

National Report on Schooling in Australia 2023



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National Report on Schooling in Australia 2023

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Executive Summary

The *National Report on Schooling in Australia 2023* is the 35th 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 2023 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](#) (updated 13/9/2023), providing data, analysis and commentary. It also includes other high-level statistical information on Australian schooling in 2023 and for the period 2013–2023 inclusive.

Overview of the report

Chapter 1 provides an introduction to the report and an overview of the Measurement Framework for Schooling in Australia.

Chapter 2, 'Schools and schooling', provides information on the status of Australian schooling in 2023, 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.

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.

Government schools are established and administered by state and territory governments through their education departments or authorities. Non-government schools are established and operated under conditions determined by state and territory governments through their registration authorities.

School, student and teacher numbers in 2023 are shown for Australia and by state and territory in Figure 1.

School numbers

In 2023, there were 9,629 schools in Australia, an increase of 15 schools since 2022. The majority of schools (69.7%) were government schools. The remaining 30.3% were non-government schools, mostly associated with religious organisations.

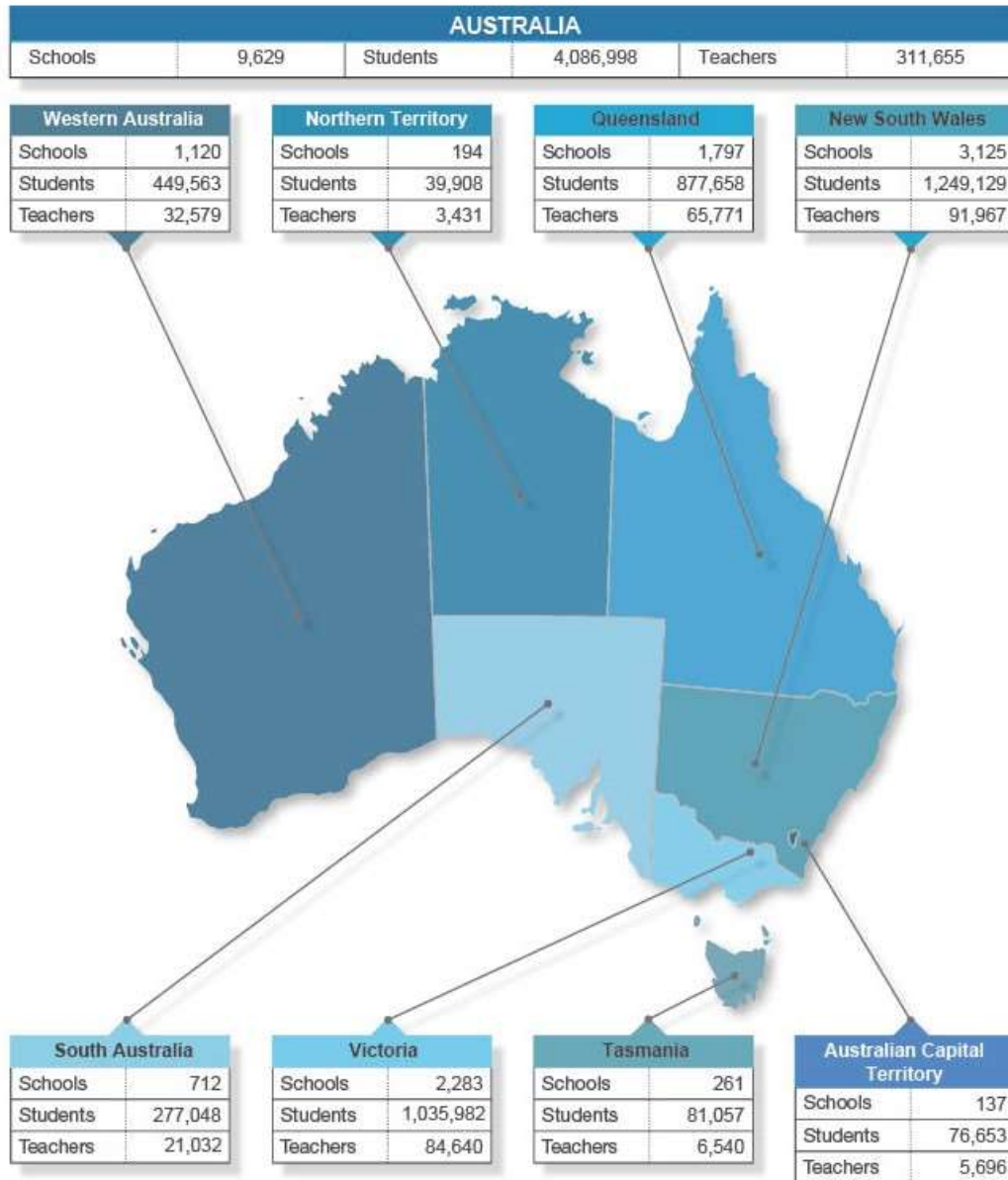
More than three-quarters (76.9%) of primary schools were government schools. Most secondary schools (73.3%) and special schools (65.6%) were also government schools, while most combined schools (64.4%) were non-government schools, mainly in the independent school sector.

Student numbers

A total of 4,086,998 students were enrolled in Australian schools in 2023, an increase of 1.1% from 2022. Almost two-thirds (64.0%) of school students were enrolled in government schools, 19.7% were in Catholic schools and 16.3% in independent schools.

More than half of students (55.3%) were primary school students. This difference is mainly due to the structure of schooling, in which primary schooling includes more year groups than secondary schooling.

Figure 1: Numbers of schools, students and teachers by state and territory, Australia, 2023



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

Source: ABS, *Schools*, 2023.

School students with disability

In 2023, 991,272 school students received an educational adjustment due to disability. This represents 24.2% of total enrolments, up from 22.5% in 2022 and 18.0% in 2015.

Among school students who received an educational adjustment due to disability in 2023, 54.3% of adjustments were provided to students with cognitive disability, 33.6% to students with social-emotional disability, 9.3% for students with physical disability and 2.7% for sensory disability.

School staff numbers

In 2023, there were 311,655 full-time equivalent (FTE) teaching staff in Australia, an increase of 4,427 (1.4%) from 2022. Staff numbers closely reflect student enrolments with 62.6% of school teachers employed in government schools, 19.3% in Catholic schools 18.2% in independent schools.

Australia's teaching workforce continued to be predominantly female, with women making up 71.9% of FTE teachers in 2023. The gender difference was more pronounced at the primary level (82.1% female) than at secondary level (61.4% female).

Student-teacher ratios

The average student to teaching staff ratio was 13.1 students per teacher – the same as in 2022 and a reduction from 13.3 students per teacher in 2021. Student-teacher ratios were lower in independent schools (11.8 students per teacher) compared to Catholic schools and government schools (13.4 students per teacher).

Chapter 3, 'Policies and priorities', outlines the national policy context for Australian schooling in 2023 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 2023 and the broader framework within which national decisions for schooling were made. It also reports on national progress in implementing the 11 Commitments to Action specified in the Mparntwe declaration.¹

Progress towards these commitments to action in 2023 included:

- A commitment to attracting and retaining high quality teachers through investment in the Australian Teacher Workforce Data (ATWD) nationally, and career development opportunities across all jurisdictions.
- Lifting preschool enrolments and attendance through the Preschool Reform Agreement (PRA), a \$2 billion four-year national reform which supports the delivery of 15 hours a week (or 600 hours a year) of quality preschool programs by early childhood teachers.
- The commencement of planning, teaching and assessing using the Australian Curriculum Version 9.0.
- The embedding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures into curriculum and pedagogy, including through the development of culturally responsive resources and professional learning as well as offering Indigenous Languages and Cultures courses.
- A focus on inclusion, with the development of state specific frameworks and hiring of specialist staff to support diverse learning needs.

¹ 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.

Chapters 4 to 8 report on the performance of Australian schooling in 2023, using the nationally agreed key performance measures for schooling specified in the Measurement Framework for Schooling in Australia 2020.

Chapter 4 reports on student enrolment, attendance, and apparent retention. In 2023:

- The proportion of 6–15-year-olds enrolled in school in Australia was 98.6% – the same as in 2022, but down from 99.0% in 2021.
- The attendance rate for students in Years 1-10 was 88.6%, up from 86.5% in 2022.
- The student attendance level (the percentage of students with above 90 per cent attendance) was 61.6%, up from 49.9% in 2022.
- 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 0.3 percentage points - from 79.0% in 2022 to 78.7% in 2023. The apparent retention rate from Year 10 to Year 12 for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students decreased by 0.6 percentage points, from 56.4% in 2022 to 55.8% in 2023.

Chapter 5 reports on student achievement in the National Assessment Program (NAP) and International Assessments.

National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy

From 2023, the numerical National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) bands and national minimum standards were replaced with 4 levels of proficiency (Exceeding, Strong, Developing, and Needs additional support). The new standards are reported on a reset NAPLAN measurement scale that makes better use of the online adaptive tests. Together with the move to earlier NAPLAN testing (in March rather than May), these changes met an initiative of the 2019 National School Reform Agreement (NRSA).

Due to the change to the reporting standards for NAPLAN in 2023 and the changes to the timing of the NAPLAN tests, results from 2023 onwards cannot be directly compared to results from 2008 to 2022. Therefore, a new NAPLAN time series was established from 2023. In 2023:

- NAPLAN participation rates were over 96% for Years 3, 5 and 7. Year 9 students had the lowest participation in NAPLAN at 92.3%.
- Among Year 3 students, the percentage with NAPLAN scores at or above the Strong proficiency level was 66.8% for reading, 76.0% for writing and 64.7% for numeracy.
- The percentage of Year 5 students with NAPLAN scores at or above the Strong proficiency level was 74.2% for reading, 66.2% for writing and 67.7% for numeracy.
- Among Year 7 students, the percentage with NAPLAN scores at or above the Strong proficiency level was 68.4% reading, 62.5% for writing and 67.2% for numeracy.
- The percentage of Year 9 Students with NAPLAN scores at or above the Strong proficiency level was 62.8% reading, 58.0% for writing and 63.9% for numeracy.

National Assessment Program – Science Literacy

In 2023, the proportion of participating Year 6 students achieving at or above the proficient standard for Science Literacy was 57%. This was not significantly different to the proportion achieving at or above the proficient standard in 2018 (58%).

The proportion of participating Year 10 students attaining the proficient standard for Science Literacy was 54%. This was not significantly different to the proportion achieving at or above the proficient standard in 2018 (50%).

Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study

In 2023, 72% of Year 4 students and 64% of Year 8 students had Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) Mathematics scores at or above the proficient standard; 83% of Year 4 students and 70% of Year 8 students had TIMSS Science scores at or above the proficient standard.

Vocational Education and Training

Chapter 6 reports on participation of young people aged 15-19 in Vocational Education and Training (VET). In Australia in 2023:

- More than a quarter (26.8%) of 15-19-year-olds completing at least one unit of competency at AQF Certificate II or above, up from 26.3% in 2022.
- Almost half (49.2%) of qualifications gained by 15–19-year-olds were at AQF level II and 33.6% 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 26.8% in 2023.

Participation of young people aged 15 to 24 in education and/or work

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 (ABS) Survey of Education and Work (SEW). In Australia in 2023:

- The proportion of 15–19-year-olds who were fully engaged in education, training or work was 87.3% – down from 88.3% in 2022 and 90.3% in 2021. Despite this, this rate is still higher than rates reported in 2018 and 2019, before the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The proportion of 20–24-year-olds who were fully engaged in education, training or work increased to 77.4% – up from 76.4% in 2022. This is the highest this rate has been since 2008.
- The proportion of 17–24-year-olds who had left school and were fully engaged in education, training or work increased to 75.4% – up from 75.0% in 2022. This represents a full recovery to pre-pandemic levels.

Student Attainment

Chapter 8 reports on levels of educational attainment of young people aged 20 to 24. Among 20–24-year-olds in 2023, the proportion who had attained at least Year 12 or AQF Certificate II or above was 90.4%, and the proportion who had attained at least Year 12 or AQF Certificate III or above was 89.6%.²

Since 2013, the proportion of 20–24-year-olds who had attained at least Year 12 or AQF Certificate II or above has risen 3.7 percentage points from 86.7% to 90.4% and the proportion of 20–24-year-olds who had attained at least Year 12 or AQF Certificate III or above has risen 3.9 percentage points from 85.7% to 89.6%. 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.

Key Performance Measures

Table 1 summarises the national KPMs for 2023 in comparison with 2022, or the most recent calendar year for which comparable data exists. This is expressed as the short-term change to each KPM. Longer-term trends in the movement of KPMs are also presented. 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 on government funding for Australian schools, school income (from all sources) and schools' capital expenditure.

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 2022–23 financial year, total recurrent government funding for schooling was \$85.92 billion (\$24,857 per student in government schools and \$14,561 per student in non-government schools). This was made up of \$58.85 billion (68.5%) from state and territory budgets and \$27.08 billion (31.5%) from the Australian Government (Commonwealth) budget.
- Overall, 75.4% (\$64.75 billion) of total recurrent government funding was allocated to government schools and 24.6% (\$21.17 billion) to non-government schools.
- Average school income per student in 2023 (from all sources including government funding, fees and charges, and private contributions) was \$19,428 in government schools, \$21,114 in Catholic schools and \$27,279 in independent schools.
- In the 2022–23 financial year, average total government recurrent expenditure (money spent on the daily operations of schools) was \$24,857 per student in government schools, with 45.8% of total government recurrent expenditure (\$11,378 per student) spent on teaching staff salaries.
- In the 2023 calendar year, average total recurrent expenditure (money spent on the daily operations of schools) was \$21,252 per student in non-government schools, with 44.5% of total recurrent expenditure (\$9,461 per student) spent on teaching staff salaries.

² At the time of publication, data on Year 12 Certification rates for 2023 was not available. When this data becomes available, it will be updated on the National Report on Schooling in Australia data portal.

