



National Report on Schooling in Australia 2022

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National Report on Schooling in Australia 2022

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Contents

Executive summary	1
Introduction	1
Overview of the report	2
Chapter 1: Introduction	11
1.1 Measurement Framework for Schooling in Australia	12
Chapter 2: Schools and schooling	14
2.1 School structures	14
2.2 School numbers	17
2.3 Student numbers	21
2.4 School students with disability	28
2.5 Staff numbers	32
2.6 Student–teacher ratios	34
Chapter 3: Policies and priorities	36
3.1 National policy context	36
3.2 Educational goals	41
3.3 Developing stronger partnerships	43
3.4 Supporting quality teaching and leadership	46
3.5 Strengthening early childhood education	49
3.6 Building foundational skills in the primary school years	52
3.7 Enhancing middle years development	54
3.8 Supporting senior secondary education	56
3.9 Embedding pathways for learning throughout life and supporting effective transitions	58
3.10 Delivering world-class curriculum and assessment	61
3.11 Supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander learners to reach their full potential	68
3.12 Supporting all young Australians at risk of educational disadvantage	70
3.13 Strengthening accountability and transparency with strong meaningful measures	73
Chapter 4: Enrolment and Attendance	76
4.1 Enrolment rate	76
4.2 Student attendance	78
4.3 Apparent retention	84
Chapter 5: Student Achievement	91
5.1 NAP – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN)	92
5.2 NAP Sample Assessments – Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Literacy	99
5.3 International Assessments – Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA)	101
Chapter 6: Participation in Vocational Education and Training	105
Chapter 7: Participation and attainment in education, training, and work	112
7.1 Participation in education, training, and employment	113
Chapter 8: Student Attainment	118
8.1 Year 12 Certification Rates	119
8.2 Student Attainment	123
Chapter 9: School Funding	127
9.1 Government recurrent funding for school education	129
9.2 School Income	134
9.3 School expenditure	138
Glossary	145
List of shortened forms	155

Executive summary



Introduction

The *National Report on Schooling in Australia 2022* is the 34th annual national report on Australia's school education sector. It has been produced by the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) on behalf of Australian education ministers.

The report highlights progress in 2022 towards the [Alice Springs \(Mparntwe\) Education Declaration](#) released by Australian education ministers in 2019 and is the third National Report on Schooling that has addressed these nationally agreed goals and commitments.

The written report addresses the 11 areas of commitment to action specified in the Alice Springs (Mparntwe) declaration, describes the national policy and reporting context for school education in Australia, and reports against the nationally agreed key performance measures (KPMs) for schooling specified in the [Measurement Framework for Schooling in Australia 2020](#), providing data, analysis and commentary. It also includes other high-level statistical information on Australian schooling in 2022 and for the period 2012–2022 inclusive.

Overview of the report

Chapter 2, 'Schools and schooling', provides information on the status of Australian schooling in 2022, including school, student and teacher numbers and school structures.

In Australia, responsibility for school education rests mainly with the 6 state and 2 territory governments. All states and territories provide for 13 years of formal school education. Primary education, including a foundation year, lasts for 7 years and is followed by secondary education of 6 years.¹ Typically, schooling commences at age 5, is compulsory from age 6 until age 17 (with provision for alternative study or work arrangements in the senior secondary years), and is completed at age 17 or 18. School structures and age requirements in states and territories are summarised in section 2.1.

School numbers are shown in section 2.2. In 2022, the majority (69.7%) of schools were government schools, established and administered by state and territory governments through their education departments or authorities. The remaining 30.3% were non-government schools, mostly associated with religious organisations. Non-government schools are established and operated under conditions determined by state and territory governments through their registration authorities.

Almost two-thirds (64.5%) of school students were enrolled in government schools, 19.7% were in Catholic schools and 15.9% in independent schools.² Section 2.3 reports on numbers of students by school sector, state and territory, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander status. Almost one-quarter of school students (22.5%) received an educational adjustment due to disability. Further details about educational adjustments for students with disability are provided in section 2.4.

School staff numbers are shown in section 2.5. Staff numbers closely reflect enrolments, with 63.1% of school teachers employed in government schools and 36.9% in non-government schools.

The average student to teaching staff ratio was 13.1 students per teacher — a reduction from 13.3 students per teacher in 2021. Student-teacher ratios were lower in independent schools (11.7 students per teacher) compared to Catholic schools (13.6 students per teacher) and government schools (13.4 students per teacher). Section 2.6 reports on student-teacher ratios by school sector, state and territory.

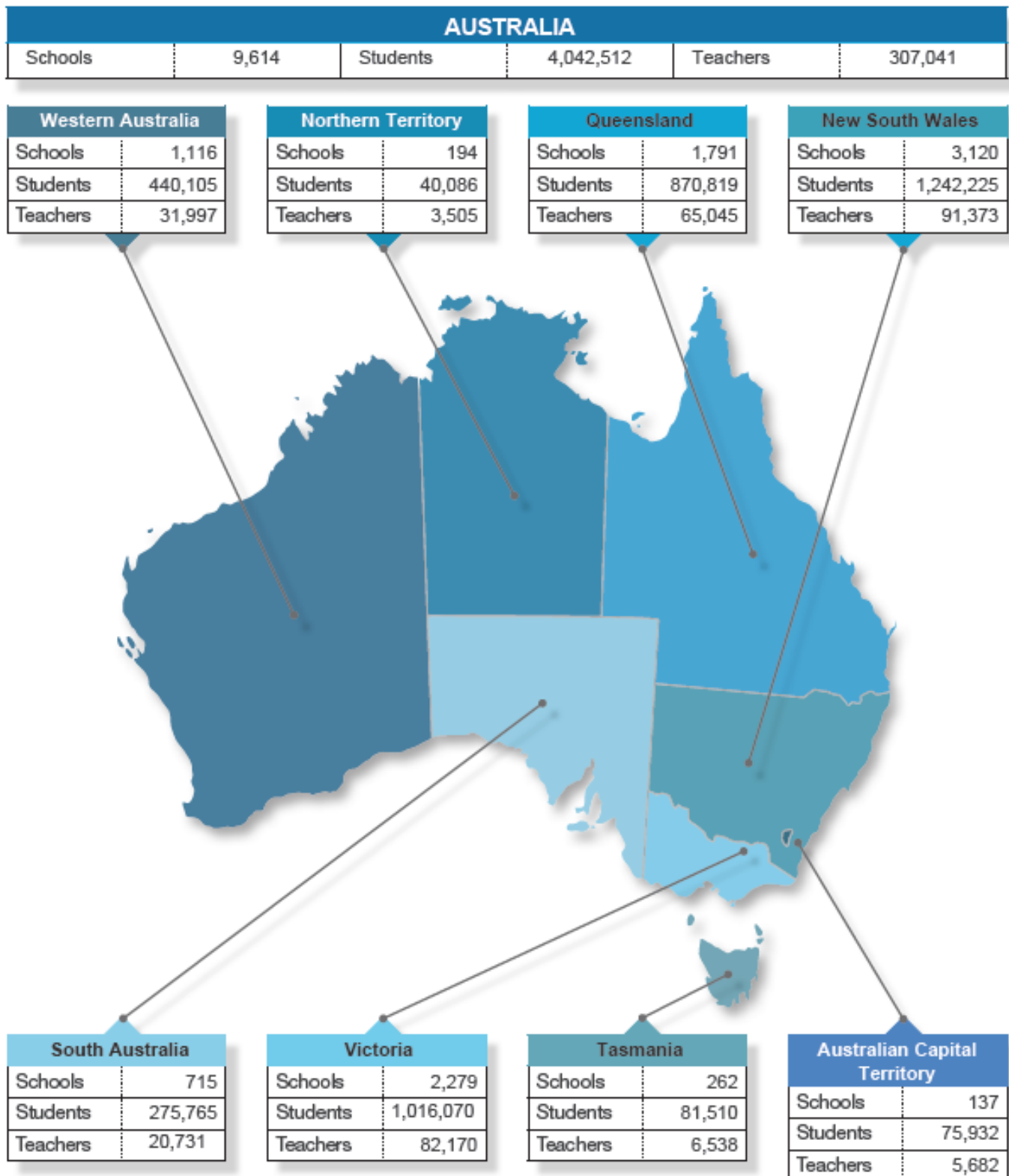
School, student and teacher numbers in 2022 are shown for Australia and by state and territory in Figure 1.

¹ South Australia completed the transition from an 8-year/5-year pattern to a 7-year/6-year pattern in 2022.

² Count of full-time plus part-time students.

Figure 1

Numbers of schools, students and teachers by state and territory, Australia, 2022



Note: Student numbers are individuals (full-time students plus part-time students). Teacher numbers are full-time equivalent (FTE) teaching staff.

Source: ABS, *Schools*, 2022.

Chapter 3, 'Policies and priorities', outlines the national policy context for Australian schooling in 2022 and reports against the commitment to action agreed by Australian education ministers in the *Alice Springs (Mparntwe) Education Declaration*.

This chapter summarises the national policy context for schooling, including the role of the national ministerial forum, the Education Ministers Meeting (EMM), in deciding agreed national policy for education in 2022 and the broader framework within which national decisions for schooling were made.

Section 3.1 lists education ministers' agreed priorities for 2022 and describes the *Alice Springs (Mparntwe) Education Declaration* and the National School Reform Agreement (NSRA) as the prior national agreements shaping school education policy. It also identifies notable initiatives undertaken in 2022.

From 2020, the *Alice Springs (Mparntwe) Education Declaration* replaced the Melbourne Declaration as the ministerial statement of educational goals for young Australians and commitment to action for the coming decade. Ministers agreed that education continue to promote excellence and equity and enable all Australians to become confident and creative individuals, successful learners, and active and informed community members. The Alice Springs (Mparntwe) declaration emphasises the importance of learning throughout life and a renewed commitment to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and cultures. Section 3.2 outlines the educational goals and commitment to action contained in the declaration.

Sections 3.3–3.13 report on national progress in implementing the *Alice Springs (Mparntwe) Education Declaration* commitment to action in 2022 under the 11 headings specified in the declaration. These sections also include activities addressing the 8 national policy initiatives specified in the NSRA and list examples of state and territory initiatives relating to the commitment.

Progress towards the commitment to action reported for 2022 included:

- A focus on student voice, including a commitment of \$10.5 million from the Australian Government in 2022 to a Youth Engagement Model to give young people the opportunity to engage with the policies and programs that impact them.
- A commitment to supporting quality teaching through an agreement to support teacher workforce shortages (National Teacher Workforce Action Plan, 2022), an investment in initial teacher education, and leadership support across a number of states and territories.
- A focus on better understanding and supporting individual student needs, including a \$183 million investment by the Victorian Government to the Middle Years Literacy and Numeracy Support Initiative, providing teaching support to secondary school students who are at risk of finishing school without the literacy and numeracy skills they need for future work or study.
- A commitment to empowering Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students to reach their potential, including embedding culturally responsive teaching practices into education.
- Strong responses by a number of states and territories on emerging issues, such as vaping.

Chapters 4 to 8 report on the performance of Australian schooling in 2022, using the nationally agreed key performance measures (KPMs) for schooling specified in the *Measurement Framework for Schooling in Australia 2020*.

These chapters report on the 20 agreed KPMs scheduled for reporting in 2022. The measures are reported at the national level, and by various breakdowns, such as state and territory, school sector, school year and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander status. For relevant KPMs, time series for the previous 10 years (2012–2021) are also included. Where relevant breakdowns or time series are not reported, they are provided in the [National Report on Schooling data portal](#), as part of extensive statistical information on schooling in Australia, along with technical notes and caveats.

Chapter 4 reports on student enrolment, attendance, and apparent retention. In 2022:

- The proportion of 6–15-year-olds enrolled in school in Australia was 98.6%, down from 99.0% in 2021.
- The attendance rate for students in Years 1-10 declined from 90.9% in 2021 to 86.5%. This decline, which was due to the impact of the COVID-19 Omicron variant, high Influenza season outbreaks and floods in certain regions across Australia, was remarkably consistent across all states/territories and school sectors.
- The national student attendance level (the percentage of students with above 90 per cent attendance) declined from 71.2% in 2021 to 49.9%. The large decline is due to a small shift in attendance, which corresponds to an exaggerated movement in the student attendance level.
- The national apparent retention rate from Year 10 to Year 12 decreased by 2.6 percentage points to 79.0% in 2022. The apparent retention rate from Year 10 to Year 12 for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students decreased by 4.1 percentage points, from 60.5% in 2021 to 56.4% in 2022.

Chapter 5 reports on student achievement in the National Assessment Program (NAP) and International Assessments. Section 5.1 reports on participation and achievement in the National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN). In 2022:

- NAPLAN participation rates were over 95% for Years 3, 5 and 7. Year 9 students had the lowest participation in NAPLAN at 91.7%.
- At least 95% of Year 3 and Year 5 students achieved at or above the national minimum standard for reading, as did 94.2% of Year 7 students and 89.6% of Year 9 students.
- Over 96% of Year 3 students achieved at or above the national minimum standard for writing, as did 92.6% of Year 5 students, 90.6% of Year 7 students and 84.1% of Year 9 students.
- At least 95% of students in years 3, 5 and 9 achieved at or above the national minimum standard for numeracy, as did 92% of Year 7 students.
- At a national level, there were upward long-term trends in the mean scaled scores for reading in Years 3 and 5 and for numeracy in Year 5.

Section 5.2 reports on student achievement in National Assessment Program – Information and Communication Technology Literacy (NAP–ICT). In 2022, the proportion of participating Year 6 students achieving at or above the proficient standard for NAP–ICT literacy was 55%. This was not significantly different to the proportion achieving at or above the standard in four of the previous five assessment cycles but was significantly lower than the proportion for 2011 (62%). The proportion of participating Year 10 students attaining the proficient standard was 46% in 2022. This proportion was significantly lower than that for any previous NAP–ICT assessment cycle.

Section 5.3 reports on student achievement in the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) assessments. In 2022:

- 57% of Australian students achieved scores at or above the proficient standard for reading literacy,
- 51% of Australian students achieved scores at or above the proficient standard for mathematical literacy, and
- 58% of Australian students achieved scores at or above the proficient standard for scientific literacy.
- Across all three domains, average scores for Australian students were higher than the OECD average.
- At the national level, across all three domains, there were no significant differences in average PISA scores between 2015 and 2022.

Chapter 6 reports on participation of young people aged 15-19 in Vocational Education and Training (VET). In Australia in 2022:

- Participation in VET returned to pre-COVID levels, with 26.3% of 15-19-year-olds completing at least one unit of competency at AQF Certificate II or above.
- Almost half (49.8%) of qualifications gained by 15–19-year-olds were at AQF level II and 33.0% were at AQF level III.
- The long-term trend in the proportion of 15–19-year-olds participating in VET was downward, from 29.6% in 2015 to 26.3% in 2022.

Chapter 7 reports on the participation of young people aged 15 to 24 in education and/or work, as measured by the Australian Bureau of Statistics Survey of Education and Work. In Australia in 2022:

- The proportion of 15–19-year-olds who were fully engaged in education, training or work decreased to 88.3%, down from 90.3% in 2021.
- The proportion of 20–24-year-olds who were fully engaged in education, training or work increased to 76.4%, up from 73.0% in 2021. This represents a full recovery to pre-COVID levels.
- The proportion of 17–24-year-olds who had left school and were fully engaged in education, training or work increased to 75.0%, up from 73.9% in 2021. Fluctuations in this measure between 2019 and 2022 were closely related to the effect of COVID 19 on the employment of young people.

Chapter 8 reports on Year 12 certification levels, and levels of educational attainment of young people aged 20 to 24. In 2022:

- The proportion of the Year 12 population that met the requirements of a Senior Secondary Certificate or equivalent was 76.3% – a return to 2020 levels after increasing to 79.1% in 2021.
- Year 12 certification rates still show gaps by location. They were higher in major cities (79.4%) than in inner regional areas (67.6%), outer regional areas (69.2%) and remote/very remote areas (55.5%).
- Year 12 certification was higher for the population living in high socio-economic status areas (82.9%) than those in medium and low socio-economic status areas (75.2% and 69.7% respectively).

Table 1 summarises the national KPMs for 2022 in comparison with 2021, or the most recent calendar year for which comparable data exists. This is expressed as the short-term change to each KPM. For NAP–ICT literacy, the most recent previous calendar year is 2017. For the OECD Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) assessments, the most recent calendar year is 2018. Table 1 also summarises longer-term trends in the movement of KPMs. This data demonstrates that while changes in KPMs from year to year are generally small, successive increments over time may result in measurable long-term trends.

Chapter 9, ‘School funding’, reports data on government spending on Australian schooling and data on school income and capital expenditure.

Chapter 9 outlines intergovernmental funding arrangements for school education, and reports on state and territory and Australian Government expenditure on government and non-government schools. It also summarises data on school income from all sources and capital expenditure on schools.

Schools are funded through a combination of state or territory government funding, Australian Government funding, fees and charges and other parental or private contributions.

In the 2021–22 financial year, total recurrent government funding for schooling was \$78.69 billion (\$22,511 per student in government schools and \$14,032 per student for non-government schools). This was made up of \$53.56 billion (68.1%) from state and territory budgets and \$25.12 billion (31.9%) from the Australian Government (Commonwealth) budget.

Overall, 74.6% (\$58.74 billion) of total recurrent government funding was allocated to government schools and 25.4% (\$19.95 billion) to non-government schools. The bulk of state and territory funding (91.5%) was allocated to government schools, while 61.2% of Australian Government funding was allocated to non-government schools.

Table 1

Key performance measures for schooling, Australia, 2021–2022 and long-term trends

Key Performance Measures	Short-term change			Long-term trend		
	2021 or previous calendar year	2022	Change	Trend period	Average annual change (percentage points)	Trend
1. Student participation						
1(b) Attendance rate: The number of actual full-time equivalent student-days attended by full-time students in Years 1 to 10 in Semester 1 as a percentage of the total number of possible student-days attended in Semester 1 (%)	90.9	86.5	↔	2014–22	-0.6	↓
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 (%)	71.2	49.9	↓	2018–22	-5.3	↓
1(d) NAPLAN participation: Proportion of students participating in NAPLAN in Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 (%)						
Year 3	96.4	96.0	↔	2008–22	-0.1	↔
Year 5	96.6	96.3	↔	2008–22	-0.1	↔
Year 7	95.8	95.2	↔	2008–22	-0.2	↓
Year 9	92.3	91.7	↔	2008–22	-0.3	↓
1(e) Apparent retention rate from Year 10 to Year 12 (%)	81.6	79.0	↔	2010–22	0.2	↑
1(f) Participation of young people in VET including VET in Schools: 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 (%)	27.3	26.3	↔	2015–22	-0.4	↓
1(g) Proportion of 15–19-year-olds in full-time education or training, in full-time work, or both in part-time work and part-time education or training [ABS Survey of Education and Work] (%)	90.3	88.3	↓	2008–22	0.2	↑
1(h) Proportion of 20–24-year-olds in full-time education or training, in full-time work, or both in part-time work and part-time education or training [ABS Survey of Education and Work] (%)	73.0	76.4	↑	2008–22	-0.3	↓
1(i) Proportion of 17–24-year-olds who have left school that are in full-time education or training, in full-time work, or both in part-time work and part-time education or training [ABS Survey of Education and Work] (%)	73.9	75.0	↔	2008–22	-0.2	↔

Table 1 continues on the next page.

Table 1 (continued)

Key performance measures for schooling, Australia, 2021–2022 and long-term trends

Key Performance Measures	Short-term change			Long-term trend		
	2021 or previous calendar year	2022	Change	Trend period	Average annual change (percentage points)	Trend
2. Student Achievement – Literacy						
2(a) Proportion of students achieving at or above the national minimum standard for Reading in Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 (%)						
Year 3 – Band 2 (2008 scale)	95.9	95.5	↔	2008–22	0.2	↑
Year 5 – Band 4 (2008 scale)	95.1	95.0	↔	2008–22	0.3	↑
Year 7 – Band 5 (2008 scale)	93.8	94.2	↔	2008–22	0.0	↔
Year 9 – Band 6 (2008 scale)	89.7	89.6	↔	2008–22	-0.1	↔
2(b) NAPLAN mean scaled scores for Reading in Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 (points on NAPLAN scale)						
Year 3	437.9	437.8	↔	2008–22	2.4	↑
Year 5	511.3	509.7	↔	2008–22	1.8	↑
Year 7	542.3	542.6	↔	2008–22	0.2	↔
Year 9	576.8	577.6	↔	2008–22	0.2	↔
2(c) Proportion of students achieving at or above the national minimum standard for Writing in Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 (%)						
Year 3 – Band 2 (2008 scale)	96.7	96.2	↔	2011–22	0.1	↔
Year 5 – Band 4 (2008 scale)	93.3	92.6	↔	2011–22	0.1	↔
Year 7 – Band 5 (2008 scale)	89.7	90.6	↔	2011–22	0.0	↔
Year 9 – Band 6 (2008 scale)	82.2	84.1	↔	2011–22	0.0	↔
2(d) NAPLAN mean scaled scores for Writing in Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 (points on NAPLAN scale)						
Year 3	425.3	422.1	↔	2011–22	0.9	↔
Year 5	479.9	484.3	↔	2011–22	0.1	↔
Year 7	522.0	529.8	↔	2011–22	0.1	↔
Year 9	550.6	559.9	↔	2011–22	-0.5	↔
2(e) Proportion of students achieving at or above the proficient standard (Level 3) on the OECD PISA combined reading scale (%): 15-year-old students (%) (Comparison year is 2018)						
	59	57	↔	2009–22	NA	NA
3. Student Achievement – Numeracy						
3(a) Proportion of students achieving at or above the national minimum standard for Numeracy in Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 (%)						
Year 3 – Band 2 (2008 scale)	95.4	95.0	↔	2008–22	0.1	↔
Year 5 – Band 4 (2008 scale)	95.0	95.1	↔	2008–22	0.2	↑
Year 7 – Band 5 (2008 scale)	93.2	92.0	↔	2008–22	-0.1	↔
Year 9 – Band 6 (2008 scale)	94.7	95.0	↔	2008–22	0.2	↔

Table 1 continues on the next page.

Table 1 (continued)

Key performance measures for schooling, Australia, 2021–2022 and long-term trends

Key Performance Measures	Short-term change			Long-term trend		
	2021 or previous calendar year	2022	Change	Trend period	Average annual change (percentage points)	Trend
3. Student Achievement – Numeracy						
3(b) NAPLAN mean scaled scores for Numeracy in Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 (points on NAPLAN scale)						
Year 3	402.8	399.8	↔	2008–22	0.8	↑
Year 5	495.2	488.3	↓	2008–22	0.8	↑
Year 7	550.3	546.3	↔	2008–22	0.6	↑
Year 9	587.5	584.4	↔	2008–22	0.4	↔
3(c) Proportion of students achieving at or above the proficient standard (Level 3) on the OECD PISA combined mathematics scale: 15-year-old students (%) (Comparison year is 2018)						
	54	51	↔	2009–22	NA	NA
4. Student Achievement – Science						
4(b) Proportion of students achieving at or above the proficient standard (Level 3) on the OECD PISA combined scientific literacy scale: 15-year-old students (%) (Comparison year is 2018)						
	58	58	↔	2009–22	NA	NA
6. Student Achievement – Information and Communication Technology						
6. Proportion of students achieving at or above the proficient standard in ICT Literacy (%) (Comparison year is 2017)						
Year 6-Level 3 (%)	53.5	55.0	↔	2005–22	0.1	↔
Year 10-Level 4 (%)	54.1	45.9	↓	2005–22	-1.1	↓
7. Student Attainment						
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 [ABS Survey of Education and Work] (%)						
	89.9	90.6	↔	2008–22	0.5	↑
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 [ABS Survey of Education and Work] (%)						
	89.5	90.1	↔	2008–22	0.5	↑

Notes: Where appropriate, measures of short-term change in Table 1 have been tested for statistical significance. Where KPMs are based on Census or administrative data, changes of more than 0.1 percentage points are considered noteworthy/significant.

Long-term trends for each KPM are shown for the period (at least 3 years) over which comparable data is available. To measure long-term trends, a line of best fit is calculated when at least three points are available. The annual change is calculated from the gradient. When the gradient exceeds the standard deviation calculated for the yearly KPMs, the line of best fit can be categorised as “trending up” or “trending down”. When there is no difference, the line of best fit will be described as “trending flat”.

For the trends in NAPLAN mean achievement (KPMs 2b, 2d and 3b), the criterion for determining the significance of the average annual change includes a calculation of equating error over time consistent with the NAPLAN National Report methodology.

↑ means the short-term increase in the measure was significant/the long-term trend was positive/upward

↓ means the short-term decrease in the measure was significant/the long-term trend was negative/downward

↔ means the short-term change in the measure was not significant/a long-term trend was not evident

N/A means not available.

For NAPLAN mean scaled scores, the average annual change over the trend period is expressed as points on the NAPLAN scale. For NAPLAN measures, this differs from the comparisons between calendar years published in the 2022 NAPLAN National Report and on the NAPLAN results page of the ACARA NAP website, which are comparisons between two points in time rather than trends over time. Trend data by state and territory, and by other disaggregations where possible and appropriate, is provided in the Key Performance Measures data set in the National Report on Schooling data portal.

Chapter 1: Introduction



The National Report on Schooling 2022 is the 33rd annual national report on Australia's school education sector.³ It has been produced by the ACARA on behalf of Australian education ministers.

The report highlights progress in 2022 towards the [Alice Springs \(Mparntwe\) Education Declaration](#) released by Australian education ministers in 2019 and is the third National Report on Schooling that has addressed these nationally agreed goals and commitments.

The National Report on Schooling consists of 2 parts: this written report and the online data portal.

The written report addresses the 11 areas of commitment to action specified in the Alice Springs (Mparntwe) declaration, describes the national policy and reporting context for school education in Australia, and reports against the nationally agreed key performance measures (KPMs) for schooling specified in the [Measurement Framework for Schooling in Australia 2020](#), providing data, analysis and commentary. It also includes other high-level statistical information on Australian schooling in 2022 and for the period 2012–2022 inclusive.

The [National Report on Schooling data portal](#) gives readers and researchers interactive access to a wider range of nationally consistent data on schooling in Australia. This includes data on enrolments, staffing, and school funding, and on the KPMs for student participation, achievement in the NAP, and attainment of Year 12 and post-school qualifications. It allows readers to view data by state and territory as well as at the national level, by calendar year and by other breakdowns, such as school sector, sex and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander status, where possible and appropriate.⁴ Data sets and commentary are regularly updated as new data becomes available and may be downloaded from the portal.

³ The first edition of the joint annual report on schooling across Australia was compiled at the direction of the then Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs for 1989.

⁴ This report uses the term 'Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander' to refer to First Nations Australians. This is in line with the Alice Springs (Mparntwe) Education Declaration and definitions used for data collection.

Previous editions of the National Report on Schooling for the years 2009–2021 are available on the [ACARA website](#). Editions from 1989 to 2008 are available in the [Trove](#) archive maintained by the National Library of Australia.

1.1 Measurement Framework for Schooling in Australia

The *Measurement Framework for Schooling in Australia 2020* provides the basis for national reporting on the performance of schooling for the years 2020–2023, as agreed by education ministers, and is the main focus of the statistical data included in this report.

The measurement framework 2020 edition is updated and revised to reflect the *Alice Springs (Mparntwe) Education Declaration*. It replaces the *Measurement Framework for Schooling in Australia 2019*.⁵ The measurement framework defines 32 national KPMs for schooling, specifies the data sources for these KPMs and outlines the reporting cycle for the period 2020–2023.

The Education Council's [Principles and protocols for reporting on schooling in Australia](#) guides the practices and procedures used by all jurisdictions, ACARA and other agencies when reporting against the measurement framework.

By intent, the KPMs contained in the measurement framework are:

- strategic measures which provide nationally comparable data on aspects of performance critical to achieving the Education Goals for Young Australians and monitoring progress against the *Alice Springs (Mparntwe) Education Declaration*
- student-centred, focusing on student participation, achievement, attainment and equity
- based on sound and reliable practice
- supportive of valid, consistent 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.

For national reporting purposes, KPMs for student participation, achievement and attainment are disaggregated by equity measures: Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander status, sex, language background, geographic location, socio-economic background and disability, where it is possible and appropriate to do so.

Most KPMs are reported annually, but some are collected and reported on a cyclical basis of 3, 4 or 5 years. The NAP Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Literacy assessment and the Organisation for Economic Cooperations and Development (OECD) Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) are implemented every three years.

⁵ The *Measurement Framework for Schooling Australia 2019* is available on the ACARA website along with the 2010, 2012 and 2015 editions of the framework that also reference the Melbourne Declaration. Previous editions of the framework (originally known as the Measurement Framework for National Key Performance Measures) are available in the Trove archive.

As 2022 was not a 'Census year', data for the enrolment KPM, based on the Census data is not reported, nor are the 5-yearly Census measures for KPMs in participation and attainment in education and work.

The available measures are reported at the national level, and by various breakdowns, such as state and territory, school sector and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander status. For relevant KPMs, time series for the previous 10 years (2012–2021) are also included.

Where applicable, long-term trends for KPMs are reported for the period (at least 3 years) over which comparable data is available. Trends are calculated from the line of best fit in a graph of all relevant data in a time series. The average annual change is calculated from the line of best fit and a test is performed to determine if a trend is evident.

Where relevant breakdowns or time series for the available KPMs are not reported here, they are provided in the National Report on Schooling data portal. Data for previous years for KPMs is also available in the data portal and in previous editions of this report.

Chapter 2: Schools and schooling

Chapter 2 provides information on the status of Australian schooling in 2022, including school structures, student and teacher numbers, and teacher education.



2.1 School structures

In recent years, school structures and age requirements for student enrolment have become more consistent across Australian states and territories. Policy initiatives leading to this include decisions by several jurisdictions to move Year 7 from a primary school year to a secondary school year and national agreement on minimum requirements for leaving school.

In 2022, primary education consisted of a Foundation year (first year of full-time school) followed by Years 1–6, with secondary education from Years 7–12.⁶

The age at which schooling becomes compulsory is 6 years in most states and territories. In practice, most children start the Foundation year of primary school at between 4 and a half and 5 and a half years old.

All states and territories require young people to participate in schooling until they complete Year 10 and to participate full time in education, training or employment, or a combination of these activities, until at least the age of 17.

However, there are still some variations in school structures, in requirements for compulsory school enrolment and in terminology between states and territories. These are summarised in Table 2.1.

⁶ In 2018, the South Australian Government announced that Year 7 would be moved from a primary school year to a secondary school year. In 2020, this change was implemented for a number of non-government schools and 3 government schools. In 2022, Year 7 became a secondary school year for all government and non-government schools in South Australia.

Table 2.1

Primary and secondary school structures, minimum school starting age, compulsory school starting age, and minimum school leaving age, by state and territory, Australia, 2022

State/territory	Name of Foundation year	Primary schooling	Secondary schooling	Minimum school starting age (Foundation)	Compulsory school starting age	Minimum school leaving age
NSW	Kindergarten	Kindergarten Years 1–6	Years 7–12	4 turning 5 by 31 July	6 years	17 years
Vic	Preparatory	Preparatory Years 1–6	Years 7–12	4 turning 5 by 30 April	6 years	17 years
Qld	Preparatory	Preparatory Years 1–6	Years 7–12	4 turning 5 by 30 June	6 years 6 months	17 years
SA	Reception	Reception Years 1–6	Years 7–12	4 turning 5 by 1 May	6 years	17 years
WA	Pre-primary	Pre-primary Years 1–6	Years 7–12	4 turning 5 by 30 June	5 years 6 months	17 years 6 months – 18 years
Tas	Preparatory	Preparatory Years 1–6	Years 7–12	5 by 1 January	5 years	17-18 years
NT	Transition	Transition Years 1–6	Years 7–12	4 turning 5 by 30 June	6 years	17 years
ACT	Kindergarten	Kindergarten Years 1–6	Years 7–12	4 turning 5 by 30 April	6 years	17 years

Notes:

State and territory minimum ages for the commencement of the Foundation year of schooling are as at January of the year of commencement.

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

In WA, the requirement to remain at school or undertake an approved combination of training and employment extends to the end of the year in which a student turns 17 years 6 months of age, or they achieve the requirements for secondary graduation, or until they turn 18 years of age, whichever happens first.

In Tas, all young people must participate in education or training until they complete Year 12, attain a Certificate III, or they turn 18 years of age, whichever occurs first. Young people with full-time employment, or other specific circumstances, can apply for an exemption.

Sources: State and territory education authorities; ABS, *Schools*, 2022.

Within the overall structure of primary and secondary education, individual schools may be primary only, secondary only or combined primary and secondary. Secondary schools may cater for the full age range of secondary students or be divided into junior and senior campuses.

In some states and territories, there are government and non-government special schools for students with disability or additional support needs. In other states and territories, most students with additional support needs are enrolled in mainstream classes. See Chapter 10 for definition of special school and special assistance school.

Students who are geographically isolated or who are otherwise unable to attend a local school may study through distance education schools or centres. Boarding facilities are available at some schools, mainly in the non-government sectors.

Students of compulsory school age may also be home-schooled if they have met the criteria set down by the relevant state or territory education authority. However, students undertaking home schooling are only counted in the National Schools Statistics Collection (NSSC) and this report if they are also formally enrolled in a course of study at school, including through distance education.

Each state and territory also has an early childhood education sector that is separate from primary and secondary schooling, although early childhood centres are often attached to, or accommodated in, primary or combined schools. In some jurisdictions, part-time early childhood education programs in the year before full-time schooling that are conducted in primary schools are considered to be a part of schooling. However, these programs are outside the scope and definition of schooling in the NSSC. Statistical data on these and other early childhood education programs is not included in this report.⁷

Data on secondary education provided by adult learning institutions such as institutes of technical and further education (TAFE) is also excluded from this report, except for VET programs undertaken by secondary school students.

⁷ Statistical data on preschool education is available in ABS, [Preschool Education](#).

2.2 School numbers

Key Facts:

In Australia in 2022:

- There were 9,614 schools – an increase of 33 schools since 2021.
- 69.7% of schools were government schools, 18.4% were Catholic and 12.0% independent.
- 64.8% of schools were primary, 15.0% secondary, 14.7% combined and 5.4% were special schools.

In Australia, responsibility for school education rests mainly with the 6 state and 2 territory governments.⁸

All states and territories provide for 13 years of formal school education. Primary education includes a Foundation year and Years 1–6. Secondary education consists of Years 7–12. Typically, schooling commences at age 5, is compulsory from age 6 until age 17 (with provision for alternative study or work arrangements after Year 10) and is completed at age 17 or 18.

The majority of schools are government schools, established and administered by state and territory governments through their education departments or authorities. The remainder are non-government schools, mostly associated with religious organisations. Non-government schools are established and operated under conditions determined by state and territory governments through their registration authorities.

The number and proportion of schools by school type and school sector in 2022 are shown in Table 2.2.

⁸ New South Wales (NSW), Victoria (Vic), Queensland (Qld), South Australia (SA), Western Australia (WA), Tasmania (Tas), Northern Territory (NT) and Australian Capital Territory (ACT).

Table 2.2

Number and proportion of schools by school type and school sector, Australia, 2022

School type	School sector									
	Government		Non-government				All schools			
	No.	%	Catholic		Independent		Total		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	% by school type
Primary	4,794	76.9	1,237	19.8	202	3.2	1,439	23.1	6,233	64.8
Secondary	1,059	73.3	325	22.5	60	4.2	385	26.7	1,444	15.0
Combined	505	35.6	157	11.1	755	53.3	912	64.4	1,417	14.7
Special	341	65.6	47	9.0	132	25.4	179	34.4	520	5.4
Total	6,699	69.7	1,766	18.4	1,149	12.0	2,915	30.3	9,614	100.0

Notes:

School type:

- primary – school delivers primary education
- secondary – school delivers secondary education
- combined – school delivers both primary and secondary education
- special – students may include primary students, secondary students, ungraded students, or a combination of primary, secondary, and ungraded students. Special schools cater for students with disability and/or additional learning support needs.

School sector: Categories used in tables and graphs showing 'school sector' are 'government', 'Catholic' and 'independent'. In some cases, the category 'total non-government' (total of Catholic and independent) is also used. Systemic and non-systemic Catholic schools are counted as Catholic schools in the National Schools Statistics Collection (NSSC) and in this report. Independent public schools established in Qld, WA and the NT are government schools.

Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding.

Source: ABS, *Schools*, 2022.

In 2022 there were 9,614 schools in Australia.⁹ This total included primary, secondary, combined (primary and secondary) and special schools, across government and non-government school sectors.¹⁰

Of the total number of schools, 69.7% were administered by state and territory governments, 18.4% identified as having Catholic affiliation, and 12.0% were classified as independent. Most independent schools are affiliated with religious denominations or promote a particular educational philosophy.

The proportion of schools by school sector in 2022 is illustrated in Figure 2.1.

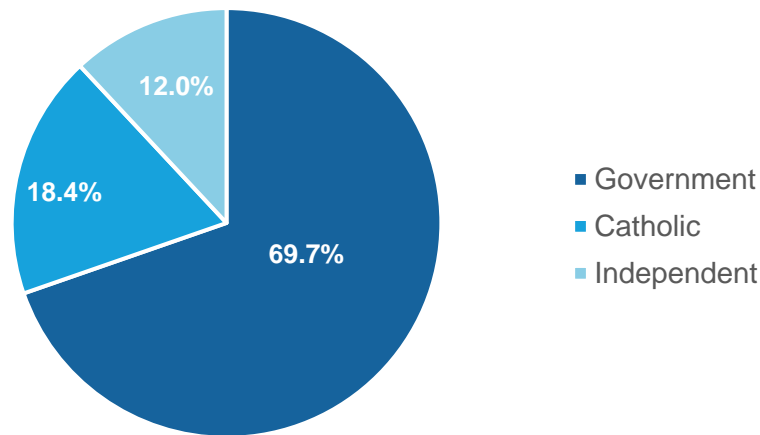
Almost two-thirds (64.8%) of schools were primary schools. In general, primary schools are smaller and more localised than secondary schools. More than three-quarters (76.9%) of primary schools were government schools.

⁹ As at the NSSC Schools Census date, 5 August 2022.

¹⁰ See Chapter 10: Glossary for definitions of school levels, school types and school sectors.

Figure 2.1

Proportion of schools by school sector, Australia, 2022 (%)



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

Source: ABS, *Schools*, 2022.

Most secondary schools (73.3%) and special schools (65.6%) were also government schools, while most combined schools (64.4%) were non-government schools, mainly in the independent school sector.

The number and proportion of schools by state and territory in 2022 are shown in Table 2.3.

Table 2.3

Number and proportion of schools by state and territory, Australia, 2022

School type	State/territory								Australia
	NSW	Vic	Qld	SA	WA	Tas	NT	ACT	
Primary	2,086	1,571	1,141	436	685	155	73	86	6,233
Secondary	509	343	276	85	143	41	22	25	1,444
Combined	344	249	279	166	207	58	93	21	1,417
Special	181	116	95	28	81	8	6	5	520
Total	3,120	2,279	1,791	715	1,116	262	194	137	9,614
Proportion (%)	32.5	23.7	18.6	7.4	11.6	2.7	2.0	1.4	100.0

Source: ABS, *Schools*, 2022.

The number of schools in each state and territory is largely determined by the size and geographical distribution of the school-age population. Changes in school numbers from year to year may also be due to administrative or structural changes in schooling and changes in student populations.

The total number of schools in Australia rose by 33 from 9,581 in 2021 to 9,614 in 2022, including increases of 12 in Vic, 9 in Qld and 8 in NSW. Proportions of schools per state and territory in 2022 did not change substantially from 2021.

There was a net rise of 187 (2.0%) in the total number of schools over the period 2012–2022. The numbers and proportions of schools in the 3 school sectors over this period are shown in Table 2.4.

Table 2.4

Number and proportion of schools by school sector, Australia, 2012–2022

Year	School sector						Total No.
	Government		Catholic		Independent		
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
2012	6,697	71.0	1,713	18.2	1,017	10.8	9,427
2013	6,661	70.9	1,717	18.3	1,015	10.8	9,393
2014	6,651	70.8	1,722	18.3	1,016	10.8	9,389
2015	6,639	70.6	1,737	18.5	1,028	10.9	9,404
2016	6,634	70.5	1,738	18.5	1,042	11.1	9,414
2017	6,639	70.3	1,744	18.5	1,061	11.2	9,444
2018	6,646	70.1	1,753	18.5	1,078	11.4	9,477
2019	6,659	70.1	1,756	18.5	1,088	11.4	9,503
2020	6,675	70.0	1,762	18.5	1,105	11.6	9,542
2021	6,692	69.8	1,762	18.4	1,127	11.8	9,581
2022	6,699	69.7	1,766	18.4	1,149	12.0	9,614

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

Source: ABS, *Schools*, 2022 and previous releases.

Between 2012 and 2022 there was a net rise of 53 in the number of Catholic schools, of 132 in the number of independent schools and of 2 in the number of government schools. The proportion of independent schools grew by 1.2 percentage points to 12.0% nationally over this period.

2.3 Student numbers

Key Facts:

In Australia in 2022:

- A total of 4,042,512 students were enrolled in Australian schools, an increase of 0.3% from 2021.
- 64.5% of school students were enrolled in government schools, 19.7% were in Catholic schools and 15.9% in independent schools.
- 55.6% of students were primary school students and 44.4% were in secondary school. This difference is mainly due to the structure of schooling, in which primary schooling includes more year groups than secondary schooling.

Enrolments by school level and sector

In 2022, a total of 4,042,512 students were enrolled in Australian schools, a rise of 0.3% from 2021.

At the time of the Schools Census in August 2021, various restrictions due to the COVID-19 pandemic were in place which may have impacted on the data. While the majority of schools across Australia continued as normal, initiatives to help reduce the spread of COVID-19 in the community remained in place, including the implementation of remote online learning where required.¹¹ By 2022, Australian schools had returned to on-site learning.

The numbers and proportions of individual students by school level and school sector in 2022 are summarised in Table 2.5.

Of the 4.04 million school students, 2.25 million (55.6%) were primary students, and 1.79 million (44.4%) were secondary students. This difference is mainly due to the structure of schooling, in which primary schooling includes more year groups or cohorts than secondary schooling. Also, not all students complete Years 11 and 12, the last 2 years of secondary school.

As shown in Table 2.5, 64.5% of Australian school students in 2022 were enrolled in government schools, 19.7% of students were enrolled in Catholic schools and 15.9% of students were enrolled in independent schools. This is illustrated in Figure 2.2.

