year 12 apparent retention rates because a higher proportion of their student population is required to remain at school until Year 12.

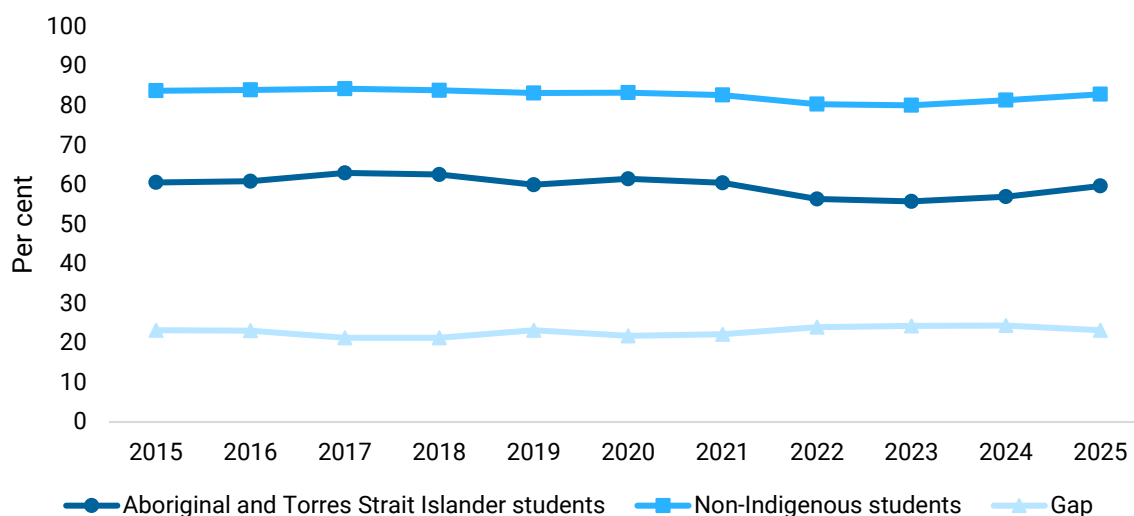
State and territory retention rates are also affected by factors that are independent of schooling, such as differences in prevailing economic circumstances, including youth employment, and the availability and promotion of training and employment pathways that are recognised as approved alternatives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

Figure 4.4 shows this KPM for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and non-Indigenous students for the period 2015–2025. When interpreting these results, it is important to note that changes in apparent retention rates among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students over time may be affected by changes in the number of students who identify (or are identified) as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander.

For Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, the Year 10 to Year 12 apparent retention rate increased from 57.0% in 2024 to 59.7% in 2025. This 2.7 percentage point increase followed a 1.2 percentage point increase in 2023. However, because of the 5.7 percentage point decline in Year 10 to Year 12 retention for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students between 2020 and 2023, there has been a 0.9 percentage point decline in this measure over the ten-year period from 2015 to 2025.

For non-Indigenous students, Year 10 to Year 12 apparent retention rates also decreased by 0.9 percentage points between 2015 and 2025. As a result, the gap between apparent retention rates for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous students was the same in 2025 as it was in 2015 (23.2 percentage points).

Figure 4.7: Apparent retention rates (uncapped), Year 10 to Year 12, by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander status, Australia, 2015–2025 (%)



Notes: See notes for Figure 4.6.

Source: ABS, *Schools*, 2025 and previous releases.

A lower percentage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students than non-Indigenous students proceed to Year 12. However, as noted above, retention rates for ‘all students’ are inflated by students entering the cohort since Year 10, both as permanent migrants and as temporary international students. This also applies to rates for non-Indigenous students, but not to rates for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students who, by definition, are Australian residents. The gap would therefore be smaller if recent immigrants and overseas students were excluded from the Year 12 count.¹¹

In addition to the factors affecting the state-by-state comparison of apparent retention rates, variations between jurisdictions in retention rates for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students may be due to:

- the number and proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students within each population – small numbers in some states and territories can affect results for these jurisdictions
- changes over time in whether individuals identify (or are identified) as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander
- movement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students between states and territories (for example, through scholarship programs for senior schooling)
- the age profile of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student population in relation to age participation requirements
- the extent of training and employment programs that provide alternative options to senior schooling
- the geographic distribution of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population.

Additional data on apparent retention from Year 10 to Year 12 is available in the Key Performance Measures data set and (including for other year groups) the Apparent Retention data set, in the National Report on Schooling data portal.

¹¹ These students are not separately identified in the NSSC. There may be instances of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous students returning from living overseas who were also not counted in the Year 10 cohort 2 years before.