Table 1: Key performance measures for schooling, Australia, 2022–2023 and long-term trends

Key Performance Measures	Short-term change			Long-term trend		
	2022 or previous calendar year	2023	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 (%)	86.5	88.6	↔	2014–23	-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 (%)	49.9	61.6	↔	2018–23	-3.9	↓
1(d) NAPLAN participation: Proportion of students participating in NAPLAN in Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 (%)						
Year 3	96.0	96.1	↔	2008–23	-0.1	↔
Year 5	96.3	96.6	↔	2008–23	-0.1	↔
Year 7	95.2	96.2	↔	2008–23	-0.2	↓
Year 9	91.7	92.2	↔	2008–23	-0.3	↓
1(e) Apparent retention rate from Year 10 to Year 12 (%)	79.0	78.7	↔	2010–23	0.1	↔
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 (%)	26.3	26.8	↔	2015–23	-0.3	↓
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 SEW] (%)	88.3	87.3	↔	2004–23	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 SEW] (%)	76.4	77.4	↔	2004–23	-0.2	↓
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 SEW] (%)	75.0	75.4	↔	2004–23	-0.2	↓

Key Performance Measures	Short-term change			Long-term trend		
	2022 or previous calendar year	2023	Change	Trend period	Average annual change (percentage points)	Trend
2. Student Achievement – Literacy						
2(b) NAPLAN mean scaled scores for Reading in Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 (points on NAPLAN scale)						
Year 3 (2023 scale)	–	404.6	NA	–	–	NA
Year 5 (2023 scale)	–	495.9	NA	–	–	NA
Year 7 (2023 scale)	–	536.3	NA	–	–	NA
Year 9 (2023 scale)	–	564.4	NA	–	–	NA
2(d) NAPLAN mean scaled scores for Writing in Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 (points on NAPLAN scale)						
Year 3 (2023 scale)	–	416.3	NA	–	–	NA
Year 5 (2023 scale)	–	482.9	NA	–	–	NA
Year 7 (2023 scale)	–	533.7	NA	–	–	NA
Year 9 (2023 scale)	–	566.6	NA	–	–	NA
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 (2023 scale)	–	407.3	NA	–	–	NA
Year 5 (2023 scale)	–	487.6	NA	–	–	NA
Year 7 (2023 scale)	–	538.4	NA	–	–	NA
Year 9 (2023 scale)	–	567.7	NA	–	–	NA
3(d) Proportion of students achieving at or above the proficient standard (Intermediate international benchmark) on the TIMSS Mathematics scales (Comparison year is 2019):						
Year 4 (%)	70	72	NA	NA	NA	NA
Year 8 (%)	68	64	NA	NA	NA	NA
4. Student Achievement – Science						
4(a) Proportion of students achieving at or above the proficient standard in NAP Science Literacy (Comparison year is 2018):						
Year 6 – Level 3 (%)	58.1	56.6	↔	2003–23	0.1	↔
Year 10 – Level 4 (%)	49.6	53.7	↔	–	–	NA
4(b) Proportion of students achieving at or above the proficient standard (Intermediate international benchmark) on the TIMSS Science scales (Comparison year is 2019):						
Year 4 (%)	78	83	NA	NA	NA	NA
Year 8 (%)	74	70	NA	NA	NA	NA

Key Performance Measures	Short-term change			Long-term trend		
	2022 or previous calendar year	2023	Change	Trend period	Average annual change (percentage points)	Trend
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 SEW] (%)	90.6	90.4	↔	2004–23	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 SEW] (%)	90.1	89.6	↔	2004–23	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”.

- ↑ 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.

In 2023, NAPLAN testing moved from May to March and the NAPLAN scale was reset introducing a break in trend. Therefore, the trend in NAPLAN Achievement KPMs cannot be shown beyond 2022. Trend data for 2008 to 2022 by state and territory, and by other disaggregations where possible and appropriate, is provided in the KPMs data set in the National Report on Schooling data portal.

Chapter 1: Introduction



The National Report on Schooling 2023 is the 35th 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 2023 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 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 2023 and for the period 2013–2023 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.

Previous editions of the National Report on Schooling for the years 2009–2022 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 Co-operation and Development (OECD) Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) are implemented every three years.

As 2023 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 (2013–2022) 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.

1.2 Data sources used in this report

A main source of data reported in the *National Report on Schooling in Australia* 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 ABS by state and territory departments of education.

Data for non-government schools in all states and territories is collected by the AGDE, 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](#).

Other major data sources for the National Report on Schooling in Australia include the National Student Attendance Data Collection (ACARA); the SEW (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 (VETiS) collections (NCVER).

Please note that throughout this report, percentages may not total exactly 100% due to rounding.

Chapter 2: Schools and schooling



This chapter provides information on the status of Australian schooling in 2023, 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 2023, primary education consisted of a Foundation year (first year of full-time school) followed by Years 1–6, with secondary education from Years 7–12.³

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.

³ 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, 2023

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*, 2023.

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 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.⁴

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.

⁴ Statistical data on preschool education is available in ABS, [Preschool Education](#).

2.2 School numbers

Key Facts

In Australia in 2023:

- There were 9,629 schools – an increase of 15 schools since 2022.
- 69.7% of schools were government schools, 18.3% were Catholic and 12.0% independent.

In Australia, responsibility for school education rests mainly with the 6 state and 2 territory governments.⁵ 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 2023 are shown in Table 2.2. In 2023 there were 9,629 schools in Australia.⁶ This total included primary, secondary, combined (primary and secondary) and special schools, across government and non-government school sectors.⁷

Table 2.2: Number and proportion of schools by school type and school sector, Australia, 2023

School type	Government schools		Catholic schools		Independent schools		All non-government schools		All schools	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Primary	4,801	77.0	1,237	19.8	199	3.2	1,436	23.0	6,237	100.0
Secondary	1,068	73.5	320	22.0	65	4.5	385	26.5	1,453	100.0
Combined	505	35.5	160	11.3	757	53.2	917	64.5	1,422	100.0
Special	338	65.4	47	9.1	132	25.5	179	34.6	517	100.0
Total	6,712	69.7	1,764	18.3	1,153	12.0	2,917	30.3	9,629	100.0

Notes: 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 NSSC and in this report. Independent public schools established in Qld, WA and the NT are government schools.

Source: ABS, *Schools*, 2023.

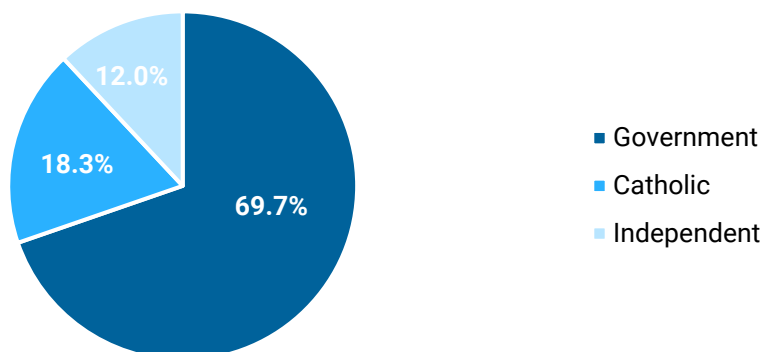
⁵ New South Wales (NSW), Victoria (Vic), Queensland (Qld), South Australia (SA), Western Australia (WA), Tasmania (Tas), Northern Territory (NT) and Australian Capital Territory (ACT).

⁶ As at the NSSC schools census date, 4 August 2023.

⁷ See Chapter 10: Glossary for definitions of school levels, school types and school sectors.

The proportion of schools by school sector in 2023 is illustrated in Figure 2.1. Of the total number of schools, 69.7% were administered by state and territory governments, 18.3% 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.

Figure 2.1: Proportion of schools by school sector, Australia, 2023 (%)



Source: ABS, *Schools*, 2023.

In 2023, 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 (77.0%) of primary schools were government schools.

Most secondary schools (73.5%) and special schools (65.4%) were also government schools, while most combined schools (64.5%) were non-government schools, mainly in the independent school sector. The number and proportion of schools by state and territory in 2023 are shown in Table 2.3.

Table 2.3: Number and proportion of schools by school type and state/territory, Australia, 2023

School type	State/Territory								Australia
	NSW	Vic	Qld	SA	WA	Tas	NT	ACT	
Primary	2,089	1,571	1,145	434	686	153	74	85	6,237
Secondary	511	345	279	85	143	41	24	25	1,453
Combined	343	251	283	165	209	59	90	22	1,422
Special	182	116	90	28	82	8	6	5	517
Total	3,125	2,283	1,797	712	1,120	261	194	137	9,629
Proportion (%)	32.5	23.7	18.7	7.4	11.6	2.7	2.0	1.4	100.0

Source: ABS, *Schools*, 2023.

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 15 from 9,614 in 2022 to 9,629 in 2023, with increases of 6 in Qld, 5 in NSW and 4 in Vic and WA and decreases of 3 in SA and 1 in Tas. Proportions of schools per state and territory in 2023 did not change substantially from 2022.

There was a net rise of 236 (2.5%) in the total number of schools over the period 2013–2023. 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, 2013–2023

Year	Government schools		Catholic schools		Independent schools		All non-government schools		All schools	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
2013	6,661	70.9	1,717	18.3	1,015	10.8	2,732	29.1	9,393	100.0
2014	6,651	70.8	1,722	18.3	1,016	10.8	2,738	29.2	9,389	100.0
2015	6,639	70.6	1,737	18.5	1,028	10.9	2,765	29.4	9,404	100.0
2016	6,634	70.5	1,738	18.5	1,042	11.1	2,780	29.5	9,414	100.0
2017	6,639	70.3	1,744	18.5	1,061	11.2	2,805	29.7	9,444	100.0
2018	6,646	70.1	1,753	18.5	1,078	11.4	2,831	29.9	9,477	100.0
2019	6,659	70.1	1,756	18.5	1,088	11.4	2,844	29.9	9,503	100.0
2020	6,675	70.0	1,762	18.5	1,105	11.6	2,867	30.0	9,542	100.0
2021	6,692	69.8	1,762	18.4	1,127	11.8	2,889	30.2	9,581	100.0
2022	6,699	69.7	1,766	18.4	1,149	12.0	2,915	30.3	9,614	100.0
2023	6,712	69.7	1,764	18.3	1,153	12.0	2,917	30.3	9,629	100.0

Source: ABS, *Schools*, 2023 and previous releases.

Between 2013 and 2023 there was a net rise of 47 in the number of Catholic schools, of 138 in the number of independent schools and of 51 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 2023:

- A total of 4,086,998 students were enrolled in Australian schools, an increase of 1.1% from 2022.
- 64.0% of school students were enrolled in government schools, 19.7% were in Catholic schools and 16.3% in independent schools.
- 55.3% of students were primary school students and 44.7% 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.

Over the past 10 years:

- Total enrolments grew by 441,479 (12.1%), largely reflecting the growth in the school-age population.
- The number of students in independent schools rose from 521,436 in 2013 to 666,581 in 2023 – a 27.8% increase. This has resulted in a 2.0 percentage point increase in the proportion of students attending independent schools.

Enrolments by school level and sector

In 2023, a total of 4,086,998 students were enrolled in Australian schools, a rise of 1.1% from 2022. The numbers and proportions of individual students by school level and school sector in 2023 are summarised in Table 2.5.

Table 2.5: Number and proportion of students (full-time plus part-time) enrolled in schools by school level and school sector, Australia, 2023

School level	Government schools		Catholic schools		Independent schools		All schools	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	% (by school level)
Primary	1,553,683	68.7	411,876	18.2	294,823	13.0	2,260,382	55.3
Junior	759,168	58.4	281,227	21.6	259,355	20.0	1,299,750	31.8
Senior	301,243	57.2	113,220	21.5	112,403	21.3	526,866	12.9
Total secondary	1,060,411	58.1	394,447	21.6	371,758	20.4	1,826,616	44.7
Total	2,614,094	64.0	806,323	19.7	666,581	16.3	4,086,998	100.0

Source: ABS, Schools, 2023.

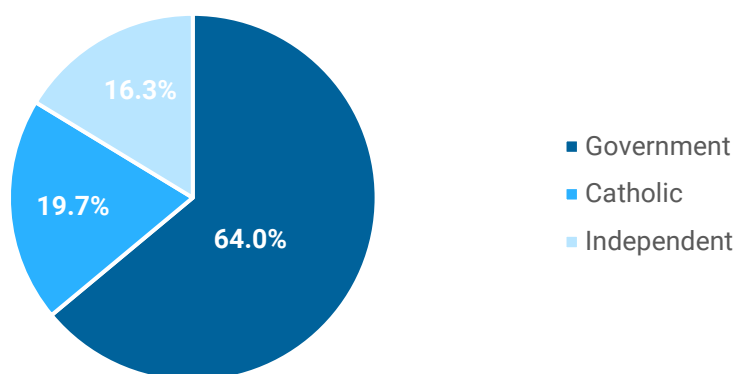
Of the 4.09 million school students, 2.26 million (55.3%) were primary students, and 1.83 million (44.7%) were secondary students. This difference is mainly due to the structure of schooling, in which primary schooling includes more year groups or cohorts than secondary schooling. Also, not all students complete Years 11 and 12, the last 2 years of secondary school.

In 2023, 64.0% of Australian school students were enrolled in government schools, 19.7% of students were enrolled in Catholic schools and 16.3% of students were enrolled in independent schools. This is illustrated in Figure 2.2.

The proportions of students enrolled in each school sector differed between levels of education, with government schools accounting for 68.7% of primary students but less than 60% (58.1%) of secondary students.

Part-time students (10,867 students) accounted for only 0.3% of total enrolments. They were concentrated in Years 11 and 12 (70.9%), and in government schools (89.1%).⁸

Figure 2.2: Proportion of students (full-time plus part-time) enrolled in schools by sector, Australia, 2023 (%)



Source: ABS, *Schools*, 2023.

Enrolments by school level, and state and territory

Enrolments of students (full-time plus part-time) by state and territory and school level in 2023 are shown in Table 2.6.

Table 2.6: Number and proportion of students by school type and state/territory, Australia, 2023

School level	State/Territory								
	NSW	Vic	Qld	SA	WA	Tas	NT	ACT	Australia
Primary	698,165	574,381	476,928	148,790	252,373	44,151	23,651	41,943	2,260,382
Junior secondary	399,657	324,745	284,697	88,417	139,750	26,503	12,054	23,927	1,299,750
Senior secondary	151,307	136,856	116,033	39,841	57,440	10,403	4,203	10,783	526,866
Total secondary	550,964	461,601	400,730	128,258	197,190	36,906	16,257	34,710	1,826,616
Total	1,249,12	1,035,982	877,658	277,048	449,563	81,057	39,908	76,653	4,086,998
Proportion of Australian total	30.6	25.3	21.5	6.8	11.0	2.0	1.0	1.9	100.0

Source: ABS, *Schools*, 2023.

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 (77.4%) were enrolled in the 3 most populous states of NSW, Vic, and Qld.

⁸ Student Numbers data set, National Report on Schooling data portal.

Growth in enrolments

The number of students enrolled in Australian schools grew by 44,486 (1.1%) between 2022 and 2023.⁹ During this period, there was an increase of 8,268 students (0.3%) in government schools and 36,218 students in non-government schools. Primary school enrolments increased by 12,593 students (0.6%) and secondary school enrolments increased by 31,893 students (1.8%).

In government schools, primary and junior secondary enrolments remained relatively unchanged between 2022 and 2023 (a net increase of 48 primary students and no change in the number of junior secondary enrolments). Senior secondary enrolments increased by 2.8% (8,220 students).

The non-government sector experienced growth in total enrolments in primary and secondary school, but with proportionately lower growth in Catholic schools (1.4%) than in independent schools (3.9%). In Catholic schools, primary enrolments increased by 0.8% (3,175 students) and secondary enrolments increased by 2.0% (7,780 students). In independent schools, primary enrolments increased by 3.3% (9,370 students) and secondary enrolments increased by 4.5% (15,893 students).

There was a shift between 2022 and 2023 in the share of total enrolments between government and non-government schools, with government schools falling by 0.5 percentage points to 64.0%, Catholic schools rising by 0.1 percentage points to 19.7% and independent schools rising by 0.4 percentage points to 16.3% of total enrolments.

Between 2013 and 2023, total enrolments grew by 441,479 (12.1%), largely reflecting the growth in the school-age population, as schooling is essentially compulsory between the ages of 6 and 16. 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, and the number of Full-Fee Paying Overseas Students (FFPOS) enrolled in Australian schools.