¹¹ For the NSSC, students were considered to be enrolled and active in an education program, even if that program had been temporarily disrupted by COVID-19. This included where programs were temporarily delivered online or remotely and even where schools were temporarily closed for COVID-19 related reasons. Because enrolments were counted in this way, it is estimated that the impacts of COVID-19 on data quality in 2021 were minor (ABS, *Schools*, 2021). The exception to this was the negative impact of international border closures on both the school-age population and the level of school enrolments overall.

Table 2.5

Number and proportion of students (full-time plus part-time) enrolled in schools by school level and school sector, Australia, 2022

School level	School sector							
	Government		Catholic		Independent		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	% by level
Primary	1,553,635	69.1	408,701	18.2	285,453	12.7	2,247,789	55.6
Junior secondary	759,168	59.1	276,745	21.5	248,812	19.4	1,284,725	31.8
Senior secondary	293,023	57.5	109,922	21.6	107,053	21.0	509,998	12.6
Total secondary	1,052,191	58.6	386,667	21.5	355,865	19.8	1,794,723	44.4
Total	2,605,826	64.5	795,368	19.7	641,318	15.9	4,042,512	100.0

Notes:

School level:

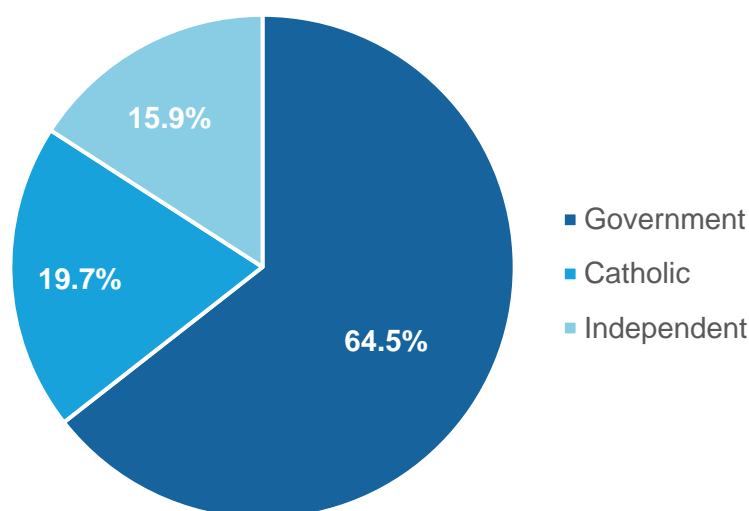
- Primary education includes a Foundation (pre-Year 1) year followed by Years 1–6. In 2022, Year 7 became a secondary school year for all government and non-government schools in South Australia.
- Secondary education consists of the first year of secondary to Year 12. Junior secondary: the years from start of secondary school to Year 10, including 'ungraded' secondary. Senior secondary: Years 11 and 12.
- Students attending special schools are allocated to either primary or secondary school on the basis of school year or school level, where identified. Where the school year or school level is not identified (ungraded), students are allocated to primary or secondary school level according to the typical age level in each state or territory. See Part 5: Glossary for definition of special school.

Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding.

Source: ABS, *Schools*, 2022.

Figure 2.2

Proportion of students (full-time plus part-time) enrolled in schools by sector, Australia, 2022 (%)



Source: ABS, *Schools*, 2022.

The proportions of students enrolled in each school sector differed between levels of education, with government schools accounting for 69.1% of primary students but less than 60% (58.6%) of secondary students. Part-time students (10,884 students) accounted for only 0.3% of total enrolments. They were concentrated in Years 11 and 12 (71.1%), and in government schools (88.2%).¹²

Enrolments by school level, and state and territory

Enrolments of students (full-time plus part-time) by state and territory and school level in 2022 are shown in Table 2.6.

Table 2.6

Number of students (full-time plus part-time) enrolled in schools by state/territory and school level, 2022

School level	State/territory								Australia
	NSW	Vic	Qld	SA	WA	Tas	NT	ACT	
Primary	698,238	565,356	475,976	149,521	248,046	44,555	23,978	42,119	2,247,789
Junior secondary	396,414	319,319	281,928	87,328	137,364	26,737	12,094	23,541	1,284,725
Senior secondary	147,573	131,395	112,915	38,916	54,695	10,218	4,014	10,272	509,998
Total secondary	543,987	450,714	394,843	126,244	192,059	36,955	16,108	33,813	1,794,723
Total	1,242,225	1,016,070	870,819	275,765	440,105	81,510	40,086	75,932	4,042,512
Proportion of Australian total (%)	30.7	25.1	21.5	6.8	10.9	2.0	1.0	1.9	100.0

Notes: See notes for Table 2.5.

Source: ABS, *Schools*, 2022.

Enrolments by state and territory and school level reflect the school-age population and its age distribution in each jurisdiction. More than three-quarters of students (77.3%) were enrolled in the 3 most populous states of NSW, Vic, and Qld.

Growth in enrolments

The number of students enrolled in Australian schools grew by 11,795 (0.3%) between 2021 and 2022, the lowest growth in enrolments since 2008 and less than a quarter of the average annual growth rate for the previous decade (1.3% on average over 2012–2022).

This sharp fall in growth was experienced most strongly in government schools where total enrolments actually fell – by 16,929 students (0.6%) between 2021 and 2022 – for the second consecutive year. This included a fall of 30,049 primary students (1.9%) which was partly offset by an increase of 13,120 (1.3%) in secondary students.

The non-government sector experienced growth in total enrolments in primary and secondary school, but with proportionately lower growth in Catholic schools (1.0%) than in independent schools (3.3%).

There was a shift between 2021 and 2022 in the share of total enrolments between government and non-government schools, with government schools falling by 0.6 percentage points to 64.5%, Catholic schools rising by 0.2 percentage points to 19.7% and independent schools rising by 0.5 percentage points to 15.9% of total enrolments.

¹² Student Numbers data set, National Report on Schooling data portal.

The fall in total enrolment growth in 2022 can be largely attributed to the continued disruption of international travel due to COVID-19. One effect of this was a fall in the number of overseas students enrolled in Australian schools. Between 2021 and 2022 the number of full fee-paying overseas students (FFPOS) fell by 1,188 students (9.1%).¹³ However, border closures had a much broader effect than on international students, resulting in a fall in net overseas migration to Australia to its lowest level for 75 years.¹⁴ This depressed population growth across all age groups, including those with school-aged children, leading to a negative impact on school enrolments.¹⁵

Overall, net overseas migration for 5–19-year-olds fell from 66,510 in 2019 to 3,180 in 2021 before increasing to 48,200 in 2022.¹⁶ As government schools provide education for around two-thirds of students, it is not surprising that the ‘loss’ of potential students in 2021 and 2022 – due to greatly reduced immigration – was reflected mainly in government school enrolments. However, the shift in enrolment ‘shares’ between the government and non-government sectors between 2020 and 2022 may indicate that this was more than proportionate. The movement of students between sectors and differences in numbers of students starting and leaving school may have also contributed to this shift.

All states and territories experienced reduced overseas migration during 2021 and subsequent increases in 2022, but with varying effects on total school enrolments. In 2022, total enrolments fell by 1.2% in the NT, 0.3% in Tas and 0.1% in NSW. WA experienced a 0.9% increase in enrolments, with increases of 0.8% in the ACT, 0.5% in Vic and SA and 0.4% in Qld. This had little effect on the distribution of students between states and territories.

Between 2012 and 2022 total enrolments grew by 452,256 (12.6%), largely reflecting the growth in the school-age population, as schooling is essentially compulsory between the ages of 6 and 16.¹⁷ Growth in senior secondary enrolments, including 17-year-olds and 18-year-olds, is influenced by Year 11 and 12 retention rates as well as population growth.

Enrolments have risen both in government and in non-government schools over the past 10 years, with the bulk of total growth over the period (58.2%) occurring in government schools. The number of students in independent schools rose from 511,012 in 2012 to 641,318 in 2022 – a 25.5% increase over 10 years. This has resulted in a 1.7 percentage point increase in the proportion of students attending independent schools. Table 2.7 summarises this data.

¹³ This followed a fall of 5,480 FFPOS between 2020 and 2021.

¹⁴ In the year ending 30 June 2022, overseas migration contributed a net gain of 170,920 to Australia's population. This represents a very large increase in net overseas migration on the 2020–21 financial year – which saw a net loss of 84,900 people. ABS, *Overseas migration*, release date 16/12/2022.

¹⁵ For a comparison of growth rates in estimated residential population and school enrolments, see *Schools, 2022*.

¹⁶ ABS, *Overseas migration*, release date 16/12/2022, Net overseas migration: Arrivals, departures and net, State/territory, Age, and sex - Financial years, 2004-05 onwards.

¹⁷ Enrolment requirements in states and territories are summarised in Part 2.1 School structures. The proportion of children aged 6–15 years who are enrolled in school is consistently close to 100%. Enrolment rates for this age group are reported in Chapter 4: Enrolment and Attendance.

Table 2.7

Number and proportion of students (full-time plus part-time) by school sector, Australia, 2012–2022

Year	School sector						
	Government		Catholic		Independent		Total
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.
2012	2,342,379	65.2	736,595	20.5	511,012	14.2	3,589,986
2013	2,375,024	65.1	749,059	20.5	521,436	14.3	3,645,519
2014	2,406,495	65.1	757,749	20.5	529,857	14.3	3,694,101
2015	2,445,130	65.2	765,539	20.4	540,304	14.4	3,750,973
2016	2,483,802	65.4	767,050	20.2	547,374	14.4	3,798,226
2017	2,524,865	65.6	766,870	19.9	557,490	14.5	3,849,225
2018	2,558,169	65.7	765,735	19.7	569,930	14.6	3,893,834
2019	2,594,830	65.7	769,719	19.5	584,262	14.8	3,948,811
2020	2,629,143	65.6	778,605	19.4	599,226	15.0	4,006,974
2021	2,622,755	65.1	787,181	19.5	620,781	15.4	4,030,717
2022	2,605,826	64.5	795,368	19.7	641,318	15.9	4,042,512

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

Source: ABS, *Schools*, 2022.

Between 2012 and 2019 the government sector share of total enrolments increased by 0.5 percentage points to 65.7%. In 2020, it fell by 0.1 percentage points and in 2021, it fell sharply by 0.5 percentage points to 65.1%, with a net loss in total enrolments in that year. This decline continued in 2022, with a larger net loss in total enrolments than for 2021, and a fall in the government sector share of 0.6 percentage points to 64.5%.

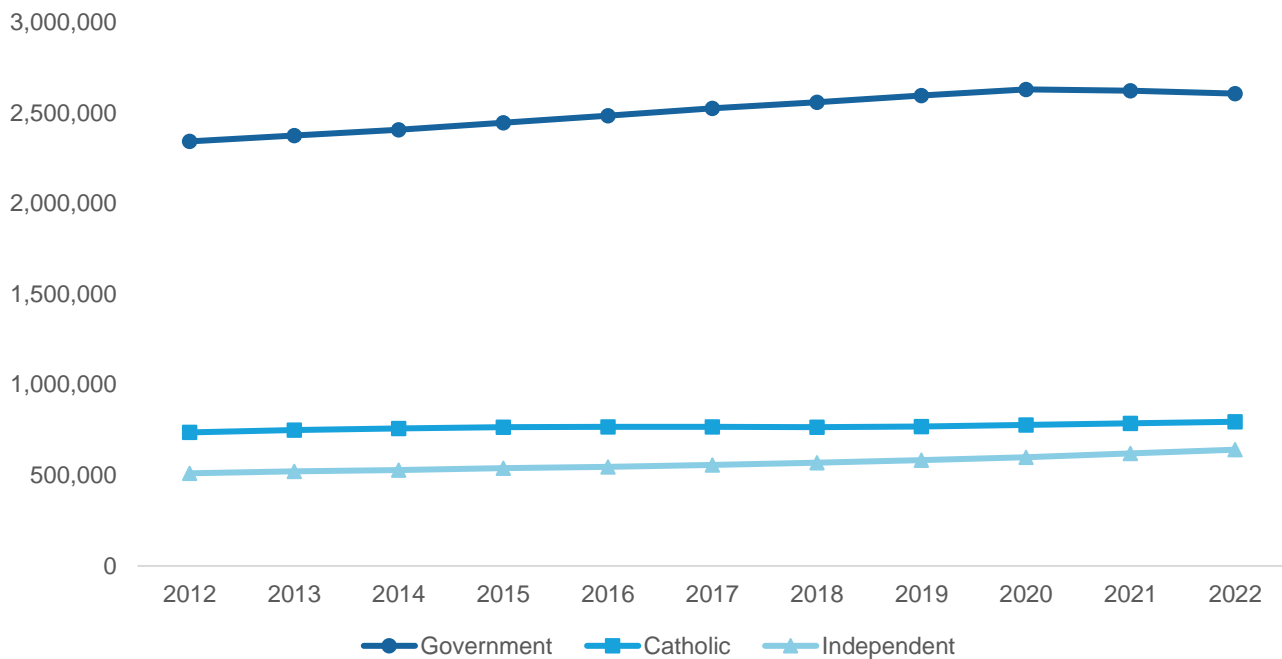
Between 2012 and 2022 independent school enrolments rose by 1.7 percentage points to 15.9% of the total, while Catholic sector enrolments fell by 0.8 percentage points to 19.7% of total enrolments over the period. This continues a long-term trend in the relative growth of the independent sector.

As noted above, it is not clear how much of the shift in sector proportions in 2022 is attributable to the fall in Australia's net overseas migration and how much to net movements of students between sectors.

Figure 2.3 illustrates the growth in student enrolments 2012–2022 by school sector.

Figure 2.3

Number of students enrolled (full-time plus part-time) by school sector, Australia, 2012–2022



Source: ABS, *Schools*, 2022.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students

In 2022 there were 255,796 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students enrolled in Australian schools, making up 6.3% of the total school population.¹⁸ Table 2.8 shows the number and proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students by school level and state and territory.

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

With 85,383 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students (33.4% of the national total), NSW had the highest number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander enrolments in 2022, more than the NSW share (30.7%) of total enrolments nationally. This represented 6.9% of the state's students, more than the national average of 6.3%. Qld schools accounted for 30.5% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students (compared with 21.5% of total enrolments) and WA 12.1% (compared with 10.9% of total enrolments).

The highest concentration of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students was in the NT, which accounted for only 1.0% of total school enrolments in 2022, but for 6.2% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander enrolments. The 15,789 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students enrolled in NT schools made up 39.4% of the Territory's school population. Because of this, data on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students has a greater impact on overall statistics for the NT than for any other state or territory.

¹⁸ This report uses the term 'Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander' to refer to First Nations Australians. This is in line with the Alice Springs (Mparntwe) Education Declaration and definitions used for data collection.

Table 2.8

Number and proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students (full-time plus part-time) enrolled in schools by school level and state/territory, Australia, 2022

School level	State/territory								Australia
	NSW	Vic	Qld	SA	WA	Tas	NT	ACT	
Primary	50,624	11,545	45,426	8,222	18,440	4,729	9,534	1,428	149,948
Junior secondary	27,914	6,463	25,100	4,670	9,581	2,902	4,990	749	82,369
Senior secondary	6,845	1,927	7,597	1,745	2,860	931	1,265	309	23,479
Total secondary	34,759	8,390	32,697	6,415	12,441	3,833	6,255	1,058	105,848
Total	85,383	19,935	78,123	14,637	30,881	8,562	15,789	2,486	255,796
Proportion of the Australian total of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students per state/territory (%)	33.4	7.8	30.5	5.7	12.1	3.3	6.2	1.0	100.0
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students as a proportion of total students in each state/territory (%)	6.9	2.0	9.0	5.3	7.0	10.5	39.4	3.3	6.3

Source: ABS, *Schools*, 2022.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students were under-represented in senior secondary years: 4.6% of senior secondary students were identified as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, compared with 6.4% of junior secondary students and 6.7% of primary school students. These proportions reflect Year 10 to Year 12 apparent retention rates among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, which are still substantially lower than for the overall school population. Apparent retention rates are reported in Chapter 4.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students predominantly attended government schools, with 82.4% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander enrolments in government schools compared with 64.5% of enrolments for all students. Overall, 17.6% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students were enrolled in non-government schools (11.0% in Catholic schools, 6.6% in independent schools) with this proportion rising from 14.8% for primary students to 21.6% for secondary students.

2.4 School students with disability

Key Facts:

In Australia in 2022:

- 911,131 school students received an educational adjustment due to disability – this represents 22.5% of total enrolments, up from 21.8% in 2021 and 18.0% in 2015.
- Among school students who received an educational adjustment due to disability, 54.9% of adjustments were provided to students with cognitive disability, 32.0% to students with social-emotional disability, 10.2% for students with physical disability and 2.9% for sensory disability.
- 1.9% of all school students were provided with extensive adjustments to enable them to participate in education on the same basis as other students. A further 3.8% were provided with substantial support, 9.6% were provided with supplementary support and 7.1% were supported through quality differentiated teaching practices.

The [Nationally Consistent Collection of Data \(NCCD\)](#) on School Students with Disability collects data about Australian school students with disability who are receiving adjustments in a consistent, reliable, and systematic way. It enables schools, education authorities and governments to better understand the needs of students with disability and how they can be best supported at school; and allocate resources efficiently.

The NCCD identifies students who received an educational adjustment due to disability. Through this collection, teachers use their professional judgement based on evidence to capture information on:

- The level of adjustment that students with disability are being provided to enable them to participate in education on the same basis as other students. The four levels are:
 - support within quality differentiated teaching practice (QDTP)
 - supplementary
 - substantial
 - extensive.
- the broad category of disability under which each student best fits:
 - physical
 - cognitive
 - sensory
 - social-emotional.¹⁹

Through participating in the collection, schools are embedding better support for all students with disability in their routine day-to-day practice by:

- focusing attention on the educational needs and adjustments required to support individual students,
- facilitating a more collaborative and coordinated approach, including improvements in support systems at the school level, and
- strengthening communication between schools, parents, and the broader community, increasing transparency and reinforcing a culture of inclusion.²⁰

¹⁹ Further details about the NCCD, levels of adjustment and categories of disability are available on the [NCCD website](#).

²⁰ NCCD, 2017 data on students in Australian schools receiving adjustments for disability.

In 2022, 911,131 school students received an educational adjustment due to disability. This represented 22.5% of total enrolments. Table 2.9 shows the number and proportion of students that received an educational adjustment due to disability in 2022, by level of educational adjustment and category of disability.

Table 2.9

School students with disability receiving adjustments as a percentage of the total student population, by category of disability and level of adjustment, 2022

Level of adjustment	Category of disability				
	Cognitive	Physical	Sensory	Social-emotional	All
Support within QDTP	3.2	1.6	0.2	2.1	7.1
Supplementary	5.8	0.4	0.3	3.1	9.6
Substantial	2.2	0.2	0.1	1.4	3.8
Extensive	1.1	0.1	0.1	0.6	1.9
Total	12.4	2.3	0.7	7.2	22.5

Source: NCCD, 2022.

Table 2.10 shows the proportion of students with disability, by school sector and level of adjustment provided in 2022. Overall, the proportion of students with disability in Catholic schools (19.5%) was lower than that of independent schools (22.4%) and government schools (23.5%). The proportion of students receiving an adjustment for a physical disability was higher in the independent sector (3.5%) than in the Catholic (2.1%) and government (2.0%) sectors. The proportion of students receiving an adjustment for cognitive, sensory, or social-emotional disability was higher among students in government schools than in non-government schools. This may be at least partly due to the fact that the majority of special schools are government schools.

Table 2.10

School students with disability receiving adjustments as a percentage of the total student population, by category of disability and school sector, 2022

School sector	Category of disability				
	Cognitive	Physical	Sensory	Social-emotional	All
Government	12.8	2.0	0.8	7.9	23.5
Catholic	11.6	2.1	0.4	5.4	19.5
Independent	11.6	3.5	0.5	6.7	22.4
Total	12.4	2.3	0.7	7.2	22.5

Source: NCCD, 2022.

Table 2.11 shows the proportion of students with disability in 2022, by school sector and level of adjustment provided. The proportion of students in Catholic schools who received support within QDTP (4.4%) was lower than in independent schools (8.9%) and government schools (7.5%).

The proportion of students receiving extensive support was higher in government schools (2.5%) than in Catholic (0.7%) and independent schools (1.0%) sectors. As was the case for the proportion of students receiving adjustments by category of disability, this difference is likely to be at least partly because the majority of special schools are government schools.²¹

Table 2.11

School students with disability receiving adjustments as a percentage of the total student population, by level of adjustment and school sector, 2022

School sector	Category of disability				
	Support within QDTP	Supplementary	Substantial	Extensive	All
Government	7.5	9.4	4.1	2.5	23.5
Catholic	4.4	10.5	3.9	0.7	19.5
Independent	8.9	9.5	3.0	1.0	22.4
Total	7.1	9.6	3.8	1.9	22.5

Source: NCCD, 2022.

The proportion of students receiving an adjustment due to disability was higher than average in the NT, Vic, and SA, as shown in Table 2.12. With 30.0% of students receiving an adjustment due to disability, 9.7% of students receiving substantial support and 4.1% receiving extensive support, the NT had the highest proportion of school students receiving assistance.

Table 2.12

School students with disability receiving adjustments as a percentage of the total student population, by state/territory and level of adjustment, 2022

	State/territory								Australia
	NSW	Vic	Qld	SA	WA	Tas	NT	ACT	
Support within QDTP	6.1	8.8	5.2	10.3	8.7	4.1	5.0	6.5	7.1
Supplementary	10.8	8.8	8.8	12.4	8.4	7.3	11.2	8.7	9.6
Substantial	3.6	4.4	3.9	3.4	2.8	4.2	9.7	3.8	3.8
Extensive	1.9	2.7	1.4	2.2	1.0	1.1	4.1	1.1	1.9
Total	22.5	24.7	19.3	28.4	21.0	16.6	30.0	20.1	22.5

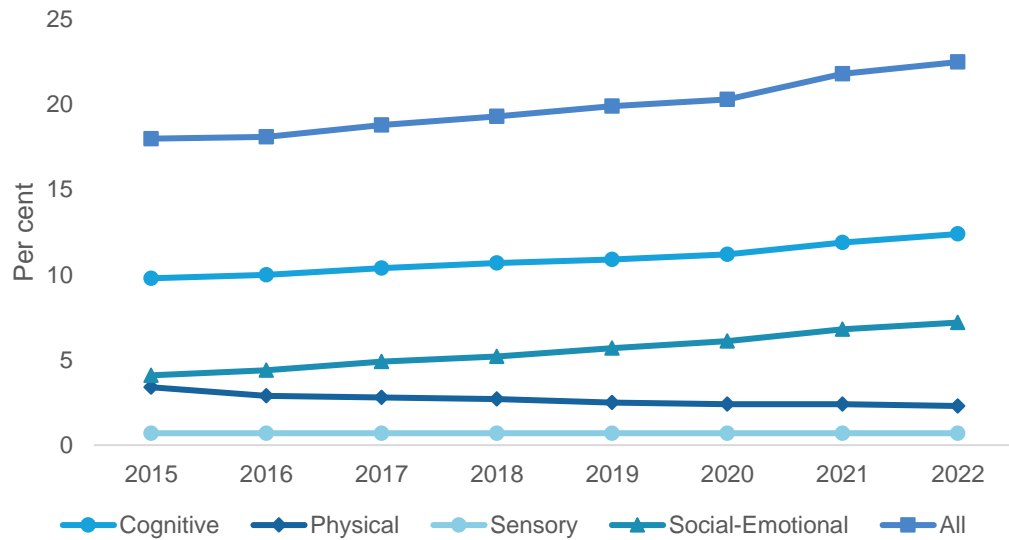
Source: NCCD, 2022.

Between 2015 and 2022, the proportion of school students receiving an adjustment due to disability increased by 4.5 percentage points, from 18.0% to 22.5% in 2022, as shown in Figure 2.4. While the proportion of students receiving adjustments for cognitive and social-emotional disabilities increased by 2.6 and 3.1 percentage points respectively, the proportion of students receiving adjustments for sensory disabilities remained stable at 0.7% and the proportion receiving adjustments for physical disabilities declined from 3.4% in 2015 to 2.3% in 2022.

²¹ Independent reviews of the quality of the data found that schools' level of understanding of the collection model, the DDA and the Disability Standards for Education 2005 contributes directly to the quality of the data collected. This may account for some of the variability between states/territories and school sectors, and over time as understanding grows stronger with each year that schools participate (NCCD, 2017 data on students in Australian schools receiving adjustments for disability).

Figure 2.4

School students with disability receiving adjustments as a percentage of the total student population, by category of disability, 2015–2022

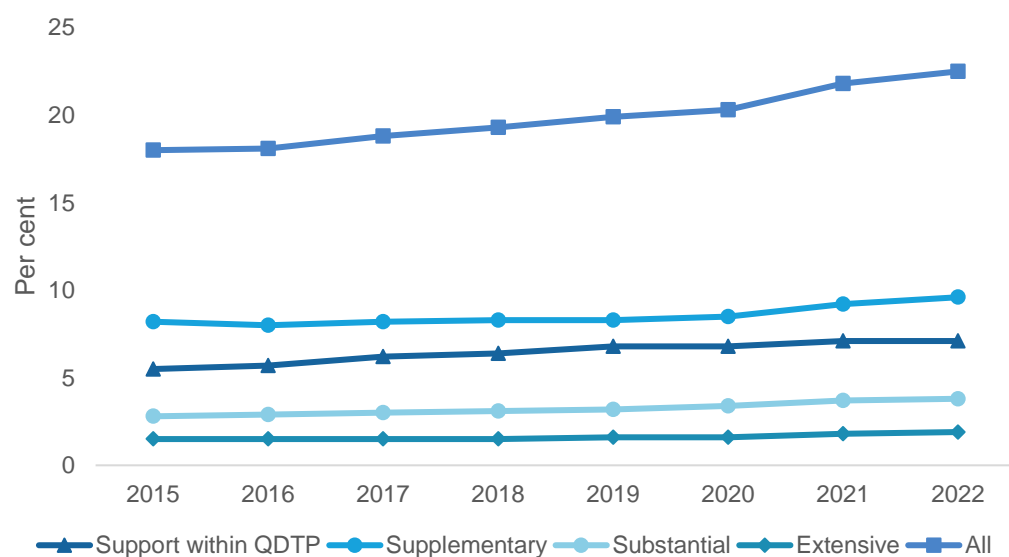


Source: NCCD, 2022 and previous years.

Figure 2.5 shows that between 2015 and 2022, the proportion of school students receiving support within QDTP increased by 1.6 percentage points, the proportion receiving supplementary support increased by 1.4 percentage points, and the proportion of students receiving substantial support increased by 1.0 percentage point. Over this period, the percentage of students receiving extensive support due to disability remained quite stable, with an increase 0.4 percentage points.

Figure 2.5

School students with disability receiving adjustments as a percentage of the total student population, by level of adjustment, 2015–2022



Source: NCCD, 2022 and previous years.

2.5 Staff numbers

Key Facts:

In Australia in 2022:

- There were 307,041 full time equivalent (FTE) teaching staff in Australia — an increase of 3,501 (1.2%) from 2021.
- Staff numbers closely reflected enrolments, with 63.1% of school teachers employed in government schools and 36.9% in non-government schools.
- Australia's teaching workforce continued to be predominantly female, with women making up 71.9% of FTE teachers in 2022. The gender difference was more pronounced at the primary level (82.0% female) than at secondary level (61.4% female).

The numbers and proportions of full-time equivalent (FTE) teaching staff by school sector, school level and gender in 2022 are shown in Table 2.13.

Table 2.13

Number and proportion of FTE teaching staff by school sector, school level and gender, Australia, 2022

School level	Primary				Secondary				Total			
	Male	Female	Total	% of all staff	Male	Female	Total	% of all staff	Male	Female	Total	% of all staff
Government	19,675	89,073	108,748	35.4	31,820	53,176	84,996	27.7	51,495	142,249	193,744	63.1
Catholic	4,164	22,711	26,875	8.8	12,334	19,457	31,791	10.4	16,498	42,168	58,666	19.1
Independent	4,206	16,191	20,397	6.6	14,096	20,138	34,234	11.1	18,302	36,329	54,631	17.8
Total non-government	8,370	38,902	47,272	15.4	26,430	39,595	66,025	21.5	34,800	78,496	113,297	36.9
All schools	28,045	127,974	156,019	50.8	58,250	92,771	151,021	49.2	86,295	220,745	307,041	100.0

Notes:

In the calculation of numbers of FTE teaching staff, a part-time teacher is counted as a proportion of a full-time teacher according to the time employed, compared with a full-time teacher in the same school system or school. (See Part 5: Glossary for definitions of FTE and teaching staff.)

Staff employed in combined and special schools are allocated to either primary or secondary education on a pro-rata basis.

Percentage columns for primary and secondary show the proportions of FTE primary and secondary teachers employed in each sector, relative to total FTE teaching staff. The total percentage column shows the proportions of total FTE teaching staff employed in each sector. The total (All schools) row shows the number and proportion of total FTE teaching staff employed at each level.

Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding.

Source: ABS, *Schools*, 2022.

In 2022, there were 307,041 FTE teaching staff across primary and secondary schooling in Australia. This was an increase of 3,501 (1.2%) from 2021. It was made up of a rise of 2,944 non-government school teachers (2.7% increase) and 558 government school teachers (0.3% increase). The percentage increase in teaching staff in independent schools (3.7%) was larger than that of Catholic schools (1.7%).

Across Australia in 2022, 63.1% of FTE teachers were employed by the government school sector, 19.1% by the Catholic school sector and 17.8% by the independent sector. This remains broadly consistent with the distribution of (full-time plus part-time) students across school sectors.

In 2022, Australia's teaching workforce continued to be predominantly female, with women making up 71.9% of FTE teachers. This gender gap is similar to that in 2021. In 2022, the difference was again more pronounced at the primary level (82.0% female) than at secondary level (61.4% female).

The number and proportion of FTE teaching staff by state and territory in 2022 is shown in Table 2.14.

Table 2.14

Number and proportion of FTE teaching staff by state and territory and school level, Australia, 2022

School level	State/territory								Australia
	NSW	Vic	Qld	SA	WA	Tas	NT	ACT	
Primary	46,492	42,054	32,426	10,481	16,249	3,311	2,064	2,943	156,019
Secondary	44,882	40,116	32,619	10,251	15,748	3,228	1,441	2,738	151,021
Total	91,373	82,170	65,045	20,732	31,997	6,538	3,505	5,682	307,041
Proportion (%)	29.8	26.8	21.2	6.8	10.4	2.1	1.1	1.9	100.0

See notes for Table 2.12.

Source: ABS, *Schools*, 2022.

The distribution of FTE teaching staff between states and territories remains broadly consistent with the overall distribution of students.

Changes in teaching staffing levels for the period 2012–2022 are shown in Table 2.15.

Table 2.15

Number of FTE teaching staff by school sector, Australia, 2012–2022

School sector	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Government	167,152	167,903	169,199	171,763	176,819	180,973	185,458	182,959	189,069	193,186	193,744
Catholic	49,427	50,527	50,936	52,160	53,154	53,839	54,511	55,372	56,645	57,667	58,666
Independent	42,407	43,154	43,930	45,277	46,357	47,248	48,614	49,963	50,802	52,686	54,631
Total non-government	91,834	93,682	94,866	97,437	99,511	101,087	103,125	105,335	107,447	110,353	113,297
All schools	258,986	261,585	264,065	269,200	276,330	282,059	288,583	288,294	296,516	303,539	307,041

See notes for Table 2.12.

Source: ABS, *Schools*, 2022.

Between 2012 and 2022, the total number of FTE teaching staff grew by 48,055 (18.6%). This was substantially more than the percentage growth in (full-time plus part-time) student enrolments (12.6%) over the same period.

In 2022, FTE teaching staff accounted for 67.2% of the FTE of all school staff. In addition to teaching staff, 149,605 FTE staff were employed in administrative and clerical roles, as teacher aides and assistants, as specialist support staff or in building and maintenance.²²

²² National Report on Schooling data portal, Staff numbers.

2.6 Student–teacher ratios

Key Facts:

In Australia in 2022:

- The average student to teaching staff ratio was 13.1 students per teacher — a reduction from 13.3 students per teacher in 2021.
- The average student to teaching staff ratio was lower in independent schools (11.7 students per teacher) compared to Catholic schools (13.6 students per teacher) and government schools (13.4 students per teacher).
- The average student-teacher ratio was 11.9 students per teacher at the secondary level, compared with 14.4 students per teacher at the primary level. Student-teacher ratios are consistently lower for secondary education than for primary education in all school sectors. This reflects differing requirements for particular student groups, and for different school subjects in secondary schools.

The student–teacher ratio is calculated as the number of FTE students per FTE teaching staff. Table 2.16 summarises average student–teacher ratios in Australia in 2022 across the 3 school sectors.

Table 2.16

FTE student–teacher ratios, by school sector and school level, Australia, 2022

School sector	Primary	Secondary	All schools
Government	14.3	12.3	13.4
Catholic	15.2	12.2	13.6
Independent	14.0	10.4	11.7
All non-government	14.7	11.2	12.7
All schools	14.4	11.9	13.1

Source: ABS, *Schools*, 2022.

For all Australian schools, the average FTE student–teacher ratio in 2022 was 13.1:1, a reduction of 0.2 from 13.3:1 in 2021.

The average ratio for government schools nationally decreased by 0.2, from 13.6:1 to 13.4:1 between 2021 and 2022. This included a 0.1 reduction both in primary and secondary student teacher ratios. In part, this may have reflected lower-than-expected student numbers in part due to the impact of COVID-19 border closures on net overseas migration.

The average student-teacher ratio for non-government schools decreased by 0.1 between 2021 and 2022. The average ratio for independent schools fell by 0.1 to 11.7:1 and for Catholic schools remained constant at 13.6:1.

Table 2.17 shows average student–teacher ratios in 2022 by school level and state and territory.

Table 2.17

FTE student–teacher ratios, by state/territory and school level, Australia, 2022

School level	State/territory								Australia
	NSW	Vic	Qld	SA	WA	Tas	NT	ACT	
Primary	15.0	13.4	14.7	14.3	15.3	13.4	11.6	14.3	14.4
Secondary	12.1	11.2	12.1	12.2	12.2	11.4	11.1	12.3	11.9
All schools	13.6	12.3	13.4	13.3	13.7	12.4	11.4	13.3	13.1

Source: ABS, *Schools*, 2022.

Between 2021 and 2022, student–teacher ratios decreased in all states and territories, with decreases of 0.5 in the NT, 0.3 in Tas, 0.2 in the ACT and 0.1 in all other states. The only increases in student–teacher ratios were in the SA secondary sector, where the average student–teacher ratio rose by 0.3 to 12.2, and in the ACT primary sector, where the student–teacher ratio rose by 0.1 to 14.3.

Student–teacher ratios are consistently lower for secondary education than for primary education in all school sectors and across all states and territories. In 2022, the average FTE student–teacher ratio was 11.9:1 at the secondary level, compared with 14.4:1 at the primary level.

This reflects differing requirements for particular student groups, and for different school subjects, in secondary schools, such as smaller maximum class sizes for practical subjects, and for senior secondary classes.

The specialist and administrative duties undertaken by teaching staff in secondary schools, such as non-teaching principals, subject head teachers, teacher librarians and careers advisers, also contribute to this difference. The extent to which teaching staff perform these roles may vary between states and between school systems. This will affect the number of teachers employed in each school, and therefore the average student–teacher ratio.

Lower student–teacher ratios mean there is a smaller number of students per teacher and, potentially, smaller class sizes. However, ratios, by themselves, are only approximate indicators of actual class size because they do not take into account the factors mentioned above.

The average national student–teacher ratio fell from 13.8:1 in 2012 to 13.1:1 in 2022, with reductions across all school sectors. Time series data (2001–2022) on student–teacher ratios by state and territory, school sector and school level is available in the student–teacher ratios data set in the National Report on Schooling data portal.

Chapter 3: Policies and priorities

This chapter outlines the national policy context for Australian schooling in 2022 and reports against the commitments to action agreed by Australian education ministers in the *Alice Springs (Mparntwe) Education Declaration*.



3.1 National policy context

Within Australia's federal system of government, constitutional responsibility for school education rests mainly with the Australian states and territories. The federal (Australian) government contributes to education policy through national agreements and its financial relations with the states.

The 6 state and 2 territory governments and the Australian Government cooperate to work towards agreed goals and commitments expressed in the *Alice Springs (Mparntwe) Education Declaration*.

In Australia, joint decisions on agreed national policy and shared priorities are made through intergovernmental policy councils and forums. In 2022 the Education Ministers' Meeting (EMM) was the forum responsible for school education.²³ Skills and training ministers had responsibility for the ongoing management of the Vocational Education and Training (VET) system through the Skills Ministers' Meeting.

²³ The EMM replaced the former Council of Australian Governments (COAG) Education Council from January 2021.

Education Ministers Meeting

The EMM is the forum for collaboration and decision-making on:

- early childhood education and care (ECEC)
- school education
- higher education
- international education.

The EMM consists of portfolio ministers with responsibility for ECEC, school education, higher education and international education from the Australian Government and each state and territory. New Zealand is a non-decision-making member of the EMM.

The Commonwealth Minister for Education is the chair of the EMM. In 2022, Education Ministers collectively focused on:

- developing the National Teacher Workforce Action Plan that sets out a clear pathway to address teacher shortages,
- agreeing to form an Expert Panel that will undertake a review to inform the next NSRA and which will build on the work of the Productivity Commission's review of the NSRA which was conducted in 2022 and released in January 2023,
- developing a national, long-term vision for early childhood education and care that will support parents' workforce participation and early learning and child development,
- developing the Early Childhood Education and Care Workforce Implementation Plan which outlines implementation steps to support the recruitment, retention, sustainability and quality of the early childhood education and care sector workforce,
- refreshing the Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF),
- endorsing the Australian Curriculum, Version 9.0.

Skills Committee and Skills Ministers Meeting

In June 2020, the National Cabinet announced the formation of the Skills National Cabinet Reform Committee (Skills Committee) as one of 6 such committees in priority areas of reform. In addition to the Skills Committee, skills and training ministers have responsibility for the ongoing management of the VET system through the Skills Ministers' Meeting. Both committees consist of ministers from each state and territory and the Australian Government with portfolio responsibility for skills issues and have replaced the COAG Skills Council as a forum for decision-making about skills development and national training arrangements.

Alice Springs (Mparntwe) Education Declaration

From 2020, the *Alice Springs (Mparntwe) Education Declaration* replaced the Melbourne Declaration as the ministerial statement of national educational goals and commitment to action for the coming decade.

Mparntwe (pronounced M-ban-tua) is the Arrernte name for Alice Springs in the NT. The Aboriginal Arrernte (pronounced Arrunda) people are the traditional custodians of Alice Springs and the surrounding region.

The *Alice Springs (Mparntwe) Education Declaration* builds on the goals, actions, themes, and values of the Melbourne Declaration. Ministers agreed that education continue to promote excellence and equity and enable all Australians to become confident and creative individuals, successful learners, and active and informed community members.

Areas of emphasis include the importance of meeting the individual needs of all learners, learning throughout life from early childhood onwards, support for educators, a renewed commitment to learning from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, and ensuring that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students are supported to reach their potential.

In December 2020, Education Council endorsed the *Measurement Framework for Schooling in Australia 2020*, which reflects the *Alice Springs (Mparntwe) Education Declaration*. The 2020 measurement framework replaced the *Measurement Framework for Schooling Australia 2019* and specifies the nationally agreed KPMs for schooling.

National School Reform Agreement

The National School Reform Agreement (NSRA) is in place from 2019 to 2024.²⁴ This is a joint agreement between the Commonwealth, states and territories that underpins Commonwealth funding for schooling over this period. The NSRA specifies 8 national policy initiatives, grouped under 3 reform directions:

- Supporting students, student learning and student achievement
 1. Enhancing the Australian Curriculum to support teacher assessment of student attainment and growth against clear descriptors
 2. Assisting teachers to monitor individual student progress and identify student learning needs through opt-in online and on demand student learning assessment tools with links to student learning resources, prioritising early years foundation skills
 3. Reviewing senior secondary pathways into work, further education, and training
- Supporting teaching, school leadership and school improvement
 4. Reviewing teacher workforce needs of the future to attract and retain the best and brightest to the teaching profession and attract teachers to areas of need
 5. Strengthening the initial teacher education (ITE) accreditation system²⁵
- Enhancing the national evidence base
 6. Implementing a USI that meets national privacy requirements in order to support better understanding of student progression and improve the national evidence base²⁶
 7. Establishing an independent national evidence institute to inform teacher practice, system improvement and policy development
 8. Improving national data quality, consistency, and collection to improve the national evidence base and inform policy development.

²⁴ In March 2023, the Terms of Reference and Expert Panel for *The Review to Inform a Better and Fairer Education System* (the Review) were announced. The Review will focus on driving real and measurable improvements for students most at risk of falling behind. Findings from the Review will help to shape the next NSRA, which take effect from 2025. To provide time for this work to occur, the current NSRA will be extended for a further 12 months, to 31 December 2024.

²⁵ ITE refers to degrees and/or diplomas required for professional employment in teaching.

²⁶ A unique and persistent number for every school student in Australia, which will allow for sharing of information between schools, sectors, and jurisdictions, through to the VET and higher education sectors.

Reporting and public transparency arrangements include an annual public report from Education Council to demonstrate progress towards implementation. Also, bilateral reform agreements between the Australian Government and the states and territories reflect state-specific initiatives in the context of each jurisdiction. States and territories report annually to the Australian Government on progress against the actions outlined in individual bilateral agreements and on their funding contributions to government and non-government schools.

Progress on the development and implementation of the initiatives in 2022 is noted below and in the relevant sections of this chapter.

Australian Curriculum review

The Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) is an independent statutory authority responsible to Education Council, established in legislation under the *Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority Act (2008)*. In 2022, ACARA completed its review of the Australian Curriculum – Foundation to Year 10, as requested by ministers in 2020. The revised Australian Curriculum, Version 9.0, was endorsed by education ministers in early 2022. More information is provided in Part 3.10: Delivering world class curriculum and assessment.

Implementing recommendations from the Review of the Disability Standards for Education

In March 2021, the (then) Minister for Education and Youth released the final report of the 2020 Review of the *Disability Standards for Education 2005*. The Department continued to work closely with state and territory governments and non-government education authorities to implement the Review recommendations. The focus in 2022 was on the development of information products to empower children and students with disability and their families; and strengthen the knowledge and capability of education providers.

More information is provided in Part 3.12: Supporting all young Australians at risk of educational disadvantage.

Responses to the COVID-19 pandemic

By 2022, Australian schools had returned to on-site learning. However, school attendance in Semester 1 2022 declined, partly due to the impact of the COVID-19 Omicron variant. The continued effect of the disruption of international travel due to COVID-19 and closure of Australia's international borders was also apparent. The reduction in numbers of international students and a very low immigration rate, including for school-aged children, led to the lowest growth in school enrolments since 2008.²⁷

In 2021, Education Ministers decided to further postpone the NAP–ICT Literacy assessment to 2022 due to the continued COVID-19 pandemic. As a result, NAP–Science Literacy and NAP–Civics and Citizenship was delayed by a further 12 months. This will result in a one-off 5-year gap (as opposed to the normal 3-year gap) in the time series for each of the sample assessments.

Internationally, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) member countries and associates decided to postpone the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) 2021 assessment to 2022 and the PISA 2024 assessment to 2025 to reflect post-COVID difficulties.

²⁷ This is discussed in Chapter 2: Schools and schooling.

To assist school communities to respond to emerging priorities in school education, including recovery from COVID-19, the Australian Government increased funding by \$10.4 million for the Emerging Priorities Program in 2021–22.

State and territory policy initiatives

State and territory governments retain the responsibility for implementing agreed national policy in education, and for initiating and carrying out their own programs of innovation and reform. In 2022, all states and territories participated in national policy initiatives under the NSRA. Other state and territory policy initiatives are noted in the following sections of this chapter.²⁸

²⁸ Information on state and territory initiatives reported in this chapter is drawn from contributions received from state and territory education authorities.

3.2 Educational goals

Alice Springs (Mparntwe) Education Declaration

The *Alice Springs (Mparntwe) Education Declaration* has 2 overarching educational goals for young Australians:

- Goal 1:** The Australian education system promotes excellence and equity
- Goal 2:** All young Australians become:
- confident and creative individuals
 - successful lifelong learners
 - active and informed members of the community.

Commitment to action to achieve the educational goals

The *Alice Springs (Mparntwe) Education Declaration* includes a commitment to action in 11 interrelated areas:

- developing stronger partnerships
- supporting quality teaching and leadership
- strengthening early childhood education
- building foundational skills in the primary school years
- enhancing middle years development
- supporting senior years of schooling
- embedding pathways for learning throughout life and supporting effective transitions
- delivering world-class curriculum and assessment
- supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander learners to reach their full potential
- supporting all young Australians at risk of educational disadvantage
- strengthening accountability and transparency with strong, meaningful measures.

Progress in 2022 in addressing the areas for action is reported in the following sections of this chapter.

Closing the Gap

Closing the Gap targets for education are part of a broader agenda for closing the gap between outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and other Australians.

The Partnership Agreement on Closing the Gap between the Australian Government, state, and territory governments, the Coalition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peak Organisations and the Australian Local Government Association includes the following targets related to education:

- By 2025, increase the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children enrolled in the year before full-time schooling early childhood education to 95%.
- By 2031, increase the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children assessed as developmentally on track in all 5 domains of the Australian Early Development Census to 55%.
- By 2031, increase the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people (age 20–24) attaining Year 12 or equivalent qualification to 96%.
- By 2031, increase the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 25–34 years who have completed a tertiary qualification (Certificate III and above) to 70%.
- By 2031, increase the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth (15–24 years) who are in employment, education, or training to 67%.

3.3 Developing stronger partnerships

The *Alice Springs (Mparntwe) Education Declaration* commits Australian governments to “building partnerships that support learners’ progress through the education system, and to provide them with individualised, high-quality learning opportunities and experiences, and personal development” (p 10).

Youth Engagement Model

In 2022, the Australian Government committed \$10.5 million to a *Youth Engagement Model* to give young people the opportunity to engage with the policies and programs that impact them. This includes the Office for Youth which has been established as a dedicated unit in the Department of Education to support the contribution of young people and their advocates, improve and harmonise policy across government, and ensure government is communicating effectively with young people. The model also includes:

- \$1.5 million for 5 youth advisory groups to work directly with Australian Government agencies on policy and program development
- \$0.5 million for the development of a youth engagement strategy to be delivered in 2024
- \$1.5 million for the Australian Youth Affairs Coalition to support its critical role in youth advocacy, engagement, and research.

Further, the Australian Government has established a 15-member Youth Steering Committee to support the Office for Youth develop and implement the youth engagement model.

Closing the Gap

The first priority reform of the National Agreement on Closing the Gap is for formal partnerships and shared decision-making. Under this reform Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are empowered to share decision-making authority with governments to accelerate policy and place-based progress on Closing the Gap through formal partnership arrangements.

Early Childhood Care and Development Policy Partnership

The Early Childhood Care and Development Policy Partnership (ECPP) is the second of five Policy Partnerships that brings together governments and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representatives to develop recommendations to improve early childhood outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families. The Partnership will drive coordinated efforts to support policy reform in early childhood education and care, maternal and child health and child safety sectors and support reforms across early childhood systems.

The ECPP has been co-developed with:

- National Voice for our Children, the national peak body for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families
- Australian Government departments with responsibility across early childhood education and care, maternal and child health, child protection and families.

The Partnership will focus on the Priority Reforms and Outcomes 2, 3, 4, 12 and 13 of Closing the Gap, with key objectives of the Partnership including:

- identifying reforms to support First Nations children to achieve their potential in the early years, to set them up for long-term success,
- actioning priority reforms in the National Agreement on Closing the Gap, particularly First Nations community-led initiatives,
- identifying opportunities to work more effectively across governments, Coalition of Peaks and community organisations, and
- enabling First Nations representatives, communities and organisations to negotiate and implement agreements with governments to support Closing the Gap.

The Australian Government has committed \$10.2 million over three years to establish the Partnership with the Partnership being part of the commitment of Australian governments to the National Agreement on Closing the Gap. In line with this National Agreement, the Partnership will be reviewed after three years.

State, territory and sector initiatives

Under the commitment to stronger partnerships, states and territories have worked to establish and grow local and state-wide partnerships of schools with families, community groups, business, higher education, government agencies and others.

- The Department for Education SA has partnered with Kornar Winmil Yunti and the Department of Human Services to deliver a new service model for Aboriginal families where there is a child or young person with concerning school attendance. KKY's Young people Empowered to Re-engage Towards Achievement Program commenced in Term 4, 2022 in Western Adelaide. It offers intensive family supports and an additional education focus, to test if this can be an effective response for Aboriginal families where there are complex family circumstances which are barriers to school attendance.
- The Department for Education SA began construction of 5 new technical colleges across the state, including 2 in regional SA and 3 across the metropolitan area. The technical colleges will partner with industry and schools, promoting vocational education and training, and creating pathways into the state's industries. Findon Technical College will be the first to open in 2024, with BAE Systems Australia as a key employer partner. All 5 technical colleges will be operational by 2026.
- The Qld Department of Education partnered with the Qld Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education and Training Advisory Committee and the Qld Department of Employment, Small Business and Training to co-design initiatives to improve the learning and training opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people.
- The NT Department of Education prioritised local decision making through Community-led Schools, Local Engagement and Decision-Making committees, school councils, and school boards. In 2022, 10 schools were on the Community-led Schools' pathway, providing families and communities with a strong voice to guide the way education is delivered for their children and ensure community aspirations influence the delivery of education services. For schools not yet ready to undertake a full community-led school journey, 42 local engagement and decision-making committees have been established in remote and very remote communities.

- The University of Canberra Affiliated Schools Program brings together the expertise of university staff, teachers, and school leaders to improve student outcomes in ACT public schools. The partnership takes a collaborative approach to developing quality teacher practice from pre-service teacher education through to experienced teacher learning and development.
- The Department of Education Vic partnered with 14 African-Australian led organisations to provide tailored and culturally appropriate education support to 1200 African-Australian young people and their families, through the Victorian African Communities Action Plan Homework Club Initiative. The strengthened partnerships with the African-Australian community led to improved academic outcomes, student confidence, family engagement, belonging and inclusion across school communities.
- The NSW Department of Education partnered with Monash University to develop resources on evidence-based practices for students with disability. These new resources build on the existing Inclusive Practice Hub and provide step-by-step guidance for school staff on implementing these practices with fidelity in their classrooms.
- NSW commenced working with the New South Wales Education Standards Authority and Aboriginal Education Consultative Group to develop resources to support the implementation of the new Aboriginal Languages K-10 syllabus.
- Thirty-eight students, including representatives from all 8 education regions, were appointed to form the inaugural WA Student Council. The councillors attend ministerial meetings, liaise with schools and students in their regions, attend student leadership activities, and provide feedback to the Department on various initiatives.
- The Association of Independent Schools of SA (AISSA) Leadership Institute ALab and Metap Praxis Symposium was attended by all 3 education sectors and showcased school-based research on student agency and interdisciplinary learning practice in Independent schools. A podcast series documenting these projects in collaboration with The Learning Future was also produced and released.
- The Association of Independent Schools of NSW (AISNSW) East Arnhem Land Cultural Immersion Program resumed after a 2-year hiatus due to COVID. The week-long program provided school leaders and teachers with an immersive intercultural experience living with the Yolngu people, deepening their understanding of Aboriginal culture and practices that they could bring back to their schools.

3.4 Supporting quality teaching and leadership

In the *Alice Springs (Mparntwe) Education Declaration*, "Australian Governments commit to working with the education community to attract, develop, support and retain high-quality teachers, educators and leaders in Australia's education system" (p 11).

National Teacher Workforce Action Plan

On 15 December 2022, Education Ministers agreed to the *National Teacher Workforce Action Plan* to address national teacher shortages. The 27 actions in the plan aim to address teacher supply, strengthen initial education, retain teachers, elevate the profession, and improve data. The package of measures includes:

- Up to 5,000 bursaries over 4 years, targeted at high achieving school leavers (with an Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR) of 80 or above or equivalent), mid-career professionals, First Nations peoples, people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and other underrepresented communities to encourage them to choose teaching as a profession.
- Expansion of the High Achieving Teachers program to support up to an additional 1,500 places to encourage more professionals to switch careers to teaching.
- Implementation of recommendations from the 2022 Quality Initial Teacher Education Review, with a focus on attracting quality candidates to study and become teachers, ensuring ITE programs and degrees are high-quality, and support the early career needs of new teachers to improve retention.

High Achieving Teachers Program

The Australian Government supports alternative, employment-based pathways into teaching by funding the High Achieving Teachers Program. Currently, two employment-based pathways into teaching are funded under this Program – the Teach For Australia Leadership Development Program and the La Trobe University Nexus Program. Both providers engaged participants in 2022.

Future Leaders Program Pilot

The Australian Government committed \$7.54 million from 2019–2022 under the Future Leaders Program for Teach for Australia to pilot a new approach to strengthening school leadership. This program provides leadership development and training to high-achieving teachers with leadership potential working in regional and rural schools. A total of 100 participants completed the program over two years in 2021- 22, with more than 40% promoted to a position of leadership or higher responsibility.

Strengthening Initial Teacher Education

Strengthening Initial Teacher Education (ITE) accreditation system is one of the 8 national policy initiatives in the NSRA. The Australian Government commissioned a review of ITE, which was published in February 2022. *Next steps: report of the Quality Initial Teacher Education Review* makes recommendations across 3 key areas, attracting high-quality, diverse candidates into initial teacher education, ensuring their preparation is evidence-based and practical and supporting early years teachers.

Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership

The Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) is a company owned and funded by the Australian Government. AITSL has responsibility for supporting the implementation of the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers and the Australian Professional Standard for Principals. Supporting teaching, school leadership and school improvement is one of 3 reform directions within the NSRA. Reviewing teacher workforce needs of the future and strengthening the ITE accreditation system are national policy initiatives under this direction.

In 2022, AITSL was involved in the Commonwealth Faster Migrant Skills Assessments Program, which supports options for employing teachers currently based outside Australia. In 2021–2022, AITSL delivered over 2,200 suitable skilled migration assessment outcomes to teachers seeking to migrate to Australia. AITSL also implemented agreed national approaches to accreditation of ITE, leading to all 47 ITE providers adopting Teaching Performance Assessments endorsed by AITSL’s Expert Advisory Group.

Online Formative Assessment initiative

The Online Formative Assessment Initiative was one of the 8 National Policy Initiatives committed under the NSRA. In December 2022, Education Ministers endorsed a path forward on the initiative and have tasked ACARA to provide advice for sharing existing assessments and assessment items to establish a bank of assessments. The assessment resources will be delivered to teachers on an opt-in basis, quickly and cost-effectively by jurisdictions working together to leverage and align existing resources from NSW, Vic, and Qld.

Implementing recommendations from the 2020 Review of the *Disability Standards for Education 2005*

New case studies and an animated explainer video were developed in 2022 (published early 2023) to help teachers and school leaders develop their understanding of the *Disability Standards for Education 2005* and implement their obligations under the Standards.²⁹

State, territory and sector initiatives

States and territories continued to implement the standards for teachers and principals, and the accreditation of teachers and teacher education programs, within their jurisdictions.

- The Qld Department of Education allocated \$15.5 million to build teacher capability, support teacher planning and provide regional support in the delivery of respectful relationships education.
- In Qld, regionally based Teacher Learning Centres and Rural and Remote Centres for Learning and Wellbeing provided professional learning, capability development and wellbeing support for teachers and leaders across all schools.
- The ACT Education Directorate released the Future of Education Phase Two Implementation Plan in March 2022. This includes commitments to support teachers, allied health, and all education professionals to meet the needs of children and young people through access to high quality training, mentoring and professional development, and supporting school leaders to build expert teaching teams.

²⁹ These resources are available at www.nccd.edu.au/dse.

- The Department of Education Vic supported more than 200 teachers from 121 schools to take part in the Victoria's Primary Mathematics and Science Specialists Initiative. This was a 2-year initiative from 2021 to 2022 which developed high-quality teachers to lead mathematics or science education at their schools.
- The NT Department of Education continued to support capacity building of Aboriginal assistant teachers in remote NT schools at every stage of their careers while creating opportunities for those who aspire to become qualified teachers through the Remote Area Teacher Education (RATE) Program. A 2-year agreement was signed with Charles Darwin University for the co-design, contextualisation, and delivery of the tertiary aspect of RATE. As at December 2022, as part of RATE:
 - 17 Aboriginal assistant teachers from Groote Eylandt, Milingimbi, Galiwinku, Alice Springs, Daly River, and Adelaide River were enrolled in Charles Darwin University's Initial Teacher Education courses,
 - 181 Aboriginal assistant teachers completed English language, literacy, and numeracy assessments to determine readiness for VET or higher education studies through the Basic Key Skills Builder platform,
 - 109 Aboriginal assistant teachers were undertaking a VET education course.
- The Vic Academy of Teaching and Leadership was established to offer professional learning to Vic school teachers and leaders including leadership programs for government school leaders and a new cross-sectoral Teaching Excellence Program.
- The NSW Department of Education continued to implement the School Leadership Development Strategy which identifies and develops school leaders and strengthens system leadership. This included a School Leadership Identification Framework, a 360-degree leadership survey, and induction and development programs. A Leadership Development Continuum underpinned all programs, articulating opportunities for leadership learning through interrelated career stages.
- The Quality Teaching Strategy was launched in WA. The strategy aims to support principals and teachers to build cultures of teaching excellence that develop, implement and sustain effective classroom practice. Three key supports are the Leading Cultures of Teaching Excellence professional learning program, Teaching for Impact resources and a School Culture Survey.
- In WA, Principal Professional Review commenced mid-Term 3, with 66 reviews completed by the end of 2022. This provides principals with feedback to support their ongoing self-assessment and reflective practices and enhance their professional growth and development.
- Independent Schools Vic delivered the Principal Executive Network Program which provided ongoing support for new principals beyond their first year. In 2022, 13 new principals participated in the program.
- The AISSA delivered the Transforming Classroom Practice F–10 Initiative. This prioritised Australian Curriculum implementation processes to enhance student outcomes and engagement. It built teacher capacity through online professional learning opportunities, including Learning Design, Formative Assessment, National Literacy and Numeracy Learning Progressions and General Capabilities. The initiative complemented other SA activities for the implementation of the Australian Curriculum Version 9.0 from 2023.

3.5 Strengthening early childhood education

The *Alice Springs (Mparntwe) Education Declaration* commits Australian governments to continuing to build quality and access to early years learning and development. This should take place in environments that meet the needs of all Australian families.

Early childhood education takes place in the years before full-time schooling and is generally accessed by for children up to 5 years. It is a separate education sector to primary and secondary education with separate regulatory and funding frameworks.

As such, it is formally outside the scope of the NSSC and the National Report on Schooling. Statistical data on early childhood education is not included in this report.

However, early childhood centres are often attached to, or accommodated in, primary schools and, in some jurisdictions, part-time early childhood education programs in the year before full-time schooling are considered to be a part of schooling. Preschool early childhood education is increasingly important as a preparation for schooling and is a key commitment of the *Alice Springs (Mparntwe) Education Declaration*. For these reasons, limited information on early childhood education is provided in this section.

Preschool Reform Agreement

The Preschool Reform Agreement (PRA) commenced in 2022 following the end of the Universal Access National Partnership Agreement in 2021. The PRA is a 4-year national reform agreement that aims to lift preschool enrolments and attendance and maximise the benefits of preschool. The funding supports the delivery of 15 hours a week (or 600 hours a year) of quality preschool programs by early childhood teachers, regardless of the setting in which programs are delivered, for all children in the year before they start school. It also supports an important, collaborative reform agenda that aims to see preschool attendance improved, as well as the development and trial of an outcome measure from 2025. The focus of activity in 2022 was to prepare for the implementation of *Commonwealth Funding Follows Child* from 2023 and development of the national preschool enrolment and attendance measures.

National Children's Education and Care Workforce Strategy

Facilitated by the Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA) all Governments and sector stakeholders collaborated to co-design a 10-year National Children's Education and Care Workforce Strategy, released in October 2021. The Strategy aims to support the attraction, development, and retention of a sustainable, high-quality early childhood workforce. In August 2022, Education Ministers endorsed the *Shaping Our Future: Implementation and Evaluation Plan* detailing how the 21 national workforce actions will be progressed, monitored, and reviewed, including 13 short-term actions to be progressed by the end of 2024.

Update of Early Years Learning Framework

As the EYLF had been in use for close to a decade, education ministers commissioned an update in 2021 to ensure it continues to reflect contemporary developments in practice and knowledge, while supporting all educators to best meet the learning and development needs of each child. After an extensive consultation process, Education Ministers endorsed the updated EYLF in December 2022. The updates strengthen the connection between the EYLF and the National Quality Standard (NQS) in areas such as transitions, sustainability, theoretical approaches, critical reflection, the importance of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ways of being, knowing and doing, and inclusion.

National Quality Framework

The National Quality Framework (NQF) drives continuous improvement in the nationally consistent quality, regulation and assessment of early childhood and child care services. It applies to most long day care, family day care, kindergarten or preschool and outside school-hours care services in Australia. ACECQA is the national body that supports regulatory authorities in states and territories in administering the NQF.

In 2022, Australian, state and territory Education Ministers agreed to changes to the NQF based on findings from the 2019 NQF Review. Key changes for providers and their services include new measures to ensure the safety, health and wellbeing of children, new workforce requirements, improved oversight by regulatory authorities, and additional guidance to support providers and their services in educating and caring for children.

Closing the Gap

The Australian Government's package of early childhood measures as part of its Closing the Gap investments for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children is focused on initiatives and programs to lift participation in quality early childhood education and care and improve school readiness outcomes.

State, territory and sector initiatives

- The Department for Education SA established a Royal Commission into ECEC to consider how SA can introduce an additional year of preschool, with a roll out commencing from 2026. The Royal Commission will also consider how to make Outside School Hours Care accessible to all families of preschool and school age children and how services and supports in the first 1000 days can be strengthened, with particular reference to ECEC.
- The NT Department of Education's pilot of universal 3-year-old preschool across 6 schools was extended for 12 months. An evaluation framework was developed to understand potential delivery models and their effectiveness for the delivery of 2 years of quality early learning prior to full-time schooling in a government school setting; and help identify barriers and enablers of engagement in quality early learning for 3-year-old children and their families.
- Consultation to inform the development of an ACT ECEC workforce strategy was undertaken. Initiatives to support quality early childhood teaching practice included delivery of the Early Childhood Degree Scholarship Program for non-government educators.
- In the ACT, the Preschool Pathways program was launched to assist parents supporting their child's transition to preschool. A resource was developed to support parents and carers to engage in their child's learning and development from birth, and the sector-wide Continuity and Transitioning Framework was revised.
- Three-year-old kindergarten was introduced across Vic, with available hours increasing to 15 per week for all children by 2029. Vic also announced the Best Start Best Life reforms, which included free kindergarten in participating services; 50 new government-owned early learning centres in areas of greatest need and 4-year-old kindergarten transitioning to 'Pre-Prep' and becoming a universal, 30-hour-a-week program of play-based learning.
- The NSW Department of Education continued to deliver the Start Strong program as well as free preschool funding for community and mobile preschools to support families experiencing cost of living pressures. NSW also funded new programs to support more children to access quality ECEC and support the workforce, including launching the Childcare and Economic Opportunity Fund.

- In WA, online professional learning modules were developed and released to support educator and school leaders' knowledge of the NQS.
- The early learning context is unique in Tas, as kindergarten is in schools. In 2022, the Premier of Tasmania announced his aspiration to provide access for all 3-year-olds to early learning in the year before kindergarten. This will be delivered through co-design with stakeholders including ECEC providers, families, and the community.

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

3.6 Building foundational skills in the primary school years

This commitment to action in the *Alice Springs (Mparntwe) Education Declaration* is to ensure school sectors are responsive to students' developmental and learning needs in primary school and provide a strong foundation for continued learning success throughout school and beyond.

Representatives of all school sectors participated in F–6 Curriculum and Teacher Practice Reference Group meetings as part of the Australian Curriculum review process with a strong focus on examining the primary curriculum content holistically by years/bands rather than by learning areas.

Phonics Check and Literacy Hub

The Phonics Check and Literacy Hub initiative aims to ensure that students struggling with learning to read are identified early using evidence-based assessment tools and resources, and that teachers have the resources they need to act on results. The initiative includes a voluntary, online, teacher-administered Year 1 Phonics Check; and a Literacy Hub with professional learning materials for teachers and resources for families.

The online Year 1 Phonics Check has been available since August 2020. Use of the Phonics Check and Literacy Hub is voluntary and free. All schools in Australia have access regardless of location or system.

State, territory and sector initiatives

- In Qld, the P–10 Numeracy continuum was updated to align with the Australian Curriculum, Version 9.0 to ensure teachers can continue to monitor numeracy development as part of the updated curriculum. The Indigenous English as an Additional Language or Dialect initiative supported schools to identify, monitor and support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander learners to access the curriculum.
- NT schools implemented literacy and numeracy strategies to build foundational skills in the primary years. Eight schools participated in the 'Good to Great' Readers Project trial, which built capability of teachers to use effective instructional models and pedagogical approaches to extend student outcomes in reading. Through this project, teachers unpacked and engaged with the core content and transferable concepts in the Australian Curriculum.
- The Finding the Balance Mathematics and Numeracy strategy supported ACT schools with targeted professional learning to better meet the numeracy needs of all students from foundation to Year 6. The Literacy Champions network, offering professional learning each term, supported lead teachers in the ACT to promote the literacy skills of primary school students.
- The NSW Department of Education continued the use of a Year 1 Phonics Screening Check in all NSW government primary schools, with over 65,000 students completing the assessment. This assessment complements existing school practices used to identify students' progress in developing foundational literacy skills.
- In Vic, the Secondary Mathematics and Science Initiative supported 64 out-of-field Year 7–10 mathematics and science teachers to complete a Graduate Certificate of Secondary Mathematics or a Graduate Certificate of Secondary Science at Deakin University, adding to the 175 out-of-field mathematics and science teachers who completed courses in 2021.
- WA public schools commenced the implementation of the Phonics Initiative to support the development of literacy skills of students from an early age.

- The Department of Education WA has committed to extend the term of the Kimberley Schools Project for a further 3 years under the Kimberley Youth and Community Justice Response. This will continue to accelerate children's learning through targeted teaching practices in Kindergarten to Year 2 and maintain a focus on the early years, attendance and community engagement.

3.7 Enhancing middle years development

The *Alice Springs (Mparntwe) Education Declaration* commits governments to work with all school sectors “to ensure that schools are responsive to students’ developmental and learning needs in the middle years, in ways which are challenging, engaging and rewarding” (p 13).

Student Wellbeing Hub

The Australian Government’s [Student Wellbeing Hub](#) provides a range of freely available information and resources for educators, students and parents to assist them to create and maintain a safe and supportive school environment. These resources include online professional learning modules, a school survey tool and classroom resources to support wellbeing education. Resources are available to support school community responses to COVID-19 and building student resilience.

Respectful Relationships

The Australian Government will invest \$83.5 million over 6 years from 2022–23 in funding for state and territory governments and non-government systems to provide consent education that is age-appropriate, evidence-based and developed by experts. This measure supports the Australian Curriculum and will be delivered in partnership with state, territory, and non-government school systems.

State, territory and sector initiatives

- In 2021–22, the Qld Department of Education allocated \$23.7 million through the *Literacy and Numeracy Intervention Appropriation* to assist the provision of literacy and/or numeracy support to students identified by school monitoring and assessment data.
- In Qld, the *Building Student Success in Years 7–10 to Support Successful Transition to Years 11–12 Initiative* provides a reflection tool and resources to facilitate school improvement in this phase of learning.
- The NT Department of Education continued to partner with students and young people in the establishment of the Youth Peak Group as part of the *Education Engagement Strategy 2022–2031*. Co-design workshops were held with 30 students and young people from across the NT to shape the purpose and governance of the group. Sixteen students were selected to provide an ongoing student voice on matters of policy development and program delivery, to positively influence future education, employment, health, and wellbeing outcomes for all young Territorians.
- The *Finding the Balance Mathematics and Numeracy Strategy* supported ACT school leaders and teachers with targeted professional learning to better meet the numeracy needs of all students, particularly in the pivotal middle years when students are developing their identity as mathematical learners.
- The Department of Education Vic committed \$183 million funding to the *Middle Years Literacy and Numeracy Support Initiative*, which provides direct teaching support to secondary school students who are at risk of finishing school without the literacy and numeracy skills they need for future work or study.
- The NSW Department of Education continued the use of check-in assessments with all year groups from Year 3 to 9. These online diagnostic assessments in reading and numeracy assist schools to identify how students are performing and help teachers tailor learning to meet student needs and support planning.

- The WA Schools Anti-Vaping Toolkit was launched and made available to all WA schools as part of an education campaign and action plan to address the issue of vaping among teenagers.
- The SA initiative to transition Year 7 students into secondary contexts was completed in 2022. The AISSA Responding to Early Adolescent Learners Reference Group continued supporting Independent schools' Middle Years Leaders. This included collaborating with experts and universities to enhance their expertise in early adolescent learners' needs.

3.8 Supporting senior secondary education

Through the *Alice Springs (Mparntwe) Education Declaration*, Australian governments commit to working with the education community to provide a senior secondary education that equips young people with the skills, knowledge, values, and capabilities to succeed in employment, personal and civic life.

Senior Secondary Certificates of Education

Each state and territory is responsible for providing senior secondary education for students participating in Years 11 and 12, the last 2 years of schooling.

The curriculum, assessment, and certification authority in each jurisdiction is responsible for determining course content and how the agreed Australian Curriculum content and achievement standards are integrated into its courses.³⁰ These state and territory government authorities also determine assessment and certification specifications for successful course completion.

Senior secondary certificates of education (SSCEs) are Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) qualifications issued by the curriculum, assessment and certification authority in each state and territory to students meeting the requirements for successful completion of secondary schooling. Each state and territory has its own SSCE(s), as listed in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1

Senior secondary certificates of education (SSCEs), Australian states and territories, 2022

State/territory	SSCE(s)
NSW	Higher School Certificate (HSC)
Vic	Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE) Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL)
Qld	Queensland Certificate of Education (QCE)
SA	South Australian Certificate of Education (SACE)
WA	Western Australian Certificate of Education (WACE)
Tas	Tasmanian Certificate of Education (TCE)
NT	Northern Territory Certificate of Education and Training (NTCET)
ACT	Australian Capital Territory Senior Secondary Certificate (ACTSSC)

Source: [ACACA website](#), states and territories.

Data on the completion of Year 12 or equivalent (AQF Certificate II or III) is reported in Chapter 8: Student attainment, and in the Participation and Attainment data set in the National Report on Schooling data portal.

³⁰ These authorities are member organisations of Australasian Curriculum, Assessment and Certification Authorities (ACACA).

State and territory initiatives

State and territory initiatives in 2022 included:

- The Qld Department of Education collaborated with key VET sector stakeholders, developing and delivering the department's strategic vision for high-quality VET and providing capability development to schools. This was done in partnership with the Qld Department of Employment, Small Business and Training, the Qld Curriculum and Assessment authority and Jobs Qld.
- A review into secondary education commenced in the NT to revitalise flexible secondary provision. The review's first phase of work focused on defining the goals of the secondary system, reviewing current state delivery against these goals, and defining the levers of future reform.
- The ACT Education Directorate continued its working partnership with tertiary institutions including the Australian National University, University of Canberra, and the Canberra Institute of Technology to provide tertiary pathways for senior secondary students who may not have previously considered further study. The Head Start Pilot Program provided funding for 50 Australian school-based apprenticeship positions targeted to local skills needs occupations, and new and emerging industries.
- In Vic, as part of the senior secondary reforms, the Vocational Major was accredited as a vocational pathway within the VCE. The Victorian Pathways Certificate (VPC) was accredited as a flexible foundation secondary course for students not able or ready to engage with the VCE. Schools were supported to expand VET offerings and teachers supported to deliver the curricula.
- In NSW, Stay Healthy HSC provides resources to assist students to stay healthy, active, and connected during the HSC. Additionally, the Pathways for Secondary Students Strategy was launched in December 2022 and supports students to make informed decisions to succeed in their pathways and transition into destinations well suited to their capabilities, interests, and aspirations.
- The AISSA 2020–21 Learner and Accreditation Project aimed to help schools assess a broader range of student capabilities, leading to questions on recognizing learning diversity. Sector leads collaborated with tertiary stakeholders, including universities and VET partners, to examine the change in this area and respond accordingly.
- In SA, an innovative curriculum and assessment program, Now I Own, was developed by FORM's Creative Schools specifically for secondary school students attending Curriculum and Re-Engagement Schools.

3.9 Embedding pathways for learning throughout life and supporting effective transitions

The *Alice Springs (Mparntwe) Education Declaration* notes “at key developmental periods in each young person’s life they transition between early childhood to primary school, from primary to secondary school and from secondary school to further education, training and employment ... Australian Governments commit to helping young Australians navigate the choices they will need to make for their education, training and employment by providing guidance and streamlining transitions” (p 14).

Senior Secondary Pathways Review

In late 2020, Education Ministers considered the outcomes of the Review of senior secondary pathways into work, further education and training and agreed priority areas for action. In 2022, the following activities were progressed in response to these priorities:

- Enhancements to career information through the National Careers Institute, including the provision of up-to-date user-friendly careers information and available training opportunities through the Australian Government’s Your Career website,
- Building on work undertaken in 2021, further collaborative work with education jurisdictions investigated senior secondary learner profiles as a way of recognising and reflecting capabilities that young people develop during their school years.

GENERATION Survey

The GENERATION survey, a new national longitudinal survey of young people, was implemented in 2022. GENERATION is a joint Australian, state and territory government initiative which aims to gain insights into young people’s pathways from school into post-school education, training, and the workforce, particularly for young people from key equity groups. The first wave of the survey was conducted in 2022 with over 15,000 Year 10 student participants across almost 300 schools. These students will be surveyed annually until 2032.

VET delivered to secondary students

Programs for the delivery of VET to secondary students, including school-based apprenticeships and traineeships, operate in all states and territories. Under these programs, school students can combine school study with training towards an accredited AQF VET qualification. The achievement of a VET qualification signifies that a student has demonstrated competency against the skills and knowledge required to perform effectively in the workplace. All VET qualifications must be issued by registered training organisations (RTOs). Participation rates of school-aged students including secondary students in VET are reported in the National Report on Schooling data portal. VET course enrolments and VET qualifications completed by senior secondary students are reported at the school level on the *My School* website.

Preparing Secondary Students for Work: A framework for vocational learning and VET offers that all secondary students should experience quality vocational learning and have access to quality VET courses that are integrated into secondary schooling and valued by students, parents, teachers, and employers. The framework clarifies the distinction between vocational learning (career education and general work-related curriculum) and VET (nationally recognised training described within an industry-developed training package or an accredited course). It emphasises that VET delivered to secondary students is the same as all other VET, and that the same quality standards apply. The framework, and a range of VET and career education tools and other resources, is published on the *Your Career* website.

Skills Reform

The Australian, state and territory governments have committed to work collaboratively on long-term improvements to the VET sector through a new National Skills Agreement. The principles of this agreement were endorsed by National Cabinet in August 2022. The objective is to strengthen the VET system to produce high quality, responsive and accessible education. This includes greater national consistency where beneficial, stronger links to skills needs and supporting providers to deliver high quality education and training.

State, territory, and school sector initiatives

All states and territories offer VET courses to secondary students, usually as part of the SSCE in each jurisdiction, as well as career education and other work-related programs.

- In SA, funding was provided to the Master Builders Association to run a program of outreach into schools to encourage students to consider taking up a building trade as a future career path.
- WorldSkills Australia Vocational Education and Training in Schools (VETiS) was introduced in SA for the first time. Students competed in work-simulated projects based on industry standard frameworks which were designed and administered by practising teachers and industry professionals. VETiS categories of carpentry and commercial cookery were selected and delivered in line with industry endorsed Flexible Industry Programs and key growth sectors within SA.
- A new Trainees in Schools program was introduced which provides government secondary students in SA the opportunity to become a trainee in a host school and to commence a pathway related to employment within the Department for Education, whilst completing SACE. The school-based trainees are employed through a Group Training Organisation, receive Certificate III level training and gain experience on-the-job.
- The Qld Department of Education increased supports for the post-secondary transition by expanding the Link and Launch program which assisted young people who had completed Year 12 but were not in study, training, or work. An earlier independent evaluation of this program found 90.9% of participants were still engaged 2.5 years after accessing transition support.
- The NT Department of Education engaged the University of Melbourne to work with early childhood services and schools to establish a framework that will strengthen continuity of learning for children from birth to Year 12.
- The ACT Education Directorate supported schools to create custom pages on their Career Tools websites. This included information on local initiatives supporting transitions for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, and students with disability.
- The Understanding Building and Construction Pilot Program, led by ACT Office for Women, in partnership with ACT Education Directorate and the National Association of Women in Construction has led to an increase in work experience opportunities for young women in the construction industry.
- In Vic, preparations to expand Head Start school-based apprenticeships and traineeships to all government schools were put in place. Supports for expanding and retaining VET workforce in schools were increased. Transforming Career Education initiatives continued. A new Local Learning and Employment Networks School to Work contract came into effect to improve work-based learning opportunities.

- In NSW, skills brokers guided transitioning students into suitable vocational education pathways that align with industry needs. Programs such as *New South Wales Fee Free*, *Summer Skills*, *Kickstart your Hospitality Career* and *Care Sector short courses* provided young people with learning experiences that lead to employment and further training options.
- In SA, VET leaders in Independent and Catholic sectors collaborated with industry representatives, RTOs, and tertiary providers, supported by AISSA. Four professional engagement meetings and in-school visits, including regional areas, aided the exploration and establishment of local industry partnerships with school VET leaders.

3.10 Delivering world-class curriculum and assessment

As part of the *Alice Springs (Mparntwe) Education Declaration*, Australian governments have committed to ensuring that all education sectors deliver world-class curriculum and assessment in Australian schools.

Progressing priority national school education initiatives, with a focus on NAPLAN and endorsing Australian Curriculum Version 9.0 was an Education Ministers Meeting priority for 2022.

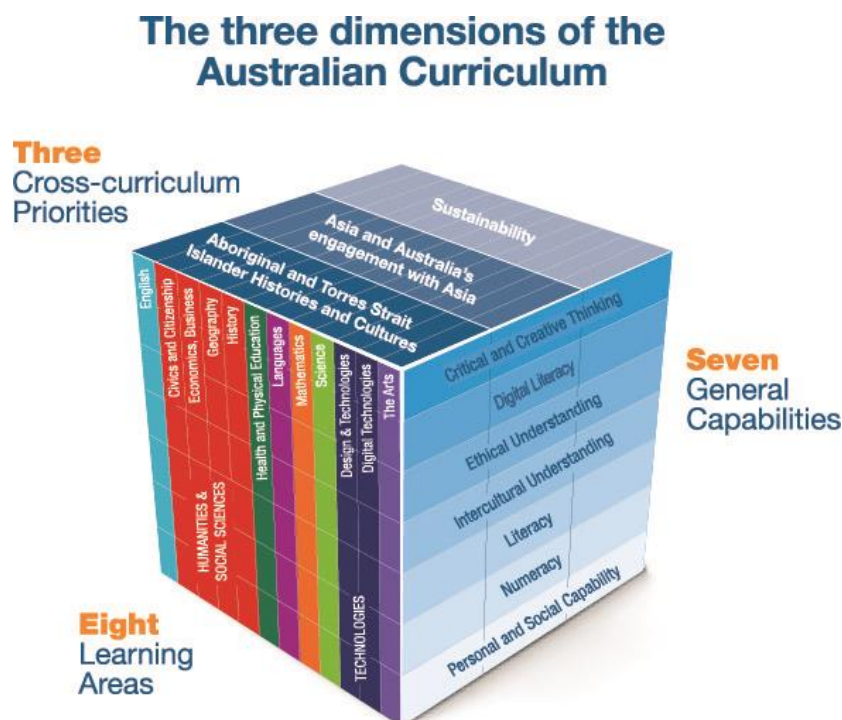
Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority

ACARA's functions in curriculum and assessment are to:

- develop and administer a national school curriculum, including content of the curriculum and achievement standards, for school subjects specified in the ACARA Charter³¹
- develop and administer national assessments
- provide school curriculum resource services
- provide information, resources, support, and guidance to the teaching profession.

Australian Curriculum

The 3-dimensional design of the Foundation – Year 10 Australian Curriculum recognises the importance of disciplinary knowledge, understanding and skills within the 8 learning areas, alongside general capabilities and cross-curriculum priorities.



³¹ Education Ministers determine the ACARA Charter. The current charter took effect from November 2016. The charter specifies subjects to be included in the Australian Curriculum in the learning areas for Foundation – Year 10 and for the areas of English, Mathematics, Science, and Humanities and Social Sciences for Years 11 and 12.

There are 8 learning areas in the Australian Curriculum, corresponding to those listed by education ministers in the *Alice Springs (Mparntwe) Education Declaration*:

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

The Australian Curriculum incorporates 7 general capabilities:

1. Literacy,
2. Numeracy,
3. Digital Literacy
4. Critical and Creative Thinking,
5. Personal and Social capability,
6. Ethical Understanding, and
7. Intercultural Understanding.

There are also 3 cross-curriculum priorities:

1. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures,
2. Asia and Australia's Engagement with Asia, and
3. Sustainability.

The general capabilities and cross-curriculum priorities are addressed within the content of the 8 learning areas.

Senior secondary curriculum

Fifteen Australian Curriculum senior secondary subjects across English, Mathematics, Science, History and Geography have been endorsed by education ministers as the agreed and common base for the development of state and territory senior secondary courses.

State and territory curriculum, assessment and certification authorities are responsible for determining how the Australian Curriculum content and achievement standards are to be integrated into their courses.

Information on senior secondary qualifications in states and territories is included in Part 3.8: Supporting senior secondary education.

Review of the Australian Curriculum

In June 2020, Education Ministers asked ACARA to review the Foundation – Year 10 Australian Curriculum. The review of the Australian Curriculum continued to be a priority focus area of the Education Ministers Meeting in 2021–2022. The review was required to:

- refine and reduce the amount of content in all 8 key learning areas, and
- reflect the goals of The Alice Springs (Mparntwe) Education Declaration.

In 2021, 18 reference groups were formed to support the Australian Curriculum Review. State and territory education and curriculum authorities nominated the members of these groups. Each reference group met regularly to agree on the directions for the revisions. A consultation curriculum was released for public comment, presenting a unique opportunity for the community to provide feedback on the national curriculum as a whole.

The Terms of Reference for the Australian Curriculum Review specified that the curriculum would be refined, realigned, and decluttered. In the course of the curriculum review:

- The content descriptions and achievement standards in all the learning areas were reviewed and, where necessary, refined and realigned.
- There was a reduction in content across all the learning areas.
- The elements and organising ideas in the general capabilities and cross-curriculum priorities respectively were reviewed and refined.

The revised Australian Curriculum, Version 9.0, was considered for endorsement by education ministers in early 2022. It was endorsed by education ministers in April 2022 and published on the new [Australian Curriculum](#) website in May 2022.

Curriculum projects

In 2022, ACARA undertook a range of curriculum project activities. These included:

- Development of new resources to support the teaching of The Arts and the first 4 Languages have been published on the Australian Curriculum, Version 9.0 website.
- The content descriptions and achievement standards in all learning areas were reviewed and, where necessary, refined and realigned. This resulted in a 21% reduction in content across all learning areas.
- The elements and organising ideas in the general capabilities and cross-curriculum priorities respectively were reviewed and refined.
- A new process for the recognition of alternative curricula was developed and approved by the ACARA Board.
- Five more Australian Curriculum Languages were released for public consultation.

Refresh of the Approved Learning Frameworks

In 2020, Education Ministers tasked ACECQA with revising the Approved Learning Frameworks (ALFs) to ensure they are in line with the current understanding, practice, and pedagogy of ECEC environments.

A Steering Committee chaired by ACECQA and comprising of senior representatives from all governments oversaw the project and engaged a consortium of academics (Macquarie University, the Queensland University of Technology, and Edith Cowan University) to lead the project.

The Consortium recommended 20 updates to the ALFs which focus on sustainability, and improving outcomes for First Nation's children, culturally and linguistically diverse children and those experiencing vulnerability and/ or disadvantage.

After a successful pilot across 16 national trial sites, the Consortium refined their recommended updates, and developed the updated draft ALFs. This included mapping the 2 ALFs to the revised Australian Curriculum, Version 9.0.

In December 2022, the Education Ministers Meeting approved the updated versions of Australia's 2 nationally approved learning frameworks:

- Belonging, Being and Becoming: Early Years Learning Framework for Australia Version 2.0 (EYLF V2.0), and
- My Time, Our Place: Framework for School Age Care in Australia Version 2.0 (MTOF V2.0).

The updates strengthen the connection between the EYLF and the NQS in areas such as transitions, sustainability, theoretical approaches, critical reflection, the importance of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ways of being, knowing and doing, and inclusion.