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 (54.2%) occurring in government schools. The number of students in independent schools rose from 521,436 in 2013 to 666,581 in 2023 – a 27.8% increase over 10 years. This has resulted in a 2.0 percentage point increase in the proportion of students attending independent schools. Table 2.7 summarises this data and Figure 2.3 illustrates the growth in student enrolments 2013–2023 by school sector.

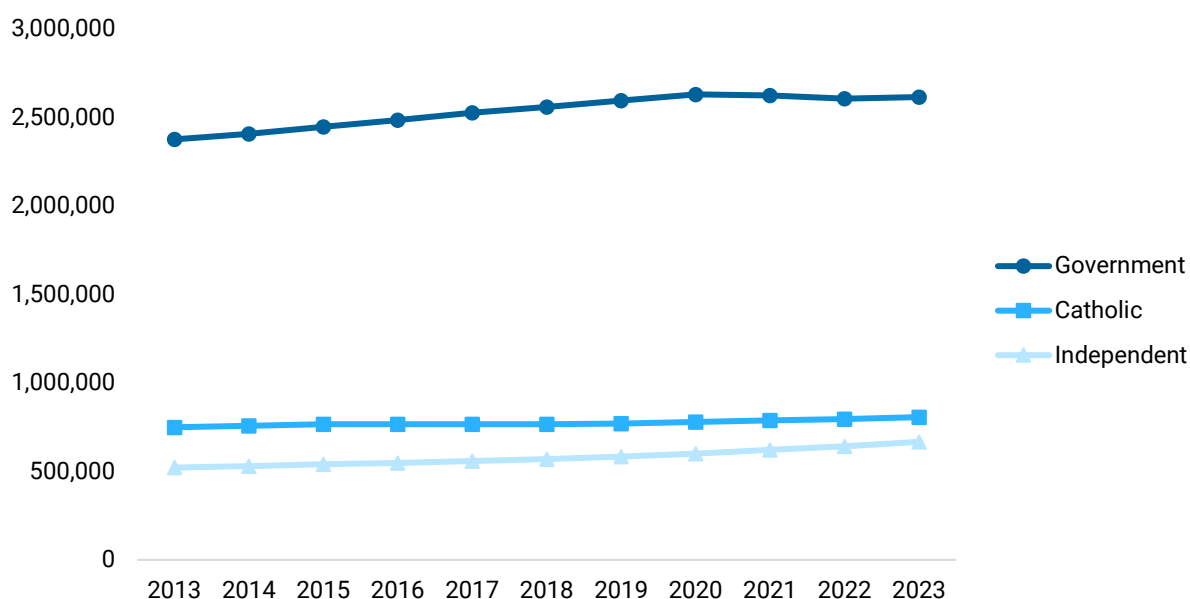
⁹ The number of Full-Fee Paying Overseas Students contributed to the higher growth rate, increasing by over a third (36.6 per cent) from 2022 to 21,124 students. Between 2019–2022 there was a drop of 41.9 per cent, primarily due to the COVID-19 pandemic (ABS, *Schools*, 2023).

Table 2.7: Number and proportion of students (full-time plus part-time) by school sector, Australia, 2013–2023

Year	Government schools		Catholic schools		Independent schools		All schools
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.
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
2023	2,614,094	64.0	806,323	19.7	666,581	16.3	4,086,998

Source: ABS, Schools, 2023 and previous releases.

Figure 2.3: Number of students enrolled (full-time plus part-time) by school sector, Australia, 2013–2023



Source: ABS, Schools, 2023.

Between 2013 and 2019 the government sector share of total enrolments increased by 0.6 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%. While total enrolments in government schools increased in 2023, the government sector share of students declined by 0.5 percentage points to 64.0%.

Over this ten-year period, independent school enrolments rose by 2.0 percentage points to 16.3% of the total, while Catholic sector enrolments fell by 0.8 percentage points to 19.7% of total enrolments. This continues a long-term trend in the relative growth of the independent sector.

The fall in total enrolment growth in government schools in 2020–2022 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 2020 and 2021 the number of FFPOS fell by 5,480, followed by a fall of 1,561 between 2021 and 2022. In 2023, the number of FFPOS increased by over a third (36.6 per cent) to 21,124 students (ABS, *Schools*, 2023).

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. This depressed population growth across all age groups, including those with school-aged children, had a negative impact on school enrolments. Overall, net overseas migration for 5–19-year-olds fell from 66,510 in 2019 to 3,220 in 2021 before increasing to 51,330 in 2022 and 97,080 in 2023.¹⁰ 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 2023 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. It is not clear how much of the shift in sector proportions since 2019 is attributable to the fall in Australia’s net overseas migration and how much to net movements of students between sectors.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students

In 2023 there were 264,395 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students enrolled in Australian schools, making up 6.5% of the total school population.¹¹ 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. NSW had the highest number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander enrolments in 2023, with 89,226 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students (33.7% of the national total). This is more than the NSW share of total enrolments nationally (30.6%) and represented 7.1% of the state’s students, more than the national average of 6.5%. Qld schools accounted for 30.4% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students (compared with 21.5% of total enrolments) and WA 12.0% (compared with 11.0% 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 2023, but for 5.9% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander enrolments. The 15,671 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students enrolled in NT schools made up 39.3% 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.

¹⁰ ABS, Overseas migration, release date 15/12/2023, Net overseas migration: Arrivals, departures and net, State/territory, Age, and sex - Financial years, 2004-05 onwards.

¹¹ 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, 2023

School level	State/Territory								
	NSW	Vic	Qld	SA	WA	Tas	NT	ACT	Australia
Primary	53,072	12,178	46,544	8,532	18,923	4,895	9,370	1,434	154,948
Junior secondary	29,044	6,862	26,061	4,822	9,837	2,902	4,938	774	85,240
Senior secondary	7,110	2,179	7,999	1,763	3,080	921	1,363	332	24,747
Total secondary	36,154	9,041	34,060	6,585	12,917	3,823	6,301	1,106	109,987
Total	89,226	21,219	80,604	15,117	31,840	8,718	15,671	2,540	264,935
Proportion of the Australian total of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students per state/territory (%)	33.7	8.0	30.4	5.7	12.0	3.3	5.9	1.0	100.0
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students as a proportion of total students in each state/territory (%)	7.1	2.0	9.2	5.5	7.1	10.8	39.3	3.3	6.5

Note: See notes for Table 2.5.

Source: ABS, *Schools*, 2023.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students were under-represented in senior secondary years: 4.7% of senior secondary students were identified as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, compared with 6.6% of junior secondary students and 6.9% 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 81.8% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander enrolments in government schools compared with 64.0% of enrolments for all students. Overall, 18.2% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students were enrolled in non-government schools (11.3% in Catholic schools, 6.9% in independent schools) with this proportion rising from 15.1% for primary students to 26.4% for senior secondary students.

2.4 School students with disability

Key Facts

In Australia in 2023:

- 991,272 school students received an educational adjustment due to disability – this represents 24.2% of total enrolments, up from 22.5% in 2022 and 18.0% in 2015.
- 2.2% 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 4.3% were provided with substantial support, 10.4% were provided with supplementary support and 7.3% were supported through quality differentiated teaching practices.
- Among school students who received an educational adjustment due to disability, 54.3% of adjustments were provided to students with cognitive disability, 33.6% to students with social/emotional disability, 9.3% for students with physical disability and 2.7% for sensory disability.

The [Nationally Consistent Collection of Data on School Students with Disability \(NCCD\)](#) 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 records information on students who received an educational adjustment to address the functional impact of a disability for a minimum of 10 weeks of school education in the 12 months preceding Census Day.¹² 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.¹³

¹² Census Day is the date on which schools identify the student population to count for the government and non-government School Census, which includes the NCCD.

¹³ Further details about the NCCD, levels of adjustment, and categories of disability are available on the NCCD portal (www.nccd.edu.au).

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.¹⁴

In 2023, 991,272 school students received an educational adjustment due to disability. This represented 24.2% of total enrolments. Table 2.9 shows the number and proportion of students that received an adjustment due to disability in 2023, by level of educational adjustment and category of disability.

Table 2.9: School students with disability receiving adjustments as a percentage of the total school enrolments, by category of disability and level of adjustment, 2023

Level of adjustment	Category of disability				
	Cognitive	Physical	Sensory	Social/emotional	All
Support within QDTP	3.3	1.6	0.2	2.2	7.3
Supplementary	6.2	0.4	0.3	3.5	10.4
Substantial	2.3	0.2	0.1	1.7	4.3
Extensive	1.3	0.1	0.1	0.7	2.2
Total	13.2	2.3	0.7	8.1	24.2

Source: Nationally Consistent Collection of Data on School Students with Disability, 2023.

Table 2.10 shows the proportion of school students with disability, by school sector and level of adjustment provided in 2023. Overall, the proportion of students receiving adjustments due to disability in Catholic schools (21.8%) and independent schools (21.9%) was lower than that of government schools (25.5%).

Table 2.10: School students with disability receiving adjustments as a percentage of the total student population, by category of disability and school sector, 2023

School sector	Category of disability				
	Cognitive	Physical	Sensory	Social/emotional	All
Government	13.6	2.1	0.8	9.0	25.5
Catholic	13.1	2.1	0.4	6.1	21.8
Independent	11.3	3.1	0.5	7.0	21.9
Total	13.2	2.3	0.7	8.1	24.2

Source: Nationally Consistent Collection of Data on School Students with Disability, 2023

¹⁴ Education Council (2017), 2017 data on students in Australian schools receiving adjustments for disability.

The proportion of students receiving an adjustment for a physical disability was higher in the independent sector (3.1%) than in the Catholic (2.1%) and government (2.1%) 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 2.11 shows the proportion of students with disability in 2023, by school sector and level of adjustment provided. The proportion of students in Catholic schools who received support within QDTP (4.6%) was lower than in independent schools (8.2%) and government schools (7.9%). The proportion of students receiving extensive support was higher in government schools (2.9%) than in Catholic (0.9%) and independent schools (1.0%). 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.¹⁵

Table 2.11: School students with disability receiving adjustments as a percentage of the total school student population, by level of adjustment and school sector, 2023

School sector	Level of adjustment				
	Support within QDTP	Supplementary	Substantial	Extensive	All
Government	7.9	10.1	4.6	2.9	25.5
Catholic	4.6	12.0	4.3	0.9	21.8
Independent	8.2	9.5	3.2	1.0	21.9
Total	7.3	10.4	4.3	2.2	24.2

Source: Nationally Consistent Collection of Data on School Students with Disability, 2023.

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 31.3% of students receiving an adjustment due to disability, 10.0% of students receiving substantial support and 4.8% receiving extensive support, the NT had the highest proportion of school students receiving assistance. In SA, 29.2% of school students received an adjustment due to disability, with higher proportions receiving support within QDTP (9.6%) and supplementary support (13.3%) than substantial or extensive support (3.9% and 2.4% respectively).

Table 2.12: School students with disability receiving adjustments as a percentage of the total school student population, by level of adjustment and state/territory, 2023

Level of support	State/Territory								
	NSW	Vic	Qld	SA	WA	Tas	NT	ACT	Australia
Support within QDTP	6.8	8.7	5.1	9.6	9.1	4.1	5.1	7.2	7.3
Supplementary	11.4	9.5	9.9	13.3	9.2	8.5	11.5	9.5	10.4
Substantial	3.9	4.9	4.8	3.9	3.0	5.2	10.0	4.0	4.3
Extensive	2.1	3.1	1.8	2.4	1.0	1.4	4.8	1.1	2.2
Total	24.2	26.3	21.5	29.2	22.3	19.3	31.3	21.8	24.2

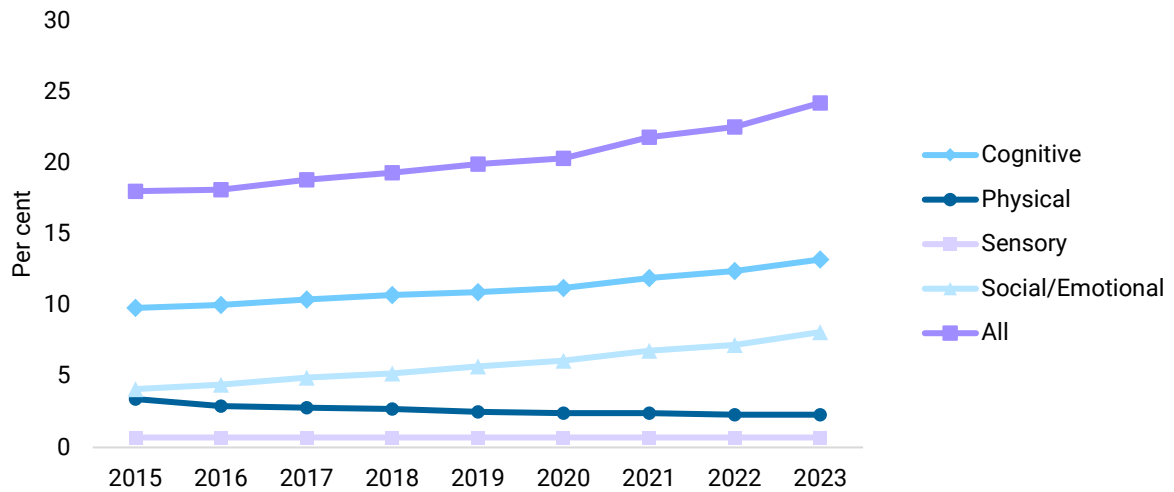
Source: Nationally Consistent Collection of Data on School Students with Disability, 2023.

¹⁵ Independent reviews of the quality of the data found that schools' level of understanding of the data 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 (Education Council (2017), 2017 data on students in Australian schools receiving adjustments for disability).

Between 2015 and 2023, the proportion of school students receiving an adjustment due to disability increased by 6.2 percentage points, from 18.0% to 24.2%, as shown in Figure 2.4.

While the proportion of school students receiving adjustments for cognitive and social-emotional disabilities increased by 3.4 and 4.0 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 2023.

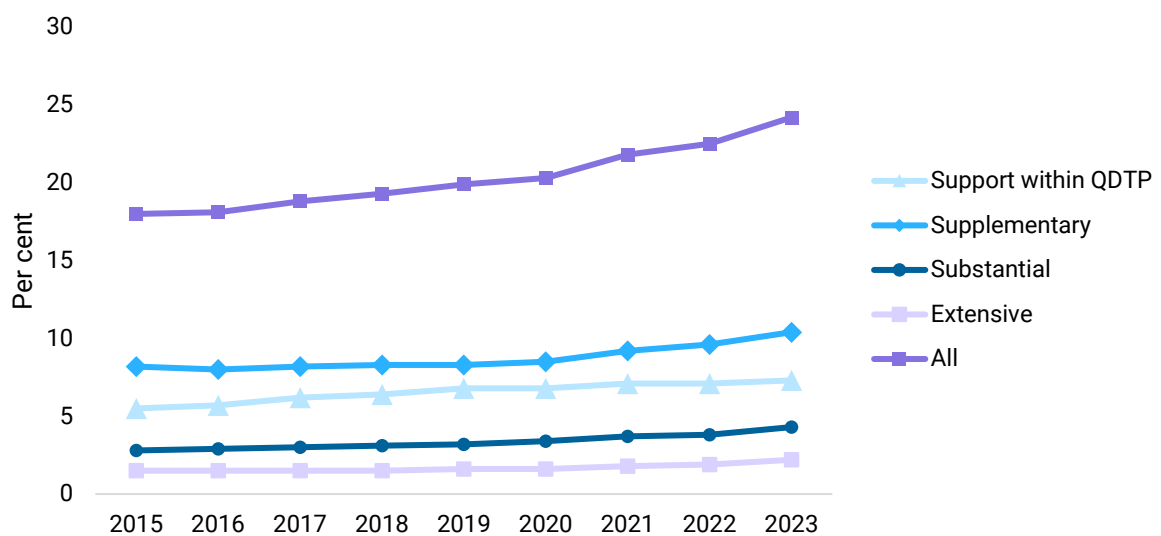
Figure 2.4: School students with disability receiving adjustments as a percentage of the total student population, by category of disability, 2015–2023



Source: Nationally Consistent Collection of Data on School Students with Disability, 2023. and previous years.

Figure 2.5 shows that between 2015 and 2023, the proportion of school students receiving support within QDTP increased by 1.8 percentage points, the proportion receiving supplementary support increased by 2.2 percentage points, and the proportion of students receiving substantial and extensive support increased by 1.5 percentage points and 0.7 percentage points respectively.

Figure 2.5: School students with disability receiving adjustments as a percentage of the total student population, by level of adjustment, 2015–2023



Source: Nationally Consistent Collection of Data on School Students with Disability, 2023. and previous years.

2.5 Staff numbers

Key Facts

In Australia in 2023:

- There were 311,655 full-time equivalent (FTE) teaching staff in Australia – an increase of 4,427 (1.4%) from 2022.
- Staff numbers closely reflected enrolments, with 62.6% of school teachers employed in government schools, 19.3% in Catholic schools 18.2% in independent schools.
- Australia’s teaching workforce continued to be predominantly female, with women making up 71.9% of FTE teachers in 2023. The gender difference was more pronounced at the primary level (82.1% female) than at secondary level (61.4% female).

In 2023, there were 311,655 FTE teaching staff across primary and secondary schooling in Australia. This was an increase of 4,427 (1.4%) from 2022. It was made up of a rise of 3,409 non-government school teachers (3.0% increase) and 1,018 government school teachers (0.5% increase). The percentage increase in teaching staff in independent schools (3.7%) was larger than that of Catholic schools (2.4%).

Across Australia in 2023, 62.6% of FTE teachers were employed by the government school sector, 19.3% by the Catholic school sector and 18.2% by the independent sector. This remains broadly consistent with the distribution of (full-time plus part-time) students across school sectors.

The numbers and proportions of FTE teaching staff by school sector, school level and gender in 2023 are shown in Table 2.13.

Table 2.13: Number and proportion of full-time equivalent teaching staff by school sector, school level and gender, Australia, 2023

	Government schools	Catholic schools	Independent schools	Total non-government schools	All schools
Primary level					
Male	19,809	4,174	4,224	8,397	28,207
Female	89,563	23,133	16,864	39,998	129,560
Total	109,372	27,307	21,088	48,395	157,767
% of all staff	69.3%	17.3%	13.4%	30.7%	100.0%
Secondary level					
Male	32,068	12,660	14,627	27,287	59,355
Female	53,510	20,084	20,940	41,024	94,533
Total	85,577	32,744	35,567	68,311	153,888
% of all staff	55.6%	21.3%	23.1%	44.4%	100.0%
Total					
Male	51,877	16,834	18,851	35,684	87,561
Female	143,072	43,217	37,804	81,021	224,094
Total	194,949	60,051	56,655	116,706	311,655
% of all staff	62.6%	19.3%	18.2%	37.4%	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 Section 10: 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.

Source: ABS, *Schools*, 2023.

In 2023, 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 previous years. In 2023, the difference was again more pronounced at the primary level (82.1% female) than at secondary level (61.4% female). The number and proportion of FTE teaching staff by state and territory in 2023 is shown in Table 2.14.

Table 2.14: Number and proportion of full-time equivalent teaching staff by state and territory and school level, Australia, 2023

School level	State/Territory								Australia
	NSW	Vic	Qld	SA	WA	Tas	NT	ACT	
Primary	46,753	43,059	32,598	10,649	16,526	3,282	1,963	2,937	157,767
Secondary	45,214	41,581	33,174	10,383	16,053	3,258	1,468	2,759	153,888
Total	91,967	84,640	65,771	21,032	32,579	6,540	3,431	5,696	311,655
Proportion (%)	29.5	27.2	21.1	6.7	10.5	2.1	1.1	1.8	100.0

Note: See notes for Table 2.12.

Source: ABS, *Schools*, 2023.

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 2013–2023 are shown in Table 2.15. Between 2013 and 2023, the total number of FTE teaching staff grew by 50,070 (19.1%). This was substantially more than the percentage growth in (full-time plus part-time) student enrolments (12.1%) over the same period.

Table 2.15: Number of FTE teaching staff by school sector, Australia, 2013–2023

Year	Government schools	Catholic schools	Independent schools	Total non-government schools	All schools
2013	167,903	50,527	43,154	93,682	261,585
2014	169,199	50,936	43,930	94,866	264,065
2015	171,763	52,160	45,277	97,437	269,200
2016	176,819	53,154	46,357	99,511	276,330
2017	180,973	53,839	47,248	101,087	282,059
2018	185,458	54,511	48,614	103,125	288,583
2019	182,959	55,372	49,963	105,335	288,294
2020	189,069	56,645	50,802	107,447	296,516
2021	193,186	57,667	52,686	110,353	303,539
2022	193,932	58,666	54,631	113,297	307,228
2023	194,949	60,051	56,655	116,706	311,655

Note: See notes for Table 2.12.

Source: ABS, *Schools*, 2023 and previous releases.

In 2023, FTE teaching staff accounted for 66.0% of the FTE of all school staff. In addition to teaching staff, 160,215 FTE staff were employed in administrative and clerical roles, as teacher aides and assistants (27.0% of all staff), as specialist support staff (3.6%) or in building and maintenance (3.3%). Time series data on school staff by state and territory, school sector and school level is available in the National Report on Schooling data portal.

2.6 Student-teacher ratios

Key Facts

In Australia in 2023:

- The average student to teaching staff ratio was 13.1 students per teacher, the same as in 2022 and a reduction from 13.3 students per teacher in 2021.
- The average student to teaching staff ratio was lower in independent schools (11.8 students per teacher) compared to Catholic and government schools (13.4 students per teacher).
- The average student-teacher ratio was 11.8 students per teacher at the secondary level, compared with 14.3 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 2023 across the 3 school sectors.

Table 2.16: FTE student–teacher ratios, by school sector and school level, Australia, 2023

School sector	Primary	Secondary	All schools
Government	14.2	12.3	13.4
Catholic	15.1	12.0	13.4
Independent	14.0	10.4	11.8
All non-government	14.6	11.2	12.6
All schools	14.3	11.8	13.1

Source: ABS, *Schools*, 2023.

For all Australian schools, the average FTE student–teacher ratio in 2023 was 13.1 students per teacher. There was no change to this ratio between 2022 and 2023, after a reduction of 0.2 from 13.3 students per teacher in 2021.

Between 2022 and 2023 student teacher ratios in government schools nationally remained constant, at 13.4 students per teacher. However, there was a reduction in student teacher ratios in government primary schools, from 14.3 students per teacher in 2022 to 14.2 students per teacher in 2023. Student teacher ratios in government secondary schools remained the same in 2022 and 2023, at 12.3 students per teacher.

Overall, the average student-teacher ratio for non-government schools decreased by 0.1 between 2022 and 2023, to 12.6 students per teacher. The average ratio for Catholic schools fell by 0.2 to 13.4 students per teacher, while ratios in independent schools increased by 0.1 to 11.8 students per teacher in 2023.

Table 2.17 shows average student–teacher ratios in 2023 by school level and state and territory.

Table 2.17: FTE student–teacher ratios, by state/territory and school level, Australia, 2023

School level	State/Territory								
	NSW	Vic	Qld	SA	WA	Tas	NT	ACT	Australia
Primary	14.9	13.3	14.6	14.0	15.3	13.4	12.0	14.3	14.3
Secondary	12.2	11.1	12.0	12.3	12.3	11.3	11.0	12.6	11.8
All schools	13.6	12.2	13.3	13.1	13.8	12.4	11.6	13.4	13.1

Source: ABS, *Schools*, 2023.

Between 2022 and 2023, the number of students per teacher remained constant in NSW and Tas, increased by 0.1 in WA and ACT and by 0.2 in the NT, and decreased by 0.1 in Vic and QLD and by 0.2 in SA.

While there was no change in overall student–teacher ratios at a national level between 2022 and 2023, the average number of students per teacher at the primary level decreased by 0.1 to 14.3 students per teacher in 2023.

At the primary school level, the number of students per teacher remained constant in WA, Tas and the ACT, decreased by 0.3 in SA and by 0.1 in NSW, Vic and Qld, and increased by 0.4 in the NT. At the secondary level, the number of students per teacher increased by 0.3 in the ACT and by 0.1 in NSW, SA and WA, and decreased by 0.1 in Vic, Qld, Tas and the NT.

Student–teacher ratios are consistently lower for secondary education than for primary education in all school sectors and across all states and territories. In 2023, the average FTE student–teacher ratio was 11.8 teachers per student at the secondary level, compared with 14.3 teachers per student 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 13.9 students per teacher in 2013 to 13.1 teachers per student in 2023, with reductions across all school sectors. Time series data (2001–2023) on student–teacher ratios by state and territory, school sector and school level is available in the National Report on Schooling data portal.

Chapter 3: Policies and Priorities



This chapter outlines the national policy context for Australian schooling in 2023 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, states and territories hold constitutional responsibility for school education. 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, the Australian Government and non-government school sector organisations, 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. Skills and training ministers had responsibility for the ongoing management of the VET system through the Skills Ministers Meeting.

Education Ministers Meeting

The Education Minister's meeting (EMM) is the forum for collaboration and decision-making on Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC), school education, higher education and 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 December 2022, Education Ministers agreed to focus on the following 3 national priorities for 2023:

- Developing a long-term vision for the ECEC sector, to support parents' workforce participation and early learning and child development.
- Implementing the National Teacher Workforce Action Plan, which sets out a clear pathway to addressing the national issue of teacher workforce shortages.
- Developing the next NRSA, which is an important vehicle through which governments across Australia work together to deliver quality school education.

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 and Workforce Ministerial Council.¹⁶ Both committees consist of ministers from each state and territory and the Australian Government with portfolio responsibility for skills issues and have replaced the Council of Australian Governments (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.

¹⁶ Following a review of the Ministerial Councils in 2022 by National Cabinet, Skills Ministers Meeting (SMM) was renamed to the Skills and Workforce Ministerial Council (SWMC) in 2023. A direct reporting line to the National Cabinet was established on a key priority within an updated Federal Relations Architecture relating to skills reform and negotiation of a new National Skills Agreement.

National School Reform Agreement

The NSRA is in place from 2019 to 2024.¹⁷ 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 system¹⁸
- Enhancing the national evidence base:
 6. Implementing a unique student identifier (USI) that meets national privacy requirements in order to support better understanding of student progression and improve the national evidence base¹⁹
 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.

Reporting and public transparency arrangements include an annual public report from Education Ministers 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 2023 is noted below and in the following sections of this chapter.

Review to Inform a Better and Fairer Education System (the Review)

The NSRA underpins Commonwealth funding for schooling and seeks to lift student outcomes. On 29 March 2023, the Hon Jason Clare MP, Minister for Education announced the Review to advise Education Ministers on what reform priorities should be included in the next agreement.

¹⁷ 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 was extended for a further 12 months, to 31 December 2024.

¹⁸ ITE refers to degrees and/or diplomas required for professional employment in teaching.

¹⁹ 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.

The Expert Panel (the Panel) conducting the Review travelled extensively across Australia, visiting schools in each state and territory to undertake wide stakeholder consultation with teachers, school leaders and support staff, parents, students and key stakeholder groups.

On 11 December 2023, Education Ministers noted the release of the Independent Panel's Report and the Australian Government Summary Report of the Review to Inform a Better and Fairer Education System.²⁰ Education Ministers committed to working together to get every school to a minimum of 100% of the Schooling Resource Standard (SRS).²¹

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 plan builds on a range of initiatives in jurisdictions, sectors and individual schools. The plan lists 5 priority areas for action, including improving teacher supply, strengthening initial teacher education (ITE), and keeping the teachers we have.

Australian Curriculum review

ACARA) is an independent statutory authority responsible to Education Ministers, 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. In 2023, ACARA continued work on completing the final phase of the curriculum review, with curricula for languages being progressively released for public comment and updated. 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 2023 was on the publication of information products to empower children and students with disability and their families; and strengthen the knowledge and capability of education providers. For example, new videos showing how teachers and school leaders can meet the Standards and support students with disability were made available on the AITSL website.²² More information is provided in Part 3.12: Supporting all young Australians at risk of educational disadvantage.

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 2023, all states and territories participated in national policy initiatives under the NRSA. Other state and territory policy initiatives are noted in the following sections of this chapter. Information on state and territory initiatives reported in this chapter is drawn from contributions received from state and territory education authorities, the National Catholic Education Commission and Independent Schools Australia.

²⁰ [Education Ministers Meeting Communiqué](#), 11 December 2023.

²¹ EMM Statement – [Better and Fairer Education System Review and the next National Education Funding and Reform Agreement, 11 December 2023](#)

²² These are available on the AITSL website at: [Teachers supporting students with disability](#).

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.

It 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 2023 in addressing the areas for action is reported in the following sections of this chapter.

National Agreement on Closing the Gap

Education is key to increasing pathways to success for First Nations people and is associated with increased wellbeing across all other aspects of life. The National Agreement on Closing the Gap includes more targets aimed at improving First Nations people's education opportunities and outcomes than any other sector within Australia.

The National 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 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%.

The Australian Government, through education, is committed to:

- Improving the education outcomes of First Nations children and students.
- Ensuring that all Australians have equitable access to a quality education.
- Working in partnership with First Nations education experts and peak bodies, to ensure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children enjoy the full benefits of education.
- Ensuring that school environments are culturally safe and First Nations cultures are valued, respected and visibly present.
- Providing opportunities for First Nations children to attend early childhood education, graduate high school, and find a higher education pathway to set them up for great employment opportunities.
- Working with States and Territories to ensure mainstream school policy and programs contribute to improvements in outcomes of all students.

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).

Consent and Respectful Relationships Education

In the October 2022 Budget, the Australian Government committed \$83.5 million over 6 years from 2022–23 to work in partnership with states, territories, non-government school sector, and subject matter experts, to support delivery of evidence based, age-appropriate, expert-developed Consent and Respectful Relationships Education (CRRE) in primary and secondary schools. This included \$77.6 million in funding to be provided to states and territories and non-government school sector to support the delivery of CRRE in their school communities. To inform and guide the implementation of the CRRE measure:

- A National Respectful Relationships Education Expert Working Group was established in May 2023, with state, territory, non-government school sector and subject matter expert representatives.
- A rapid review into current delivery approaches in jurisdictions and schools to identify best-practice, gaps and areas for improvement was completed in September 2023.
- Development of a Respectful Relationships Education (RRE) Framework to support high-quality and evidence-based RRE in all schools is underway and expected to be completed by mid-2024.