The updates also provide continuity for children in terms of their development and wellbeing, as they transition from ECEC to school and outside hours school care.

National Assessment Program

The National Assessment Program (NAP) consists of:

- Annual national literacy and numeracy tests (NAPLAN).
- Sample assessments in Civics and Citizenship, Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Literacy and Science Literacy for Years 6 and 10 conducted on a 3-year cycle.
- Australia's participation in international assessments.

ACARA is responsible for overseeing the first 2 of these. The Australian Government Department of Education oversees participation in international assessments.

For national reporting purposes KPMs for participation and achievement in assessments within the NAP have been approved by education ministers and are specified in the *Measurement Framework for Schooling in Australia 2020*.

NAPLAN 2022

NAPLAN is an annual national assessment for all students in Years 3, 5, 7 and 9. Students in these year levels are assessed on their literacy and numeracy skills through tests in reading, writing, conventions of language (spelling, grammar, and punctuation) and numeracy. The tests are aligned with the Australian Curriculum: English F–10 and the Australian Curriculum: Mathematics F–10.

ACARA is responsible for the development and oversight of the delivery of the NAPLAN tests. States and territories are responsible for the administration of the tests in each jurisdiction. The national platform for administering NAPLAN online is managed by Education Services Australia and funded by the Australian Government.

NAPLAN was fully administered online for the first time in 2022. The transition from traditional paper-based testing to online adaptive testing took place from 2018 to 2021. The objective of moving NAPLAN online was to deliver better, more precise, and more engaging assessments for schools and students. In total, approximately 4.7 million tests were sat by over 1.2 million students.

Prior to the tests, NAPLAN online schools were able to participate in a ranges of readiness activities such as a school readiness test, platform readiness testing and practice tests. This allowed teachers to rehearse procedures and students were able to familiarise themselves with testing procedures and item types.

NAPLAN results data for 2022 is available in interactive form on the ACARA NAP website. The interactive report and the NAPLAN National Report for 2022 provide comparisons of performance by state and territory; by student characteristics such as gender, Indigeneity, and parental education; and by school characteristics such as location. The 2022 NAPLAN National Report and 2022 Test Incident Report were published in December 2022.

Improvements to NAPLAN

A report on a joint review of NAPLAN commissioned by the governments of NSW, Qld, Vic, and the ACT was provided to Education Council in 2020. Recommendations made in the report included changing the timing of testing to earlier in the school year, changes to the writing test, assessing in Year 10 instead of Year 9, and introducing critical and creative thinking in STEM.

In 2022, Australian Education Ministers agreed to critical improvements to NAPLAN, giving teachers additional information about student performance earlier in the year. From 2023, NAPLAN, which traditionally has been held in Term 2 of the school year, will be held in Term 1.

NAP–sample assessments

The national sample assessments test the skills and understanding of Year 6 and Year 10 students in the areas of science literacy, civics and citizenship, and ICT literacy. The assessments began in 2003 and are usually held on a rolling 3-yearly basis. Participating schools are sampled from all states and territories and school sectors.

In June 2020 Education Council decided to postpone the NAP–ICT Literacy sample assessment scheduled for 2020 by 12 months to 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. In September 2021, Education Ministers decided to further postpone the NAP–ICT Literacy assessment to 2022 due to the continued COVID-19 pandemic. As a result, NAP–Science Literacy and NAP–Civics and Citizenship were also delayed by a further 12 months. This postponement will result in a one-off 5-year gap (as opposed to the normal 3-year gap) in the time series for each of the sample assessments.

In 2022, Australian Education Ministers agreed that the existing NAP sample assessments in Science, Civics and Citizenship, and ICT Literacy (to be renamed and re-designed as Digital Literacy), which involve some students in Years 6 and 10 every 3 years, should take place in Term 2 from 2023.

Separate opt-in assessments in these same domains and year levels will also be available in Term 2 each year for any school or system. Science will be available in 2024, with Civics and Citizenship added in 2025 and Digital Literacy in 2026. The results of these opt-in assessments will be available to participating schools and systems to support their teaching and learning programs and will not be reported publicly by ACARA.

NAP – Civics and Citizenship

The sixth NAP–Civics and Citizenships (NAP–CC) assessment of a sample of Years 6 and 10 students was delivered online in October and November 2019 (incorporating aspects of the Australian Curriculum: History). The final report was published on the NAP website in January 2021.

NAP – ICT Literacy

The NAP–ICT Literacy sample assessment took place in 2022. Students undertaking the assessment were tested on their ability to use ICT appropriately and safely to access, manage and evaluate information; develop new understandings; apply computational, design and systems thinking to create solutions; communicate and collaborate with others; and engage productively with emerging and future technologies. Results will be published on the NAP website in 2023.

NAP – Science Literacy

The sixth NAP–Science Literacy sample assessment was conducted in 2018 and the final report on the results was published in February 2020.

NAP – international assessments

Three international sample assessments included in the NAP are used as a basis for KPMs for schooling. These are:

Programme for International Student Assessment

The Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) assessments take place every 3 years and assesses 15-year-olds in reading, mathematical literacy, and scientific literacy. PISA is developed and administered internationally by the Organization for Economic Co-operation Development (OECD).

In 2020, OECD member countries and associates decided to postpone PISA 2021 to 2022 and PISA 2024 to 2025 to reflect post-COVID difficulties. Results for PISA 2022 were released at the end of 2023.

Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study

Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) takes place every 4 years and assesses Year 4 and Year 8 students' achievement in mathematics and science. The assessment is administered by the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA). Data collection for the most recent cycle of TIMSS (2019) took place in Australia in late 2018. Results were released in December 2020. The next cycle of TIMSS is planned for 2023.

Progress in International Reading Literacy Study

Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) is a 5-yearly assessment of reading literacy for Year 4 students. The IEA is responsible for PIRLS. Almost 5,500 Year 4 students from 281 schools around Australia participated in the PIRLS 2021 assessment. The results were released in May 2023.

State and territory and sector initiatives

- Qld schools implemented the Prep to Year 10 Australian Curriculum as written. The P–12 Curriculum assessment and reporting framework sets out the requirements for quality curriculum delivery and assessment and provided a consistent approach for schools to plan and deliver the curriculum and assess student learning against the achievement standards.
- The NT developed resources and professional learning for teachers to support implementation of the Australian Curriculum, Version 9.0. This included the development of both a primary and middle school math network to upskill math teachers and provide the necessary professional development.
- The Education Directorate worked with all ACT public schools to be ready to access, implement and assess against the Australian Curriculum, Version 9.0, including individualised bespoke professional learning. The Understanding Building and Construction pilot program is a national first, curriculum-based program designed to increase the participation of women in construction through targeted careers-focused learning in schools. Over 100 students across 4 pilot schools completed this work studies elective in 2022.
- Following approval of the Australian Curriculum, Version 9.0 by Education Ministers, the Department of Education Vic commenced revision to the Victorian Curriculum F–10. The revision builds on the success of the current Victorian Curriculum F–10 by ensuring the Australian Curriculum Version 9.0 is implemented in Victoria while maintaining Victorian priorities and standards; making the curriculum more teachable and manageable; and strengthening student access to the essential knowledge and skills needed to be successful learners.
- NSW continued to reform curriculum by working to streamline and strengthen what is taught in NSW schools. There were 71 Curriculum Reform Communities operating in more than 1,700 schools to share information and build teacher capability in leading curriculum change.
- The AISSA Discovering AI: Creating Curious Classrooms Action Research mentored teachers to integrate Artificial Intelligence into STEM-related units of work for Year 4 to Year 12. An AI expert and AISSA consultant provided guidance for teachers on learning design, implementation, and evaluation.

3.11 Supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander learners to reach their full potential

In the *Alice Springs (Mparntwe) Education Declaration* “Australian Governments commit to empowering Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students to reach their potential and to ensuring the education community works to ‘close the gap’ for young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples” (p 16).

Closing the Gap

In 2022, the Australian Government focussed on implementing the \$126 million package for school education measures announced in the first *Commonwealth Closing the Gap Implementation Plan*. These measures focus on scaling up initiatives and evidence-driven programs which are demonstrating success at lifting student outcomes, attendance, and engagement. The Government also developed the second *Commonwealth Closing the Gap Implementation Plan*, released in February 2023.

Boarding support

The Australian Government provided \$15.758 million through grants to assist boarding providers to better support the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander boarding students and to continue to keep students engaged in school and ensure improved education outcomes. To continue this support, Commonwealth funding of \$17.25 million was announced for the 2023 school year.

Indigenous Advancement Strategy

The Indigenous Advancement Strategy (IAS) is the way the Australian Government funds and delivers a range of programs for Indigenous Australians. In the 2019/20 Budget, the Australian Government allocated \$5.2 billion to the IAS, over 4 years to 2022/23, for grant funding processes and administered procurement activities that address the objectives of the IAS. “Children and schooling” is one of 6 focus areas of the IAS.

State, territory and sector initiatives

All states and territories operate programs to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and communities within their jurisdictions.

- The Department for Education SA STEM Aboriginal Learner Congress Initiative is designed, led, and owned by the Young Aboriginal STEM Thinkers of SA (YASTSA). The 2-day event celebrated the past and current achievements of Aboriginal people through their work and passion for STEM, inspiring young Aboriginal learners to pursue challenging subjects in school and to explore the skills required for pursue a career in STEM.
- The Department for Education SA is developing a collaboration agreement with the Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Education Committee (PYEC), an Anangu-run organisation that leads the strategy for the education of Anangu in the APY and Maralinga Lands. This agreement describes how the department will support the PYEC to achieve the priorities outlined in the PYEC Strategic Plan 2022–2026.
- The SA Aboriginal Contexts in Science Initiative worked in partnership with representatives from SA Aboriginal Nations and First Nations academics to develop teaching and learning resources.
- The Department for Education SA has established the Targeted Learner Achievement Implementation Team to ensure the successful implementation and embedding of Aboriginal Learner Achievement Leaders’ Resources into all schools.
- In Qld, through the Australian Curriculum, Prep to Year 10 students learnt about reconciliation and

recognition of the world's oldest continuous living culture through the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures priority. This enabled Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students to see themselves, their identities and cultures reflected in the curriculum.

- The Qld Department of Education delivered Solid Pathways-STEM, an online program for high achieving Aboriginal students in Years 4 to 6, aiming to expand and enhance opportunities for them to experience STEM learning.
- As at June 2022, the Qld Department of Education achieved a rate of 2.7% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander's participation in the workforce. This is compared to the Qld Government target of 3%.
- Under the Northern Territory Education Engagement Strategy 2022–2031, a Youth Peak Advisory Group was established, and progress made to establish an Aboriginal education advisory group. These groups are decision making mechanisms to capture Aboriginal perspectives and student voice on matters of policy development and program delivery.
- In the ACT the Koori Pre-Cultural Safety Framework, Koori Pre-curriculum and supporting resources were launched from the Set up for Success co-design process. The Koori Pre co-design continued engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities on the evolution of Koori preschool.
- The ACT Education Directorate Secondary and Tertiary Scholarship Programs supported Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students to complete Year 12 and to undertake a teaching qualification.
- The Department of Education Vic has supported over 180 'campfire conversations' throughout 2022 to discuss and co-design how to strengthen self-determination in education. Over 3000 people participated in a campfire conversation, or series of conversations. The Catholic Education Commission of Victoria also published its Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Action Plan to outline strategic initiatives and its commitment to support schools to strengthen their priority areas.
- The Connected Communities Strategy was implemented in 33 government schools in rural/remote, regional, and metropolitan locations across NSW. The Strategy focuses on culturally responsive teaching practices, family and community engagement, attendance and retention, improved literacy and numeracy results, student pathways and post school options for Aboriginal students and all students.
- The WA Training and Accreditation Council approved the accreditation of Certificate III and IV Teaching Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Languages courses. In 2022, 92 public schools in WA taught one of 24 Aboriginal languages.
- The Department of Education WA hosted Aboriginal Engagement Forums with Aboriginal families in all regions of WA. The purpose was to listen and talk about ways to build better relationships and strengthen Aboriginal student wellbeing, engagement and achievement.
- The Two-way Science Initiative in WA supported schools to build partnerships with Aboriginal communities to connect local Aboriginal knowledge with the science curriculum in an integrated teaching and learning program. Schools engaged in Phase 1 of the initiative showcased their work at a 2-day conference attended by Aboriginal leaders, teachers and communities.
- The AISNSW's Waratah Project continued into its seventh year, with participation increasing to 30 schools. The project supports schools to improve outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students through literacy, numeracy, and wellbeing initiatives, using a 'hub and spoke' model to develop and implement strategies in partnership with families and communities.
- The AISSA completed the seventh year of the Indigenous Secondary Student Mentoring Program. This saw an Aboriginal mentor work alongside Aboriginal secondary students across 20 metropolitan and regional Independent schools, to provide culturally sensitive mentoring.

3.12 Supporting all young Australians at risk of educational disadvantage

In the *Alice Springs (Mparntwe) Education Declaration*, Australian governments “commit to ensuring the education community works to provide equality of opportunity and educational outcomes for all students at risk of educational disadvantage” (p 17).

Needs-based school funding

Under the Quality Schools funding arrangements, Australian Government recurrent funding for schools is calculated using a base per-student amount plus 6 loadings aimed at addressing disadvantage.

For most non-government schools, the base amount is discounted by the estimated capacity of parents to contribute towards the school’s operating costs.³²

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

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

Review of the Disability Standards for Education

In 2020, the Australian Government conducted a 5-yearly review of the *Disability Standards for Education 2005*. The standards clarify the rights of students with disability and the obligations of education providers under the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992*. The aim of the review was to test if the standards are effective in supporting students with disability to access and participate in education on the same basis as students without disability and whether any improvements to the standards should be made. There was an extensive public consultation process, which included a focus on the experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students with disability.

The final report of the review, released in March 2021, made 13 recommendations reflecting 4 reform directions:

- Empowering and supporting students with disability and their families
- Strengthening the knowledge and capability of educators and providers
- Embedding accountability for the Standards throughout the education system
- Building awareness and capability in the early childhood education and care sector.

³² The capacity to contribute does not apply to government schools, non-government special schools or special assistance schools, non-government majority Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander schools, or non-government sole provider schools.

In September 2022, the Australian Government Department of Education published a suite of information resources for students with disability and their families about the *Disability Standards for Education 2005*. The resources help students with disability and their families understand their rights and obligations. Students with disability and their families from across Australia helped to design these resources with support from Children and Young People with Disability Australia.³³

Nationally Consistent Collection of Data on School Students with Disability

The Australian Government will invest \$20 million over 4 years to continue the NCCD Continuous Quality Improvement Measure. Ongoing support for the program will ensure that appropriate funding continues to build the capacity of schools to implement the NCCD and deliver better educational outcomes for students with disability. This will also contribute to the Australian Government's response to the National School Resourcing Board's review of the loading for students with disability and the Review of the Disability Standards for Education 2005.

The Smith Family's Growing Careers Project

The Australian Government is providing \$38.2 million over 4 years (2020/21 to 2023/24) to support the Smith Family's Growing Careers Project. The project will support up to 76,725 disadvantaged high school students from Years 7 to 12 (or equivalent) across Australia to participate in a suite of careers education activities that aim to support successful transitions from school to work or to further education and training.

Duke of Edinburgh's International Award Australia – Disadvantaged Youth Program

The Australian Government provided \$3 million to support 4,500 disadvantaged young people over 2021/22 to 2023/24 to access the Duke of Edinburgh's International Award. The Disadvantaged Youth Program provides young people with disability, aged 14 to 24 years, and young people from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, refugee, and regional and remote communities, aged 14 to 18 years, with opportunities to develop non-academic and academic competencies.

State, territory and sector initiatives

- In SA, professional learning and professional support networks were developed in preparation for the rollout of autism inclusion teachers in every government primary school, combined school, and special school from the start of Term 1, 2023. This has created a network of autism expertise across the state.
- In April 2022, recruitment began for an additional 100 mental health and learning support specialist to be deployed to primary and secondary schools in SA. A pilot began in metropolitan and country schools which will inform the most effective way to allocate and utilise mental health practitioners so that this service gets the best outcomes for students. Full implementation will occur from early 2023.
- In SA, a scholarship fund has been created to support high school students from under-represented groups (low socio-economic status, girls, and Aboriginal learners) to pursue STEM subjects at SACE Stage 1 and 2 level.
- Schools in SA developed an ethnographic approach with students to determine the co-designed curriculum implementation. This aimed to increase attendance and engagement using creative learning strategies implemented through the establishment of meaningful partnerships between teachers, creative (arts) practitioners, children, and young people.

³³ These resources are available at: www.education.gov.au/disability-standards-education-2005/students.

- Non-government schools were provided access to SA Department for Education Practice Guides for Learners with Additional Needs to support inclusion and improved learning and wellbeing outcomes for all learners, particularly those who require adjustments. The guides offer hands-on, practical advice specifically designed for the SA context.
- In Qld, \$80.6 million was committed to support a 2-year transition to a new Students with Disability – reasonable adjustment resourcing model, which provides resources to state schools based on the reasonable adjustments being made by schools, informed by the Nationally consistent collection of data on school students with disability.
- The Framework for Inclusion is the NT’s 10-year strategy for inclusive education. Priority projects for 2022/23 included needs-based funding model for students with disability and improving policy, guidance materials and support for schools to enhance their inclusive practices and support for student mental health. A review is underway to establish a disability funding model, aiming to guide allocation of resources to students and schools.
- ACT provides access for 500 children experiencing vulnerability or disadvantage to 2 days per week, 48 weeks per year of quality early childhood education in the year before preschool. Public school equity grants help disadvantaged families cover the costs of education expenses and deliver a ‘free meals in schools’ trial to ensure children are ready and able to learn.
- Key achievements in Vic included the continued support for disadvantaged families through the Camps, Sports, and Excursion Fund (CSEF) and the provision of textbooks and uniforms, with the department undertaking targeted follow-up with schools with the largest decline in CSEF student numbers. Also, the introduction of a new functional needs-based assessment approach for students with disability, new school funding allocations and initiatives to develop systemic capability in inclusive education.
- In 2022, the NSW Department of Education committed \$383 million to small-group tutoring. This funding responded to the ongoing impact of the pandemic on learning and provided support for schools to deliver small-group tuition to disadvantaged students most in need of learning support in government and non-government schools.
- The number of school psychologists employed by the Department of Education WA increased considerably in 2022 through a state government election commitment. In the 2022 school year, an average of 412.7 full-time equivalent school psychologists supported schools.
- The Specialist Learning Program for students with autism spectrum disorder was introduced in 16 WA public schools, providing skilled teachers and individualised planning and support, targeting academic achievement, organisational skills, social skills, positive peer relationships and emotional self-regulation.
- The Alternative Learning Settings program, which provides alternative facilities and targeted support programs to WA school students with complex and challenging behaviours, was consolidated into the School of Alternative Learning Settings and expanded to 11 sites.

3.13 Strengthening accountability and transparency with strong meaningful measures

In the *Alice Springs (Mparntwe) Education Declaration* (p 19) Australian governments commit to continuing to provide public reporting that:

- focuses on improving performance and student growth and outcomes for all students
- provides parents with information on their child's performance, progress, and outcomes
- is locally, nationally, and internationally relevant
- is accessible, timely, consistent, and comparable.

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

Improving the national evidence base is one of 3 policy reform directions specified in the NSRA. Agreed policy initiatives in this area are implementing a national unique student identifier (USI); establishing AERO to inform teacher practice, system improvement and policy development; and improving national data quality, consistency, and collection.

Australian Education Research Organisation

The Australian Education Research Organisation (AERO) is a joint ministerial company responsible for generating new evidence on effective teaching and learning practices and making this evidence accessible for teachers and school leaders across Australia. It is governed by a Board of up to 8 members appointed by the Education Ministers Meeting.

Launched in December 2020, AERO's scope covers both the schooling and early childhood sectors. The establishment of AERO is a national policy initiative to improve the national evidence base under the NSRA. In September 2021, Education Ministers Meeting approved AERO's 3-yearly strategic plan and research agenda for 2021–22. In 2022, AERO published resources to inform teacher practice, system improvement and policy development using evidence-based approaches in the schooling and early childhood education sectors.

Unique student identifier

The Unique Student Identifier (USI) project is one of eight national policy initiatives in the National School Reform Agreement. This initiative will provide every Australian school student with a USI number that will travel with them from kindergarten throughout school and into VET and higher education.

In December 2022, Education Ministers agreed on the operating model for the schools USI, as well as a baseline use of the Schools USI to support the transfer of student information when individuals move between schools and systems; the agreed USI data set will be included in the Student Data Transfer Protocol when it is operational. Ministers also agreed that no further uses will be considered until the initiative is fully implemented and every school student has a national USI.

The Australian Government is leading the implementation of the Schools USI project, in collaboration with state and territory governments and the non-government schooling sector.

The Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA)

The data collection and reporting functions of ACARA are to:

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

The ACARA Charter specifies the following priorities for data and reporting:

- assess data needs to review, and if necessary, introduce new performance indicators in the measurement framework
- manage the collection and quality assurance of data for policy development in the school education sector and provide accessible and comprehensive national school and schooling information (including the My School website and NAP reporting)
- produce a revitalised, timely and accessible national report on schooling, which meets the goals for national performance reporting.

Measurement Framework for Schooling in Australia

In 2020 ACARA revised the *Measurement Framework for Schooling in Australia* to reflect the *Alice Springs (Mparntwe) Education Declaration*. The schedule of KPMs was also revised to reflect the postponement of NAP sample and international assessments due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The *Measurement Framework for Schooling in Australia 2020*, endorsed by Education Council in December 2020, is the basis for reporting of KPMs for 2022.

National Report on Schooling in Australia

In February 2023, ACARA published the *National Report on Schooling in Australia 2021* following endorsement by the National Assessment, Data, Analysis and Reporting Reference Group. The report was prepared in consultation with representatives of state and territory education authorities, other government agencies and non-government school sectors.

National Report on Schooling data portal

The online data portal provides public access, on a single website, to a wider range of national and state and territory data on schooling in Australia than available elsewhere.

It includes current statistics and time series data on school numbers, enrolments, staffing and funding, and data on the agreed KPMs for schooling, including attendance, retention, assessment and Year 12 or equivalent attainment. The portal allows users to view and download data at the national level, and to disaggregate data by state and territory, by school sector, by calendar year and by available breakdowns of equity groups such as sex and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander status.

The data portal allows for the timely release of national data on schooling in advance of the annual national report being published. It was updated in April and December 2022.

My School

ACARA is responsible for the national data collection on individual schools reported on the *My School* website. *My School* includes information on school type and sector; data on enrolments, staffing, student attendance, senior secondary outcomes and VET activity, school funding, and the performance of the school's students in NAPLAN assessments; and a school comment submitted by principals.

Australian Schools List website

ACARA maintained the [Australian Schools List](#) website for online education services that rely on a current and accurate list of registered schools in Australia.

The list of schools is compiled from school registration authorities in each state and territory, providing details of all schools and campuses in Australia. It also includes school location, school type and school sector attributes. The list is refreshed quarterly.

ACARA continued to provide third parties access to ACARA-collected data under the *Data Access Protocols 2015*.

Teacher workforce data

AITSL continues to deliver the Australian Teacher Workforce Data (ATWD) initiative, linking initial teacher education data with that of current teachers to assist in managing workforce needs; understand teacher supply; and provide insights into the teaching experience.

In June 2022, AITSL released the first ATWD Key Metrics Dashboard, an interactive digital tool, updated as new data becomes available, to provide user friendly access to teacher workforce data.

In the 2021/22 Budget, the Australian Government announced \$5.8 million to continue its commitment to the ATWD to identify long-term trends and emerging issues affecting the teacher workforce.

State and territory initiatives

- Under the Education NT Strategy 2021–25, a feasibility study for an education management system to improve data quality and visibility of a student's learning journey was finalised, identifying an approach to developing a student-centric data system.
- The centralised introduction of Career Tools platform in 2022 provides schools and the Education Support Office with access to data previously not available to ACT schools, which increases transparency of the career education activity occurring in ACT schools
- Vic continued to report on national and state measures in State Budget Papers and the Report on Government Services.
- NSW used local school data and system data to deliver targeted support for schools, based on context and need. Identified schools benefitted from high-impact programs and resources, tailored to their unique circumstances. Actions in 2022 resulted in the offer of at least one new support for 588 schools, for delivery in 2023. There were 470 schools recommended for a new support at the end of the Engaging in the Right Support process.
- The AISNSW continued its NCCD support program, working with schools continue improving national consistency in the collection of NCCD data across NSW. Offerings included face to face and online professional learning, networking workshops, collaborative meetings, and access to resources aimed at deepening staff understanding of the NCCD to improve implementation.

Chapter 4: Enrolment and Attendance

This chapter reports on student enrolment, attendance, and apparent retention in 2022, using the nationally agreed KPMs for schooling specified in the *Measurement Framework for Schooling in Australia 2020*.



4.1 Enrolment rate

Key Facts:

- At the 2021 census, 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 Northern Territory, which had an enrolment rate of 98.6%.
- Data from the National Schools Statistics Collection indicates that in 2022, the proportion of 6–15-year-olds enrolled in school in Australia was 98.6%, 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.³⁴ 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%.

³⁴ 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 2.2 provides data on the number of students enrolled by school sector, by school level, by state and territory, and over time.

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 5-yearly Census.³⁵ 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%, KPM1(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 NSSC, was also reported. From 2019, this measure was deleted as a measure of the KPM because of statistical inconsistencies. 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 2022 was 98.6%, down from 99.0% in 2021.

Table 4.1 shows this KPM for the Census years 2011, 2016 and 2021; and the annual measure based on the NSSC.

Table 4.1**Proportion of the population aged 6–15 years enrolled in school, Australia, 2012–2022**

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
KPM1(a) Proportion of 6–15-year-olds enrolled in school, Australia (%) (Census)	-	-	-	-	99.4	-	-	-	-	99.3	-
Number of children aged 6–15 years enrolled in school (NSSC)	2,801,751	2,844,983	2,889,292	2,930,612	2,974,656	3,022,905	3,071,847	3,131,591	3,174,506	3,198,158	3,215,223
Population, Australia (aged 6–15 years)	2,799,226	2,833,866	2,875,596	2,919,394	2,970,505	3,024,364	3,081,581	3,143,378	3,196,673	3,229,459	3,259,377
Proportion of 6–15-year-olds enrolled in school, Australia (%)	100.1	100.4	100.5	100.4	100.1	100.0	99.7	99.6	99.3	99.0	98.6

Sources: ABS, *Australian Census of Population and Housing*, 2011, 2016, 2021; ABS, *Schools Australia*, 2012–2022; ABS, *National, state and territory population June 2022* (release date 15/12/2022).

Data disaggregated by state and territory, and other disaggregations for the Census years 2011, 2016, and 2021 is available in the data portal.

³⁵ The Census is Australia's largest statistical collection undertaken by the ABS. It is conducted every 5 years.

4.2 Student attendance

Key Facts:

In Australia in 2022:

- The attendance rate for students in Years 1-10 declined to 86.5% from 90.9% in 2021. This decline, which was due to the impact of the COVID-19 Omicron variant, high Influenza season outbreaks and floods in certain regions across Australia, was remarkably consistent across all states/territories and school sectors.
- The national student attendance level (the percentage of students with above 90 per cent attendance) declined to 49.9% from 71.2% in 2021. The large decline is due to a small shift in attendance, which corresponds to an exaggerated movement in the student attendance level.

Like enrolment rates, the national KPMs for attendance in the *Measurement Framework for Schooling in Australia 2020* 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 number of possible student-days attended in Semester 1

Key Performance Measure 1(c)

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

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. Data is reported from 2014 for the attendance rate and from 2015 for the attendance level.

Attendance rates

Table 4.2 reports KPM 1(b) by state and territory and school sector for 2022.

Table 4.2

Student attendance rates, Years 1–10, by state and territory and school sector, Australia, 2022 (%)

School sector	NSW	Vic	Qld	SA	WA	Tas	NT	ACT	Australia
Government	85.2	87.4	85.6	84.8	84.7	83.9	74.3	85.1	85.6
Catholic	88.1	87.8	88.1	87.0	89.2	86.9	76.5	85.3	87.9
Independent	88.7	89.1	89.5	87.6	88.6	87.9	85.4	88.8	88.8
All	86.4	87.7	86.7	85.6	86.1	85.1	76.0	85.9	86.5

Notes:

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

Source: ACARA, National Student Attendance Data Collection.

Table 4.3 reports KPM 1(b) nationally, by school sector, for 2014–2022.

Table 4.3

Student attendance rates, Years 1–10, by school sector, Australia, 2014–2022 (%)

School sector	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Government	91.9	92.0	91.9	91.8	91.3	90.7	N/A	90.0	85.6
Catholic	93.9	93.6	93.6	93.4	92.9	92.4	N/A	92.3	87.9
Independent	94.3	93.9	93.8	93.7	93.5	93.1	N/A	93.0	88.8
All	92.7	92.6	92.5	92.4	91.9	91.4	N/A	90.9	86.5

Notes:

See notes for Table 4.2.

National attendance data for 2020 was collected but not published as it was not considered nationally consistent because of differing arrangements in states and territories due to COVID-19.

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.

2021 and 2022 attendance data in NSW is not comparable with previous years due to changes to the attendance calculations to align with the revised 2020 National Standards for student attendance data reporting.

Source: ACARA National Student Attendance Data Collection.

The average school attendance rate for Years 1–10 across Australia in 2022 was 85.6% for government schools, 87.9% for Catholic schools, 88.8% for independent schools and 86.5% for schools overall. This was a fall of 4.4 percentage points in the national KPM from 90.9% in 2021, with decreases occurring at the national level in all three school sectors.

The [Key Performance Measures Dashboard](#) in the National Report on Schooling data portal reports a downward trend over the period 2014–2022 of -0.6 percentage points per annum. The lower attendance rates in 2022 can thus be seen as consistent with a long-term trend.

This interpretation should be made with some caution, as part of the fall from 2019 to 2022 may have resulted from increased student absences due to illness or suspected illness as COVID-19 continued to spread. Attendance rates in Semester 1 2022 declined due to the impact of the COVID-19 Omicron variant as well as high Influenza season outbreaks and floods in certain regions experienced across Australia at that time.

All states and territories reported reduced attendance rates in 2022, with decreases ranging from 3.4 percentage points in Qld to 5.7 percentage points in the ACT. The average attendance rate for Years 1–10 in 2022 exceeded 85% in all states and territories except the NT, where, as in previous years, the much lower average attendance rate (57.8%) for the high proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students led to an average rate for all students of 76.0%.³⁶

Across all states and territories, attendance rates increased with socio-educational advantage (SEA).³⁷ The average attendance rate for schools in the lowest SEA quartile was 83.7%, compared to 88.8% for students in schools in the highest SEA quartile. This difference was more pronounced in the NT than in other states and territories, with average attendance rates of 65.1% among students in schools in the lowest SEQ quartile, compared to 86.3% for students in schools in the highest SEA quartile.

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 2022, the average attendance rate for Years 7–10 was 84.7% compared with 87.8% for Years 1–6. There was little difference in the 2022 national average attendance rate for girls (86.7%) and boys (86.3%). Average attendance rates were higher in major cities (87.5%) than in remote areas (79.3%), and lowest in very remote areas (63.1%).³⁸

Attendance rates for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students have continued to decline, especially in remote and very remote communities and especially during the COVID-19 pandemic.

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 2014, 2021 and 2022.

The decrease in attendance rates for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students between 2021 and 2022 (4.9 percentage points) was larger than that for non-Indigenous students (4.2 percentage points). This increased the gap in attendance by 0.7 percentage points to 12.9 percentage points nationally. Above average gaps in attendance rates were again recorded in the NT, WA, and SA.

Geographic differences 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 schools in major cities was 87.8%, in remote schools 85.7% and in very remote schools 85.4%. But for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, these rates were 77.4% (major cities), 65.2% (remote) and 52.2% (very remote), a difference of 10.4 percentage points between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in major cities, 20.5 percentage points in remote areas, and a gap of 33.2 percentage points between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous students in schools in very remote areas.³⁹

³⁶ As at August 2022, 40.4% of full-time students in Years 1–10 in the NT were identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander, compared with 6.5% of full-time students in Years 1–10 across Australia (ABS, *Schools, 2022*, table 42 (b)). For measuring attendance, years 1–10 includes ungraded primary and ungraded secondary students.

³⁷ In 2022, additional reporting of student attendance by socio-educational quartile was introduced. These measures are not based directly on student level attendance but have been calculated by distributing school level attendance using the SEA quartiles as reported on My School.

³⁸ Student attendance rates disaggregated by year level, sex and geolocation are available in the National Report on Schooling data portal, Student Attendance data set.

³⁹ National Report on Schooling data portal, Student Attendance data set.

The average attendance rate for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students was lower for older year groups: 77.8% for Years 1–6 but 69.4% for Years 7–10. Attendance rates 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 39.0% for Year 10 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in very remote areas. As a result, the attendance gap is larger at higher year levels in these areas.

Table 4.4

Student attendance rates, Years 1–10, by state and territory and Indigenous status, Australia, 2014, 2021 and 2022 (%)

State/territory	NSW	Vic	Qld	SA	WA	Tas	NT	AC	Australi
2014									
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	87.5	86.8	85.2	81.1	77.4	88.5	70.2	85.2	83.5
Non-Indigenous	93.9	93.1	92.8	92.6	92.7	92.4	90.9	92.5	93.2
All students	93.6	93.0	92.2	92.1	91.7	92.1	82.3	92.3	92.7
Gap Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander/non-Indigenous (percentage points)	6.4	6.3	7.6	11.5	15.3	3.9	20.7	7.3	9.7
2021									
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	82.2	84.5	81.3	77.3	72.8	84.9	61.6	83.2	79.4
Non-Indigenous	91.6	92.6	90.9	91.2	91.2	89.9	91.7	91.9	91.6
All students	91.0	92.4	90.1	90.5	89.9	89.3	79.7	91.6	90.9
Gap Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander/non-Indigenous (percentage points)	9.4	8.1	9.7	13.9	18.5	5.0	30.1	8.7	12.2
2022									
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	77.3	79.6	76.8	72.5	66.4	79.9	57.8	77.0	74.5
Non-Indigenous	87.1	87.9	87.7	86.4	87.6	85.7	87.9	86.2	87.4
All students	86.4	87.7	86.7	85.6	86.1	85.1	76	85.9	86.5
Gap Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander/non-Indigenous (percentage points)	9.8	8.3	10.9	13.9	21.2	5.8	30.1	9.2	12.9
Change in gap 2014–21 (percentage points)	3.0	1.8	2.1	2.4	3.2	1.1	9.4	1.4	2.5
Change in gap 2014–22 (percentage points)	3.4	2.0	3.3	2.4	5.9	1.9	9.4	1.9	3.2
Change in gap 2021–22 (percentage points)	0.4	0.2	1.2	0.0	2.7	0.8	0.0	0.5	0.7

Notes:

See notes for Table 4.2.

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%. A number of studies have shown that learning outcomes and educational achievement decline markedly when student attendance slips below 90%.⁴⁰ KPM 1(c) aims to identify populations or groups for whom attendance is generally satisfactory. Conversely, it identifies groups whose lower levels of attendance may put them at a disadvantage.

Table 4.5 shows KPM 1(c) by state and territory, by school sector, for 2022.

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, 2022 (%); Change 2021–2022 (percentage points)

School sector	NSW	Vic	Qld	SA	WA	Tas	NT	ACT	Australia
2022									
Government	44.3	54.4	49.5	46.7	47.6	44.1	36.5	40.6	48.2
Catholic	51.0	49.6	51.0	44.6	60.0	47.4	35.4	33.8	50.5
Independent	54.4	57.2	59.9	47.6	56.7	51.0	49.9	51.3	55.6
All	47.3	53.9	51.4	46.5	51.0	45.7	38.2	41.3	49.9
Change 2021–2022									
Government	-23.6	-20.6	-14.1	-19.1	-17.7	-18.4	-12.8	-30.3	-19.8
Catholic	-25.0	-28.7	-23.9	-31.7	-14.6	-23.2	-18.0	-39.9	-25.5
Independent	-24.3	-27.4	-16.7	-30.9	-19.1	-26.1	-16.9	-26.8	-23.6
All	-23.8	-23.1	-16.1	-23.3	-17.4	-20.3	-13.9	-31.4	-21.3

Notes:

See notes for Table 4.2.

Source: ACARA National Student Attendance Data Collection.

In 2022, 49.9% of Australian students in Years 1–10 attended school for at least 90% of school days, falling from 71.2% in 2021, with declines in attendance rates in all school sectors and in all states and territories. Declines in attendance rates were larger for non-government schools compared to government schools, and larger in the ACT, NSW, Vic, and SA than for other states and territories.

It is likely that the overall fall in this KPM resulted from the spread of COVID-19 and its impact on school operations in 2022. This included public health advice that students with cold and flu symptoms should not attend school. The reason for the large decline in the student attendance level is that a small shift in attendance corresponds to an exaggerated movement in the student attendance level.

This KPM 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 2022 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.

Table 4.6 shows KPM 1(c) by state and territory, by Indigenous status, for 2022 and the gap in this measure between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous students.

⁴⁰ For example, Hancock, K.J., Shepherd, C., Lawrence, D., & Zubrick, S. (2013), *Student Attendance and Educational Outcomes: Every day counts*, Telethon Institute for Child Health Research.

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, 2022 (%); Change 2021–2022

State/territory	NSW	Vic	Qld	SA	WA	Tas	NT	ACT	Australia
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	26.8	34.8	30.4	22.7	18.9	33.6	15.0	24.2	26.6
Non-Indigenous	48.8	54.2	53.5	47.9	53.5	47.1	53.3	41.9	51.5
All students	47.3	53.9	51.4	46.5	51.0	45.7	38.2	41.3	49.9
Gap Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander/non-Indigenous (percentage points)	22.0	19.4	23.2	25.2	34.7	13.5	38.3	17.7	24.8
Change 2021–2022									
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	-17.7	-15.5	-12.5	-14.4	-13.2	-18.1	-6.6	-23.9	-14.7
Non-Indigenous	-24.3	-23.3	-16.5	-23.8	-17.8	-20.5	-19.0	-31.6	-21.7
All students	-23.8	-23.1	-16.1	-23.3	-17.4	-20.3	-13.9	-31.4	-21.3
Gap Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander/non-Indigenous (percentage points)	-6.5	-7.8	-4.0	-9.3	-4.6	-2.4	-12.4	-7.8	-7.0

Notes:

See notes for Table 4.2.

Sources: ACARA National Student Attendance Data Collection.

In 2022, 26.6% of Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students attended school for 90% of the time or more, with a gap of 24.8 percentage points between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous students. The gaps in SA, WA and the NT were above the national average.

The decline in attendance levels between 2021 and 2022 was larger for non-Indigenous students than for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, resulting in a reduction of the gap of 7.0 percentage points since 2021. Between 2021 and 2022, KPM 1c for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students decreased, but the gap also narrowed in all jurisdictions, with the NT, WA and SA experiencing the largest reduction in the attendance level gap.

4.3 Apparent retention

Key Facts:

- Apparent retention rates estimate the progression of students through school over several years through several year levels. The national apparent retention rate from Year 10 to Year 12 decreased by 2.6 percentage points to 79.0% in 2022.
- The apparent retention rate from Year 10 to Year 12 for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students decreased by 4.1 percentage points, from 60.5% in 2021 to 56.4% in 2022.
- Over the ten-year period from 2012 to 2022, Year 10 to Year 12 apparent retention for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students has increased, with a net rise of 3.1 percentage points since 2012. For non-Indigenous students, apparent retention rates were the same in 2012 and 2022. This has resulted in a narrowing of the gap between apparent retention rates of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and non-Indigenous students by 3.1 percentage points.

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. 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 state and territory 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

Table 4.7 and Figure 4.1 show KPM 1(e) by school sector for the period 2012–2022.

Table 4.7

Apparent retention rates (uncapped), Year 10 to Year 12, by school sector, Australia, 2012–2022 (%)

School sector	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Government	74.8	76.7	78.6	79.2	79.5	79.8	79.2	78.0	78.2	77.2	73.5
Catholic	84.2	85.4	86.8	86.3	86.4	86.5	85.4	84.9	85.5	85.4	84.4
Independent	89.0	88.9	90.9	90.0	89.7	90.9	91.1	91.0	90.5	90.8	90.3
All	79.3	80.7	82.5	82.7	82.9	83.3	82.8	82.0	82.1	81.6	79.0

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 Year 10 to Year 12 is Year 10, two years before. 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.

Source: ABS, *Schools*, 2022 and previous releases.

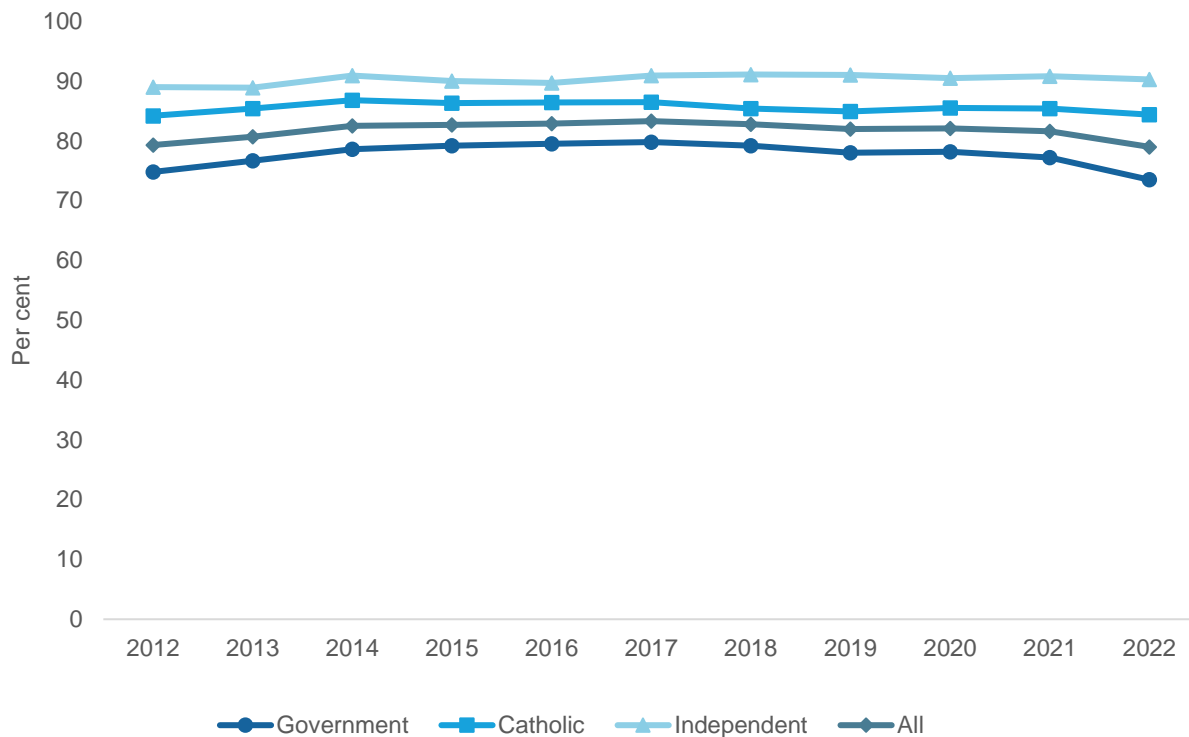
This series records an overall upward movement in apparent retention from Year 10 to Year 12, following the implementation of strengthened participation requirements for 15- and 16-year-olds in 2010.⁴¹ The Key Performance Measures data set in the National Report on Schooling data portal shows a long-term upward trend in this measure of 0.2 percentage points per annum for the period 2008–2022.