Early Childhood Care and Development Policy Partnership

The Early Childhood Care and Development Policy Partnership is one of 5 Policy Partnerships established under the National Agreement on Closing the Gap. It is a shared decision-making forum 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 ECEC, maternal and child health and child safety sectors and support reforms across early childhood systems.

The Partnership is co-chaired by the national peak body for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families, SNAICC – National Voice for our Children, and the Commonwealth Department of Education. Membership comprises senior officials from each Australian government, Coalition of Peaks representatives and independent First Nations members. Support is provided by a co-secretariat operated in partnership between SNAICC and the Commonwealth Department of Education.

The Partnership will focus on the Priority Reforms and Outcomes 2, 3, 4, 12 and 13 of Closing the Gap. The Australian Government has committed \$10.2 million over 3 years to establish the Partnership. It will be reviewed after 3 years.

State, territory and sector initiatives

- The ACT marked 5 years of its 10-year Future of Education strategy with a cross-sectoral Ideas Summit. School leaders, students and community partners from across the ACT shared views and experiences of what is currently working and what could be done better. A Listening Report was developed from the summit that will inform planning for the next 5 years.
- Partnerships with the early childhood sector have been established to support the delivery of the Valuing Educators, Values Children Workforce Strategy 2023–25, under the ACT Government’s 10-year Set up for Success: An Early Childhood Strategy for the ACT.

- The *University of Canberra Affiliated Schools Program* continued to bring together the expertise of university staff, teachers, and school leaders to improve student outcomes in ACT public schools.
- The NSW Department of Education and the NSW Federation of Parents and Citizens Association signed a formal partnership agreement which highlighted their strong, ongoing working relationships. This 10-year agreement will support strong collaboration between schools, P&C associations, and their communities, and help parents and carers engage with and be partners for their child's education.
- In partnership with the Australian Olympic Committee, NSW's 7 public sports high schools were designated 'Australian Olympic Pathway Schools', providing students additional opportunities to pursue their athletic journeys.
- The NSW Department of Education continued to work with the NSW Aboriginal Education Consultative Group Incorporated through its ongoing formal Partnership Agreement, *Walking Together, Working Together*. The Partnership Agreement is based on the principles of respect, commitment, collaboration and accountability to improve educational outcomes for Aboriginal learners.
- The NT Government facilitated new working relationships between Aboriginal communities and government agencies to support self-determination. The NT Department of Education continued to prioritise local decision-making through community-led schools, school councils, school boards and local engagement and decision-making committees. There were 50 Local Engagement and Decision-Making committees, providing remote and very remote Aboriginal communities with a voice to education priorities and mechanisms to communicate these priorities with the school. In 2023, 10 schools were on the Community-led Schools pathway. Community-led schools give families and communities in remote and very remote communities a strong voice in decision making that impacts the way education is delivered for their children.
- The Qld *Equity and Excellence: realising the potential of every student* education strategy, launched in 2023, sets a new direction for schools and Qld's state schooling system with the aim of lifting educational outcomes across the board. Work has commenced to establish dedicated educational precincts to implement targeted responses to local needs; support schools in the most complex communities by collaborating with partners and across government to deliver locally responsive and integrated strategies; and deliver integrated school-based hub models that provide a full range of services to support children, students, families and communities.
- A team of Industry Engagement Consultants within the SA Department for Education partnered with industry and employers across SA to develop opportunities for students to be exposed to the breadth and depth of an industry and help students identify the different types of roles and exciting career opportunities available.

- The South Australian Certificate of Education (SACE) Board:
 - Created partnerships with industry groups including the Australian Business and Community Network and South Australian Skills Commission and employers to work together and identify the skills and behaviours that young people need to thrive in the workplace.
 - Had a partnership with students to evaluate the SACE Capabilities and Learner Profile, compulsory subjects Exploring Identities and Futures and Activating Identities and Futures and Recognition of Aboriginal Cultural Knowledge and Learning policy pilots.
 - Had a partnership and involvement with the Aboriginal community and Aboriginal students in pilots to formally recognise cultural knowledge and learning of Aboriginal young people as part of the SACE.
- In Tas, the Department for Children, Education and Young People partnered with the following organisations to support student wellbeing, contributing the following funding:
 - Stay ChatTY: \$750,000 over 3 years (2022–23 to 2024–25) to deliver the Stay ChatTY Schools Program to students in Years 9 to 12 in Tasmanian government schools,
 - Australian Childhood Foundation: \$898,000 over 2 years (2022–23 to 2023–24) to deliver the Trauma Informed Practice in Schools professional learning program,
 - Working It Out: \$450,000 over 2 years (2022–23 to 2023–24) to expand the *Valuing Diversity in Schools* program.
- Catholic Education Tasmania launched *Insight*, a whole system-wide initiative based on the Science of Learning and Reading to support innovative evidence-informed teaching in every classroom. The project aims to elevate student achievement through a focus on a rich curriculum that supports student growth in knowledge and learning, understanding cognitive science, and employing high-impact pedagogy. The initiative involves instructional leadership coaching and mentoring for Principals, School leaders and Instructional Leader Teacher Practice Educators focused on one-on-one coaching of high-impact teaching pedagogies and practices aligned with the Science of Learning, professional learning around the evidence-informed theories behind the Science of Learning and development of explicit teaching resources to support this style of teaching.
- The Victorian Department of Education partnered with 14 African-Australian led organisations to provide tailored and culturally appropriate education support to 1,251 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.
- Independent Schools Victoria has an on-going collaboration with Harvard University's Graduate School of Education and the *Project Zero* team to make the latest research on learning available to schools and teachers. In 2023, the *Making Thinking Routine* program was designed to enhance student cognition and to assist teachers to deepen learning and ignite student curiosity and engagement, by integrating flexible thinking into content instruction. The *Idea into Action: Personalising Instructional Change* research project involved a small number of schools trialling a research toolkit to enhance teacher learning and engagement.
- A guide and a resource hub for WA public schools supporting co-design of community action to improve attendance were developed and piloted.

- The WA Departments of Education, Communities and Health participated in the Early Years Partnership with the Minderoo Foundation and Telethon Kids Institute. The partnership aims to improve the wellbeing and school readiness of children from conception to 4 years in 4 Western Australian communities. Community plans were launched and shared.
- Catholic Education Western Australia Limited has developed several key partnerships to enhance support for students, including a collaboration with the Department of Training and Workforce Development and TAFE to develop the *Career Taster Program, Yadha Muru City Country Partnerships* with 3 metropolitan and 3 regional/remote schools in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) and VET (Hospitality and Tourism) and a collaboration with Supporting and Linking Tradeswomen to offer taster opportunities to students from schools in remote and regional areas.

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."

National Teacher Workforce Action Plan

Through the *National Teacher Workforce Action Plan*, agreed by Education Ministers in December 2022, all Australian governments are working together to implement 27 interconnecting actions in 5 priority areas: improving teacher supply; strengthening ITE; keeping the teachers we have; elevating the profession; and better understanding future teacher workforce needs.²³

Some highlights to date include the launch of the *Be That Teacher* campaign to raise the status and value the role of teachers, the introduction of the first round of Commonwealth Teaching Scholarships for ITE students to help attract high quality candidates to the teaching profession, and the commencement of a Literacy and Numeracy Test for ITE trial to ensure ITE students can receive targeted support if they need it.

Implementation of the Action Plan is a standing item on the agendas of the Schools Policy Group, the Australian Education Senior Officials Committee and the Education Ministers Meeting. A cross-government and sectoral working group oversees implementation of the Action Plan.

The Teacher Education Expert Panel

The Teacher Education Expert Panel delivered a report to the Minister for Education suggesting a series of reforms to strengthen ITE programs, which was released on 6 July 2023. Education Ministers provided in-principle support to all 14 recommendations, designed to:

- Strengthen ITE programs to deliver confident, effective beginning teachers (recommendations 1-3)
- Draw a stronger link between performance and funding of ITE (recommendations 4-7)
- Improve practical teaching experience (recommendations 8-11)
- Enhance postgraduate ITE programs for mid-career entrants (recommendations 12-14).

In July 2023, Ministers agreed to progress some immediate actions. Work commenced on implementation of all 14 Panel recommendations following the December 2023 Education Ministers Meeting.

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.

²³ To read the action plan and keep up to date with its progress, visit www.education.gov.au/national-teacher-workforce-action-plan.

Australian Teacher Workforce Data

AITSL continues to support the Australian Teacher Workforce Data (ATWD), linking ITE data with teacher workforce data across Australia, providing a comprehensive picture of Australia's teaching workforce, from ITE through all stages of the teacher career, across all states, territories, and employer sectors.

The ATWD is jointly funded by all Australian governments. In 2021, all Education Ministers agreed to invest \$7.3 million over 2021–22 to 2024–25 to support the ATWD. AITSL leads the ATWD in collaboration with the Australian Government Department of Education, states and territories and teacher regulatory authorities.

In 2023, the ATWD Key Metrics Dashboard, an interactive digital tool released in 2022, was updated to include the most recent information on the teacher workforce, and 2 publications were released, *ATWD National Trends: ITE pipeline* and *ATWD National Trends: Teacher Workforce*. These reports are updated annually as new data becomes available.

High Achieving Teachers Program

The Australian Government supports alternative, employment-based pathways into teaching by funding the High Achieving Teachers Program. Currently, 2 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 174 participants completed the program over 3 years between 2021 and 2023, with the program having a positive impact on teachers wanting to progress to position of leadership or higher responsibility.

Disability Standards for Education

During 2023, the Australian Government continued to implement recommendations from the 2020 Review of the Disability Standards for Education 2005 (the Standards) in consultation with state, territory, and non-government education authorities. In March, the Australian Government published case studies to provide 'good practice' examples for teachers and schools leaders on how to meet their obligations under the Standards on the NCCD portal and in September, resources for including 'in the classroom videos' to support teachers better understand and apply the Standards were published on the AITSL website.²⁴

Also available are new practical and easy-to-use resources to help students with disability and their families understand their rights and how to exercise those rights. These resources were co-designed with young people with disability and their families with the help of Children and Young People with Disability Australia.²⁵

²⁴ The case studies are available at: www.nccd.edu.au/resources-and-tools/case-studies and the in classroom videos at: www.aitsl.edu.au/teach/supporting-students-with-disability/teachers-supporting-students-with-disability.

²⁵ These resources are available in English, Easy Read English, Auslan and 8 community languages at <https://www.education.gov.au/disability-standards-education-2005>.

Online Formative Assessment Initiative

The Online Formative Assessment Initiative was one of the 8 National Policy Initiatives committed under the NSRA. The goal is to establish a national bank of assessments that meets the needs of all jurisdictions on an opt-in basis, given the value of formative assessments in helping teachers understand student learning. In December 2022, Education Ministers endorsed a path forward on the initiative and tasked ACARA to lead this work. At its meeting of 16 June 2023, the Australian Education Senior Officials Committee approved a National Formative Assessment Resource Bank steering committee.

State, territory and sector initiatives

- The ACT Education leadership program was developed to support school leaders build capability of instructional leaders and managers to deliver the new *Student-Centred Improvement Framework*. The program supports the delivery of fundamentals for improvement: resourcing, system stewardship, and a culture of ongoing professional development.
- In the ACT:
 - Preschool Pathways Partners supported preschool educators to build knowledge, confidence and capacity in quality pedagogy and universal practices, implement inclusive practices, enhance transitions and provide continuity for preschool children and their families.
 - Extensive professional learning was offered to meet the needs of learners with disability and diverse learning needs. Educators were supported to differentiate their practice and provide reasonable adjustments, with additional resourcing and support from the School Psychology Service and Allied Health Service as required.
 - The ACT Education Directorate and Teacher Quality Institute worked together to establish a pilot of system sponsored teacher identified professional learning communities.
- As part of efforts to address teacher workforce and to attract and retain high quality teachers, the NSW Department of Education converted more than 16,000 temporary teachers and support staff to permanent positions under the Temporary Workforce Transition initiative. The department has also committed to delivering initiatives that address the teacher workforce by improving attraction to teaching, re-training and upskilling more teachers to specialise in high demand subjects and boosting teacher supply in regional and remote communities.
- In NSW, the School Leadership Institute (SLI) engaged with more than 7,000 current and future school leaders in nearly 1,900 schools through leadership induction conferences, leadership development programs, and online resources. The SLI held the first *Future School Leader* conference (for current classroom teachers developing formal leadership readiness), expanded the *Principal Leadership Learning* program, and continued ongoing leadership development programs.
- The Catholic Schools NSW inaugural *Avila Leadership Programme for New and Aspiring Principals* began in December 2023 with 32 aspiring and new principals in the inaugural cohort. The programme has been explicitly crafted to meet the needs of the next generation of Catholic school principals, equipping them for the demands of contemporary educational leadership, governance and operations.

- The NT Department of Education:
 - Held an Education Leaders' Summit from 15 to 16 August 2023 with approximately 330 attendees from across the NT. The summit is a forum to present and discuss innovative ideas and the latest trends to improve educational outcomes for children and young people.
 - Continued to provide ongoing training and development for teachers and principals, including professional development programs and initiatives aimed at improving instructional abilities and content knowledge.
 - Commenced development of a *Continuity of Learning Framework* with the University of Melbourne to guide delivery of continuous learning experiences for every child in the NT. The framework is expected to be released in 2024 and will inform planning and delivery of enhanced teaching and instructional leadership at the classroom, school, community, region and system levels.
 - Trained 50 NT educators to implement the Keeping Safe Child Protection Curriculum with schools.
- The Qld Department of Education commenced delivery of a range of initiatives under its education strategy, *Equity and Excellence: realising the potential of every student*. This includes building educational leadership and teaching expertise, leveraging digital innovation in teaching and learning, strengthening educational performance and support models, delivering integrated service responses and educational precincts and revitalising educational infrastructure.
- The Qld Department of Education *M in Science Technology Engineering and Mathematics (STEM)* initiative provided targeted resources to build the pedagogical practices aligned to Version 9 of the Australian Curriculum. These resources are co-designed with education researchers and contribute to a F–12 approach to students' mathematics learning journey.
- Independent Schools Queensland delivered a middle leaders webinar to support the development of leadership skills for 120 middle leaders across 50 schools. ISQ also delivered numeracy and literacy masterclasses to 350 participants across the year. These sessions supported the Australian Education Research Organisation (AERO)'s research into effective teaching strategies and the changes to the Australian Curriculum.
- Queensland Catholic Education Commission engaged in cross-sector partnerships along with the Teacher Certification Authority Queensland College of Teachers to develop a new certification process in Qld, thus optimising recognition for teacher excellence, enhancing quality learning and teaching and improving student learning outcomes.
- The SA Department for Education continued to implement the state government's *Seven Point Plan for Teaching Quality* policy, to streamline and improve performance management and recruitment processes to empower principals; and expanded the country incentive scheme. It invested in supporting the career pathways and capabilities of teachers and leaders, through access to a range of scholarships for pre-service teachers, an Early Career Teacher Development program for graduates, and a range of professional learning options through the department's training academy Orbis.
- In SA, an artificial intelligence (AI) chatbot, EdChat, was developed and trialled with the aim of supporting schools to access and safely use generative AI.
- The South Australian Certificate of Education (SACE) Board supported the development of over 650 teachers through the SACE Capabilities and Learner Profile, as well as the accreditation of compulsory subjects *Exploring Identities and Futures* and *Activating Identities and Futures*.