After 5 successive years of growth from 2012, the national apparent retention rate from Year 10 to Year 12 fell in 2018 and 2019; then rose by 0.1 percentage point in 2020 before falling by 0.5 percentage points in 2021 and a further 2.6 percentage points in 2022.

⁴¹ 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.

Figure 4.1

Apparent retention rates (uncapped), Year 10 to Year 12, by school sector, Australia, 2012–2022 (%)



Source: ABS, *Schools*, 2022 and previous releases.

In 2022, apparent retention rates from Year 10 to Year 12 decreased in all sectors, with larger declines in the government sector (3.7 percentage points) than the Catholic and independent sectors (1.0 and 0.5 percentage points respectively). The gap in the rates between the government and independent sectors narrowed from 14.2 percentage points in 2012 to 10.2 percentage points in 2016, but, by 2022, this had widened to 16.8 percentage points, resulting in a net increase in this gap of 2.6 percentage points over the 10-year period 2012–2022.

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.

Table 4.8 shows KPM 1(e) by state and territory.

Table 4.8

Apparent retention rates (uncapped), Year 10 to Year 12, by state and territory, Australia, 2012, 2021 and 2022 (%) and changes 2021–2022 and 2012–2022 (percentage points)

State/territory	NSW	Vic	Qld	SA	WA	Tas	NT	ACT	Australia
2012	75.5	81.2	82.2	86.3	77.8	67.1	62.1	89.3	79.3
2021	76.3	83.9	83.2	87.1	85.6	74.5	67.5	89.7	81.6
2022	73.2	82.1	81.0	86.0	82.0	71.7	62.6	87.8	79.0
Change 2021–2022	-3.1	-1.8	-2.2	-1.1	-3.6	-2.8	-4.9	-1.9	-2.6
Change 2012–2022	-2.3	0.9	-1.2	-0.3	4.2	4.6	0.5	-1.5	-0.3

Notes:

See notes for Table 4.7.

For a more detailed time series of apparent retention rates and trend analysis by state and territory, see the National Report on Schooling data portal.

Source: ABS, *Schools*, 2022 and previous releases.

In 2022, apparent retention rates ranged from 62.6% in the NT to 87.8% in the ACT.

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.

At the national level, despite the declines in 2021 and 2022, the positive long-term trend in retention from Year 10 to Year 12 over the last 10 years is in line with the policy intent of all Australian governments.

Table 4.9 and Figure 4.2 report this KPM for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and non-Indigenous students for the period 2012–2022.

Table 4.9

Apparent retention rates (uncapped), Year 10 to Year 12, for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and non-Indigenous students (%) and gap between rates (percentage points) Australia, 2012–2022

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	53.3	55.8	60.4	60.6	60.9	63.0	62.6	60.0	61.5	60.5	56.4
Non-Indigenous	80.4	81.9	83.6	83.8	84.0	84.3	83.9	83.2	83.3	82.7	80.4
Gap	27.1	26.1	23.2	23.2	23.1	21.3	21.3	23.2	21.8	22.2	24.0

Notes:

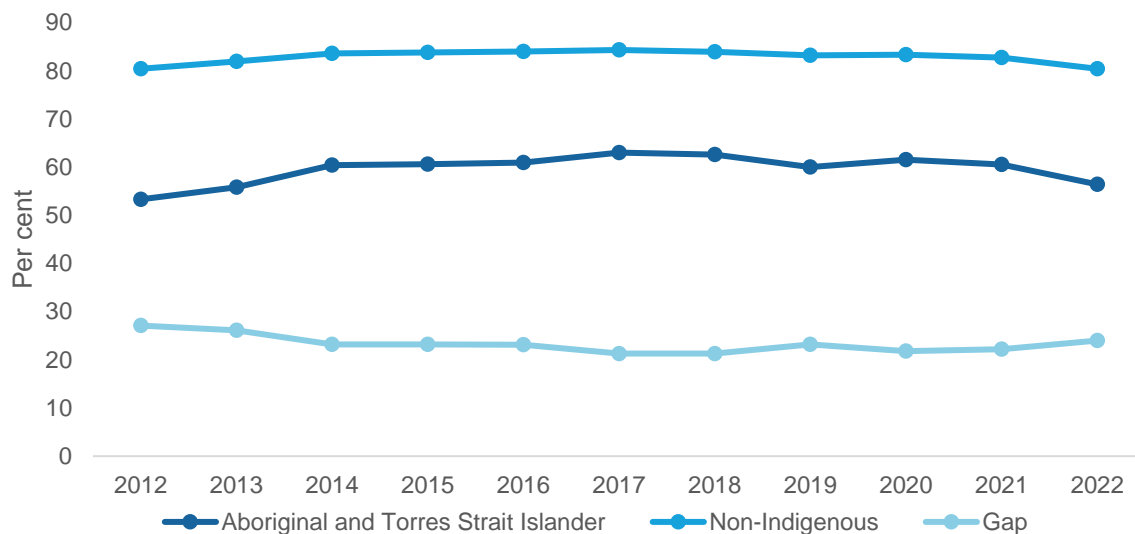
See notes for Table 4.7.

Apparent retention rates can be affected by changes over time in whether individuals identify (or are identified) as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander.

Source: ABS, *Schools*, 2022 and previous releases.

Figure 4.2

Apparent retention rates (uncapped), Year 10 to Year 12, by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander status, Australia, 2012–2022 (%)



Source: ABS, *Schools*, 2022 and previous releases.

The apparent retention rate for Year 10 to Year 12 for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students fell from 60.5% in 2021 to 56.4% in 2022. The fall of 4.1 percentage points followed a fall of 1.0 percentage point in 2021.

However, over the last ten years, Year 10 to Year 12 retention for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students has increased, with a net rise of 3.1 percentage points since 2012. For non-Indigenous students, apparent retention rates were net unchanged over this period, leading to a narrowing of the gap between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous students by 3.1 percentage points.

With the gap at 24.0 percentage points in 2022, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students are still less likely to proceed to Year 12 than other students. 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.⁴²

Table 4.10 reports KPM 1(e) by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander status and state and territory for 2012, 2021 and 2022. The table displays variations between states and territories in apparent retention rates for both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and non-Indigenous students and in the percentage point gap between these rates.

Table 4.10

Apparent retention rates (uncapped), Year 10 to Year 12, for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and non-Indigenous students (%) and gap between rates (percentage points), by state and territory 2012, 2021 and 2022

2012	NSW	Vic	Qld	SA	WA	Tas	NT	ACT	Australia
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	48.1	56.3	62.4	70.0	45.4	41.2	40.3	65.4	53.3
Non-Indigenous	76.6	81.5	83.6	86.9	79.7	69.2	75.1	89.8	80.4
Gap	28.5	25.2	21.2	16.9	34.3	28.0	34.8	24.4	27.1
2021	NSW	Vic	Qld	SA	WA	Tas	NT	ACT	Australia
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	49.8	67.6	68.9	76.3	65.5	63.6	44.1	80.7	60.5
Non-Indigenous	77.9	84.2	84.3	87.6	86.8	75.5	82.7	89.9	82.7
Gap	28.1	16.6	15.4	11.3	21.3	11.9	38.6	9.2	22.2
2022	NSW	Vic	Qld	SA	WA	Tas	NT	ACT	Australia
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	45.0	62.4	64.1	74.4	62.5	62.0	42.7	79.5	56.4
Non-Indigenous	75.1	82.4	82.5	86.6	83.2	72.8	75.7	88.1	80.4
Gap	30.1	20.0	18.4	12.2	20.7	10.8	33.0	8.6	24.0
Change in gap 2021–2022	2.0	3.4	3.0	0.9	-0.6	-1.1	-5.6	-0.6	1.8
Change in gap 2012–2022	1.6	-5.2	-2.8	-4.7	-13.6	-17.2	-1.8	-15.8	-3.1

Notes:

See notes for tables 4.7 and 4.9.

Source: ABS, *Schools*, 2022 and earlier releases.

⁴² 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.

In 2022, the apparent retention rate from Year 10 to Year 12 for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students declined in all states and territories. The gap in apparent retention between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and non-Indigenous students widened between 2021 and 2022 in NSW, Vic, Qld, and SA, and narrowed in WA, Tas, the NT and the ACT.

As well as factors affecting the state-by-state comparison of apparent retention rates for 'all students', 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, especially its concentration in rural and remote communities.

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.

Chapter 5: Student Achievement

This chapter reports on student achievement in the National Assessment Program (NAP) and International Assessments specified in the *Measurement Framework for Schooling in Australia 2020*.



For 2022, the student achievement Key Performance Measures includes KPMs for NAP – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN reading, writing and numeracy outcomes), NAP – ICT Literacy, and literacy and numeracy outcomes from the OECD Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA).

5.1 NAP – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN)

Key Facts:

- NAPLAN participation rates in 2022 were over 95% for Years 3, 5 and 7. Year 9 students had the lowest participation in NAPLAN at 91.6%.
- At least 95% of Year 3 and Year 5 students achieved at or above the national minimum standard for reading, as did 94.2% of Year 7 students and 89.6% of Year 9 students.
- Over 96% of Year 3 students achieved at or above the national minimum standard for writing, as did 92.6% of Year 5 students, 90.6% of Year 7 students and 84.1% of Year 9 students.
- At least 95% of students in years 3, 5 and 9 achieved at or above the national minimum standard for numeracy, as did 92% of Year 7 students.
- At a national level, there were upward long-term trends in the mean scaled scores for reading in Years 3 and 5 and for numeracy in Year 5.

In 2022, the fourteenth year of national literacy and numeracy testing, Year 3, 5, 7 and 9 students in Australia were assessed on the test domains of reading, writing, language conventions (spelling, grammar, and punctuation) and numeracy. KPMs are approved for reading, writing and numeracy.

The [2022 NAPLAN National Report](#) and the [NAPLAN results](#) page of the NAP website provide nationally comparable information on the 2022 national and state/territory results for each test domain. They also provide comparisons of performance by student characteristics such as gender, Indigenous status, language background other than English, parental occupation and parental education, as well as school location.

This section reports on NAPLAN 2022 and discusses short-term trends in NAPLAN achievement.

Trends are calculated from the line of best fit in a graph of all relevant data in a time series. The average annual change is calculated from the line of best fit and a test is performed to determine if a trend is evident.

For the trends in NAPLAN mean scaled scores (KPMs 2b, 2d and 3b) an additional criterion has been applied, requiring the average annual change to exceed a minimum effect size, equivalent to 1.0 score points. This approach addresses the understatement of measurement error in the annual change and reduces the likelihood that some trends in the mean scaled score may simply result from chance variation.

NAPLAN results are also reported at the school level on the [My School](#) website, and parents receive an individual report on their child's achievement in the NAPLAN tests. An individual student report shows student performance against the national average and relative to the achievement band scale. Information about how to interpret scales and standards is available on the [NAP website](#).

In 2022, NAPLAN was fully administered online for the first time after undergoing a transition from traditional paper-based testing to online adaptive testing since 2018. The objective of moving NAPLAN online was to deliver better, more precise, and more engaging assessments for schools and students. In the transition years, online test results were equated with the paper tests.

NAPLAN participation rates, mean scaled scores and proportions of students achieving at or above the national minimum standard in reading, writing and numeracy at each year level are specified as KPMs in the *Measurement Framework for Schooling in Australia 2020*.

NAPLAN participation

Key performance measure 1(d)

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

Table 5.1 reports KPM 1(d), the proportion of students participating in at least one NAPLAN test, for 2022.

Table 5.1

Proportion of students participating in at least one NAPLAN test for Years 3, 5, 7 and 9, 2022 (%)

	Year 3	Year 5	Year 7	Year 9	All
Proportion of students participating in at least one NAPLAN test (%)	96.0	96.3	95.2	91.6	94.8

Notes:

Participation rates are calculated as all assessed and exempt students as a percentage of the total number of students in each year level, as reported by the school. Exempt students do not sit the test. For reporting purposes, they are deemed to be below the national minimum standard.

Definitions of terms are provided in the [NAPLAN glossary](#) on the NAP website.

Source: ACARA, unpublished data.

Since 2019, the KPM for NAPLAN participation has been reported as participation in at least one NAPLAN assessment. In 2022:

- Year 9 had the lowest participation in NAPLAN, decreasing from 96.0% in 2008 to 91.6% in 2022.
- While participation across all years has declined since 2008, an increase in participation was recorded for the first time between 2018 and 2019. Participation of all students in at least one NAPLAN assessment increased from 95.2% in 2018 to 95.4% in 2019 but decreased to 94.8% in 2022.
- As with previous years, participation rates in NAPLAN in 2022 were lower for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students than for non-Indigenous students.
- Additional information on participation by test domain and by subgroups such as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students is reported on the results tab of the NAP website and the 2022 NAPLAN National Report. This includes data on absences and withdrawal rates.

Since 2008, there has been an increase in the proportion of students withdrawn from NAPLAN tests. Students may be withdrawn by their parent or carer based on issues such as religious beliefs or philosophical objections to testing. Further information on withdrawals can be found on the NAP website.

Reading

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 scaled scores for reading

Table 5.2 reports KPMs 2(a) and 2(b) for Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 in 2022 and summarises the national long-term trends in reading achievement from 2008 to 2022.

Table 5.2

Summary for reading for Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 for Australia: proportion at or above national minimum standard and mean scaled scores (2022); long-term trends (2008–2022)

	Year 3	Year 5	Year 7	Year 9
2022				
Proportion of students at or above national minimum standard (%)	95.5	95.0	94.2	89.6
CI ±	0.2	0.2	0.3	0.4
Mean scaled score	437.8	509.7	542.6	577.6
CI ±	1.3	1.0	1.5	1.6
2008–2022				
Average annual change in proportion above national minimum standard (percentage points)	0.2	0.3	0.0	-0.1
Trend	↗	↗	↔	↔
Average annual change in mean scaled score (points on NAPLAN scale)	2.4	1.8	0.2	0.2
Trend	↗	↗	↔	↔

Notes:

Exempt students do not sit the test. For reporting purposes, they are deemed to be below 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% 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% ± 0.5 it can be said with 95% confidence that the true value lies between 89.5% and 90.5%.

↗ = the long-term trend was positive/upward

↘ = the long-term trend was negative/downward

↔ = a long-term trend was not evident

Sources: ACARA, *National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy, Achievement in Reading, Writing, Language Conventions and Numeracy, National Report for 2022*; ACARA, National Report on Schooling data portal ACARA, unpublished data.

Summary of changes in reading achievement between 2021 and 2022:

- At the national level, there was no statistically significant change in mean scaled scores, or the proportion of students achieving at or above the national minimum standard, across all year levels.
- In the ACT, there was a significant increase in both mean scaled scores and the percentage of students achieving at or above the national minimum standard for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in Year 5.
- In Vic, mean scaled scores for Year 9 were significantly higher than the previous year among female students and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

Summary of trends in reading for the period 2008–2022:

- At the national level, there were upward trends in the mean scaled scores for reading in years 3 and 5.
- There was an upward trend in mean scaled scores for students in years 7 and 9 in WA, and a significant downward trend for Year 9 students in the ACT.
- For Year 3 students in Qld and WA, and year 5 students in QLD, there were upward trends in the proportion of students achieving at or above the national minimum standard. In the ACT, there was a downward trend in the proportion of students achieving at or above the national minimum standard in Year 9.
- Among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and students who spoke a language other than English at home there was an upward trend in mean scaled scores for reading in Year 7.

Writing

Key performance measure 2(c)

Proportion of students achieving at or above the national minimum standard for writing

Key performance measure 2(d)

NAPLAN mean scaled scores for writing

Table 5.3 reports on KPM 2(c) and 2(d) for Years 3, 5, 7 and 9, 2022 and provides a summary of trends in writing achievement for the period 2011–2022.

The writing genre assessed in NAPLAN 2022 was narrative writing. Students and teachers were not advised in advance whether the genre would be narrative or persuasive. Since 2016, there have been two writing prompts: one for Years 3 and 5; and one for Years 7 and 9. A common writing scaled for both genres has only been in place since 2011, hence reporting on writing uses 2011 as the base year for measuring long-term trends.

Table 5.3

Summary for writing for Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 for Australia: proportion at or above national minimum standard and mean scaled scores (2022); long-term trends (2011 to 2022)

	Year 3	Year 5	Year 7	Year 9
2022				
Proportion of students at or above national minimum standard (%)	96.2	92.6	90.6	84.1
CI ±	0.2	0.3	0.4	0.6
Mean scaled score	422.1	484.3	529.8	559.9
CI ±	0.9	1.0	1.6	1.7
2011–2022				
Average annual change in proportion above national minimum standard (percentage points)	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.0
Trend	↔	↔	↔	↔
Average annual change in mean scaled score (points on NAPLAN scale)	0.9	0.1	0.1	-0.5
Trend	↔	↔	↔	↔

Note: See notes for Table 5.2.

Sources: ACARA, *National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy, Achievement in Reading, Writing, Language Conventions and Numeracy, National Report for 2022*; ACARA, National Report on Schooling data portal ACARA, unpublished data.

Summary of changes in writing achievement between 2021 and 2022:

- At the national level, there was no statistically significant change in mean scaled scores, or the proportion of students achieving at or above the national minimum standard, for writing across all year levels.
- For Year 7 and 9 students in Vic, mean scaled scores for writing were significantly higher in 2022 compared to 2021.
- Among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and students who spoke a language other than English at home, mean scaled scores for writing in Year 9 were significantly higher in 2022 compared to 2021.

Summary of trends in writing achievement for the period 2011–2022:

- At the national level, there was no statistically significant difference in mean scaled scores from 2011 to 2022, or the proportion of students achieving at or above the national minimum standard, across all year levels.⁴³
- For Year 3 students in the NT, SA, and WA there were upward trends in mean scaled scores for writing.
- Among students who spoke a language other than English at home, there was an upward trend in mean scales scores for writing in Year 3.
- Among students living in major cities, there were upward trends in mean scaled scores for writing in years 5 and 9.

⁴³ For Years 5, 7, and 9, mean scaled scores for writing had a “U shaped” trend (a decline followed by an increase) between 2011 and 2022.

Numeracy

Key performance measure 3(a)

Proportion of students achieving at or above the national minimum standard for numeracy

Key performance measure 3(b)

NAPLAN mean scaled scores for numeracy

Table 5.4 reports KPMs 3(a) and 3(b) for Years 3, 5, 7 and 9, 2022 and provides a summary of trends in numeracy achievement for the period 2008–2022.

Table 5.4

Summary for numeracy for Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 for Australia: proportion at or above national minimum standard and mean scaled scores (2022); and long-term trends (2008–2022)

	Year 3	Year 5	Year 7	Year 9
2022				
Proportion of students at or above national minimum standard (%)	95.0	95.1	92.0	95.0
CI ±	0.2	0.2	0.4	0.3
Mean scaled score	399.8	488.3	546.3	584.4
CI ±	1.0	1.0	2.0	1.7
2008–2022				
Average annual change in proportion above national minimum standard (percentage points)	0.1	0.2	-0.1	0.2
Trend	↔	↗	↔	↔
Average annual change in mean scaled score (points on NAPLAN scale)	0.8	0.8	0.6	0.4
Trend	↔	↗	↔	↔

Note: See notes for Table 5.2.

Sources: ACARA, *National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy, Achievement in Reading, Writing, Language Conventions and Numeracy, National Report for 2022*; ACARA, National Report on Schooling data portal ACARA, unpublished data.

Summary of changes in numeracy achievement between 2021 and 2022:

- At a national level, across all year levels, there was no significant change in mean scaled scores for numeracy, or the proportion of students achieving at or above the national minimum standard, between 2021 and 2022.
- For Year 5 in Vic and Year 7 in SA, mean scaled scores for numeracy were significantly lower in 2022 compared to 2021.
- Among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, mean scaled scores for Years 5 and 7 in Vic and Year 7 in SA were significantly lower in 2022 compared to 2021.

Summary of trends in numeracy for the period 2008–2022:

- At a national level, there was an upward trend in mean scaled scores for numeracy in years 3 and 5, and the proportion of Year 5 students achieving at or above the national minimum standard was significantly higher in 2022 compared to 2008.

- There were upward trends in mean scaled scores for numeracy for Year 3 students in Qld, Year 5 students in Qld, WA and SA, and students in years 7 and 9 in WA.
- There was an upward trend in the proportion of Year 9 students achieving at or above the national minimum standard in WA and a downward trend in the proportion of Year 7 students achieving at or above the national minimum standard in the ACT.
- There were upward trends in mean scaled scores for numeracy in years 5 and 7 among students who spoke a language other than English at home.
- For Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, there was an upward trend in mean scaled scores for numeracy in Year 9.
- Between 2016 and 2022, there was a downward trend in mean scaled scores for Year 7 students in inner regional, outer regional and very remote areas.

5.2 NAP Sample Assessments – Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Literacy

Key Facts:

In 2022, at a national level:

- The proportion of participating Year 6 students achieving at or above the proficient standard for NAP–ICT literacy was 55%. This was not significantly different to the proportion achieving at or above the standard in four of the previous five assessment cycles but was significantly lower than the proportion for 2011 (62%).
- The proportion of participating Year 10 students attaining the proficient standard was 46%. This proportion was significantly lower than that for any previous NAP–ICT assessment cycle.

The NAP Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Literacy assessment commenced in 2004 and is undertaken by sample groups of Year 6 and Year 10 students across Australia every three years.

ICT literacy is defined as “the ability to use ICT appropriately and safely to access, manage and evaluate information; develop new understandings; apply computational, design and systems thinking to create solutions; communicate and collaborate with others; and engage productively with emerging and future technologies”.⁴⁴

The 2022 assessment instrument consisted of 8 discrete online modules, each with a 20-minute time limit. Every module followed a linear narrative sequence designed to reflect typical real-world use of ICT. The assessment instrument was administered online to representative, random samples of students in Year 6 and Year 10 in Term 4, 2022. Data were provided by 5,412 Year 6 students in 325 schools and 4,569 Year 10 students in 311 schools.

The NAP–ICT Literacy scale comprises 6 proficiency levels that are used to describe student achievement for both Year 6 and Year 10.⁴⁵ There are two proficient standards – one for Year 6 and one for Year 10. Each standard is a point on the scale that represents a “challenging but reasonable” expectation of student achievement at that year level.

In reporting national key performance measures (KPMs) of Australian students’ ICT literacy, the NAP–ICT Literacy assessment provides a way to monitor progress towards the Alice Springs (Mparntwe) Education Goals for Young Australians.

Key performance measure 6

Proportion of students achieving at or above the proficient standard in ICT Literacy:

Year 6 - Level 3

Year 10 - Level 4

⁴⁴ ACARA NAP–ICT Literacy Public Report 2022; Pg 13.

⁴⁵ Descriptors of these levels are available in the ACARA NAP–ICT Literacy Public Report 2022.

Table 5.5 shows the percentage of Year 6 and Year 10 students in each proficiency level and the percentage of students at or above the proficient standard for Year 6 and Year 10 across the 6 assessment cycles.

Table 5.5

Proportion of students achieving each proficiency level, and proportion achieving at or above the proficient standard in ICT Literacy, 2005–2022 (%)

Proficiency level	2005	2008	2011	2014	2017	2022
Year 6						
Level 6	0	0	0	0	0	0
Level 5	0	1	1	1	0	0
Level 4	8	15	20	13	13	13
Level 3	41	41	40	42	41	42
Level 2	39	30	27	31	33	32
Level 1	13	13	11	14	13	13
Percentage of students attaining at or above the proficiency standard (Level 3)	49	57	62	55	53	55
CI ±	3.0	2.8	2.0	2.5	2.4	2.4
Difference from 2022			↑			
Year 10						
Level 6	0	1	2	0	0	0
Level 5	12	18	19	9	8	6
Level 4	49	47	44	43	46	40
Level 3	32	26	25	33	33	37
Level 2	6	7	8	11	10	13
Level 1	0	2	2	4	3	5
Percentage of students attaining at or above the proficiency standard (Level 4)	61	66	65	52	54	46
CI ±	3.1	3.0	2.3	2.5	3.0	3.2
Difference from 2022	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	

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.

↑ significantly higher than in 2022

↓ significantly lower than in 2022

Source: ACARA NAP—ICT Literacy Public Report 2022.

In 2022,

- The proportion of participating Year 6 students in Australia achieving at or above the proficient standard was 55%. This was not significantly different to the proportion achieving at or above the standard in 2017 (53%) but was significantly lower than the proportion for 2011 (62%).
- The proportion of participating Year 10 students in Australia attaining the proficient standard was 46%. This proportion was significantly lower than that for any previous cycle.

5.3 International Assessments – Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA)

Key Facts:

In the 2022 PISA assessments:

- 57% of Australian students achieved scores at or above the proficient standard for reading literacy
- 51% of Australian students achieved scores at or above the proficient standard for mathematical literacy
- 58% of Australian students achieved scores at or above the proficient standard for scientific literacy
- Across all three domains, average scores for Australian students were higher than the OECD average.

At the national level, across all three domains, there have been no significant differences in average PISA scores across the 2015, 2018 and 2022 assessment cycles.

The OECD Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) compares the performance of 15-year-old students internationally. PISA aims to measure how well a sample of 15-year-old students can apply their knowledge and skills in the three domains of reading, mathematical and scientific literacy.

Since 2000, PISA has been implemented every three years. However, the most recent PISA assessment was delayed by one year due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

PISA 2022 compared the performance of samples of 15-year-old students from 81 OECD member countries, partner countries or economies.⁴⁶ Over 690,000 students, including a representative sample of 13,437 Australian students from 743 Australian schools, participated in PISA in 2022.⁴⁷ Mathematics was the major domain for PISA 2022, it was also the major domain in 2012 and 2003.⁴⁸

PISA is one of the international assessments in Australia's National Assessment Program and provides data for the following key performance measures specified in the *Measurement Framework for Schooling, 2020*.

These KPMs refer to the proficient standard adopted for Australia as representing 'a challenging but reasonable' expectation of student achievement at a year level, with students needing to demonstrate more than elementary skills expected at that year level. 79 For PISA, the proficient standard is defined as level 3 on each of the international PISA scales.

⁴⁶ 'Partner countries' are countries that are not members of the OECD. A 'partner economy' is a region, state or city rather than a whole country. The PISA student sample in each country is intended to represent the student population of that country. The student sample in a partner economy represents the student population in that region, state or city only, and may not be representative of the country of which it is part. As such, PISA results for partner economies may not be fully comparable with results for countries.

⁴⁷ In PISA 2022, Australia successfully achieved the required school response rate; however, for the first time, Australia did not achieve the required student response rate. Given that the school response rate standard was met, and the student response rate was close to the international standard, weighting adjustments substantially reduced the risk of bias.

⁴⁸ In each cycle of PISA, one domain is selected as the main focus on a rotating basis. Once a domain has been a main focus, reliable comparisons can be made between the results in the first focus year and results in subsequent testing years. Science was the main focus in 2006 and 2015. Reading literacy was the main focus in 2000, 2009 and 2018.

Key performance measure 2(e)

Proportion of students achieving at or above the proficient standard (level 3) on the OECD PISA combined reading scale.

Key performance measure 3(c)

Proportion of students achieving at or above the proficient standard (level 3) on the OECD PISA combined mathematics scale.

Key performance measure 4(b)

Proportion of students achieving at or above the proficient standard (level 3) on the OECD PISA combined scientific literacy scale.

Average PISA scores for Australia and the OECD in 2022, and the proportion of students achieving at or above the proficient standard, are reported in Table 5.6.

Table 5.6

Mean PISA scores and proportion of students achieving at or above the proficient standard (level 3) in PISA, Australia and OECD, 2022

	Mean PISA score	Percentage of students at or above the proficient standard
Australia		
Reading literacy	498	57%
Mathematical literacy	487	51%
Scientific Literacy	507	58%
OECD Average		
Reading literacy	476	49%
Mathematical literacy	472	46%
Scientific Literacy	485	50%

Note: The OECD average reflects the performance of participating students across OECD member nations. It does not include the performance of students in non-member countries or partner economies.

Source: De Bortoli, L., Underwood, C., & Thomson, S. (2023). PISA 2022. Reporting Australia's results. Volume I: Student performance and equity in education. Australian Council for Educational Research.

In PISA 2022, at the Australian national level:

- Australian students achieved average scores of 498 points in reading literacy, 487 points in mathematical literacy and 507 points in scientific literacy. Average scores were higher than the OECD average in all three domains.
- 57% of participating Australian students achieved at or above the national proficient standard for reading literacy (KPM 2(e))
- 51% of participating Australian students achieved at or above the national proficient standard for mathematical literacy (KPM 3(c))
- 58% of participating Australian students achieved at or above the national proficient standard for scientific literacy (KPM 4(b)).

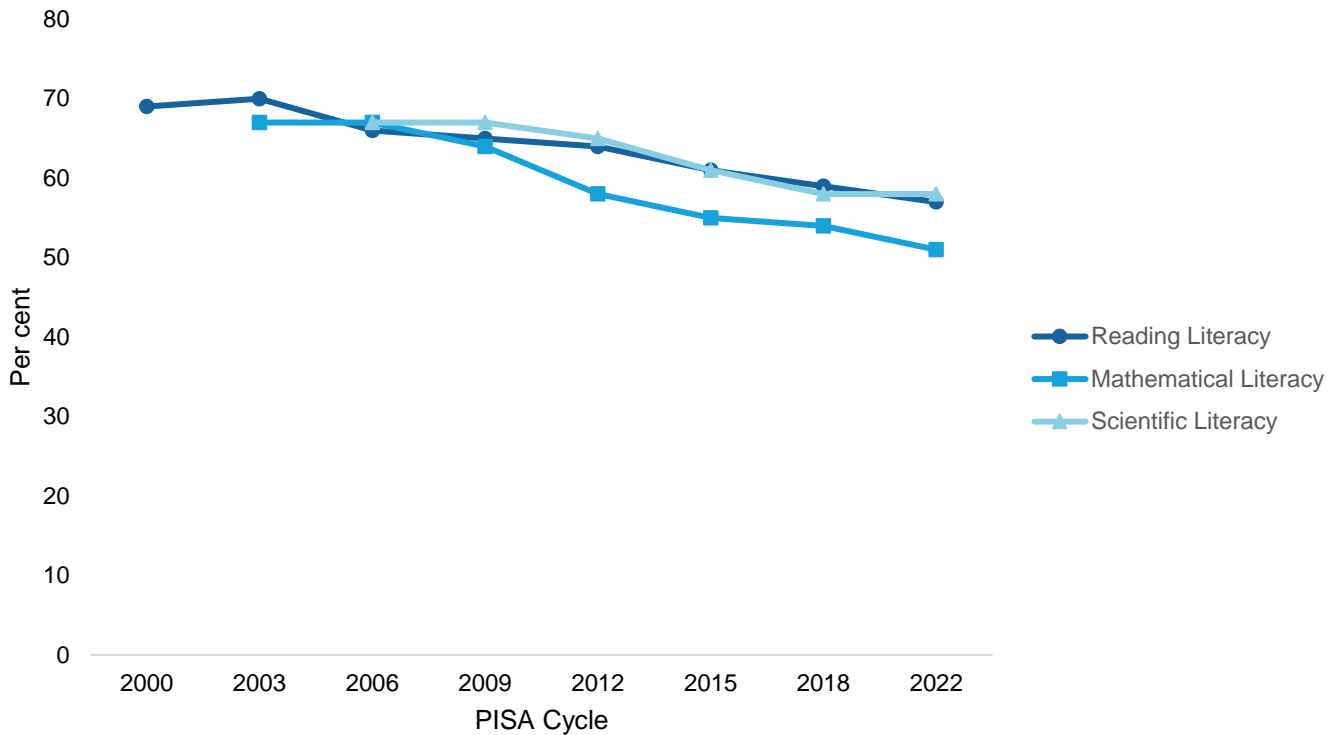
Figure 5.1 shows the movements of the three PISA KPMs over relevant PISA assessment cycles.

An overall downward trend in reading literacy and mathematical literacy continued in 2022, but there was relatively little change since the last cycle of PISA in 2018, with decreases of 2 percentage points for reading literacy and 3 percentage points for mathematical literacy. For scientific literacy there was no change in the percentage of students achieving the proficient standard between 2018 and 2022. Across all three domains, differences in PISA scores across the 2015, 2018 and 2022 assessment cycles were not statistically significant.

Between 2018 and 2022 the mean performance in PISA mathematics across OECD countries fell by a record 16 points, reading performance fell by 11 points and science performance did not change significantly. The COVID-19 pandemic has been identified as a major factor contributing to this decline in student learning outcomes. Despite this, the performance of Australian students over this period has remained steady.

Figure 5.1

Proportion of students achieving at or above the proficient standard (level 3) in PISA, Australia, 2000–2022 (%)



Source: De Bortoli, L., Underwood, C., & Thomson, S. (2023). PISA 2022. Reporting Australia's results. Volume I: Student performance and equity in education. Australian Council for Educational Research.

PISA data on student achievement can be disaggregated by a number of factors, including sex, Indigenous status, geographic location, and language and immigrant background. Information about the background of PISA, the framework that is used to design the assessments, the implementation of PISA and further technical information is available from the [OECD PISA](#) website. Further detailed information on PISA results for 2022, including international and interstate comparisons are provided in [PISA 2022. Reporting Australia's results](#).

Chapter 6: Participation in Vocational Education and Training

This chapter reports on participation of young people aged 15-19 in Vocational Education and Training.



Key Facts:

- In Australia in 2022:
 - Participation in VET has returned to pre-COVID levels, with 26.3% of 15-19-year-olds completing at least one unit of competency at AQF Certificate II or above in 2022.
 - Almost half (49.8%) of qualifications gained by 15–19-year-olds were at AQF level II and 33.0% were at AQF level III.
- The long-term trend in the proportion of 15–19-year-olds participating in VET was downward, from 29.6% in 2015 to 26.3% in 2022.

VET is a part of the Australian tertiary education system. VET is a type of education that prepares students for the current and future workforce by focusing on the skills and technical knowledge required for a particular job function. VET offers standalone qualifications as well as learning while in paid employment.

The Australian VET sector provides nationally recognised training and qualifications for employment for those entering or already engaged in the workforce. Competency standards (units of competency or accredited modules) for VET qualifications in different industries and occupations are included in national industry-developed training packages or accredited courses, which also define qualifications in each industry.⁴⁹

The National Skills Agreement endorsed by the National Cabinet on 31 August 2022 articulates a vision for a VET sector that ‘provides high-quality, responsive and accessible education and training to boost productivity and support students to obtain the skills they need to participate and prosper in the modern economy’.

While all governments have a shared role in national policy leadership for VET, the state and territory governments and schools have responsibility for determining arrangements for delivery within their jurisdictions. These arrangements are summarised in the National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER) [VOCEDplus](#) website.

Participation of young people in VET

The Alice Springs (Mparntwe) Declaration commits Australian governments to “supporting senior years of schooling” and “embedding pathways for learning throughout life and supporting effective transitions”.

KPM 1(f), participation of 15-19-year-olds in VET, is an indicator of the success of schools in supporting students throughout schooling and in their transitions to post-school education and work.

In addition to KPM 1(f), education ministers have approved 2 program measures for young people’s participation and attainment in VET, disaggregated by industry area and by qualification level.

Key performance measure 1(f)

Participation of young people, including secondary students, in VET

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

The KPM for participation in VET includes all 15–19-year-old VET students, regardless of if they are enrolled in school, as a proportion of the 15–19-year-old population. The specification for participation is the completion of at least one unit of competency (or accredited course module) in a VET qualification at AQF Certificate II or above.⁵⁰

⁴⁹ Nationally recognised VET qualifications are detailed on a national register at [training.gov.au](#). The requirements for each level of VET qualification are set out in the [Australian Qualifications Framework \(AQF\)](#), which also provides guidelines for SSCE (Year 12) qualifications and qualifications in the higher education sector.

⁵⁰ AQF Certificate II is regarded as entry-level training for employment.

The specification of the successful completion of a unit of competency in the KPM is a marker for genuine participation in a VET course. This is opposed to an initial enrolment, which may not be followed through. It is not intended that this KPM be seen as a measure of attainment.

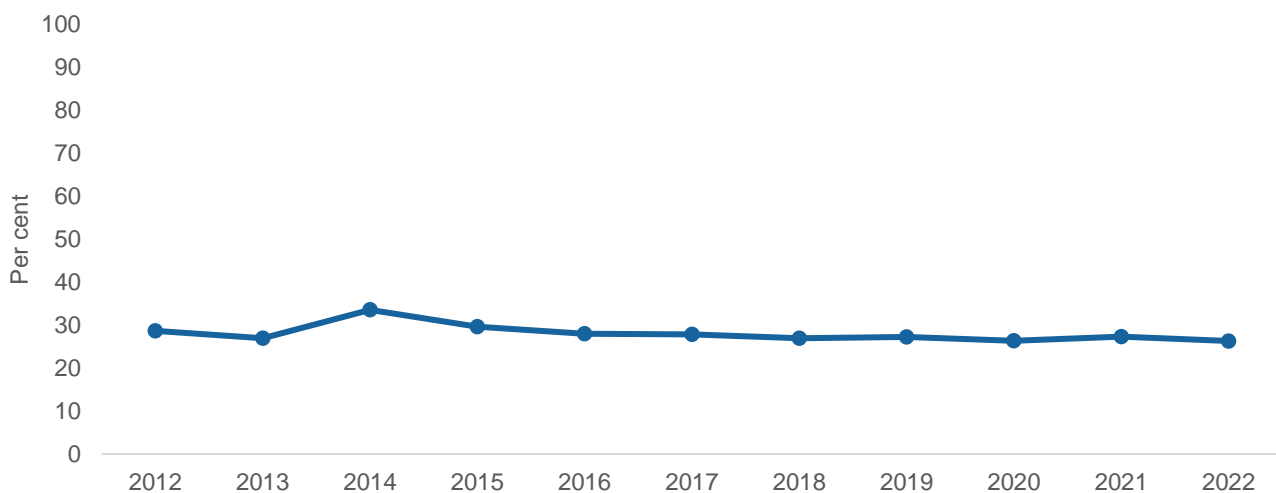
Figure 6.1 shows national data for this KPM for the period 2012–2022.⁵¹

There is a break in the time series between 2013 and 2014, when reporting requirements for VET providers were extended to include privately funded accredited VET training. This change contributes to the higher numbers and proportions of 15–19-year-olds reported as participating in VET in 2014 than in previous years.

There is a further break in the series between 2014 and 2015, following the introduction of a national USI for VET students. The USI allows all training activity undertaken by a student to be electronically linked, irrespective of where the training took place. This enabled the removal of many duplicate student entries from 2015, resulting in reductions in the KPM and a break from data reported for 2014.⁵²

Figure 6.1

Proportion of 15–19-year-olds successfully completing at least one unit of competency at AQF II or above (%), Australia, 2012–2022



Notes:

'Unit of competency' includes training package units of competency and nationally accredited VET modules. A successfully completed unit of competency or module includes competencies with an outcome of competency achieved or pass or recognition of prior learning granted.

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

From January 2015, VET students have been allocated a Unique Student Identifier (USI). From 2015 onwards, NCVET has applied a de-duplication process, using the USI, to better estimate the counts of students participating in VET activity. This change constitutes another break in the time series between 2014 and 2015. Data from 2015 is consistent year-on-year. For further information, please refer to [Counting Students in Total VET students and courses](#).

Sources: NCVET, National VET in Schools Collection 2012–22; NCVET, National VET Provider Collection 2012–2022; ABS, *National, state and territory population December 2022* (release date 15/06/2023).

⁵¹ Data for this KPM is revised annually as the latest year is always a preliminary estimate. Data by state and territory, disaggregated by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander status, sex, geolocation and language background is provided in the National Report on Schooling data portal.

⁵² However, as data for many VET in Schools students was provided without a USI, some duplication may occur in the count of these students.

Table 6.1 provides further detail, with the number and proportion of 15–19-year-olds who successfully completed at least one unit of competency as a part of a VET qualification at AQF Certificate II or above. There is a long-term downward trend of 0.5 percentage points per annum from 2015 to 2022.

Table 6.1

Number and proportion of 15–19-year-olds who successfully completed at least one unit of competency as a part of a VET qualification at AQF Certificate II or above, Australia, 2012–2022

Australia	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Number of 15–19-year-olds successfully completing at least one unit of competency at AQF II or above ('000)	418.5	395.5	494.8	435.6	413.4	412.6	401.1	407.5	392.1	404.5	403.4
15–19-year-old population ('000)	1459.7	1466.7	1474.7	1469.9	1475.2	1481.6	1488.4	1495.1	1486.8	1479.6	1532.9
Proportion of 15–19-year-olds successfully completing at least one unit of competency at AQF II or above (%)	28.7	27.0	33.6	29.6	28.0	27.8	27.0	27.3	26.4	27.3	26.3

Note: See notes for Figure 6.1.

Sources: NCVER, National VET in Schools Collection 2012–22; NCVER, National VET Provider Collection 2012–2022; ABS, *National, state and territory population December 2022* (release date 15/06/2023).

VET program measure 1

Occupation and industry profile of VET engagement for 15–19-year-olds who in the calendar year successfully completed at least one unit of competency/module as a part of a VET qualification at AQF Certificate II or above

Alongside KPM1(f), VET program measures are used to monitor and report on the performance of the VET sector in Australia. VET program measure 1 measures the number of 15-19-year-olds who have completed a unit of competency at AQF Certificate II or higher by field of education.

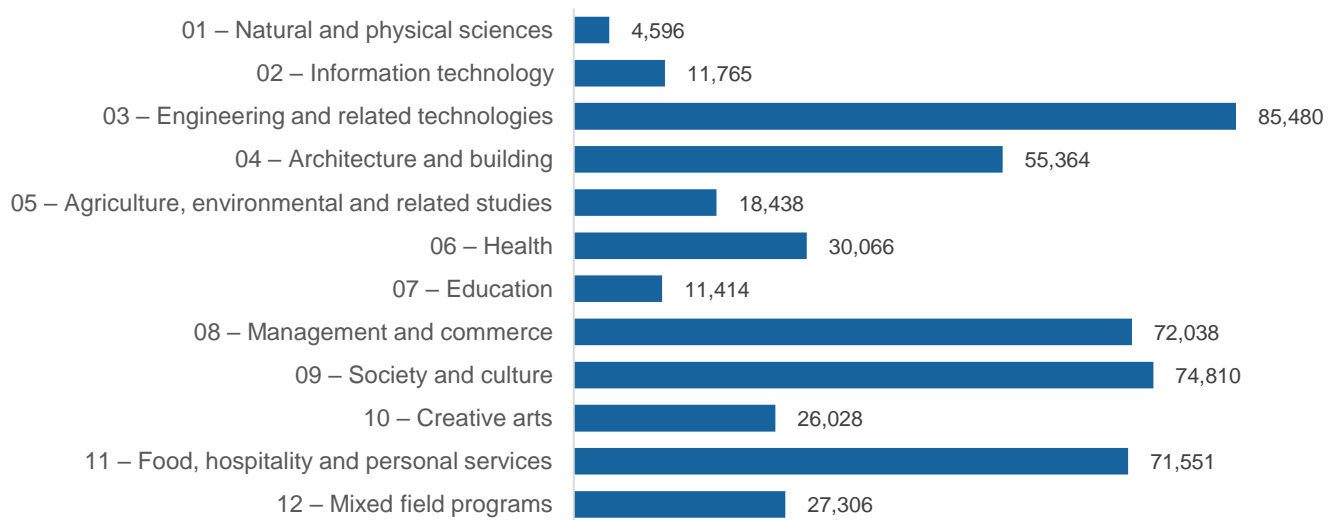
Figure 6.2 reports VET program measure 1 for 2022 using the Australian standard classifications for field of education as a proxy for occupation and industry profile. From 2020, students undertaking multiple courses in different fields of education are counted once within each relevant field.⁵³

Engineering and related technologies had the highest number of 15–19-year-olds who had completed at least one unit of competency (85,480), followed by Society and culture (74,810), Management and commerce (72,038) and Food, hospitality and personal services (71,551). This is consistent with the number of completions, by field of education, in 2021.

⁵³ Other disaggregations, by skills service organisation and by occupational category, are provided in the National Report on Schooling data portal along with disaggregations by state/territory and equity group.

Figure 6.2

Number of 15–19-year-olds successfully completing at least one unit of competency as part of a VET qualification at AQF Certificate II or above, by field of education, Australia, 2022



Notes: The number of students by field is greater than the unique count of students (403,380), as students undertaking multiple courses are counted once for each field of education, they have successfully completed at least one unit of competency in at AQF II or above. Field of education is according to ABS 1272.0 – Australian Standard Classification of Education (ASCED), 2001.

Sources: NCVET, National VET in Schools Collection 2022; NCVET, National VET Provider Collection 2022.

VET program measure 2

Level of AQF certification for 15–19-year-olds who in the calendar year successfully completed a VET qualification

Table 6.2 reports on VET program measure 2 – the number of VET qualifications completed by 15–19-year-olds in 2022, by the AQF level of qualifications. In 2022, 49.8% of qualifications gained by 15–19-year-olds were at AQF level II and 33.0% were at AQF level III.

Table 6.2

VET qualifications completed by 15–19-year-olds, by qualification level of major course, Australia, 2022

Qualification level	Number	%
Certificate I	13,343	6.8
Certificate II	97,483	49.8
Certificate III	64,509	33.0
Certificate IV	10,933	5.6
Diploma or higher	9,419	4.8
Total	195,687	100.0

Note: Major course relates to the highest qualification attempted by a student in the reporting year.

Sources: NCVET, National VET in Schools Collection 2022; NCVET, National VET Provider Collection 2022.

Numbers of qualifications and students should not be compared, as student numbers include students who are beginning or continuing a multi-year course as well as those in the final year of a course. Also, due to time constraints, VET courses delivered to secondary students do not always 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.⁵⁴

VET delivered to secondary students

Secondary school students in all states and territories can undertake nationally recognised VET as part of their school program, usually in the senior years of schooling, as part of the SSCE (year 12) qualifications. VET delivered to secondary students is regulated by the VET sector and is identical to VET offered in any other context.⁵⁵

Secondary students enrolled in VET include school-based apprentices and trainees. These are students who, as well as undertaking an accredited VET qualification as a part of their school studies, have entered 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.

Senior secondary students can take VET courses in addition to their school studies, or leave school to take up full-time VET study, or a combination of part-time VET and work, as alternative pathways to meet requirements for young people to participate in education, training or employment.⁵⁶

KPM 1(f) and the VET program measures include all 15–19-year-old students undertaking VET. The data in this section refers to VET delivered to 15–19-year-old secondary school students. For the purposes of the national VET in Schools data collection⁵⁷, these are students who are undertaking accredited VET as a part of a SSCE.⁵⁸ This data is not restricted to Certificate II or above, or to students who have successfully completed at least one unit of competency.⁵⁹

Figure 6.3 shows the number of 15–19-year-old students undertaking VET delivered to secondary students each year in the period 2012–2022 with school-based apprentices and trainees disaggregated.

⁵⁴ State and territory data for VET qualifications completed by 15–19-year-olds as well as a breakdown in participation by 15-19-year-olds by student attributes is provided in the National Report on Schooling data portal.

⁵⁵ The term 'VET delivered to secondary students' has generally replaced the term 'VET in Schools (VETiS)' historically used for these programs. However, in 2022, the term 'VET in Schools' continued to be used in the VET sector to identify VET delivered to secondary students and for data collection and reporting purposes.

⁵⁶ Secondary student enrolments in VET, school-based apprenticeships and traineeships, and VET qualifications issued to secondary students are reported at the school level on the My School website for schools with senior secondary enrolments.

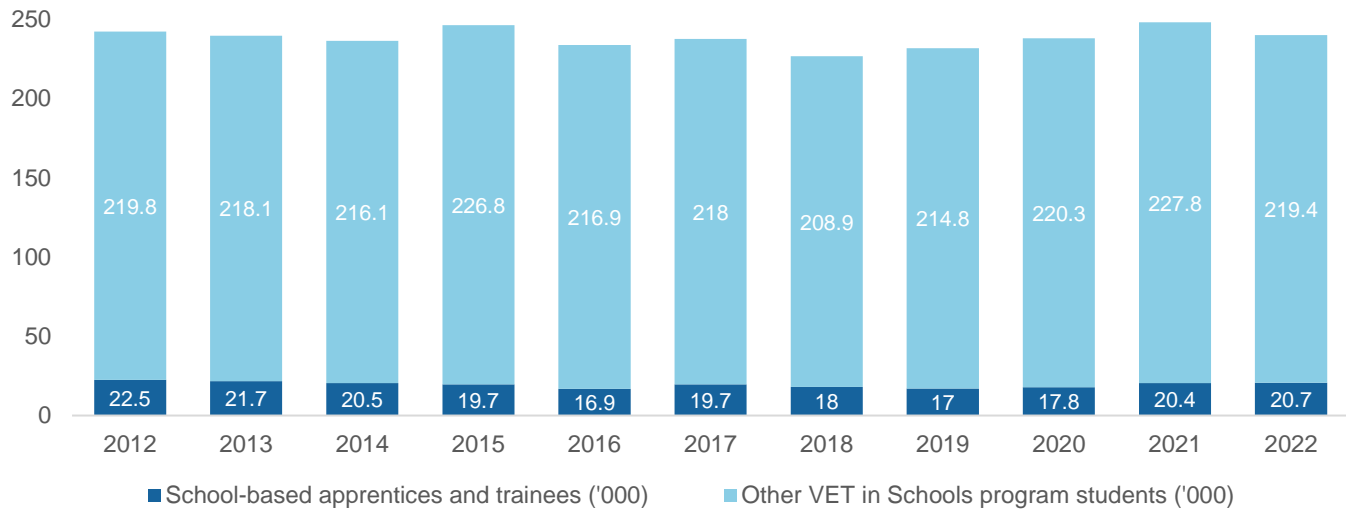
⁵⁷ The national VET in Schools data collection is compiled by NCVER from data provided by states and territories.

⁵⁸ In some jurisdictions, students who have left school (that is, they are not secondary students) but are receiving credit for a VET course towards a senior secondary certificate may be included in these counts. To the extent that these students are included, this inflates the data as a measure of the number of secondary school students undertaking VET.

⁵⁹ Enrolments and qualifications achieved in VET by secondary students are reported at the school level, by field of education and qualification level, on the My School website.

Figure 6.3

Number of 15–19-year-old students undertaking VET delivered to secondary students (VET in Schools) Australia, 2012–2022



Notes:

'School-based apprentices and trainees' includes students who undertook at least one unit of competency or accredited module in a school-based apprenticeship or traineeship.

Sources: NCVER, National VET in Schools Collection, 2022; NCVER [VET in Schools 2022](#); NCVER, [DataBuilder](#).

In 2022 there were 240,120 students aged 15–19 years enrolled in VET in Schools/VET delivered to secondary students. Of these, 20,686 were school-based apprentices and trainees, and 227,773 were in other VET in schools (VETiS) programs. Based on this data, it is estimated that nearly half of senior secondary students (47.1%) undertook one or more VET courses in 2022 as part of their SSCE.⁶⁰

Most of these students (50.3%) were enrolled in Certificate II qualifications and a further 41.4% were enrolled in Certificate III qualifications. Of VET in Schools students aged 15–19 years, 20,690 (8.6%) were undertaking a school-based apprenticeship or traineeship.

The most popular courses undertaken by secondary students were the training package Tourism, Travel and Hospitality, followed by the Business Services, and Sport, Fitness and Recreation training packages.

Between 2021 and 2022, the number of secondary students aged 15–19 years undertaking VET decreased by 3.3%. There was a resurgence in the number of students undertaking school-based apprenticeships and traineeships to 2014 levels with a rise of 14.8% between 2020 and 2021. These rises were largely due to increases in student and school-based apprentice numbers in Qld.⁶¹

Further detailed information, including data disaggregated by state and territory, data definitions and data quality issues is available in NCVER [VET in Schools 2022](#) and NCVER [DataBuilder](#).

⁶⁰ This estimate is calculated as the number of VET in Schools students as a proportion of the number of senior secondary students (full-time plus part-time) as reported in Chapter 2 (Table 2.6) of this report. It is an estimate only, as there are some disparities between the counting of VET in Schools students and of Year 11 and 12 students in the NSSC.

⁶¹ The increase in VET in Schools students over the past several years in Qld corresponds to the state's VET investment budget which invested heavily in skills, including Certificate I and II training for VET in Schools students. Much of the increase has been driven by an increase in Foundation Skills training (NCVER, *VET in Schools*, 2022).

Chapter 7: Participation and attainment in education, training, and work

This chapter reports on the participation of young people aged 15 to 24 in education and/or work, as measured by the Australian Bureau of Statistics Survey of Education and Work.



Key Facts:

In Australia in 2022:

- The proportion of 15–19-year-olds who were fully engaged in education, training or work decreased to 88.3% – down from 90.3% in 2021.
- The proportion of 20–24-year-olds who were fully engaged in education, training or work increased to 76.4% – up from 73.0% in 2021. This represents a full recovery to pre-COVID levels.
- The proportion of 17–24-year-olds who had left school and were fully engaged in education, training or work increased to 75.0% – up from 73.9% in 2021. Fluctuations in this measure between 2019 and 2022 were closely related to the effect of COVID 19 on the employment of young people.

7.1 Participation in education, training, and employment

KPMs 1(g), 1(h) and 1(i) measure the full-time participation in education, training, and employment of 3 groups of young people:

- 15–19-year-olds, including school students and those who have left school and have moved into tertiary study and/or the workforce
- 20–24-year-olds, who may be undertaking VET or university study, working, or a combination of these activities
- 17–24-year-olds who have left school and who may also be undertaking further study and/or work.

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 annual measures of these KPMs are based on the ABS SEW, which is conducted in May each year. Five-yearly measures of the KPMs, based on data drawn from the Census, are reported for Census years.

Key performance measure 1(g)

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

Key performance measure 1(h)

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

Key performance measure 1(i)

Proportion of 17–24-year-olds who have left school that are in full-time education or training, in full-time work, or both in part-time work and part-time education or training

KPMs 1(g) and 1(h) for the period 2012–2022 and for Census years 2016 and 2021 are shown in Table 7.1. Figure 7.1 illustrates KPMs 1(g) and 1(h), as measured by the SEW, over the period 2012–2022.

Table 7.1

Proportions of 15–19-year-olds and 20–24-year-olds in full-time education, in full-time work, or both in part-time work and part-time education, Australia, 2012–2022 (%)

Calendar year	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Full-time participation rates for 15–19-year-olds	86.5	86.3	87.2	87.4	88.4	89.0	88.6	87.0	85.4	90.3	88.3
CI±	1.0	1.2	1.1	0.3	1.3	1.0	1.2	0.9	1.2	0.9	1.4
Full-time participation rates for 15–19-year-olds (Census measure)	-	-	-	-	86.4	-	-	-	-	86.9	-
Full-time participation rates for 20–24-year-olds	76.6	73.8	74.1	73.6	76.1	75.0	74.6	75.5	71.0	73.0	76.4
CI±	1.7	1.1	1.6	1.7	1.5	1.5	1.6	1.8	2.2	1.9	2.2
Full-time participation rates for 20–24-year-olds (Census Measure)	-	-	-	-	72.2	-	-	-	-	72.3	-

Notes:

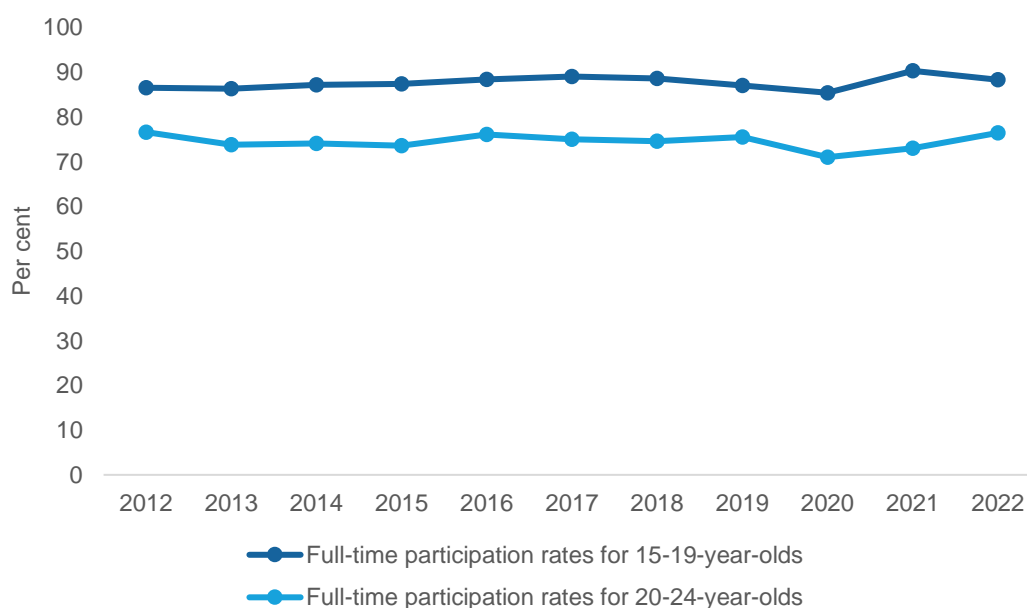
CI = confidence interval. The percentages reported for SEW data in this table include 95% confidence intervals. Confidence intervals are a way of expressing the degree of sampling and measurement error associated with survey estimates. For example, an estimate of 80 with a 95% confidence interval of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

SEW includes people in very remote areas but excludes people in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in very remote areas. This exclusion has only a minor impact on national estimates.

Sources: ABS, Education and Work, Australia, May 2022; ABS, Census of Population and Housing, 2016, 2021.

Figure 7.1

Proportions of 15–19-year-olds and 20–24-year-olds in full-time education, in full-time work, or both in part-time work and part-time education, Australia, 2012–2022 (%)



Source: ABS, Education and Work, Australia, May 2022.

As shown in Table 7.1 and Figure 7.1, full-time participation rates for young people in their mid-to-late teens are 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 secondary school students for whom full-time participation in education, training or work is compulsory, at least until age 17.

From 2012 to 2019 there was a net increase in full-time participation for 15–19-year-olds from 86.5% to 87.0%, but a net fall in the participation rate for 20–24-year-olds from 76.6% to 75.5. This fall was partly due to the expansion of the sample population of the SEW from 2013 to include people who were permanently unable to work.

In 2020 both measures fell significantly — by 1.6 percentage points for 15–19-year-olds and by 4.5 percentage points for 20–24-year-olds — due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.⁶² While some restrictions due to COVID remained in place in May 2021, both SEW measures increased from their 2020 levels.

For 15-19-year-olds, there was a significant increase in full-time participation rates between 2020 and 2021, from 85.4% to 90.3%. This more than reversed the fall in 2020, recording the highest participation level for this age group to date and above the long-term trend for this measure.⁶³ While there was a significant decrease in full-time participation rates for 15-19-year-olds to 88.3% in 2022, this is still higher than pre-pandemic levels.

Full-time participation for 20–24-year-olds increased by 2 percentage points between 2020 and 2021, and by 3.4 percentage points in 2022. The significant increase between 2021 and 2022 represents a full recovery to pre-COVID levels.

Trend data for the annual SEW measures of these KPMs for the period 2008–2022 is included in the Key Performance Measures data set in the National Report on Schooling data portal. This shows a long-term upward trend in KPM 1(g) of 0.2 percentage points per annum, and a long-term downward trend in KPM 1(h) of 0.3 percentage points per annum over this period.

As a participation measure of 17–24-year-olds, KPM 1(i) includes people from the 15–19-year-old and 20–24-year-old age groups but excludes school students from both the numerator and the denominator. This measure is informative as an indicator of the transition of young people from school to post-school education and/or work, and the performance of schooling in facilitating this.

SEW data for this KPM is reported for the period 2012–2022 in Table 7.2 and Figure 7.2. Census data for the years 2016 and 2021 is also reported in Table 7.2.

⁶² The SEW is run during the first 2 weeks of May. During, and leading up to, this period in 2020, travel bans, community lockdowns and various other restrictions due to the COVID-19 pandemic were in place, and these are likely to have impacted the survey results.

⁶³ Reasons for this increase may include provision of free courses through TAFE as a COVID measure, upskilling following pandemic changes, domestic and international travel restrictions, fewer school leavers taking a gap year, a significantly lower unemployment rate and increased job opportunities.

Table 7.2

Proportion of 17–24-year-olds who have left school that are in full-time education, in full-time work, or both in part-time work and part-time education, Australia, 2012–2022 (%)

Calendar year	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Full-time participation rates for 17–24-year-olds who have left school	75.5	72.7	73.2	72.9	75.5	74.7	74.3	74	69.3	73.9	75.0
CI±	1.3	1.1	1.4	1.4	1.2	1.3	1.6	1.6	1.8	1.6	1.8
Full-time participation rates for 17–24-year-olds who have left school (Census measure)	-	-	-	-	71.0	-	-	-	-	73.4	-

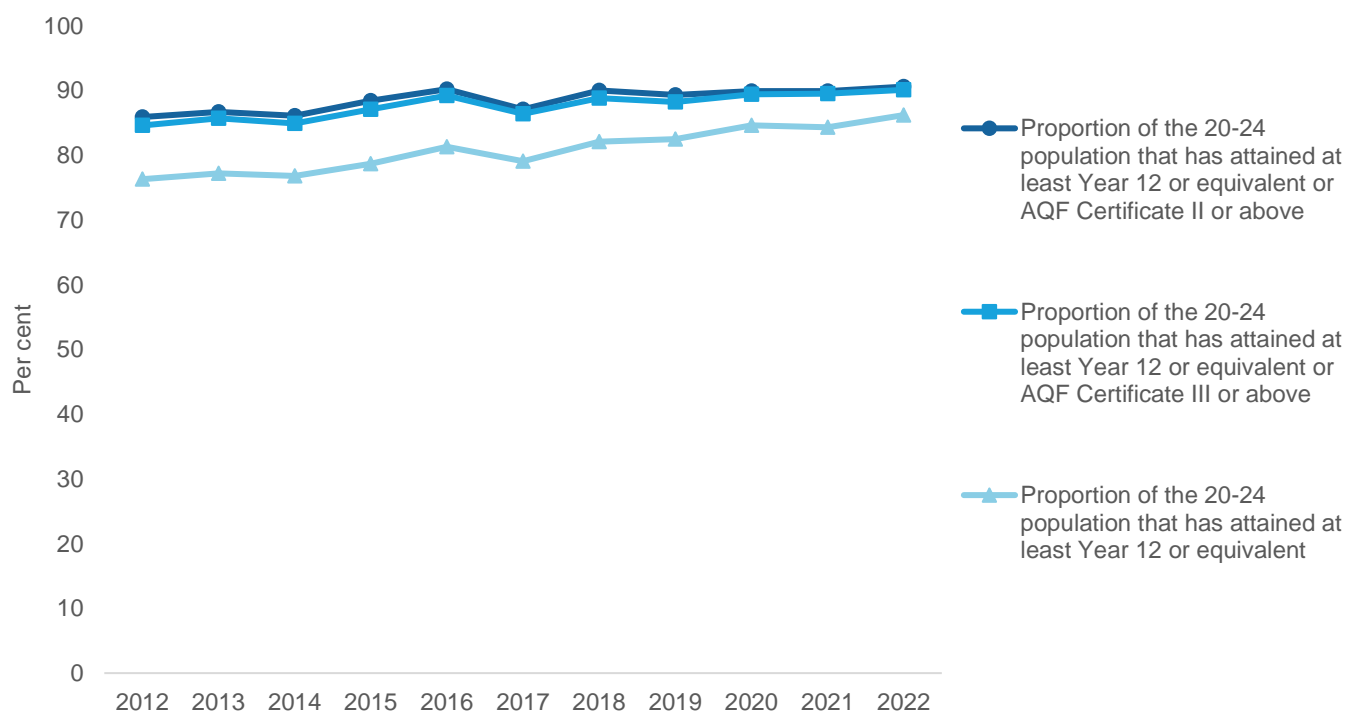
Notes: See notes for Table 7.1.

Sources: ABS, *Education and Work*, May 2022; ABS, Census of Population and Housing, 2016, 2021.

See also National Report on Schooling data portal.

Figure 7.2

Proportions of 20–24-year-olds who having attained at least Year 12 or equivalent, or AGF Certificate II or above; 20–24-year-olds having attained at least Year 12 or equivalent, or AGF Certificate III or above; and 20–24-year-olds having attained at least Year 12 or equivalent Australia, 2012–2022 (%)



Source: ABS, *Education and Work, Australia*, May 2022.

There was little change in KPM 1(i) between 2012 and 2019. However, like other groups of young people, 17–24-year-olds who had left school were affected by the impact of COVID-19. The fall in this measure of 4.7 percentage points between 2019 and 2020 and the subsequent increase of 4.6 percentage points between 2020 and 2021 were both statistically significant. The increase in 2021 is likely to reflect the policy initiative to provide free and subsidised training courses to school leavers and other young adults as a response to falls in employment due to the COVID pandemic.

The 1.1 percentage point increase from 73.9% in 2021 to 75.0% in 2022 was not statistically significant, and there was no evident long-term trend in this measure between 2008 and 2022.

The Census reports KPM 1(i) as 73.4% in 2021. This is substantially up on the result of 71.0% from the 2016 Census. The KPM data set in the National Report on Schooling data portal reports no evident trend in the Census measure for this KPM over the period 2011–2021.

Census data provides more robust measures by state and territory and can be disaggregated by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander status but is only available every 5 years. Census data for these KPMs by state and territory and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander status is also reported in the National Report on Schooling data portal. However, because of sample size and other factors, SEW data for particular age groups is less reliable when disaggregated by state and territory, especially for smaller jurisdictions.⁶⁴ Because the survey is not conducted in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in very remote areas, and because of sample size, SEW data cannot be disaggregated by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander status.

⁶⁴ The survey sample covers the full working-age population, so numbers of 15–19-year-olds and 20–24-year-olds surveyed are relatively small in some states and territories.

Chapter 8: Student Attainment

This chapter reports on Year 12 certification levels, and levels of educational attainment of young people aged 20 to 24.



Completion of Year 12 or an equivalent vocational qualification is a key milestone in the formal development of young people's skills and knowledge and for improved social and economic opportunities. Young people with Year 12 qualifications are more likely to continue further study and to enter the workforce.⁶⁵

There is a commitment from Australian governments to raise the minimum level of education of young people. The current NSRA has a target to lift the Year 12 (or equivalent) or Certificate III attainment rate to 90 per cent.⁶⁶

Data is collected and reported on Year 12 certification rates and Year 12 attainment. This information is used to measure the educational progress of students, schools and the nation, monitor gaps and inequalities in educational outcome, inform education policy and decision making, and allocate resources to support student needs.

⁶⁵ Australian Government *Australia's Welfare School Retention and Completion*, 2017.

⁶⁶ Certificate III is recognised as the international standard of equivalence of upper secondary education.

8.1 Year 12 Certification Rates

Key Facts:

In Australia in 2022:

- The proportion of the Year 12 population that met the requirements of a Senior Secondary Certificate or equivalent was 76.3% – a return to 2020 levels after increasing to 79.1% in 2021.
- Year 12 certification rates still show gaps by location. They were higher in major cities (79.4%) than in inner regional areas (67.6%), outer regional areas (69.2%) and remote/very remote areas (55.5%).
- Year 12 certification was higher for the population living in high socio-economic status areas (82.9%) than those in medium and low socio-economic status areas (75.2% and 69.7% respectively).

Over the period from 2012 to 2022:

- Year 12 certification rates increased by 3.3 percentage points.
- There was a reduction in the gender gap and remote area gap for Year 12 certifications, but the gap between Year 12 certification rates in high socio-economic status areas compared to low socio-economic status areas has widened.

Certification rates are estimated by calculating the number of students who meet the requirements of a SSCE or equivalent expressed as a percentage of the potential Year 12 population. These rates are derived from data supplied to the Australian Government Department of Education by state and territory curriculum, assessment, and certification authorities.⁶⁷ The potential Year 12 population is an estimate of a single year age group which could have attended Year 12 that year, calculated as the estimated resident population (ERP) aged 15 to 19 divided by five.⁶⁸

Figure 8.1 shows Year 12 certification rates for 2022, by gender and geolocation. Nationally, 76.3% of the Year 12 population met the requirements of a Senior Secondary Certificate or equivalent in 2022, down from 79.1% in 2021. Year 12 certification rates were higher for females (80.6%) than for males (72.2%); and higher in major cities (79.4%) than in inner regional areas (67.6%), outer regional areas (69.2%) and remote/very remote areas (55.5%).

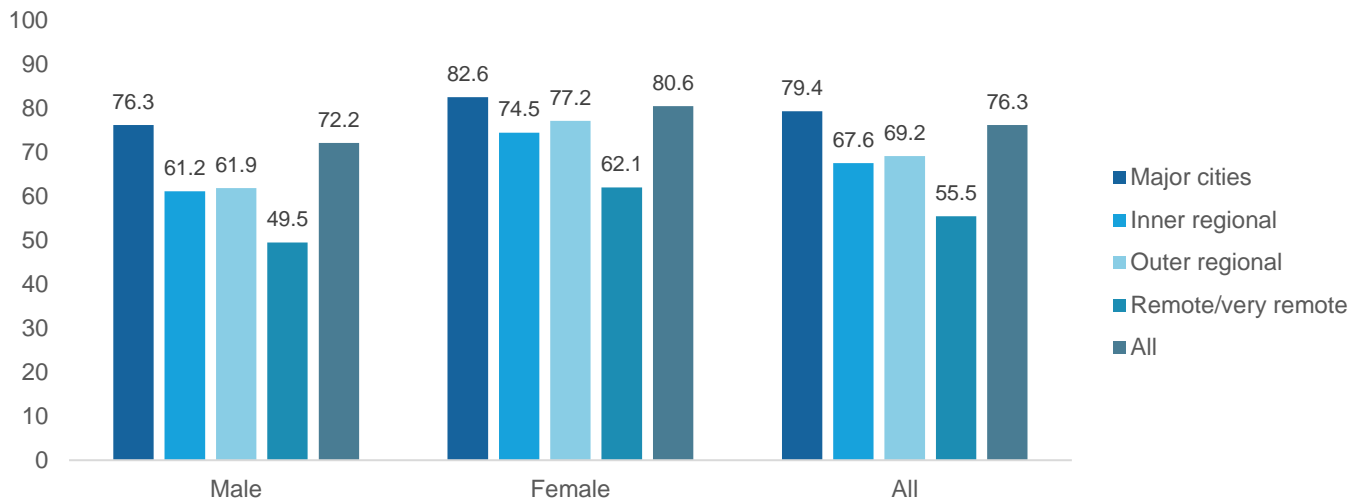
The gender difference in Year 12 certification rates was largest among the Year 12 population living in outer regional areas (15.3 percentage points higher for females than for males), and smallest among those living in major cities (6.3 percentage points higher for females). Differences in Year 12 certification rates according to geolocation were larger for males (26.8 percentage points higher in major cities than in remote or very remote areas) than for females (20.5 percentage points higher in major cities than in remote or very remote areas).

⁶⁷ This indicator should be interpreted with caution as assessment, reporting and criteria for obtaining a year 12 or equivalent certificate varies across jurisdictions; and students completing their secondary education in Technical and Further Education (TAFE) institutes are included in reporting for some jurisdictions and not others.

⁶⁸ Certification rates from 2017 have been calculated using ERP based on the 2016 Census. Rates for 2016 and prior are calculated using ERP based on the 2011 Census.

Figure 8.1

Year 12 certification rates, by gender and geolocation, 2022 (%)

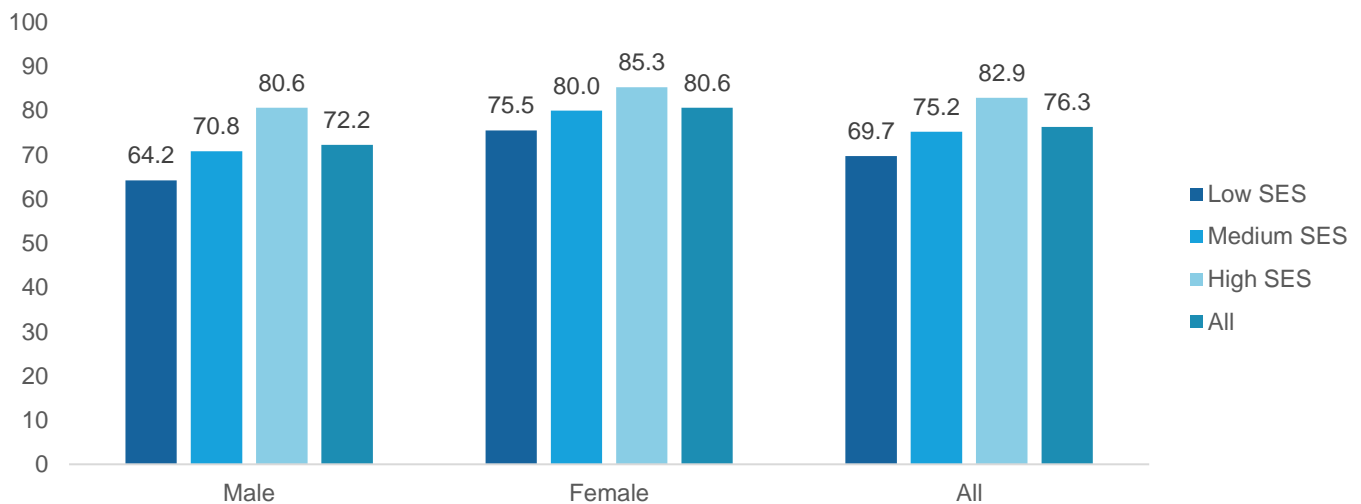


Sources: Australian Government Department of Education, derived from data supplied by state and territory curriculum, assessment and certification authorities; ABS, *National, state and territory population*.

Year 12 certification rates in 2022, by socio-economic status (SES) and gender, are presented in Figure 8.2. Among the Year 12 population living in low SES areas, Year 12 certification rates were 69.7%, compared to 75.2% in medium SES areas and 82.9% in high SES areas. Differences in Year 12 certification rates by SES were larger for males (16.4 percentage points higher in high SES areas compared to low SES areas) than for females (9.8 percentage points higher in high SES areas compared to low SES areas).

Figure 8.2

Year 12 certification rates, by gender and socio-economic status, 2022 (%)



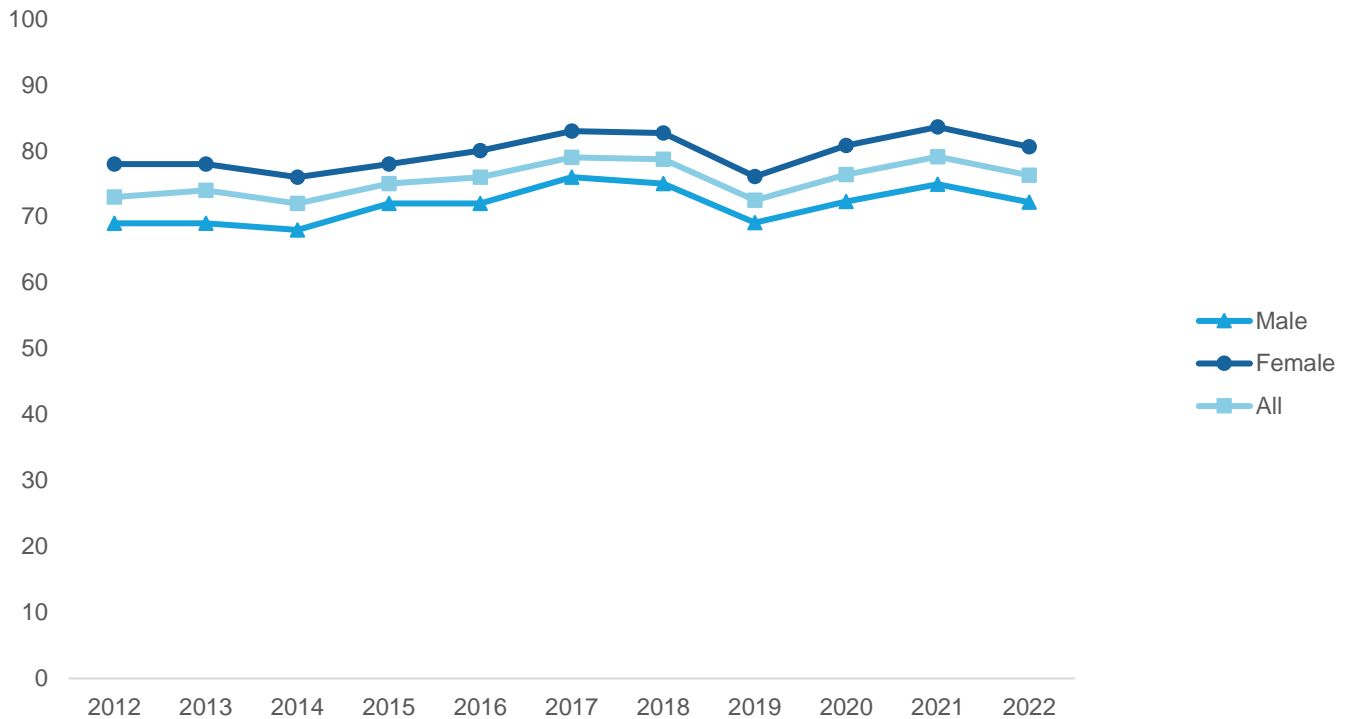
Notes: The ABS Index of Relative Socio-Economic Disadvantage has been used to calculate socio-economic status on the basis of postcode of students' home addresses. Low SES is the average of the lowest three deciles, medium SES is the average of the middle four deciles and high SES is the average of the top three deciles. The aggregation of all postcode locations into three SES categories – high, medium and low – means that there may be significant variation within the categories – the low category, for example, will include locations ranging from those of extreme disadvantage to those of moderate disadvantage.

Sources: Australian Government Department of Education, derived from data supplied by state and territory curriculum, assessment and certification authorities; ABS, *National, state and territory population*.

Figure 8.3 shows the change in Year 12 certification rates over the period from 2012 to 2022. Overall, Year 12 certification rates increased by 3.3 percentage points, from 73.0% in 2012 to 76.3% in 2022. The gender difference in Year 12 certification rates decreased slightly during this time, from 9.0 percentage points in 2012 to 8.4 percentage points in 2022.

Figure 8.3

Year 12 certification rates, by gender 2012–2022 (%)



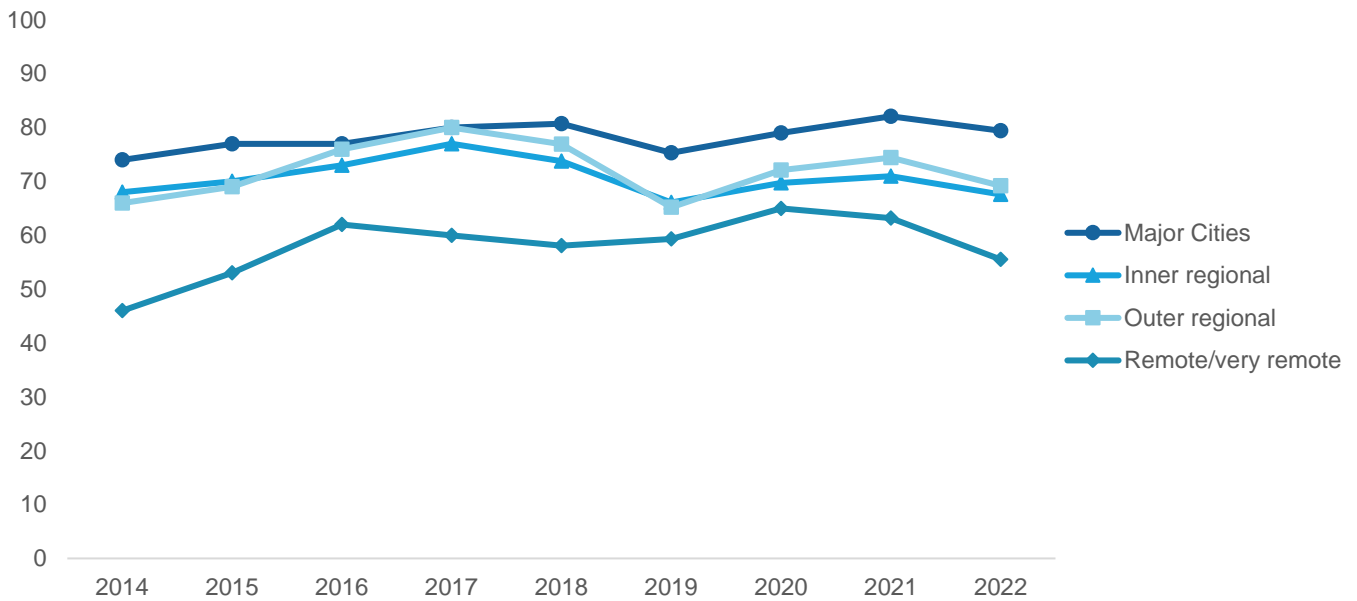
Note: In 2014, WA had a “half cohort” complete year 12 making the Year 12 certifications for WA in 2014 significantly lower than for other years. This was also the case for Qld in 2019. These half cohorts resulted from a change to the pre-year one entry age (in 2002 and 2007 respectively) leading to approximately half the normal intake of students for that year level. This also affects Year 12 certification rates for Australia in 2014 and 2019.

Sources: Australian Government Department of Education, derived from data supplied by state and territory curriculum, assessment and certification authorities; ABS, *National, state and territory population*.

Year 12 certification rates by geolocation for 2014 to 2022 are presented in Figure 8.4. While the difference in Year 12 Certification rates in major cities compared to remote and very remote areas is still substantial (23.9 percentage points higher in major cities in 2022), increases in certification rates among the Year 12 population in regional and remote areas (from 46.0% in 2014 to 55.5% in 2022) has resulted in a 4.1 percentage point reduction in this difference since 2014.

Figure 8.4

Year 12 certification rates, by geolocation, 2014–2022 (%)



Notes: See note for Figure 8.3.

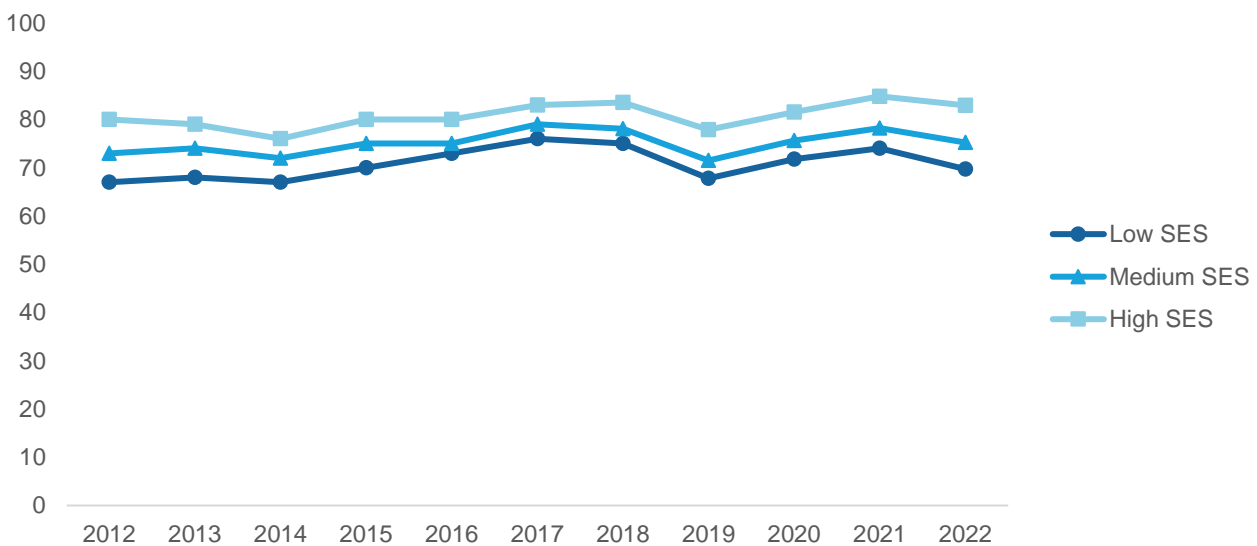
Data for 2009–2013 is available on the [ACARA website](#). From 2009 to 2013, geolocation is reported as the Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA) remoteness classification.