- In Tas, the Principal Capability Framework (PCF) was launched as an evidence-based framework to drive growth in principal capability. The PCF provides principals with structure for ongoing self-reflection that supports capability growth over time and is not compliance driven. The framework guides professional growth of principals, with a view to maximising impact on student and staff outcomes.
- In Tas, several initiatives were delivered to enhance career pathways and support quality teaching and a leadership pipeline. This included programs for early career teacher development, quality mentoring and middle leaders and a leadership qualification pathway to a Graduate Certificate in Education. Principals were supported with induction programs and preparation for principalship.
- In Vic:
 - The Victorian Academy of Teaching and Leadership was established to provide high-quality, evidence-informed professional learning that enhances the capability and confidence of Victorian school teachers and leaders. This includes leadership excellence programs for government school leaders and the cross-sectoral *Teaching Excellence Program*.
 - The *Professional Learning Communities* initiative is an evidence-based, whole-school approach to lifting student learning outcomes that is being rolled-out across all Victorian government schools.
 - The Arc Platform was established to assist teachers to find, access, and use the digital products and services provided by the Victorian Department of Education. Arc was extended in 2023 to include Arc Learning, providing teachers with access to a curated collection of high-quality learning and teaching and pedagogical resources.
- Victorian Independent schools focused on leadership development across all levels of school leadership, including support for middle-level leaders. Independent Schools Victoria also collaborated with the Association of Heads of Independent Schools Australia to support aspiring principals with the aim of developing the next generation of school principals.
- The WA Department of Education commenced the *Reducing Teacher Workload Using Digital Forms* pilot. The pilot provides school staff with a consistent, accessible and efficient way to share information, request services and complete reporting responsibilities.
- The WA Department of Education selected 25 lead public schools to support the implementation of the *Quality Teaching Strategy* and *Teaching for Impact*. The *Leading Cultures of Teaching Excellence* professional learning program supported principals from 40 schools to create and sustain school cultures, strengthening teaching excellence.
- In WA, an attraction and retention package of \$12.4 million was provided to 48 schools identified in the *Regional Incentive Framework* as experiencing significant recruitment pressures. Payments were made to eligible teachers and school administrators in Western Australian public schools in 2 instalments during 2023.
- The Association of Independent Schools of Western Australia delivered a year-long professional learning program of teaching for impact, focussing on the development of teachers' instructional practice and driving improvements in teacher and student outcomes. As part of this program, AISWA partnered with AERO who conducted research to understand how to sustain improvements in practices resulting from professional learning.

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 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.

Productivity Commission Inquiry into Australia’s Early Childhood Education and Care system

In March 2023, the Productivity Commission commenced a comprehensive inquiry into Australia’s Early Childhood Education and Care system. The inquiry supports the Government’s commitment to identifying solutions to chart the course for universal ECEC. The final report is due to Government by 30 June 2024.

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 2023 was measurement of preschool attendance in 2025 and planning for development of a preschool outcomes measure.

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 priority actions to be progressed by the end of 2024.

Agreement on Closing the Gap

High quality early ECEC is critical to supporting children's development and future success. The Australian Government is continuing to work in partnership with the Coalition of Peaks, other First Nations partners, and all levels of government to ensure sustained progress over the life of the National Agreement on Closing the Gap (Closing the Gap). The Government is working to achieve the Closing the Gap Outcomes and embed the Priority Reforms across its work in ECEC.

Update of Early Years Learning Framework

As the 2 National Approved Learning Frameworks (ALFs); *Belonging, Being & Becoming: The Early Years Learning Framework* and the *My Time, Our Place: The Framework for School Age Care* had been in use for close to a decade, Education Ministers commissioned an update in 2021. This was to ensure they continued 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 ALFs in December 2022. The updated ALFs came into operation on 1 February 2024 and strengthen their connection with 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 ECEC 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 independent 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 included new measures to strengthen the safety, health and wellbeing of children, specified new workforce and qualification requirements, improved oversight by regulatory authorities, and additional guidance to support providers and their services in educating and caring for children. Implementation of most changes commenced from 1 October 2023, including updates to the Guide to the NQF to reflect amendments to the Education and Care Services National Law, National Regulations and the Approved Learning Frameworks.

Review of Child Safety Arrangements under the National Quality Framework

In 2023 the Minister for Education and Minister for Early Childhood Education commissioned the ACECQA to undertake a Review of Child Safety Arrangements under the National Quality Framework (NQF).

The Final Report – Findings and recommendations for the NQF and inter-related child safety mechanisms (the Report) was published on the ACECQA website on 21 December 2023. The Report makes 16 recommendations about physical and online safety, child supervision and staffing requirements. The Review found the NQF is an internationally recognised framework that provides a robust regulatory scheme for ensuring the safety, health and wellbeing of children. It also found Australia has a very good system of ECEC and more can be done to ensure the NQF remains contemporary and fit-for-purpose in the context of child safety.

In December 2023, Education Ministers were briefed on the Report by the ACECQA CEO. Ministers requested Senior Officials commence consultation on the Report's recommendations, and report back to Ministers with implementation advice.

State, territory and sector initiatives

- In the ACT:
 - The ACT Government’s 10-year plan *Set up for Success: An Early Childhood Strategy for the ACT* includes a range of initiatives to strengthen early childhood education including *Valuing Educators, Values Children Workforce Strategy 2023–25*. Partnerships with the early childhood sector have been established to support delivery of the strategy through the Valuing Educators Reference Group. Priority 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 was implemented.
 - Targeted professional learning was provided through “communities of practice” and pre-school network sessions with a focus on documentation to develop preschool teacher capabilities.
 - The *Everyone, Everyday* program aims to create a cultural shift in community attitudes towards disability. This was expanded to include Preschool resources in 2023. The adjustment matrix was utilised by preschool educators to record the modifications and additional resourcing of children.
- The NSW Department of Education launched the redesigned *Start Strong* program for community and mobile preschools and long day care services. The program meets the objectives of the *Affordable Preschool* initiative and the PSA to provide quality, affordable preschool to children and their families. Approximately 175 services were funded under the *Start Strong Pathways* program. Under the *Start Strong Capital Works* program, the department awarded over \$24 million to not-for-profit services to create 300 new preschool places across metropolitan and regional NSW, and maintain over 100 places with crisis works, including flood-affected services. From 2023, early childhood services receiving Start Strong funding completed a Transition to School Statement for each child transitioning to school the year after. The statement summarises a child’s strengths, interests and approaches to learning and helps link the Early Years Learning Framework to the Early Stage 1 content in the NSW syllabuses to support teaching and planning for Kindergarten teachers.
- The NT Department of Education partnered with Nous Group and the Centre for International Research on Education Systems from Victoria University to undertake a review of preschool. The review will focus on identifying optimal models for preschool funding and delivery in the NT to best achieve outcomes for children and families. The review team consulted broadly across early childhood settings in the NT, including site visits to preschools in all regions of the NT. A discussion paper was released in May 2023, with 128 responses received.
- The Qld Government introduced funding reforms in 2023 and will invest \$2 billion over 4 years to reform kindergarten funding including provision of free kindergarten for 15 hours per week, 40 weeks per year from 2024. The reforms also include funding to address educational disadvantage, improve inclusion and address early childhood workforce challenges through the Queensland Early Childhood Workforce Strategy.
- Queensland Catholic Education Commission supported the Queensland Government Free Kindy announcement, jointly planning implementation in 2024 for eligible children to receive 15 hours a week for 40 weeks, or 600 hours a year in early learning services. Queensland Catholic Education Commission also supported announcements that would strengthen Early Childhood Education through the Queensland Early Childhood Workforce Strategy. This strategy will assist in meeting the chronic shortage of qualified educators in the sector.

- In SA, the *Royal Commission into Early Childhood Education and Care final report* was released in August 2023. The state government has committed to action on all recommendations. Key recommendations for the SA Department for Education include the delivery of universal 3-year-old preschool from 2026, outside hours school care reform, greater supports for Aboriginal children and Children in Care and growing our workforce. The first mid-year intake for public preschools was introduced in July 2023 giving families earlier access to high-quality educational programs for their children.
- The Association of Independent Schools of South Australia supported early childhood teachers through collaborative forums that explored and shared exemplary curriculum practices across a range of learning areas. Early childhood teachers identified ways to strengthen practice through connecting the Australian Curriculum Version 9.0 and the Early Years Learning Framework v2. Teachers explored practical ways these documents could be used to provide continuity of learning for children in preschool and during their transition to formal schooling.
- In Tas, 5 new trial sites for *Early Learning for Three-Year Olds* (EL3) were established. The EL3 initiative is a step towards giving every child access to early learning in the year before kindergarten. The communities are located across Tas and will meet local community needs. A Co-Design Planning Group guided the selection of the communities. Selection was based on criteria for assessment of suitability and broad community engagement conducted across the state.
- The Victorian Department of Education:
 - Continued to roll out Three-Year-Old Kindergarten across the state, with available hours increasing to 15 per week for all children by 2029. In 2023, the average offering of Three-Year-Old Kindergarten was over 12 hours per week.
 - Commenced implementation of the Best Start, Best Life reforms. Approximately 97% of services participated in Free Kinder, a roll-out schedule for the phased implementation of 'Pre-Prep' has been released and all locations for the 50 new government-owned Early Learning and Childcare Centres in areas of greatest need, have been announced, with the first 4 to open in 2025.
 - Continues to provide additional supports to engage vulnerable and disadvantaged children in kindergarten, including Aboriginal children, refugee and asylum seeker children and children known to Child Protection.
- The WA Government released a *Workforce Action Plan* to build a ECEC workforce in regional WA.
- In WA during 2023, all new ECEC worker traineeships, including trainees undertaking relevant ECEC qualifications, were eligible for fee-free training through the *FREE IN '23* initiative.

More information on early childhood education is available on the Australian Government Department of Education (www.education.gov.au/early-childhood).

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.

Mathematics Hub

The Mathematics Hub was established in 2022 and provides a freely available, curated collection of evidence-based resources aligned to the Foundation to Year 10 Australian Curriculum to support teachers, school leaders, students, parents and carers across Australia, including a voluntary, teacher administered Year 1 Number Check for students.

In 2023, the Australian Government launched an array of new professional learning and curriculum resources to support teachers on the Mathematics Hub, including: free, self-paced, open access mathematics Massive Open Online Courses for teachers of Foundation to Year 10 students; a series of self-paced online modules, webinars and podcasts to enhance primary school teachers' understanding and skills in the explicit teaching of mathematics; and a comprehensive Curriculum Planning Tool.

Literacy Hub

New resources were added to the Australian Government's Literacy Hub, including shared reading texts, webinars, and a 7-unit professional learning program to support schools building a Systematic Synthetic Phonics approach for reading and spelling.

State, territory and sector initiatives

- The ACT Education Directorate's mathematics and numeracy strategy '*Finding the Balance*' offered targeted professional learning for schools, and conferences for leaders and teachers, to meet the numeracy needs of students.
- The *Literacy Champions Network*, offering professional learning each term, supports ACT lead teachers to promote the literacy skills of students in F-6. Workshops for new educators were offered each term along with PL offerings for new ACT teachers, returning teacher and relief staff upskilling in the 10 Essential Practices in Literacy. Teachers continued to have access to professional learning and expert supports to meet the needs of all students.
- In 2023, all ACT public primary schools had disability education programs as well as inclusion support in general education classrooms.
- As part of the NSW Mathematics Strategy, the NSW Department of Education appointed 25 new graduate primary teachers with a mathematics specialisation in NSW public schools. A total of 102 teachers have been appointed since the initiative began, exceeding the target of 100 new graduate primary teachers.
- There were changes to some literacy and numeracy items in the NSW Department of Education Best Start Kindergarten Assessment to align to Version 3 of the National Literacy and Numeracy Learning Progressions and new English and Mathematics K-2 syllabuses.
- The NSW Department of Education launched the NSW Student Learning Library with K-2 English and Mathematics learning resources. The library provides learning resources for students which are accessible at home or at school. Learning resources are NSW syllabus-aligned and have been created and reviewed by accredited Australian teachers.

- The NT department of Education worked with the NT Department of Health to develop a framework for engagement between schools and health services. The framework highlights how sharing child development and specialist health services data can inform a more systematic approach to supporting early intervention in the early years. Early intervention will support and strengthen the transition of students into the early years of learning and improve the achievement of foundational skills and engagement through later years of schooling.
- NT schools continued to implement literacy and numeracy strategies to build foundational skills in the primary years. In 2023, 140 students from 14 primary schools across the Darwin region participated in the annual Meaningful Maths Enrichment Day. The event focussed on making maths fun through a range of activities including robotics, engineering, riddles, and investigative programs.
- Launched in 2023, Queensland Department of Education's Reading Commitment will see a consistent evidence-informed approach used to teach reading in all Qld state schools. Included in the commitment is the development of a comprehensive suite of reading materials, including guidelines, resources and advice for schools, and professional learning programs.
- The Department for Education South Australia provided updated online professional learning for all early years teachers in reading. This covered building foundation reading skills, extending foundation reading skills, introduction to phonics and the phonics screening check, and oral reading fluency.
- The Department for Education South Australia commenced planning for the trial of a Maths Assessment Interview at Years 3 and 4, developed by Monash University, to be delivered in 2024 with 95 schools. The Maths Assessment Interview is conducted as a one-to-one interview between the teacher and student and is being complemented by evidence-based professional learning for teachers.
- The Association of Independent Schools of South Australia launched a Wellbeing Toolkit and supported school implementation with 2-day workshops. The toolkit assisted SA independent schools to strengthen whole school wellbeing and practice. Support provided included evidence-based resources that developed student and staff wellbeing through a whole school lens. The building of leadership capacity to drive implementation and sustainability at the school level was a key priority.
- All Tasmanian Government Schools must prioritise and provide additional focus on the teaching of reading. In line with advice from AERO, Tasmanian schools, principals, and teachers will have more specific professional learning and more detailed practical resources. All schools have access to support and advice from an in-school Quality Teaching Coach (Literacy). These coaches work with leaders and teachers in their school to implement the Department's evidence-based teaching methods for reading. The Department of Premier and Cabinet's Literacy Advisory Panel recommendations will directly inform the actions of the DECYP 2023 – 2026 Implementation Plan for Reading.
- In Vic, cohort 7 of the *Primary Mathematics and Science Specialists* initiative began. This is a 2-year teacher and whole school capability building program to improve student learning outcomes in mathematics and science. Participating teachers receive 20 days of professional learning over 2 years and 0.5 FTE time release to develop their skills and those of their colleagues across their school. Cohort 7 is being delivered as a mathematics only cohort for 100 teachers from approximately 50 schools.