Sources: Australian Government Department of Education, derived from data supplied by state and territory curriculum, assessment and certification authorities; ABS, *National, state and territory population*.

Differences between Year 12 certification rates in high and low SES areas have remained stable since 2012. Figure 8.5 shows that in 2012 Year 12 certification rates were 13.0 percentage points higher in high SES areas compared to low SES areas. With Year 12 certification rates in high SES areas increasing from 79.0% to 82.9% during this period, the difference in Year 12 certification rates between low and high-SES areas increased to 13.2 percentage points in 2022.

Figure 8.5

Year 12 certification rates, by socio-economic status, 2012–2022 (%)



Note: See note for Figure 8.3.

Sources: Australian Government Department of Education, derived from data supplied by state and territory curriculum, assessment and certification authorities; ABS, *National, state and territory population*.

8.2 Student Attainment

Key Facts:

Among 20–24-year-olds in 2022:

- the proportion who had attained at least Year 12 or equivalent, or AQF Certificate II or above was 90.6%. This was an increase of 0.7 percentage points from 2021, and a rise of 4.7 percentage points from 2012.
- the proportion who had attained at least Year 12 or equivalent, or AQF Certificate III or above was 90.1%. This was an increase of 0.6 percentage points from 2021, and a rise of 5.5 percentage points from 2012.

The long-term upward trend in these measures is in line with long-standing government policy to increase levels of attainment for young people in Australia.

Data from the Census confirms this upward trend, with a 2.0 percentage point increase in the proportion of 20–24-year-olds who had attained at least Year 12 or AQF Certificate III or above between 2016 and 2021.

The attainment KPMs specified in the *Measurement Framework for Schooling in Australia 2020* measure the level of educational attainment achieved by young Australians by the time they have reached their early to mid-20s. These measures also reflect targets set by the former COAG for youth attainment in education and training, in recognition that year 12 attainment contributes to a skilled workforce and improved living conditions for Australians.

Key performance measure 7(a)

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

Key performance measure 7(b)

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

The measures are based on the ABS SEW, which is conducted in May each year, and on the 5-yearly Census. Table 8.1 reports KPMs 7(a) and 7(b) at the national level for the period 2012–2022. It also includes these proportions as measured by the 2016 and 2021 Censuses.

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 SSCE on the completion of Year 12 and either AQF Certificate II or AQF Certificate III.⁶⁹

⁶⁹ SSCE qualifications are not located at a particular level in the AQF. The volume of learning required to attain an AQF Certificate II is typically 0.5–1 year; for Certificate III it is typically 1–2 years, and for a Senior Secondary Certificate of Education it is typically 2 years (The Australian Qualifications Framework, second edition, p 14). In some instances, senior secondary students undertaking VET can complete several Certificate II qualifications as a part of an SSCE.

For comparison purposes, Table 8.1 also reports the proportion of the 20–24-year-old population in each of these years that had completed Year 12 or equivalent. This is not, by itself, a KPM for schooling, but is the main component of both KPMs 7(a) and 7(b).

Table 8.1

Proportion of the 20–24-year-old population that has attained at least Year 12 or equivalent, or AQF Certificate II or above; or AQF Certificate III or above; Australia, 2012–2022 (%)

Calendar year	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Proportion of the 20–24-year-old population that has attained at least Year 12 or equivalent, or AQF Certificate II or above	85.9	86.7	86.1	88.4	90.2	87.1	90.0	89.3	89.9	89.9	90.6
CI±	1.3	1.5	1.5	1.1	1.6	1.2	1.2	1.4	1.2	1.2	1.1
Proportion of the 20–24-year-old population that has attained at least Year 12 or equivalent, or AQF Certificate II or above (Census measure)	-	-	-	-	88.6	-	-	-	-	90.3	-
Proportion of the 20–24-year-old population that has attained at least Year 12 or equivalent, or AQF Certificate III or above	84.6	85.7	84.9	87.1	89.2	86.4	88.8	88.2	89.4	89.5	90.1
CI±	1.3	1.5	1.5	1.1	1.6	1.2	1.2	1.6	1.2	1.4	1.1
Proportion of the 20–24-year-old population that has attained at least Year 12 or equivalent, or AQF Certificate III or above (Census measure)	-	-	-	-	87.9	-	-	-	-	89.9	-
Proportion of the 20–24-year-old population that has attained at least Year 12 or equivalent	76.3	77.2	76.8	78.7	81.3	79.1	82.1	82.5	84.6	84.3	86.2
CI±	1.6	1.6	1.8	1.6	1.9	1.4	1.4	1.6	1.8	1.7	1.4
Proportion of the 20–24-year-old population that has attained at least Year 12 or equivalent (Census measure)	-	-	-	-	79.5	-	-	-	-	83.7	-

Notes: Year 12 or equivalent includes AQF SSCEs issued by Australian state and territory curriculum assessment and certification authorities and equivalent qualifications such as matriculation certificates and school leaving qualifications obtained outside Australia and the International Baccalaureate. It also includes survey and Census respondents who indicated that their highest level of education is Year 12.

AQF Certificate II is a VET qualification regarded as entry-level training for employment (or a similar qualification gained outside Australia). AQF Certificate III is a VET qualification regarded as intermediate-level training for employment (or a similar qualification gained outside Australia).

Sources: ABS, *Education and Work*, May 2022; ABS, *Census of Population and Housing*, 2016, 2021.

As measured by SEW, the proportion of 20–24-year-olds who had attained at least Year 12 or equivalent, or AQF Certificate II or above – KPM 7(a) – rose from 85.9% in 2012 to 89.9% in 2020, with no change in 2021 and an increase of 0.7 percentage points to 90.6% in 2022. While the increase in this measure between 2021 and 2022 was not statistically significant, the proportion of 20–24-year-olds who had attained at least Year 12 or equivalent, or AQF Certificate II or above was above 90%. This was the former COAG target for this measure, originally to be met in 2015.

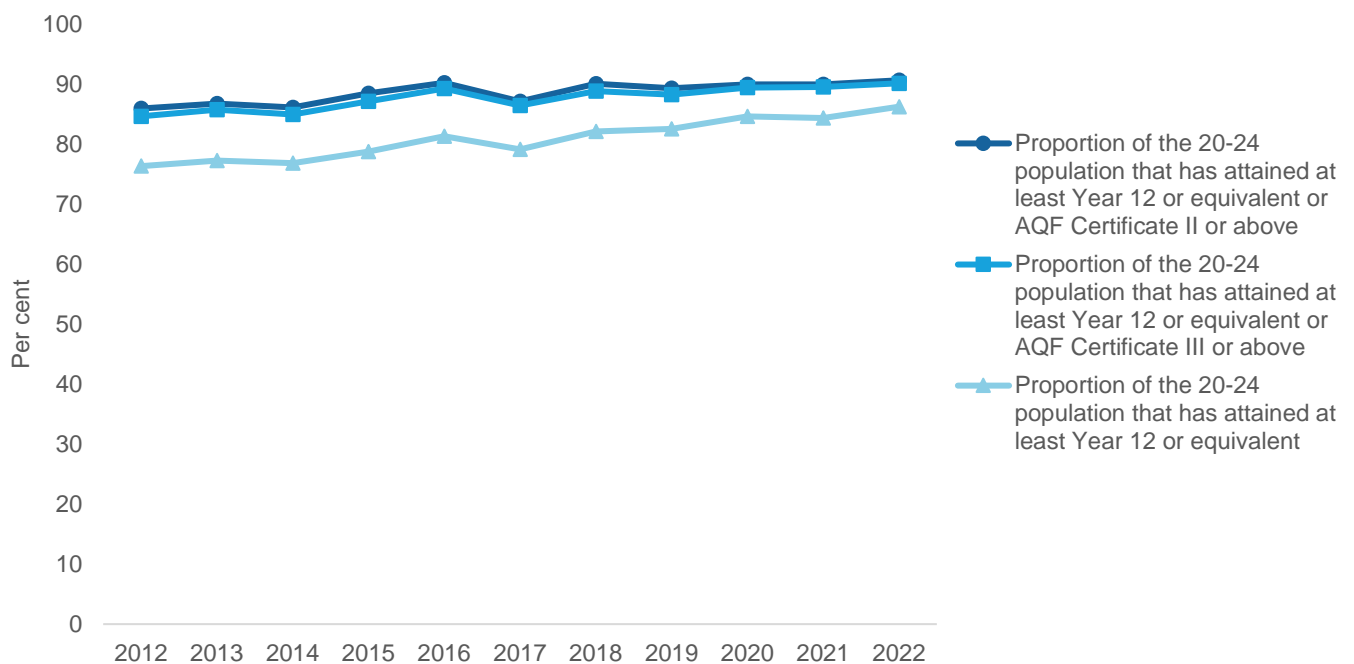
As with KPM 7(a), the proportion of 20–24-year-olds who had attained at least Year 12 or equivalent, or AQF Certificate III or above was above 90% for the first time in 2022, reaching the previous COAG target (90% by 2020).

Trend data for the annual measures of these KPMs for the period 2008–2022 is available in the Key Performance Measures data set in the National Report on Schooling data portal. This shows long-term upward trends of 0.5 percentage points per annum for both KPM 7(a) and KPM 7(b) over this period, in line with long-standing government policy to increase levels of attainment for young people.

Figure 8.6 depicts the annual movement in the 2 attainment measures from 2012 to 2022, as measured by SEW, along with the proportion of 20–24-year-olds having attained at least Year 12 or equivalent.

Figure 8.6

Proportions of 20–24-year-olds having attained at least Year 12 or equivalent, or AQF Certificate II or above; 20–24-year-olds having attained at least Year 12 or equivalent, or AQF Certificate III or above; and 20–24-year-olds having attained at least Year 12 or equivalent; Australia, 2012–2022 (%)



Source: ABS, *Education and Work, Australia*, May 2022.

As shown in Figure 8.1, the 2 attainment KPMs have generally moved in parallel over the period 2012–2022. There has been little difference between the 2 measures with an average difference of 0.9 percentage points over this 10-year period. Since 2020, the 2 measures have converged further, with a difference of only 0.5 percentage points in 2022.

Both KPMs also have generally moved in parallel to the proportion of 20–24-year-olds that have attained at least Year 12 or equivalent. This is partly because Year 12 attainment is the main component of both measures.

The proportion of young people completing Year 12 or equivalent is not itself a KPM for schooling, because pursuing a VET qualification post-Year 10 is considered a legitimate alternative to Years 11 and 12 as a pathway to further education and work. However, the proportion of 20–24-year-olds who have attained at least Year 12 or equivalent has risen more quickly in recent years than the proportions having attained equivalent VET qualifications. In 2022, 86.2% of 20–24-year-olds had attained at least Year 12 or equivalent. This was an increase of 1.9 percentage points from 2021, and a rise of 9.9 percentage points from 2012.

There is no observable impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the SEW measures of KPMs 7(a) and 7(b) in 2022. However, the qualifications held by 20–24-year-olds in May 2022 would have been attained in 2021 or earlier. The significant falls due to COVID in participation in education, training and work reported in Section 7.1 for 15–24-year-olds in 2020 may be reflected in the SEW and Census attainment measures in future.

SEW data for KPMs 7(a) and 7(b) by state and territory is provided on the National Report on Schooling data portal in the [Key Performance Measures](#) data set and in the [Student Attainment](#) data set.⁷⁰ The Student Attainment data set also includes data on the attainment of Year 12 or equivalent and of other AQF qualifications.⁷¹

⁷⁰ Due to sample size and other factors, SEW data for specific age groups (such as 20–24-year-olds) is less reliable when disaggregated by state and territory, especially for smaller jurisdictions, and cannot be disaggregated by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander status. Census data by state and territory is also published in the data portal and provides more reliable measures for disaggregation.

⁷¹ It is important to note that in measuring attainment for 20–24-year-olds, neither the SEW nor the Census measures of attainment take into account the interstate movements of young people for employment or higher education after leaving school, or the numbers of overseas tertiary students residing in each state. As measures of the effectiveness of schooling within a state, the attainment KPMs therefore understate the successful outcomes of schooling in some states and territories and overstate them in others.

Chapter 9: School Funding

This chapter reports on government funding of Australian schooling, school income and school expenditure.



In Australia, schools are funded by a combination of state/territory government funding, Australian Government funding, fees and charges, and other private contributions.

The bulk of funding for government schools comes from the state or territory government that owns and administers the school, with additional contributions from the Australian Government. A smaller contribution comes from fees, charges and other private sources. Most of the income for non-government schools comes from Australian Government funding and private sources (including fees and other charges), with smaller contributions from state and territory governments.

In the 2021/22 financial year, total operating expenses for all levels of government on primary and secondary education was 2.8% of Australia's gross domestic product (GDP).⁷²

This chapter is structured as follows. Section 9.1 reports on government recurrent funding for school education, using data from the NSSC and the Report on Government Services. Section 9.2 uses the ACARA MySchool Finance data collection to report on school income from all sources (government funding, fees and charges and other private income). Section 9.3 provides information about school expenditure, using data from the NSSC for government schools, and unpublished data from the Australian government department of education for non-government schools.

When reading this chapter, it is important to keep in mind that because of differences between the various data collections, not all data reported in this chapter is directly comparable.⁷³

⁷² Derived by Australian Government Department of Education ABS, 'Government Finance Statistics, Annual' (previously known as Cat. No. 5512.0).

⁷³ There are key differences between the 'School income and capital expenditure for government and non-government schools' – [My School](#) finance data (based on a calendar year) and the 'Government expenditure on government schools' - National Schools Statistics Collection (NSSC) finance data (based on a financial year). The income-based finance data from My School should not be compared to the expenditure-based finance data from NSSC (Finance). Table 9.3 (at the end of this chapter) provides an overview of the key features of the 4 data collections and the differences between them.

In this chapter, time-series figures have been adjusted for inflation to 2022 dollars, based on the Consumer Price Index (CPI) for June of each year where financial year values are presented, and December of each year when calendar year values are presented. Nominal values and values adjusted using the General Government Final Consumption Expenditure (GGFCE) chain price deflator and the ABS Wage Price Index (WPI) are available on the National Report on Schooling Data Portal.

While wage/salary related expenditure makes up the majority of school recurrent expenditure (more so for government schools than for non-government schools), the purpose of the deflator in this chapter is to provide a “real-dollar” comparison of monetary values over time. The use of deflators that focus only on wages (WPI), or government expenditure (as is the case with GGFCE) is somewhat ‘self-referential’ in the sense that values are being adjusted by a factor of how much the values themselves have changed, rather than how much the value of a dollar (more generally) has changed. As such, the nominal values and the deflator values are likely to be highly correlated. In this sense, the CPI is the most independent, unbiased way of equating the value of the dollar at a particular point in time.

In most years there is not a substantial amount of difference in the adjusted values when CPI or WPI are used. There are some exceptions, for example, in periods of high inflation where wages/salaries have not increased in line with inflation, and in years where policy changes have resulted in teacher wages increasing at a higher rate than inflation. For example, in recent years, government attempts to reduce inflation have introduced a somewhat artificial change in CPI (although the impact is real), while over the same period, there have been increases in teacher salaries to try and attract and retain teachers.

9.1 Government recurrent funding for school education

Key Facts:

In the 2021/22 financial year:

- Total recurrent government funding for schooling was \$78.69 billion. This was made up of \$53.56 billion (68.1%) from state and territory budgets and \$25.12 billion (31.9%) from the Australian Government (Commonwealth) budget.
- Overall, 74.6% (\$58.74 billion) of total recurrent government funding was allocated to government schools and 25.4% (\$19.95 billion) to non-government schools.
- The bulk of state and territory funding (91.5%) was allocated to government schools, while 61.2% of Australian Government funding was allocated to non-government schools.
- Total recurrent government funding was \$22,511 per student in government schools and \$14,032 per student for non-government schools.

Government recurrent funding, which supports the ongoing operating expenses of schools, is linked to the NSRA. Each state and territory government has a separate agreement with the Australian Government, which includes state-specific actions to improve student outcomes, and minimum state and territory funding contribution requirements.

The Australian Government provides funding through the recurrent funding model, set out in the *Australian Education Act 2013*. Under the recurrent funding arrangements, the Australian Government pays a prescribed percentage of each school's Schooling Resource Standard (SRS) each year. The SRS is an estimate of how much public funding a school needs to meet its students' educational needs. It is calculated from a per-student base-funding amount with six needs-based loadings to provide extra funding for students with disability, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, students who have low English language proficiency, students from a socio-educationally disadvantaged background, schools that are not in major cities and smaller schools.⁷⁴

All state and territory governments redistribute funding between government schools within their jurisdiction according to their own funding arrangements, as per the *Australian Education Act 2013*. Each state and territory has its own model for distributing funds, such as the Student Resource Package in Victoria or the Resource Allocation Model in New South Wales. These models are designed to address the specific educational needs within their jurisdictions. They consider factors such as student and school characteristics to ensure that resources are directed where they are needed most, and all students are supported to achieve, regardless of where they live, their background, or their SES.

⁷⁴ The amount of government funding received by a school will change from year to year depending on the number of students enrolled at the school and the loadings the students and school attract. More information on loadings is available on the [Australian Government Department of Education website](#). The low English language proficiency loading applies to students from a language background other than English where at least one parent has completed school education only to Year 9 (or equivalent) or below. This may include recently settled migrants and refugees.

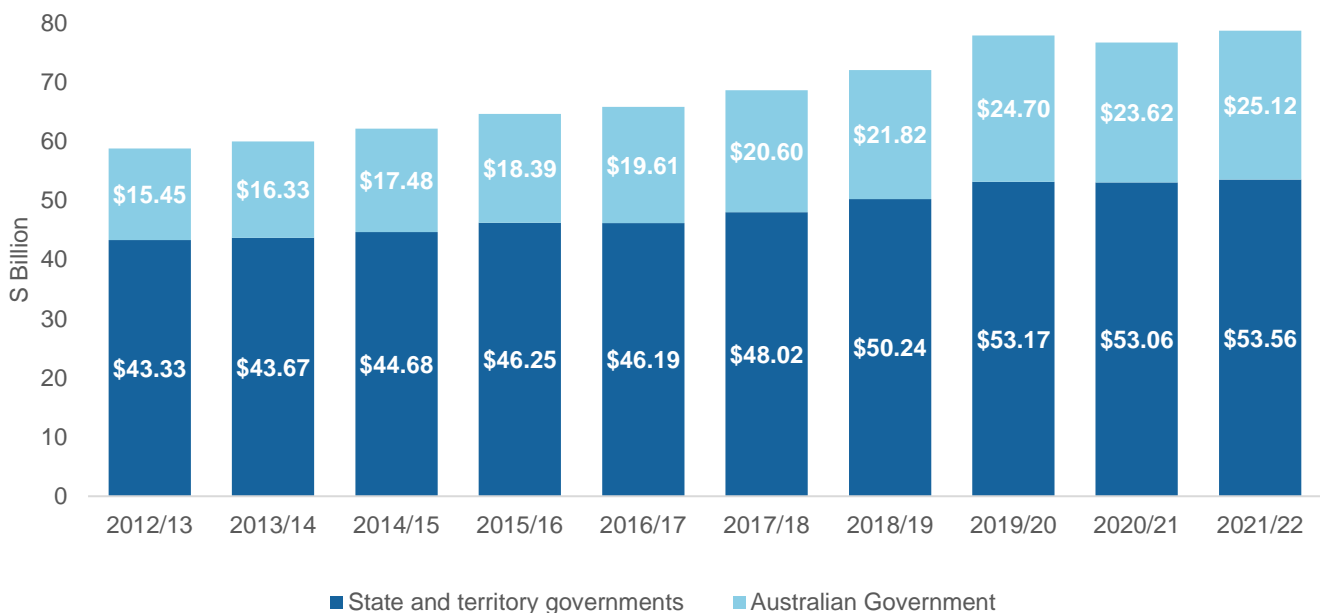
For most non-government schools, the SRS base amount is reduced by the school's Capacity to Contribute (CTC) – a measure of the capacity of the parents and guardians of students at the school to contribute financially to operating costs, relative to the capacity at other non-government schools. The CTC for most non-government schools is calculated using a Direct Measure of Income (DMI) based on the actual income of parents and guardians of students at each school.⁷⁵

In 2021/22, total government recurrent funding of \$78.69 billion was provided for school education. This included \$53.56 billion (68.1%) through state and territory budgets and \$25.12 billion (31.9%) through the Australian Government budget.⁷⁶

After adjusting for inflation, this represents an increase of 2.6% from the previous financial year, made up of a 6.4% increase in funding from the Australian Government and a 1.0% increase in funding from state and territory governments. Funding of school education over time, by the Australian Government and state and territory governments, is shown in Figure 9.1.

Figure 9.1

Australian and State/Territory government recurrent funding for all schools 2012/13 to 2021/22 (\$billion)



Notes:

Amounts are adjusted for inflation to 2022 dollars, based on the Consumer Price Index for June of each year. Nominal values and values adjusted using the General Government Final Consumption Expenditure (GGFCE) chain price deflator and the ABS Wage Price Index (WPI) are available on the National Report on Schooling Data Portal.

The Australian Government provided increased assistance in 2020 to some non-government schools in response to COVID-19. Australian Government expenditure data in this table include only Australian Government specific purpose payments. Other Australian Government funding for schools and students is not included. For some non-government schools 2020–21 financial year payments from the Australian Government were brought forward to the 2019–20 financial year.

Sources: National Schools Statistics Collection (Finance), unpublished, 2022; the Australian Government Department of Education (unpublished); Steering Committee for the Review of Government Service Provision, *Report on Government Services 2024*, Productivity Commission; ABS, *Schools*, 2022; ABS, Consumer Price Index, Australia, 2023.

⁷⁵ The CTC does not apply to government schools, or non-government schools which are special schools, special assistance schools, majority Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander schools, or sole provider schools. There are 2 other methodologies that can be used to calculate a school's CTC – the Refined Area Based (RAB) methodology and ministerial discretion. The RAB methodology is used to calculate CTC for schools if it is not practicable to use the DMI methodology for the school for the year.

⁷⁶ Components of government recurrent funding do not sum to total due to rounding.

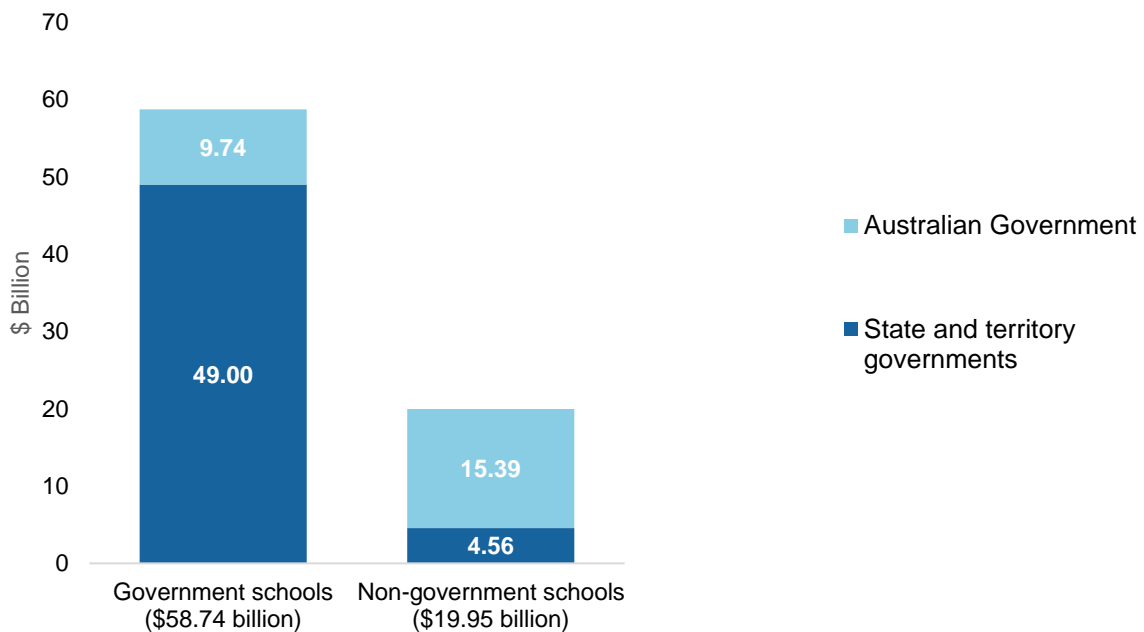
Government recurrent funding, by school sector

Of total government recurrent funding in 2021/22, the government school sector received 74.6% (\$58.74 billion) and the non-government sector received 25.4% (\$19.95 billion). This breakdown is shown in Figure 9.2.⁷⁷

The bulk of state and territory funding (91.5%) was allocated to government schools, while 61.2% of Australian Government funding was allocated to non-government schools.

Figure 9.2

Total government recurrent funding for school education, by funding source and school sector, Australia, 2021–22 (\$ billion)

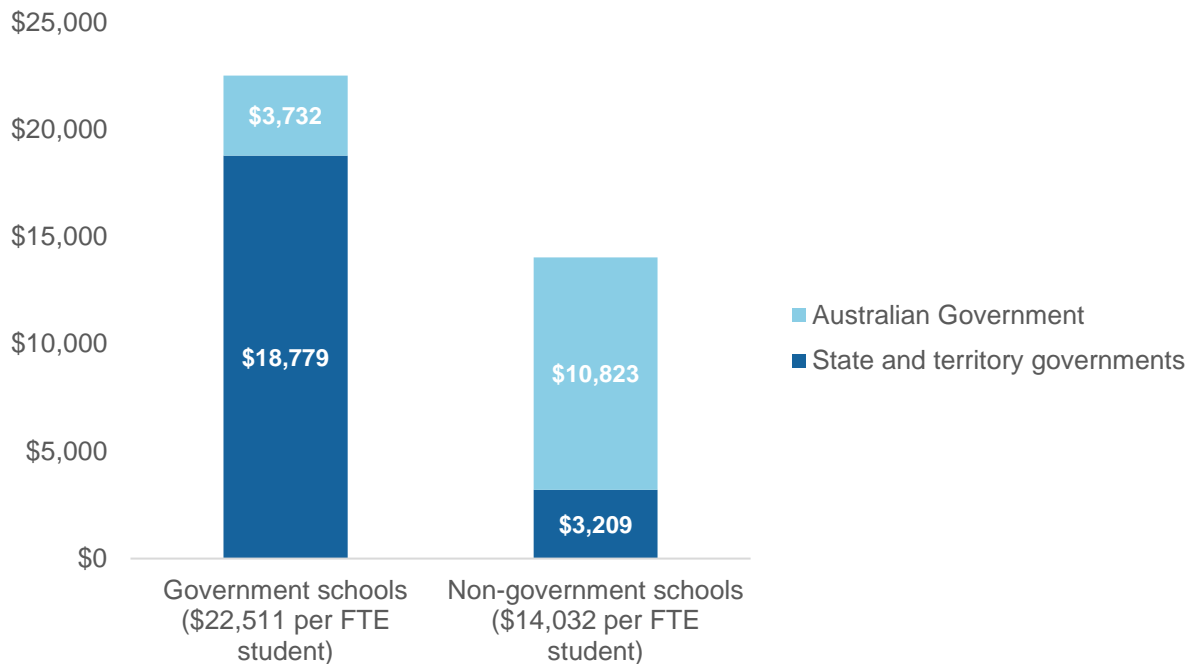


Sources: Government Schools Finance Statistics Group, National Schools Statistics Collection (NSSC) – Finance 2022, unpublished; the Australian Government Department of Education (unpublished); Steering Committee for the Review of Government Service Provision (SCRGSP), Report on Government Services 2024, Productivity Commission.

In 2021/22, total government recurrent funding was \$22,511 per student in government schools and \$14,032 per student in non-government schools. Figure 9.3 shows the contribution of state and territory governments and the Australian Government to the government and non-government school sectors, on a per-student basis.

⁷⁷ Government funding for schools is historically reported on a financial year basis. Calendar year data for non-government schools has been adapted in this section to report on a comparable basis to government school financial data.

Figure 9.3

Government recurrent funding for school education by funding source and school sector, Australia, 2021/22, (\$ per student)

Note: Student numbers are the average full-time equivalent (FTE) student populations for the years being reported.

Sources: Government Schools Finance Statistics Group, National Schools Statistics Collection (NSSC) – Finance 2022, unpublished; the Australian Government Department of Education (unpublished); Steering Committee for the Review of Government Service Provision (SCRGSP), Report on Government Services 2024, Productivity Commission.

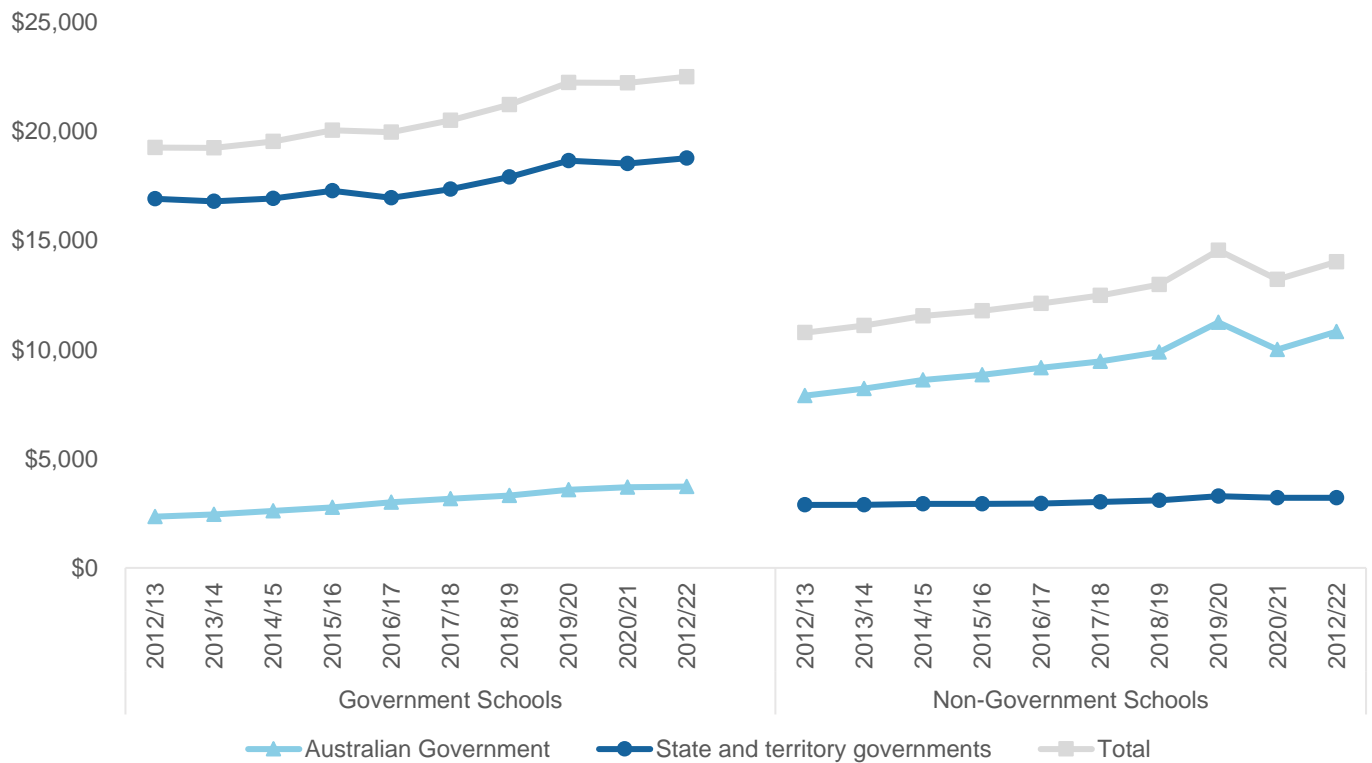
Between the 2020/21 and 2021/22 financial years, after adjusting for inflation:

- Across all schools, total government recurrent funding per student increased by \$417 (2.2%) per student, with increases of \$349 (5.9%) in Australian government funding and \$68 (0.5%) in state/territory funding.
- In government schools, total government recurrent funding per student increased \$284 (1.3%), with increases of \$38 (1.0%) in Australian government funding and \$246 (1.3%) in state/territory funding.
- In non-government schools, total government recurrent funding per student increased by \$806 (6.1%), with an increase of \$815 (8.1%) in Australian government funding and almost no change in state/territory funding (a decrease of \$8 or 0.2%).

Figure 9.4 shows changes in government funding per student in government and non-government schools since the 2012/13 financial year, after adjusting for inflation.

Figure 9.4

Government recurrent funding for school education (\$ per student), by funding source and school sector, Australia, 2012/13 to 2021/22



Notes: Student numbers are the average full-time equivalent (FTE) student populations for the years being reported.

Amounts are adjusted for inflation to 2022 dollars, based on the Consumer Price Index for June of each year. Nominal values and values adjusted using the General Government Final Consumption Expenditure (GGFCE) chain price deflator and the ABS Wage Price Index (WPI) are available on the National Report on Schooling Data Portal.

Sources: Government Schools Finance Statistics Group, National Schools Statistics Collection (NSSC) – Finance 2022, unpublished; the Australian Government Department of Education (unpublished); Steering Committee for the Review of Government Service Provision (SCRGSP), Report on Government Services 2024, Productivity Commission.

Over the ten-year period from 2012/13 to 2021/22, after adjusting for inflation:

- Across all schools, total government recurrent funding per student increased by \$3,219 (19.7%), with increases of \$1,949 (45.5%) in Australian government funding and \$1,270 (10.6%) in state/territory funding.
- In government schools, total government recurrent funding per student increased by \$3,248 (16.9%), with increases of \$1,382 (58.8%) in Australian government funding and \$1,866 (11.0%) in state/territory funding.
- In non-government schools, total government recurrent funding per student increased by \$3,252 (30.2%), with increases of \$2,930 (37.1%) in Australian government funding and \$321 (11.1%) in state/territory funding.

9.2 School Income

Key Facts:

In Australia, school income is made up of a combination of government funding, fees and charges, and private contributions.

In 2022:

- In government schools, state and territory governments provided 75.6% of total gross income, Australian Government funding accounted for 20.7%, and the remaining 3.7% came from fees, charges parent contributions and other private sources.
- In Catholic schools, the Australian Government contributed 60.7% of gross income, state and territory governments provided 15.7%. Fees, charges and private contributions made up 23.6% of Catholic sector income.
- In independent schools, income from fees, charges and parent contributions made up 46.9% of total gross income, with income from other private sources contributing an additional 4.4%. Australian Government funding accounted for 38.3% of total gross income, and state and territory governments provided 10.4%.

In Australia, school income is made up of a combination of government funding (from the Australian Government and state/territory governments) and income from fees and charges and private contributions.

For government schools, the bulk of income comes from the state or territory government, with smaller contributions from the Australian Government, fees and charges and private contributions. Most of the income for non-government schools comes from Australian Government funding and private sources (including fees and other charges), with smaller contributions from state and territory governments.

This section reports on school income from government and private sources using the ACARA *MySchool* finance data collection, and the amounts reported in this section are not directly comparable to the data presented in Section 9.1 of this Chapter. The *MySchool* data collection differs from the NSSC finance data in the following ways:

- it is based on income reported by schools, rather than government expenditure,
- it is reported on a calendar year basis, rather than a financial year basis,
- the amounts reported in the *MySchool* data include government and private funding that supports a school but exclude distinct income and/or expenditure items treated differently across all sectors such as user cost of capital (a notional opportunity cost), payroll tax, depreciation and the cost of transporting students to and from school.⁷⁸

⁷⁸ As these items are included in the NSSC finance data, school funding amounts reported in Section 9.1 are considerably higher than school income from government funding based on the *MySchool* data, particularly for state/territory government funding for government schools.

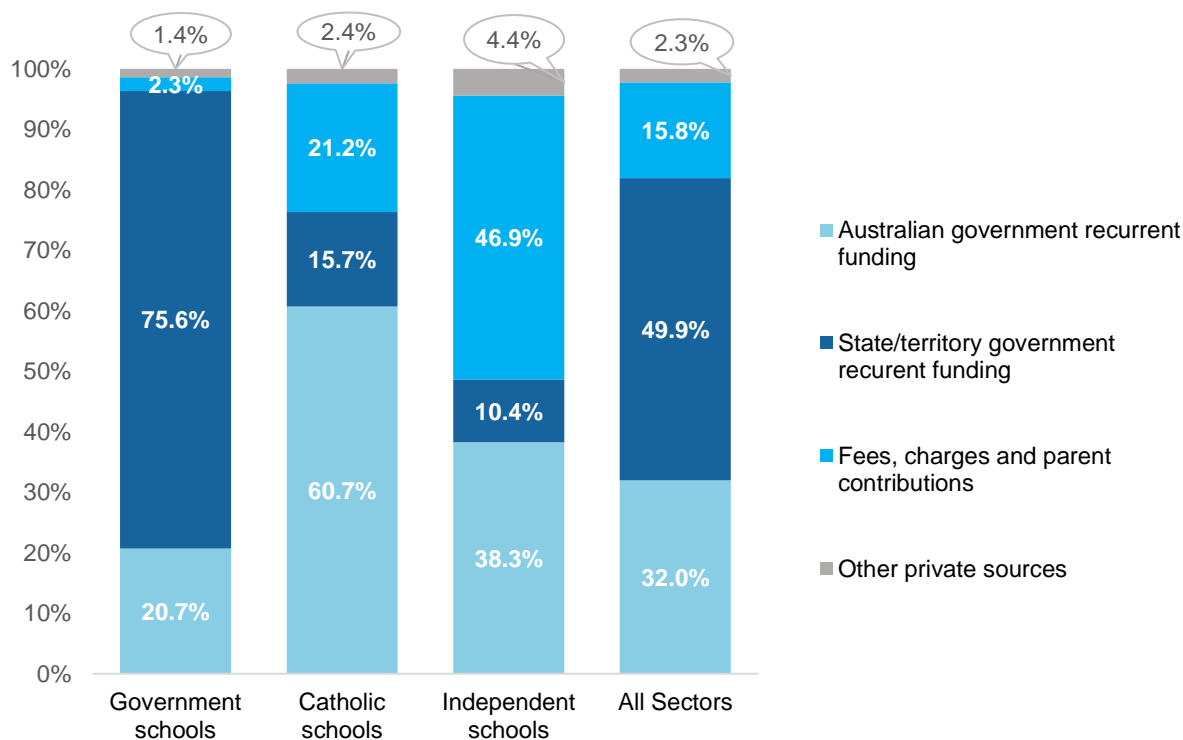
Recurrent income for schools

In 2022, total gross recurrent income for all schools in Australia was \$80.05 billion, made up of \$25.62 billion (32.0%) from Australian Government recurrent funding, \$39.98 billion (49.9%) from state/territory government recurrent funding, \$12.65 billion (15.8%) from fees, charges and parent contributions and \$1.81 billion (2.3%) from other private contributions.

Australian Government recurrent funding accounted for 20.7% of the total gross income for government schools, with state and territory governments providing 75.6% of funds. For non-government schools, the Australian Government contributed 60.7% of Catholic sector gross income and 38.3% of independent sector gross income.⁷⁹ Income from fees, charges and parent contributions made up 21.2% of Catholic sector income and 46.9% of independent sector income. These contributions are shown in Figure 9.5.

Figure 9.5

Gross recurrent school income, by funding source and school sector, Australia, 2022 (%)



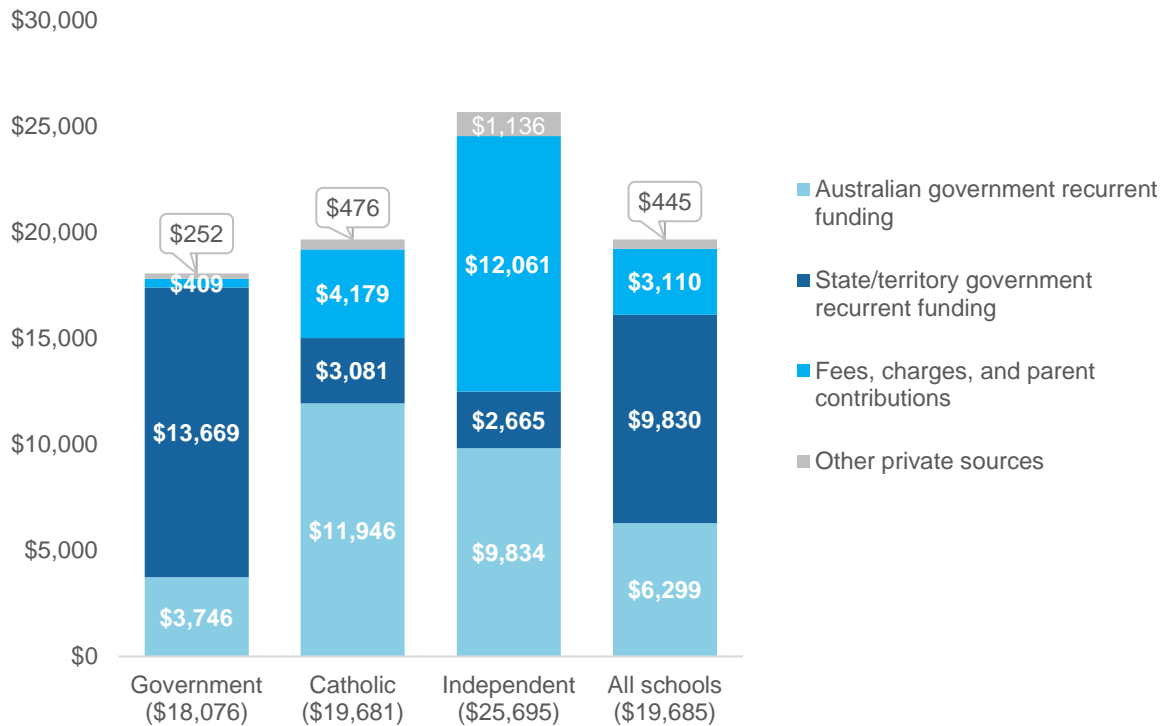
Source: ACARA, *My School* finance data collection.

In 2022, average gross recurrent income per student, across all Australian schools, was \$19,685. It was higher for independent schools (\$25,695) than for Catholic schools (\$19,681) and government schools (\$18,076). Figure 9.6 provides a breakdown by source of income and school sector.

⁷⁹ In this section non-systemic Catholic schools are included in the independent school data to reflect their financial status. This is an exception to the general statement that non-systemic Catholic schools are counted as Catholic in this report.