- In Vic, Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools published a suite of practical, high-quality teaching and learning programs in Mathematics for students in Foundation to Year 2. These evidence-based support resources utilised an explicit pedagogical model and were designed to provide foundational mathematics skills and drive excellence in academic performance. In addition to curriculum and lesson materials, teacher professional learning and a coaching-feedback model for teachers were also available. The Diocese of Ballarat Catholic Education Limited (DOBCEL) developed a structured literacy project based on a collaboration between 2 Sunraysia schools. DOBCEL has partnered with Latrobe University SoLAR Lab to evidence the change in approach and outcomes.
- From 2023, WA public school principals are required to confirm by mid-year that Year 1 students at their school have undergone a phonics assessment, which identifies their progress against the Department's expected proficiency. A phonics self-reflection tool has been developed to guide reflection on current phonics practices, highlighting areas of focus.
- The Commonwealth and Western Australian Governments entered into a 4-year agreement to deliver the *Scaling Up Success in Remote Schools* program at 14 remote schools in the Goldfields and Midwest regions. The program aims to close the gap in reading and writing and will scale up the successful elements of the *Kimberley Schools Project* with a focus on targeted teaching practices in Kindergarten to Year 2 and working in partnership with parents and the community.

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”.

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. This includes the Australian Student Wellbeing Framework, a foundational document that focuses on a whole school systemic approach to wellbeing with tiers of support, emphasising appropriate early intervention to enable schools to respond to emerging challenges. Other resources include online professional learning modules, a school survey tool and evidence-based classroom mental health and wellbeing resources.

State, territory and sector initiatives

- 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.
- In the ACT, young people with disability and diverse learning needs were supported through evidence-based teaching practices and interventions. All ACT public high schools now have disability education programs as well as inclusion support in general education classrooms. Teachers continued to have access to professional learning and expert supports to meet the needs of all students.
- As part of the NSW Mathematics Strategy, the NSW Department of Education permanently appointed 16 additional mathematics teachers after they completed the *MathsNOW* scholarship program, with a total of 43 appointments in 2023. 67 scholarships commenced in 2023.
- The NSW Department of Education continued the use of Check-in assessments with all cohorts 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.
- In NSW, the *Transition to Year 7* assessment replaced *Best Start Year 7*. The assessment provides teachers with a snapshot of literacy and numeracy skills students demonstrate on entry to Year 7.
- Catholic Schools NSW supported middle years development through professional learning modules and a virtual symposium focusing on the 3–6 Mathematics syllabus and 3–6 English syllabus, building awareness and capacity in the primary and secondary contexts around what is required in each phase of learning.
- The NT Department of Education negotiated an agreement with the South Australian Department of Education to allow NT teachers to have full access to SA’s high-quality curriculum resource materials, including units of work, lesson plans and support materials that are aligned to the Australian Curriculum.

- The NT established the Youth Voice Peak Group in Term 1, 2023, with 16 middle and senior school student members from across 11 government and non-government schools. The group aims to ensure student voice and agency guides the way the department delivers education pathways and services to all young Territorians. Members represent all regions and education settings across the NT, including homeland communities, distance education systems, and specialist education settings.
- The Qld Department of Education established the *Junior Secondary: On track for success* project to realise the potential of every student through the design and implementation of an evidence-informed approach to junior secondary engagement. The project delivered strategies to build the professional expertise required to support learning and engagement of all learners into and through junior secondary.
- The Association of Independent Schools of South Australia convened the *Responding to Early Adolescent Learners* reference group, supporting middle years school leaders to examine ways to optimise early adolescent education. Key authorities offered expertise on curriculum, success traits, and transitioning. The group explored excellence in inclusive practice tailored to middle years contexts.
- In Tas, representatives from the Department for Education, Children and Young People contributed to work undertaken by the Australian Education Research Organisation (AERO) that focused on supporting learners in the middle years of school. Resulting guidance resources for secondary school leaders and teachers to better support learners in Years 7 to 9 with foundational literacy and numeracy skills will be published by AERO.
- In Vic, the *Middle Years Literacy and Numeracy Support* (MYLNS) initiative provides intensive teaching support to students in Year 10 in government secondary schools who are at risk of finishing school without the literacy and numeracy skills they need for future work and study. Schools are funded to release experienced teachers as MYLNS Improvement Teachers, who support students one-on-one, in small groups or within class. In 2023, the MYLNS initiative supported over 5,000 students.
- The Department of Education WA introduced new teaching and learning resources to deliver prevention education in addition to the WA Schools Anti-vaping Toolkit for Years 8 to 10.
- In WA, the *Innovation Challenge* was expanded with up to 30 teams of Year 8 public school students who honed their leadership, design and critical thinking skills in 2023.

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

State and territory governments are 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. These authorities, which also determine assessment and certification specifications for successful course completion, are member organisations of Australasian Curriculum, Assessment and Certification Authorities (ACACA).

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, 2023

State/territory	Senior secondary certificates of education
NSW	Higher School Certificate
Vic	Victorian Certificate of Education Victorian Certificate of Education Vocational Major
Qld	Queensland Certificate of Education
SA	South Australian Certificate of Education
WA	Western Australian Certificate of Education
Tas	Tasmanian Certificate of Education
NT	Northern Territory Certificate of Education and Training
ACT	Australian Capital Territory Senior Secondary Certificate

Source: The Australasian Curriculum, Assessment and Certification Authorities (ACACA) (www.acaca.edu.au), 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.

State, territory and sector initiatives

- The ACT Education Directorate continued the working partnership with tertiary institutions including ANU and the University of Canberra to provide university extension courses for senior secondary students in the ACT. These courses provided tertiary pathways to students who may not have previously considered further study and assist students to transition to tertiary education.

- In the ACT, young people with disability and diverse learning needs are supported through evidence-based teaching practices and interventions. Teachers continued to have access to professional learning and expert supports to meet the needs of all students. All ACT public colleges (11-12) now have disability education programs as well as inclusion support in general education classrooms.
- In NSW:
 - Stay Healthy HSC provided resources to assist students to stay healthy, active and connected during the HSC. The HSC Hub continued to provide on-demand resources that teachers can provide to their students to help with exam preparation. The hub includes curriculum resources and support materials, lectures, online demonstrations, assessment resources, and video lessons aligned to the syllabuses, bolstering existing course work.
 - The HSC Common Start Program provided funds for newly created Year 12 extension classes. Funds were used to support HSC teachers and students.
 - From 2023, course categorisation in calculating the ATAR was removed for the Year 10 cohort. This will support student choice in senior secondary school and broaden opportunities for post school study, training and work.
- The NT Department of Education, in partnership with Deloitte Access Economics and the Northern Institute of Charles Darwin University, commenced a review of secondary education (Years 7 to 12). The review will inform the design of a secondary education system that is responsive to the unique and diverse delivery contexts in the NT. The team met with school leaders, educators, community members and sector stakeholders. A public discussion paper was released in June 2023, receiving 60 questionnaire responses and 26 written submissions.
- In the NT, the Clontarf and Stars foundations worked with Aboriginal senior school students and their families, providing school-based mentoring and wellbeing support for students to finish Year 12. During 2023, 452 young Aboriginal men were enrolled in Clontarf senior years programs (Years 10 – 12) and 327 young Aboriginal women were enrolled in Stars senior years programs (Years 10 – 12).
- As part of the Qld Department of Education’s commitment to the Queensland Workforce Strategy, Queensland Treasury provided funding of \$5.04 million for the *Regional School Industry Partnership* program to strengthen local school-industry partnerships and support school to work transitions. Located in each education region, the program connects schools with industry to support a variety of opportunities for students, including work experience, school-based apprenticeships and traineeships, industry placement for teachers, and resources to support curriculum delivery.
- Independent Schools Qld provided support for its member schools through the distribution of VET Activity funding, professional development, school reviews and one-to-one guidance. This included the commencement of 1,257 school-based apprenticeships and traineeships across Years 10, 11 and 12 through its Seed Funding program, a number of bespoke reviews across its 43 school Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) and the accredited training of 27 schoolteachers and 18 career guidance officers through its scholarship programs, increasing the number of practitioners able to deliver VET courses and provide relevant pathways guidance.
- The SA Department for Education launched the *MyCareerPortal* website, providing government secondary schools with free access to a nationally recognised online career education platform. The website provides opportunities for government school students to explore their

interests, values and aspirations, explore careers and the world of work through virtual work experience, and plan their future career journey.

- New SACE subjects (Stage 1 Exploring Identities and Futures and Stage 2 Activating Identities and Futures) were accredited as compulsory requirements of the senior secondary qualification. The subjects aim to develop students' transferable capabilities for life from Stage 1 to Stage 2 and to pathways beyond school.
- In SA, the second pilot of the Capabilities and Learner Profile involved 42 schools and 1,202 students and focussed on formally recognising students' capabilities developed through curriculum and activities outside of the classroom and matching their capabilities profiles to tertiary pathways and inform tertiary entry applications.
- In Tas, the Department for Education, Children and Young People implemented programs to increase student access to quality learning programs:
 - All secondary schools have now extended to include Years 11 and 12, ensuring accessible education pathways.
 - Virtual Learning Tasmania provides online learning programs for students in Years 11 and 12 to mitigate barriers to access and equity in remote geographical locations.
 - Forty-two schools delivered VET qualifications. They offered a range of face-to-face and online short qualifications that enhanced learner success and employability skills.
 - Equitable pathways through partnerships with TasTAFE and the University of Tasmania were provided, including University Connections, High Achiever Programs and Schools Recommendation Program to facilitate higher education access for young Tasmanians.
- Catholic Education Tasmania launched a system wide learning management system called Connect. The platform will enable multiple colleges to exist as separate schools within one platform. The benefit for senior years is that teachers can easily share courses and curriculum materials between colleges which reduces planning time for staff and facilitates the sharing of best practice in curriculum design. It also makes learning seamless for students taking senior courses at an alternative college to their home school. A major feature is that student assessment, reporting, pastoral and attendance data flows between colleges.
- The VCE Vocational Major (VCE VM) and the Victorian Pathways Certificate (VPC) were introduced in Victorian secondary schools. All local government secondary schools now offer the VCE VM to their students, with 25 schools delivering a vocational senior secondary certificate for the first time. Across all sectors, 84% of senior secondary providers have authorisation to deliver the VCE VM.
- In Vic, the core offering of VET Delivered to School Students (VDSS) was updated to include Victoria's growing Clean Energy sector. The core offering now includes 41 VET certificates grouped into 12 pathways aligned with student interests and industry needs. The removal of cost barriers, new funding, and planning efforts have partly contributed to a 25% increase in the number of Victorian government schools who had students enrolled in all 6 of the Priority Pathways for VDSS. Additionally, the *Head Start* program now supports over 3,000 students in participating in apprenticeships or traineeships during Years 10, 11, and/or 12.
- In WA, a review of senior secondary school pathways was launched in June 2023. The *Pathways to Post-School Success* review explores whether current pathways are effectively preparing students for further study, training or work options. The review is being led by the Department of Education WA in partnership with Catholic Education Western Australia and the Association of Independent Schools of Western Australia.

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”.

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 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.

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.

GENERATION Survey

The GENERATION survey of post-school destinations, a new national longitudinal survey of young people, was implemented in 2022. GENERATION is a joint Australian, state and territory government initiative that 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 survey commenced in 2022 with over 15,000 Year 10 student participants across almost 300 schools. The survey has completed 2 waves of interviews, in 2022 and 2023, with data from the 2022 interviews publicly released on the Australian Data Archive in 2023. Participants will be followed up annually until around age 25.

State, territory, and sector initiatives

- As part of *Set up for Success: An Early Childhood Strategy for the ACT* the Preschool Pathways program was launched to assist parents and carers, early childhood services and community groups to support children’s transition to preschool with a suite of modules that build their knowledge and confidence, a range of resources including the Preschool Pathways Map.
- In the ACT, transition sessions were organised for families of children with disabilities moving between various school settings, including primary to high school, high school to college, and post-college. The National Disability Insurance Scheme collaborated with specialist schools to provide information nights regarding post-school transitions and options. Early advice was given to schools about enrolling students with disabilities, allowing for early implementation of supports such as infrastructure improvements, additional staffing, professional learning, and meetings with families.

- Careers NSW School Trials were delivered in Terms 2-4, 2023. The purpose was to support high schools by engaging students from Year 7 to think about their careers, discover who they are and explore who they can become. There were 61 high schools actively engaged in the program, with over 7,100 students engaging in the Trial. The services complemented the schools existing career advice programs and schools were given the opportunity to select from the bespoke services available.
- The *Careers NSW Post School Program* supported people at any stage of their working life to gain the support and skills to empower their participation in further education, training, or employment. Customers booked one-on-one appointments with qualified Career Practitioners for career exploration, skill identification, goal setting, resume, interview skills, job search, training and further education. Bookings could also be made with an Industry Expert to gain advice and understanding on an industry of interest.
- The NT Department of Education continued to work with industry, training providers and schools to ensure the VET programs delivered to secondary students result in appropriate and relevant employment pathways which are aimed at increasing the apprenticeship and traineeship uptake and students completing an NT Certificate of Education and Training.
- The Qld Government invested \$40.7 million in Early Years Funding grants in 2023–24 to organisations to support universal and targeted supports for children and families. This included support for families, ECEC services and schools to positively transition children from home to quality early learning services, kindergarten and schools.
- Qld Department of Education expanded the *Link and Launch* program which now operates from a total of 36 schools across the state to work with young people who have completed Year 12 and who are not in study or work to make a successful transition to a post-school destination. At December 2023, *Link and Launch* has worked with more than 3,400 young people since the program was established in 2019.
- Independent Schools Qld committed to collaborations and engagements to ensure that pathways for learning were made available and accessible to learners and that effective transitioning from school-based programs to further and higher education opportunities or work were well supported. This included collaborations across schools sectors along with Queensland's Department of Employment, Small Business and Training to unpack VET Reform components, working alongside the Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority to ensure support for structured planning, the inclusion of vocational education pathways and awarding of credit to SSCE and being part of the Gateway to Industry Schools Steering Committee which oversees 12 programs connecting schools with industry engagement opportunities.
- In SA, construction of the Findon Technical College was completed. The college is the first of 5 technical colleges to be built across SA and will be opened in 2024. It provides students in Years 10 to 12 with the opportunity to learn skills in the areas of advanced manufacturing and engineering, early childhood and education, health and social support. The industry training programs at each technical college have been designed with input from employers, universities, and training organisations, offering specialised industry pathways and real-world work experience. Graduates will be well-equipped for immediate employment or further education opportunities.
- South Australian Certificate of Education (SACE) Board worked with the South Australian Tertiary Admissions Centre and tertiary education providers to develop effective models to match students to tertiary pathways. SACE continued to engage with industry stakeholders to identify the capabilities that employers and the industry value.