Figure 9.6

Gross recurrent school income, by funding source and school sector, 2022 (\$ per FTE student)



Source: ACARA, *My School* finance data collection.

Net recurrent income per student (NRIPS) includes total gross recurrent income from all sources (public and private) minus deductions for debt and capital expenditure. In 2022, average NRIPS across all schools was \$19,025. It was higher for independent schools (\$23,318) than for Government schools (\$18,063) and Catholic schools (\$18,363).

In real terms (after adjusting for inflation), between 2021 and 2022, NRIPS increased by \$23 (0.1%) in government schools; but decreased by \$427 (2.3%) in Catholic schools and \$555 (2.3%) in independent schools. Across all sectors, NRIPS was \$128 (0.7%) lower in 2022 than in 2021.⁸⁰

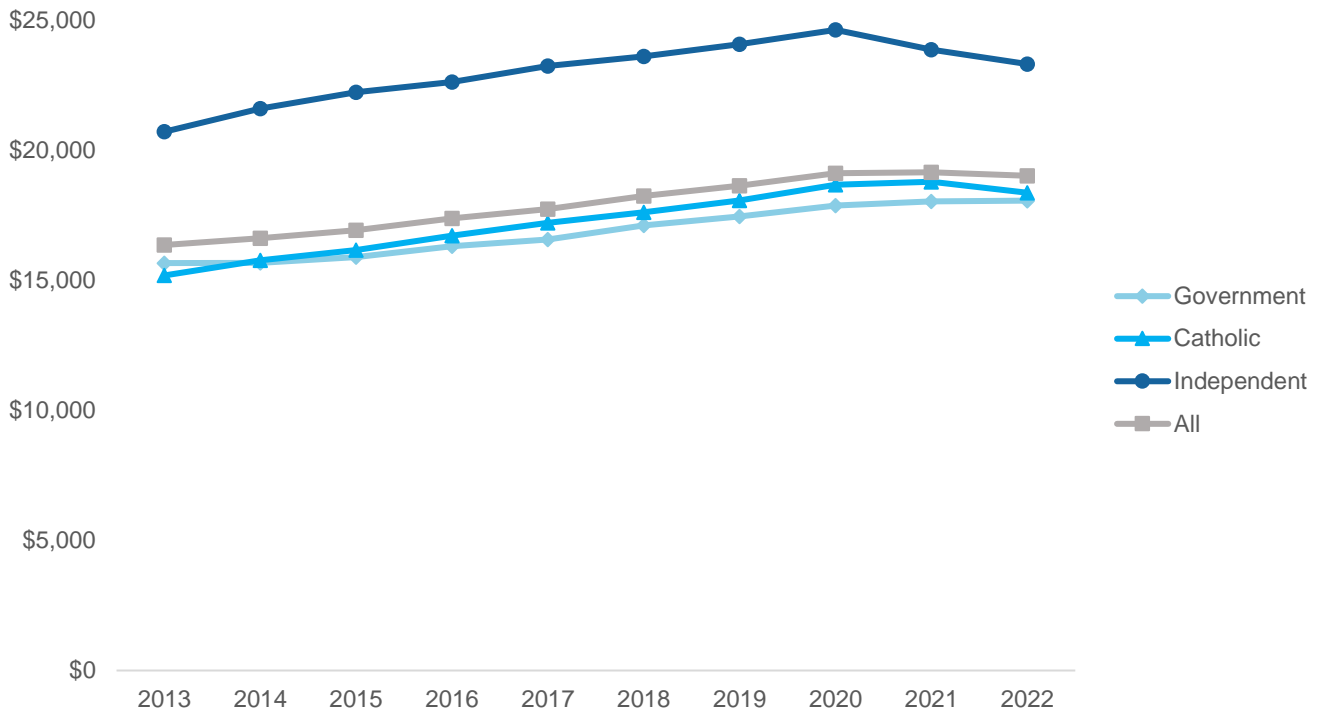
Figure 9.7 shows NRIPS, adjusted for inflation, for the period 2013 to 2022.

After adjusting for inflation, NRIPS across all schools was \$2,668 (16.3%) higher in 2022 compared to 2013, with increases of \$2,401 (15.3%) in government schools, \$3,176 (20.9%) in Catholic schools and \$2,605 (12.6%) in independent schools.

⁸⁰ The decline in NRIPS for independent schools between 2020 and 2022 is likely to be at least partly due to the increased enrolment numbers in the independent sector. Between 2019 and 2022, the government sector share of total enrolments fell by 1.2 percentage points to 64.5%, independent school enrolments rose by 1.1 percentage points to 15.9% of the total market, while Catholic sector enrolments increased by 0.2 percentage points to 19.7% of total enrolments. See Chapter 2: Schools and Schooling for further details of changes in government, Catholic and Independent schools share of total enrolments over time.

Figure 9.7

Net recurrent income per student (NRIPS), by school sector, Australia, 2013–2022 (\$ per student, \$2022)



Note: Values are adjusted for inflation to 2022 dollars, based on the Consumer Price Index for December of each year. Nominal values and values adjusted using the General Government Final Consumption Expenditure (GGFCE) chain price deflator and the ABS Wage Price Index (WPI) are available on the National Report on Schooling Data Portal.

Sources: ACARA, *My School* finance data collection. ABS, *Schools*, 2022; ABS, Consumer Price Index, Australia, 2023.

9.3 School expenditure

Key Facts:

- In government schools, in the 2021/22 financial year:
 - average total government recurrent expenditure (money spent on the daily operations of schools) was \$22,511 per student
 - \$10,458 per student (46.5% of total government recurrent expenditure) was spent on teaching staff salaries.
- In non-government schools, in the 2022 calendar year:
 - average total recurrent expenditure was \$19,372 per student
 - \$9,031 per student (46.6% of total recurrent expenditure) was spent on teaching staff salaries.
- In the 2022 calendar year, capital expenditure (money spent to buy or improve long-term fixed assets, such as renovating classrooms, or constructing a new library) was \$4.35 billion in government schools, \$1.93 billion in Catholic schools, and \$2.95 billion in independent schools.

There are 2 types, or functions, of school expenditure. Recurrent expenditure is money spent on the daily operations of schools, including:

- salaries for school staff,
- school supplies (e.g., textbooks, art supplies, sporting equipment),
- general operating expenses of the school (e.g., utility bills and insurance),
- maintaining the school's land and buildings (e.g., building repairs and school grounds upkeep), and
- other administrative costs (e.g., staff costs in meeting Australian Government reporting requirements and participating in NAPLAN or other national assessments).

Capital expenditure is money spent to buy or improve long-term fixed assets that can be used for educational purposes, for example, renovating classrooms, or constructing a new library.⁸¹

⁸¹ Non-government schools derive their income from Australian Government and state/territory government grants, school fees and charges, and from private sources including fundraising, and donations. This income is used to fund both recurrent and capital purposes. Under the *Australian Education Act 2013*, an approved authority for a non-government school that has a capacity to contribute greater than zero percent must not use government recurrent funding for the purchase of land or buildings for the school, the construction of a building, or part of a building, for the school, capital improvements for the school, any form of loan, credit facility, or other interest in relation to the above.

In this section, school expenditure is reported separately for government and non-government schools. For government schools, data is sourced from the NSSC and reported on a financial year basis. Only expenditure from government funding is reported.⁸²

For non-government schools, expenditure data is sourced from the Australian Government Department of Education financial questionnaire. Expenditure is reported for the calendar year and includes expenditure from all income sources, including school fees and other private sources.⁸³

It is important to note that, due to the differences in the data sources and the time-period for which expenditure is reported (financial year for government schools and calendar year for non-government schools), expenditure per student for government and non-government schools is not directly comparable.

Government recurrent expenditure on government schools

Total recurrent government expenditure on government schools in 2021/22 was \$58.74 billion (\$22,511 per student).

The major component of expenditure for government schools is in-school expenditure, which covers schools' day-to-day operations. In-school expenditure encompasses expenses related to teaching, learning, school administration and library functions. Out-of-school expenditure includes state office costs, and regional and local functions which support schools. Amounts of in-school and out-of-school expenditure, by function, are presented in Table 9.1.

Salaries are by far the largest component of expenditure on schools, with teacher salaries comprising the majority of this expenditure. Teaching salary costs (average \$10,458 per student) represented 75.6% of total salary costs in 2021/22 and 46.5% of total recurrent expenditure inclusive of user cost of capital, down marginally from 48.4% in 2020–21. In 2021–22, non-salary costs including user cost of capital made up 38.6% of total operating expenditure inclusive of user cost of capital.⁸⁴

⁸² For government schools, expenditure from income from fees, charges and other private sources is excluded from the amounts reported in this section. Therefore, for government schools, total expenditure is equal to the total funding amounts reported in Section 9.1.

⁸³ In this data collection, compiled by the Australian Government, non-systemic Catholic schools are counted as Catholic.

⁸⁴ Expenditure data for government and non-government schools, broken down by school level (primary and secondary), is available on the National Report on Schooling data portal. Average recurrent expenditure per student is higher, on average, for secondary school students than for primary students. Capital expenditure per student is also higher, on average, for secondary school students than for primary school students.

Table 9.1

Recurrent expenditure by government education systems, Australia, 2021/22 financial year (accrual basis), (nominal \$'000 and \$ per student)

	In school recurrent expenditure (\$'000)	Out of school recurrent expenditure (\$'000)	Total recurrent expenditure (\$'000)	Total recurrent expenditure per student (\$ per student)
Salaries - Teaching staff	\$27,287,355	\$0	\$27,287,355	\$10,458
Salaries - Non-teaching staff	\$7,107,199	\$1,637,312	\$8,744,511	\$3,351
Redundancies	\$36,293	\$26,693	\$62,986	\$24
Non-salary costs	\$11,375,221	\$1,262,228	\$12,637,449	\$4,843
Total recurrent expenditure (excluding user cost of capital)	\$45,806,068	\$2,926,233	\$48,732,301	\$18,676
User cost of capital	\$9,929,322	\$77,277	\$10,006,599	\$3,835
Total recurrent expenditure (including user cost of capital)	\$55,735,390	\$3,003,510	\$58,738,900	\$22,511

Notes: Amounts are expressed in actual dollars (nominal) and are not adjusted for inflation. Components may not add to totals due to exclusions and rounding. Salaries include on-costs such as superannuation, payroll tax, workers compensation and long service leave. Redundancy payments have been excluded from salaries (teaching and non-teaching)

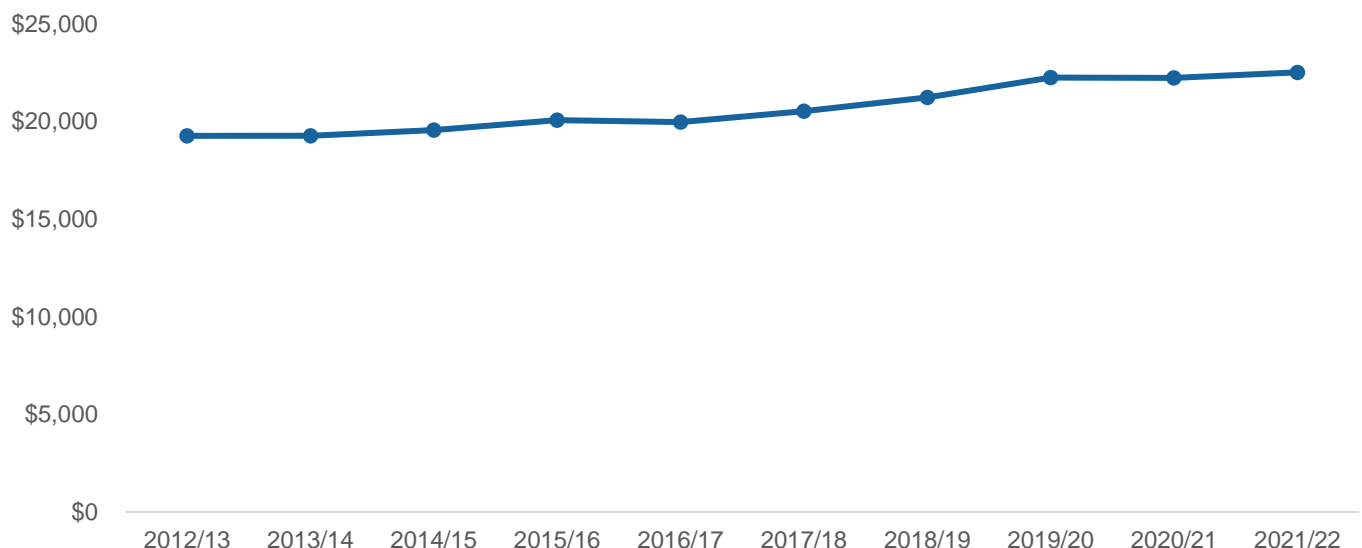
Source: National Schools Statistics Collection (NSSC) (Finance), unpublished, 2022.

After adjusting for inflation, average total recurrent expenditure per student in government schools increased by \$284 (1.3%) between the 2020/21 and 2021/2022 financial years.

Figure 9.8 shows average total recurrent expenditure per student in government schools, adjusted for inflation, for the period 2012/13 to 2021/22. During this period, average total recurrent expenditure per student increased by \$3,248 (16.9%) in real terms.

Figure 9.8

Total recurrent expenditure per student (including user cost of capital), government schools, Australia, 2012/13 to 2021/22 (\$ per student, \$2022)



Notes: Amounts are adjusted for inflation to 2022 dollars, based on the Consumer Price Index for June of each year. Nominal values and values adjusted using the General Government Final Consumption Expenditure (GGFCE) chain price deflator and the ABS Wage Price Index (WPI) are available on the National Report on Schooling Data Portal.

Sources: National Schools Statistics Collection (NSSC) (Finance), unpublished, 2022; ABS, Consumer Price Index, Australia, 2023.

Recurrent expenditure in non-government schools

In 2022, total recurrent expenditure in non-government schools was \$28.91 billion (\$19,372 per student).

Table 9.2 shows total recurrent expenditure per student for non-government schools in the 2022 calendar year.

As was the case for government schools, salaries are the largest component of expenditure on schools, with teacher salaries comprising the majority of this expenditure. In 2022, teaching salary costs (average \$9,031 per student) represented 72.8% of total salary costs and 46.6% of total recurrent expenditure, down from 48.3% of total recurrent expenditure in 2021. Non-staff related expenditure made up 25.4% of total recurrent expenditure in non-government schools in 2022.

Table 9.2

Recurrent expenditure in non-government schools, by function, Australia, 2022 calendar year (\$ per student)

	Total recurrent expenditure (\$'000)	Total recurrent expenditure per student (\$)
Salaries - Teaching staff	\$13,478,464	\$9,031
Salaries - Non-teaching staff	\$5,027,857	\$3,369
Other staff-related expenditure	\$3,061,002	\$2,051
Debt servicing	\$317,157	\$213
Other operating expenditure	\$7,027,221	\$4,709
Total recurrent expenditure	\$28,911,701	\$19,372

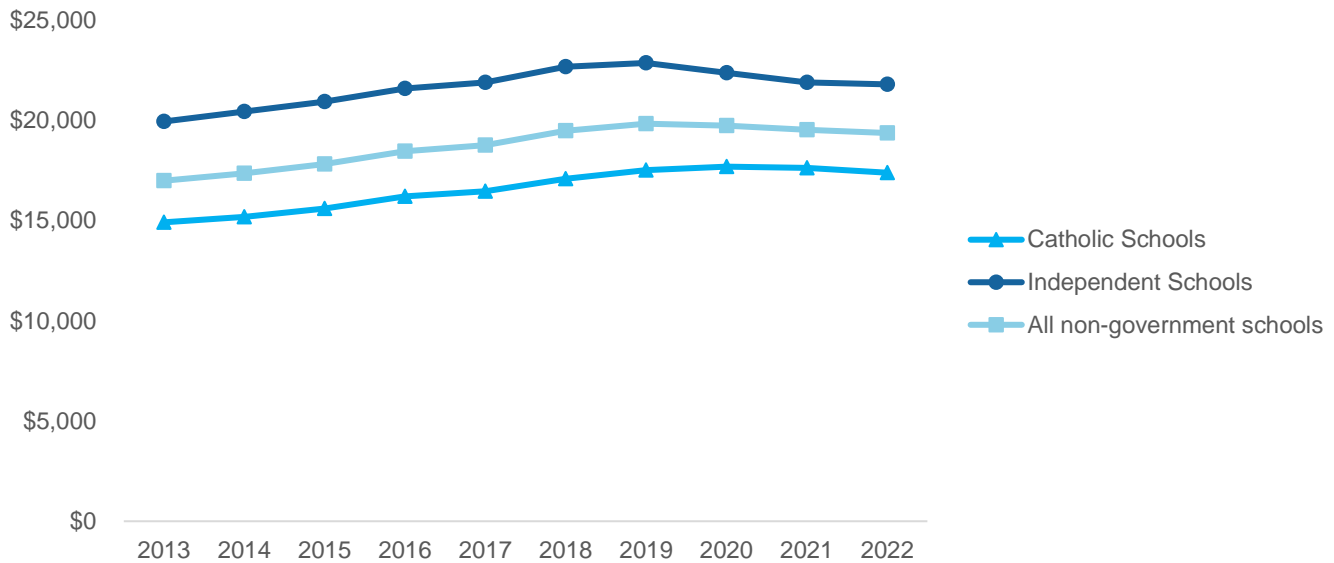
Notes: Expenditure per student for the components of recurrent expenditure is derived based on the percentage of total recurrent expenditure (including user cost of capital) of each component.

Source: Australian Government Department of Education, unpublished data.

In 2022, total recurrent expenditure per student was higher for independent schools (\$21,796 per student) than in Catholic schools (\$17,385 per student). Average total recurrent expenditure per student for the period from 2013 to 2022, adjusted for inflation, is shown in Figure 9.9.

Figure 9.9

Total recurrent expenditure per student, non-government schools, Australia, by sector, 2013–2022 (\$ per student, \$2022)



Note: Values are adjusted for inflation to 2022 dollars, based on the Consumer Price Index for December of each year. Nominal values and values adjusted using the General Government Final Consumption Expenditure (GGFCE) chain price deflator and the ABS Wage Price Index (WPI) are available on the National Report on Schooling Data Portal.

Source: Australian Government Department of Education, unpublished data.

After adjusting for inflation, total recurrent expenditure per student in non-government schools decreased by \$157 (0.8%) between 2021 and 2022, with decreases of \$250 (1.4%) for Catholic schools and \$96 (0.4%) for independent schools.⁸⁵

In real terms (after adjusting for inflation), average total recurrent expenditure per student in non-government schools increased by 14.0% (\$2,381 in 2022 dollars) over the period from 2013 to 2022, with increases of 16.6% (\$2,471) for Catholic schools and 9.3% (\$1,850) for independent schools.

Capital expenditure in government and non-government schools

My School allows for comparable reporting of capital expenditure by all schools.⁸⁶ In 2022, capital expenditure was \$4.35 billion across 6,699 government schools, \$1.93 billion over 1,766 Catholic schools, and \$2.95 billion across 1,149 independent schools.

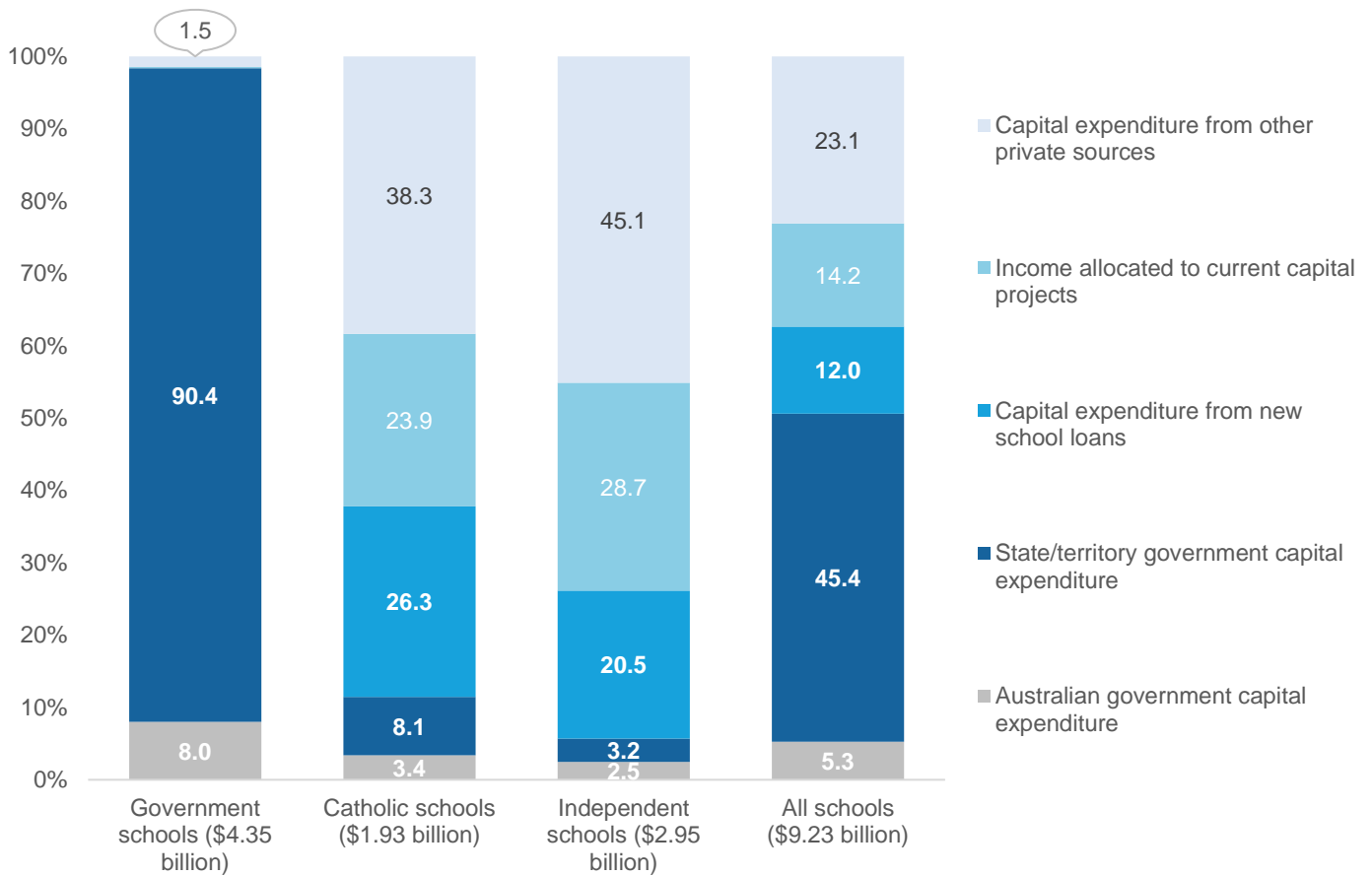
In government schools, capital expenditure was mainly sourced from state/territory funding (90.4%), with an additional 8.0% from Australian government funding, and 1.5% from other private sources, as shown in Figure 9.10.

⁸⁵ As was the case for the decline in net recurrent income per student (NRIPS), the decline in total recurrent expenditure per student independent schools between 2019 and 2022 is likely to be at least partly due to the increased enrolment numbers in the independent sector.

⁸⁶ Capital expenditure for both government and non-government schools were derived from *MySchool* data. These amounts differ from the capital expenditure amounts based on NSSC data for government schools and data provided by the Australian Government Department of Education for non-government schools. For the *MySchool* Finance data, jurisdictions agreed to exclude all capital expenditure on the construction and acquisition of new schools where the expenditure was incurred in calendar years prior to the school becoming operational. There are generally 40-45 new schools opened each year, for which this change applies.

Figure 9.10

Capital expenditure, by income source and school sector, Australia, 2022 calendar year (%)



Note: New school loans refer to the amount of capital expenditure funded by capital loan drawdowns in the reporting year. Income allocated to current capital projects is the amount of gross income received by the school that has been spent on capital projects in the reporting year. Other (capital expenditure) – the amount of capital expenditure funded through other private sources including retained earnings from previous years. Values may not sum exactly to 100.0 due to rounding.

Source: ACARA, *My School* finance data collection.

A relatively small proportion of capital expenditure in non-government schools was sourced from state/territory government capital funding (8.1% for Catholic schools and 3.2% for independent schools) or Australian government funding (3.4% for Catholic schools and 2.5% for independent schools).

In Catholic schools, 38.3% of capital expenditure was sourced from private income sources, as was 45.1% of capital expenditure in independent schools. Capital expenditure from income allocated to current capital projects made up 23.9% of total capital expenditure for Catholic schools and 28.7% of total capital expenditure for independent schools, while capital expenditure from new school loans made up 26.3% of total capital expenditure for Catholic schools and 20.5% of total capital expenditure for independent schools.

Table 9.3 An overview of the key features and differences between the 4 school funding data collections

	Government expenditure on government schools	Non-government schools' income and expenditure	School income and capital expenditure for government and non-government schools	Government recurrent expenditure on government and non-government schools
Reporting period	Financial year 2021/22 (ending in reporting year)	Calendar year 2022 (same as reporting year)	Calendar year 2022 (same as reporting year)	Financial year 2021/22 (ending in reporting year)
Scope of reporting	Government schools only Disaggregation by state/territory No disaggregation by funding source	Non-government schools receiving Australian Government recurrent funding Disaggregation by state/territory, Catholic and independent schools Catholic non-systemic schools are reported as Catholic schools.	Government and non-government schools receiving government funding Disaggregation by state/territory, Catholic and independent schools Catholic non-systemic schools are reported as independent schools in aggregated data.	Government and non-government schools receiving government funding No disaggregation by Catholic/Independent for non-government schools.
What is reported	Capital and recurrent expenditure In-school costs (e.g., teacher salaries) Out-of-school costs (e.g., state office, regional and local functions which support schools)	Income from all sources Capital expenditure and recurrent expenditure	Recurrent income from all sources Capital expenditure	Government recurrent expenditure on government schools and non-government schools No disaggregation by state/territory or primary/secondary
Income or expenditure based	Expenditure based (based on payment of expenses)	Income and expenditure based	Income and capital expenditure based	Expenditure based (based on payment of expenses)
Treatment of private funding	Not reported	Private income reported	Private income reported	Not reported
Inclusions	Payroll tax (real or notional) Notional user cost of capital in government school funding Non-salary costs include other operating expenses, grants and subsidies and depreciation	Recurrent and capital grants Debt servicing of loans Australian Government assistance as part of the COVID-19 response (including JobKeeper payments)	Government funding (including JobKeeper payments received by non-government schools) Private funding	Australian Government funding for schools, joint programs apportioned to government schools, assistance in response to COVID-19 (excluding JobKeeper payments received by non-government schools) Expenditure by state and territory government education departments Staff allowances for accommodation
Exclusions	Funds raised by schools, school councils or community organisations	Amounts related to boarding facilities	Items are treated differently across sectors, such as user cost of capital, payroll tax and boarding	Funds raised by schools, school councils or community organisations
Agency responsible for collecting data	State and territory governments	Australian Government Department of Education (AGDE)	AGDE (non-government schools) State/territory governments (government schools)	Productivity Commission
Source	National Schools Statistics Collection (Finance)	AGDE financial questionnaire	<i>My School</i>	NSSC Finance Collection, federal budget papers and data provided to the Productivity Commission

Glossary



Note on data sources and terms

A main source of data reported in the *National Report on Schooling in Australia 2021* and in the National Report on Schooling data portal is the National Schools Statistics Collection (NSSC) (non-finance). This is a count of schools, students and staff involved in primary and secondary education, in government and non-government schools, for all Australian states and territories. The schools Census collection date for the collection is the first Friday in August each year.

Data for government schools is submitted to the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) by state and territory departments of education.

Data for non-government schools in all states and territories is collected by the Australian Government Department of Education, Skills and Employment and a subset is provided to the ABS for the NSSC.

Data from the collection is published by the ABS in [Schools](#). Definitions of terms in this glossary are, for the most part, quoted or adapted from the *Schools* glossary and explanatory notes.

Other major data sources for the National Report on Schooling in Australia include the National Student Attendance Data Collection (ACARA); the Survey of Education and Work (ABS); the Census of Population and Housing (ABS); National, state and territory population (ABS); the NSSC (finance) collection (states and territories); NAP national reports (ACARA) and National VET Provider and National VET in Schools collections (NCVER).

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (Indigenous) status

A student is classified as being of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander origin, based on information provided by the student, or their parent or guardian, on the school enrolment form.

Accrual accounting

A recording method in which revenues, expenses, lending and borrowing are recorded as they are earned, accrued or incurred regardless of when payment is made or received.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (Indigenous) status

A student is classified as being of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander origin, based on information provided by the student, or their parent or guardian, on the school enrolment form.

Accrual accounting

A recording method in which revenues, expenses, lending and borrowing are recorded as they are earned, accrued or incurred regardless of when payment is made or received.

Apparent retention rate

An indicative measure of student progression through secondary school. It is a measure of the proportion of full-time school students who have stayed at school from one year to another. The rate is calculated by dividing the number of students in a year group (cohort) in one calendar year by the number of students in the same cohort in a previous calendar year. For example, an apparent retention rate from Year 10 to 12 in 2021 measures the percentage of Year 10 students in 2019 that continued to Year 12 in 2021.

From 2015 onwards, the ABS has released rates tables in 2 formats: one with rates exceeding 100% capped to a maximum value of 100.0 (capped), and one where rates exceeding 100% continue to be reported as the raw calculated value (uncapped). This report continues to report uncapped rates for apparent retention.

See [Schools](#) explanatory notes for further information.

Attendance

The National Student Attendance Data Collection is conducted by ACARA for Semester 1 of each school year. Data is collected for full-time students in Years 1–10 (including ungraded secondary). Data is provided to ACARA by state and territory education departments for government schools and by the Australian Government Department of Education, Skills and Employment for non-government schools.

The attendance rate is defined as 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 number of possible student-days attended in Semester 1.

The attendance level is defined as the proportion of full-time students in Years 1–10 whose attendance rate in Semester 1 is equal to or greater than 90%.

Specifications for the collection are provided in the [National Standards for Student Attendance Data Reporting](#).

Capital expenditure

Expenditure by a school or school system to purchase or improve land, buildings and other capital assets and equipment.

Census of Population and Housing

Australia's largest statistical collection, undertaken by the ABS. The Census of Population and Housing is conducted every 5 years. The aim of the census is to accurately collect data on the key characteristics of people in Australia on census night, and the dwellings in which they live. In 2021 the census counted 10.9 million dwellings and approximately 25.4 million people.

Estimated resident population

The estimated resident population (ERP) 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 Census of Population and Housing, updated quarterly using information on births, deaths, and overseas and interstate migration. For further details see ABS, [National, state and territory population](#).

Full-time equivalent students

The FTE value of students is a measure used for funding purposes. It is calculated by adding the number of full-time students and the FTE value of part-time students.

A full-time student is one who undertakes the prescribed minimum workload required to complete a given year level in a calendar year. This may vary between states and territories and from year to year. A part-time student is one who undertakes a workload less than that prescribed as full-time. Methods for estimating the FTE value of part-time students vary between states and territories due to different policy and administrative arrangements. The recorded FTE value for each student is capped at 1.0.

Full-time equivalent teaching staff

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

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

The FTE value of teaching staff is calculated by adding the number of full-time teaching staff and the FTE value of part-time teaching staff.

Full-time equivalent student–teacher ratios

Student–teacher ratios are calculated by dividing the FTE student number by the FTE teaching staff number. They are an indicator of the level of staffing resources used and should not be used as a measure of class size. They do not include teacher aides and other non-teaching staff who may also assist in the delivery of school education.

Location

School locations are classified based on the Australian Statistical Geography Standard remoteness indicator. The five Remoteness Areas for Australia are:

- major cities
- inner regional
- outer regional
- remote
- very remote.

A map, showing the location of these areas, is available on the [ABS website](#).

Measurement Framework for Schooling in Australia

The *Measurement Framework for Schooling in Australia 2020*, as agreed by education ministers, provides the basis for national reporting on the performance of schooling in 2020, and is the main focus of the statistical data included in this report.

The measurement framework defines national key performance measures (KPMs) for schooling, specifies the data sources for these KPMs and outlines the reporting cycle for the period 2020–2023.

The framework is maintained by ACARA on behalf of education ministers and is published on the ACARA website. It is periodically revised by ACARA in consultation with jurisdictions and sectors.

National Assessment Program

The National Assessment Program (NAP), as specified in the *Measurement Framework for Schooling in Australia 2020*, encompasses all assessments endorsed by education ministers for participation by students nationally:

- NAPLAN – annual, full student cohort literacy and numeracy assessments in Years 3, 5, 7 and 9
- NAP sample assessments – triennial domestic sample student population assessments in Years 6 and 10 in Science Literacy, ICT Literacy and Civics and Citizenship
- Australia’s participation in international sample student population assessments: Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) and Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS).

ACARA is delegated to manage the development and oversee the delivery of assessments and reporting for NAPLAN, and for domestic NAP sample assessments, as directed by education ministers. PISA is conducted by the OECD. TIMSS and PIRLS are conducted by the IEA.

National Schools Statistics Collection

The scope of the NSSC consists of all ‘establishments’ that have as their major activity the administration or provision of full-time day primary, secondary and/or special education, or primary or secondary education by distance education. The statistics in the NSSC do not include students engaged in school-level education conducted by other institutions; in particular, TAFE, except where this is part of a school program, such as VET delivered to secondary students.

The NSSC consists of government and non-government statistics. Government statistics comprise all establishments (as defined) administered by departments of education under directors-general of education (or equivalent) in each state or territory. Non-government statistics comprise all such establishments not administered by departments of education.

The 2 sections of the NSSC are:

- non-finance statistics (numbers of schools, students and staff) collected for government and non-government schools and published by the ABS in its annual *Schools* publication
- finance statistics (expenditure on salaries and non-salary costs) collected for government school systems only; and published in this report and in the National Report on Schooling data portal.

Primary education

See *School level and school year*.

Recurrent funding

Annual funding provided to schools/school systems for expenditure relating to ongoing operating costs of the school (for example, teaching and non-teaching staff salaries, school operating costs).

Remoteness

See *Location*.

School

A school is an education establishment that satisfies all 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 4 continuous weeks, excluding breaks for school vacations.

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

The term 'school' in this publication excludes preschools, early learning or long day care centres, senior technical and agricultural colleges, evening schools, continuation classes and institutions such as business or coaching colleges.

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

School level and school year

All states and territories provide for 13 years of formal school education. Typically, schooling commences at age 5, is compulsory from age 6 until at least the completion of Year 10 and is completed at age 17 or 18.

For national reporting purposes, primary education comprises a Foundation year⁸⁷ followed by Years 1–6 in New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland, Western Australia⁸⁸, Tasmania, the Northern Territory and the Australian Capital Territory. Primary education generally comprises a Foundation year followed by Years 1–7 in South Australia.⁸⁹

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

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

Categories used in tables and graphs showing 'school level' are 'primary' and 'secondary'. In some tables, the categories 'primary', 'junior secondary', 'senior secondary' and 'total secondary' are used.

Students attending special schools are allocated to either primary or secondary education on the basis of school year or school level, where identified. Where a school year or school level is not identified, students are allocated to primary or secondary level of education according to the typical age level in each state or territory. Ungraded students (ungraded primary and ungraded secondary) are those who have not been placed in a specific year level.

See also *School type*.

See also *Special school*.

School sector

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

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

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

⁸⁷ The Foundation Year (first year of full-time schooling) is known as Preparatory in Vic, Qld and Tas, Kindergarten in NSW and the ACT, Reception in SA, Pre-primary in WA and Transition in the NT. In some jurisdictions, part-time programs that precede the Foundation Year are conducted in primary schools (for example, Kindergarten in WA). However, these programs are outside the scope of the NSSC and of data sets included in this report.

⁸⁸ Year 7 became part of secondary education in Qld and WA from 2015. This change affects some comparisons with previous years of student and staff data by school level.

⁸⁹ In 2018, the SA Government announced that Year 7 will be moved from a primary school year to a secondary school year. In 2020 in SA, Year 7 was counted as a secondary school year for a number of non-government schools and 3 government schools, with other government schools to adopt this structure from 2022.

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

In *Schools* and in this report, Catholic systemic and non-systemic schools are counted as 'Catholic'.

Exception: For the purposes of financial reporting in Part 4.2, based on data drawn from the *My School* data collection, a number of Catholic non-systemic schools, mainly in New South Wales, are counted as 'independent'. Government funding for these schools is distributed directly to the schools rather than through Catholic school system authorities. This affects comparisons between school sectors in some states and nationally. Financial data reported in Part 4.2 should not be compared with financial data included elsewhere in this report.

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

School type

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

- 'primary' – school delivers primary education
- 'secondary' – school delivers secondary education
- 'combined' – school delivers primary and secondary education
- 'special' – students may include primary students, secondary students, ungraded students or a combination of primary, secondary and ungraded students.

See also *Special school*.

Secondary education

See *School level and school year*.

Senior secondary certificate of education

Senior secondary certificates of education (SSCEs) are Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) qualifications issued by the curriculum, assessment and certification authority in each state and territory to students meeting the requirements for successful completion of secondary schooling. These have different titles in each jurisdiction:

State/territory	SSCE(s)
New South Wales	Higher School Certificate (HSC)
Victoria	Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE) Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL)
Queensland	Queensland Certificate of Education (QCE)
South Australia	South Australian Certificate of Education (SACE)
Western Australia	Western Australian Certificate of Education (WACE)
Tasmania	Tasmanian Certificate of Education (TCE)
Northern Territory	Northern Territory Certificate of Education and Training (NTCET)
Australian Capital Territory	Australian Capital Territory Senior Secondary Certificate (ACTSSC)

Source: [ACACA website, states and territories](#).

Special school

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

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

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

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

Staff

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

The functional categories for school staff are as follows:

- (a) Teaching staff are employees who spend the majority of their time in contact with students. They support students either by direct class contact or on an individual basis and are engaged to impart school curriculum. For the purposes of this report, teaching staff includes principals, deputy principals, campus principals and senior teachers mainly involved in administration.
- (b) Specialist support staff are employees who perform functions to support students or teaching staff. While these staff may spend most of their time in contact with students, they are not employed or engaged to impart the school curriculum.
- (c) Administrative and clerical staff are employees whose main duties are generally clerical or administrative. Teacher aides and assistants are included in this category, as they are seen to provide services to teaching staff rather than directly to students.
- (d) Building operations, general maintenance and other staff are employees involved in the maintenance of buildings and grounds. Also included are staff providing associated technical services, other janitorial staff and staff who service equipment. School cleaners, whether salaried or employed on contract, are excluded.

For further details on the definition of staff, see ABS [Schools glossary](#).

States and territories

Australia has a federal system of government comprising the national government, and the governments of the 6 states and 2 territories. In this report, the national government is generally referred to as 'the Australian Government'.

In tables and graphs in this report and the National Report on Schooling data portal, states and territories are listed in the order of New South Wales (NSW), Victoria (Vic), Queensland (Qld), South Australia (SA), Western Australia (WA), Tasmania (Tas), the Northern Territory (NT) and the Australian Capital Territory (ACT). This is the order used in ABS publications, including *Schools*.

Student

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

Students who were 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).⁹⁰

⁹⁰ For the schools census 2021, students were considered to be enrolled and active in an education program, even if that program had been temporarily disrupted by COVID-19. This included where programs were temporarily delivered online or remotely and even where schools were temporarily closed for COVID-19 related reasons.

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

Student attendance

See *Attendance*.

Survey of Education and Work

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

See [ABS, Education and Work, Australia methodology](#) for more information.

Teaching staff

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

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

User cost of capital

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

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

VET for secondary students, VET in Schools

Data on vocational education and training delivered to secondary students / VET in Schools was derived from the National VET in Schools Collection and the National VET Provider Collection, compiled by NCVER under the Australian Vocational Education and Training Management Information Statistical Standard (AVETMISS) release 8.0.

List of shortened forms

ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
ACACA	Australasian Curriculum, Assessment and Certification Authorities
ACARA	Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority
ACECQA	Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority
ACT	Australian Capital Territory
ACTSSC	Australian Capital Territory Senior Secondary Certificate of Education
AERO	Australian Education Research Organisation
AISNSW	Association of Independent Schools NSW
AISSA	Association of Independent Schools of South Australia
AITSL	Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership
AQF	Australian Qualifications Framework
ASCED	Australian Standard Classification of Education
ATAR	Australian Tertiary Admission Rank
ATWD	Australian Teacher Workforce Data
AVETMISS	Australian Vocational Education and Training Management Information Statistical Standard
COAG	Council of Australian Governments
CSEF	Camps, Sports and Excursion Fund
CTC	Capacity to Contribute
DSE	Disability Standards for Education
DMI	Direct Measure of Income
ECEC	early childhood education and care
ECPP	Early Childhood Care and Development Policy Partnership
EMM	Education Minister's Meeting
ERP	Estimated Resident Population
EYLF	Early Years Learning Framework
FFPOS	full fee-paying overseas students
FTE	full-time equivalent
HALTs	Highly Accomplished teachers and Lead teachers
HSC	Higher School Certificate (NSW Senior Secondary Certificate of Education)
IAS	Indigenous Advancement Strategy
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IEA	International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement
ITE	Initial Teacher Education

ISQ	Independent Schools Queensland
ISV	Independent Schools Victoria
KPM	Key Performance Measure
NAP	National Assessment Program
NAPLAN	National Assessment Program-Literacy and Numeracy
NCCD	Nationally Consistent Collection of Data on School Students with Disability
NCVER	National Centre for Vocational Education Research
NQF	National Quality Framework
NRIPS	net recurrent income per student
NSRA	National School Reform Agreement
NSSC	National Schools Statistics Collection
NSW	New South Wales
NT	Northern Territory
NTCET	Northern Territory Certificate of Education and Training
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PIRLS	Progress in International Reading Literacy Study
PISA	Programme for International Student Assessment
PRA	Preschool Reform Agreement
PYEC	Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Education Committee
QCE	Queensland Certificate of Education
QDTP	quality differentiated teaching practice
Qld	Queensland
RTO	Registered Training Organisation
SA	South Australia
SACE	South Australian Certificate of Education
SES	socio-economic status
SEW	Survey of Education and Work
SRS	Schooling Resource Standard
SSCE	Senior Secondary Certificates of Education
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics
TAFE	Technical and Further Education
Tas	Tasmania
TCE	Tasmanian Certificate of Education
TIMSS	Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study
USI	Unique Student Identifier
VCAL	Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning

VCE	Victorian Certificate of Education
VET	Vocational education and training
VETiS	VET in Schools
Vic	Victoria
WA	Western Australia
WACE	Western Australian Certificate of Education