- In Tas:
 - Government schools were supported to strengthen their career education provision and transition planning through the delivery of the Graduate Certificate in Career Development to school staff. There were 53 qualified career practitioners working across Department schools and portfolios.
 - Government School teachers were supported to obtain or upgrade their TAE qualifications, achieving an increase in the availability of VET training to Tasmanian Senior Secondary Students, and expanding and retaining the VET school workforce.
 - *Driving for Jobs* is a school-based program, supporting students from areas of high socioeconomic disadvantage to obtain their driver licence.
 - Videos showcasing School-based Traineeships and Apprenticeships as an exceptional VET pathway were developed, highlighting how they give real world experience and enhanced career prospects.
 - The Department for Education, Children and Young People prompted the development and implementation of a quality assurance process for the review of 2023 transitions plans.
- In Vic, the Senior Secondary Pathways Reforms have delivered deeper student engagement with careers and pathways and support for effective transitions for early school leavers. This included high-quality careers exploration and planning to support students to locate and consider career opportunities to support decision making during, and following, secondary schooling and participation in work experience to inform student career aspirations and development, develop soft skills, and provide industry and workplace insights. It also involved scoping and design work on the enhanced supports for early school leavers which will support the most vulnerable students to reengage in learning.
- Victoria's 10 Tech Schools continued to help local partner secondary schools enhance STEM learning and embed pathways into further STEM study and careers. Tech Schools are located on tertiary education campuses and provide access to hands-on and immersive STEM learning experiences for 150,000 secondary school students.
- Catholic Education Commission of Victoria provided funding to assist secondary schools to develop a whole school approach to career development and build the capability of school teams to assist students with pathways transition. 32 teachers received part-sponsorship to undertake the Graduate Certificate in Career Development Practice through the Career Education Association of Victoria Institute. In addition, 4 schools were funded to undertake Career benchmarking services to assist them to deliver quality career education and development programs for students.
- The WA Department of Education launched the Career Learning Toolkit. The toolkit is an online hub housing resources to assist teachers and career practitioners with planning for career development learning. This equips students with the tools and knowledge required to successfully transition to post-school pathways.

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.

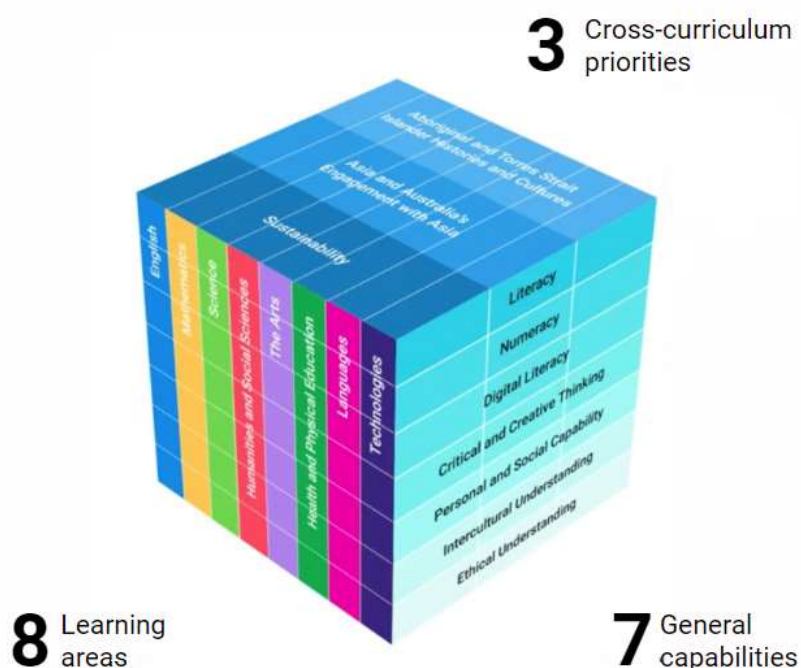
Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority

The Australian Curriculum and Reporting Authority (ACARA)'s functions in curriculum and assessment are to:

- Provide authoritative advice to stakeholders and facilitate information sharing, collaboration and support for the Australian Curriculum
- Monitor the effectiveness of implementation of the Australian Curriculum and
- Undertake research to inform national policy and practice.

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.

The three dimensions of the Australian Curriculum



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
- Health and Physical Education
- Languages
- Technologies
- The Arts.

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. Intercultural Understanding
7. Ethical 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
3. Sustainability.

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

In June 2020, Education Ministers asked ACARA to review the Foundation – Year 10 Australian Curriculum. 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. The revised Australian Curriculum, Version 9.0, was endorsed by education ministers in April 2022 and published on the new [Australian Curriculum](#) website in May 2022.

In 2023, ACARA continued work on completing the final phase of the curriculum review with languages being progressively released for public comment and updated. Five Languages (German, Indonesian, Korean, Modern Greek and Spanish) were endorsed and published on the Australian Curriculum website in February 2023. Four Languages (Arabic, Hindi, Turkish and Vietnamese) were endorsed in August 2023 and published on the Australian Curriculum website in October 2023.

The final stages of review and consultation for Chinese background and first language learner pathway, Classical Greek, Latin, and the Classical Languages framework was undertaken in 2023. Publication is occurred in February 2024.

The final stages of review and consultation for Auslan and the Aboriginal Languages and Torres Strait Islander Languages Framework was undertaken in 2023 and will be concluded in early 2024. Publication occurred in May 2024.

In response to an increase in mental health concerns, education ministers requested a review of the Australian Curriculum content related to mental health and wellbeing. Through consultation at the 2022 Mental Health Forum, hosted by ACARA, the following recommendations were made:

1. Add more text to unpack the mental health and wellbeing focus area description
2. Add specific reference to loss and grief to some existing elaborations
3. Develop a Mental health and wellbeing Curriculum connection.

Recommendations 1 and 2 were considered, actioned and published on the Australian Curriculum Version 9.0 website. Recommendation 3 was considered and actioned. The Curriculum connection: Mental health and wellbeing was published on the Australian Curriculum Version 9.0 website in August 2023.

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.

Curriculum projects

In 2023, ACARA undertook a range of curriculum project activities. These included:

- Enhancing functionality of the Australian Curriculum Version 9.0 website, with the National Formative Assessment Resource Bank and 19A projects both exploring solutions to enable the publication of optional resources to support the implementation of the Australian Curriculum Version 9.0.
- The addition of work samples to the Resources section of the Australian Curriculum Version 9.0 website. By May 2023, 82 work samples had been published.
- The launch of ACARA's Professional learning hub in May 2023, with an initial release of 2 modules focused on key changes. The hub is a new Australian Curriculum support resource for teachers and educators. Module 3 was released in June 2023.
- The re-launch of the website curriculum selector tool with enhancements to the user experience.
- Publication of the Machine-Readable Australian Curriculum (MRAC) files and student diversity content in May 2023.
- Preliminary research into the review of the Australian Curriculum: Work Studies.
- Preliminary research into the review of the Australian Curriculum: Senior Secondary.

Refresh of the Approved Learning Frameworks

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 and
- My Time, Our Place: Framework for School Age Care in Australia Version 2.0.

The updates strengthen the connection between the Early Years Learning Framework 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. After a 12-month period of familiarisation in 2023, all approved providers and their services will be required to be operating in accordance with the updated frameworks from 2024.

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 (NAP Sample).
- Australia's participation in international assessments.

ACARA is responsible for overseeing the NAPLAN and NAP Sample assessments. The AGDE 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.

National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy 2023

The National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (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.

In 2022, Australian Education Ministers agreed to critical improvements to NAPLAN, giving teachers additional information about student performance earlier in the year. In 2023, NAPLAN, which traditionally has been held in Term 2 of the school year, was held in Term 1 (March). A record 4.4 million online tests were taken by almost 1.3 million students in 9,390 campuses and schools across Australia.

Education ministers also agreed in February 2023 to introduce new proficiency standards for the reporting of NAPLAN results on a reset measurement scale that takes full advantage of the more precise online tests. A new NAPLAN time series began in 2023, with reporting against 4 proficiency levels: Exceeding, Strong, Developing, Needs additional support. This change provides parents and carers with more meaningful information on their child's performance and will identify more struggling students who need additional support. On 22 June 2023, ACARA released the NAPLAN results to TAAs to provide to schools.

NAPLAN results data for 2023 is available in interactive form on the ACARA NAP website. The interactive report and the NAPLAN National Report for 2023 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 2023 NAPLAN National Report and 2023 Test Incident Report were published in August 2023.

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 has resulted 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.

Progress for each of the NAP sample assessments outlined below:

1. **NAP – Science Literacy (NAP–SL):** The seventh NAP–Science Literacy sample assessment was conducted in May 2023. NAP–SL measures science literacy as defined in the Australian Curriculum: Science: ‘An ability to use scientific knowledge, understanding, and inquiry skills to identify questions, acquire new knowledge, explain science phenomena, solve problems and draw evidence-based conclusions in making sense of the world, and to recognise how understandings of the nature, development, use and influence of science help us make responsible decisions and shape our interpretations of information’. The public report providing the findings of the assessment will be published in May 2024.
2. **NAP – Information and Communication Technology Literacy (NAP–ICTL):** The 2020 cycle of NAP – Information and Communication Technology Literacy (NAP–ICTL), which is the sixth in the NAP–ICTL program, was delayed by the COVID-19 pandemic and administered in 2022, resulting in an unusually extended 5-year period. Assessment modules were reviewed to ensure assessment items were positioned and aligned to the assessment framework in relation to both the Version 8.4 Australian Curriculum: Digital Technologies learning area subject and the Information and Communication Technology general capability. The public report providing the findings of the assessment was published in late 2023.
3. **NAP – Civics and Citizenship (NAP–CC):** The sixth NAP–Civics and Citizenship (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. From March to May 2023, ACARA undertook an extended review of the assessment framework for NAP–CC to ensure the assessment items are aligned to the assessment framework in relation to the Australian Curriculum: Humanities and Social Sciences learning area subject.

NAP – international assessments

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

- Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA):

The 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 Organisation 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:

The TIMSS assessments take 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 took place in Australia in late 2023. Results will be released in December 2024.

- Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS):

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, territory and sector initiatives

- The ACT Education Directorate:
 - Worked with all schools to implement the Australian Curriculum Version 9. Schools were supported to make reasonable adjustments to curriculum and assessment as required for students with disability and diverse learning needs, including access to the Abilities Based Learning and Education Support assessment and reporting suite.
 - Released the Student-Centred Improvement Framework which includes pedagogy, curriculum and assessment as elements of the learning school improvement dimension. Schools will be required to self-evaluate curriculum and assessment related student outcomes against the improvement tool, aiming to sustain positive impact with culturally relevant and responsive approaches across the whole school.
- NSW continued to deliver a new curriculum by working to streamline and strengthen what is taught in NSW schools. New syllabuses focus on essential content which identifies the core knowledge and skills that students have a right to know and which they need to progress in each subject. The delivery timeline was extended to allow teachers additional time to plan and prepare before implementation in classrooms.
- NSW syllabuses continued to have strong community ownership through public consultation and stakeholder engagement, with 27 draft syllabuses released for consultation in 2023. In addition, 6 new syllabuses were released during the year.
- NSW released the first Auslan (Australian Sign Language) Syllabus for K-10 students in NSW schools. This new syllabus was developed in consultation with the Deaf community, teachers, students and parents. Schools can plan and prepare to teach the new syllabus from 2023, with full implementation from 2026.

- Catholic Schools NSW pioneered an assessment project known as 'Gradeo.' By leveraging an extensive bank of Trial HSC exams developed by a division of Catholic Schools NSW, Gradeo will be a high-quality, online assessment hub for teachers and students. Gradeo could be utilised for High School Certificate revision, including to access full past papers or individual items or clusters of items as mini 'check-in' assessments. Phase One of Gradeo included a research and consultation report on attitudes and approaches to new models of online assessment. The report leverages desktop research, a technology scan and findings from consultations with students, teachers, parents and assessment experts.
- Following the release of Version 9.0 of the Australian Curriculum, the NT is developing EsseNTial Curriculum, a package of resources for Territory teachers, which removes duplication and aligns to year-level standards. The EsseNTial Curriculum package adapts the Australian Curriculum to the NT context and will support schools with their whole-school curriculum maps and help reduce teacher workload. T-10 EsseNTial Curriculum English and T-10 EsseNTial Curriculum Maths are scheduled for release in Semester 1, 2024.
- The Qld Department of Education provided the Australian Curriculum in Prep to Year 10, as written, to ensure all students, of all identities and abilities can access and participate in the curriculum alongside their similar-aged peers and achieve academically and socially with tailored supports including reasonable adjustments that meet their learning needs.
- The Qld Department of Education provided a suite of high-quality Prep to Year 10 curriculum planning and assessment resources that supported schools in implementing all 8 learning areas of the curriculum.
- To support quality curriculum, Independent Schools Queensland delivered First Nations Education professional learning events. These included an intensive workshop on embedding First Nations perspectives and knowledge in classroom curriculum planning, and online modules on partnering with local First Nations peoples and embedding First Nations perspectives in numeracy.
- The SA Department for Education worked with the Center for Curriculum Redesign (CCR) (Boston, USA) and 11 schools (25 teachers) to begin a trial of the CCR modern mathematics curriculum for Year 10 students. This is a 4-year commitment helping participants develop deeper understanding of mathematics, enhance pedagogical practices and further develop use of technology as a tool in mathematics.
- The SA Department for Education commenced work to develop new financial literacy resources that will be rolled out to schools in 2024 to help students develop the necessary knowledge and capabilities to make sound financial decisions.
- In SA authentic curriculum and assessment SACE subjects were developed, that focus on student agency and metacognition, as well as cultivating conditions to deliberately develop student capabilities. These subjects are Stage 1 Exploring Identities and Futures and Stage 2 Activating Identities and Futures.
- All Tasmanian Government schools commenced planning, teaching and assessing using Version 9.0 of the Australian Curriculum. Resources and professional learning, including sessions facilitated by ACARA representatives, were available from 2022 to deepen understanding of the key changes across Learning Areas and year levels and to support the implementation process. The alignment between curriculum and assessment was further reinforced through the phased implementation of the revised *Reporting and Communicating with Families policy and procedures*.

- Victorian Curriculum F–10 Version 2.0 is scheduled to be published mid-2024. 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 and making the curriculum more teachable and manageable. Victorian Curriculum F–10 Version 2.0 curriculum is informed by findings and recommendations of our education system’s leading specialists. The revision to the curriculum conducted during the past 16 months is the culmination of the participation and advice provided by 250+ teachers, focus groups with school curriculum leaders, and sector feedback.
- In WA, revised Kindergarten Curriculum Guidelines were released. The Guidelines support teachers and educators to develop curriculum and facilitate the optimal learning and development of Kindergarten children. The changes strengthen the teaching of digital literacy, cultural responsiveness, environmental and sustainable education, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives, social competence and mental health and wellbeing. The updated guidelines reflect the changes in V2.0 of the Early Years Learning Framework.

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”.

On-Country Learning

The On-Country Learning Measure (the measure) was announced through the 2023–24 Federal Budget as part of the [Better, safer future for Central Australia](#) plan and is a commitment of \$40.4 million over 2023–24 and 2024–25. The measure is designed to support improved attendance and education outcomes at all operating government and non-government schools in the Central Australia region and will support all operating schools in Central Australia to respond flexibly to the needs of their communities and support young people to increase school engagement and attendance. The majority of funding under this Agreement will go directly to public schools in Central Australia. Every operating school in Central Australia will receive additional funding in 2024 through the On-Country Learning measure.

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 2021–22 Budget, the Australian Government allocated \$5.7 billion to the IAS over 4 years, extending until 2024–25, 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

- The ACT Education Directorate delivered the Koori Pre-Cultural Safety Framework, Koori Pre-Curriculum and resources to support the evolution of Koori Preschool in the ACT the *Set up for Success: An Early Childhood Strategy for the ACT*. The resources have been designed to meet the needs of community now and in the future, particularly around cultural safety and integrity and are used to enhance engagement and decision-making in Koori Preschools. These documents underpin programs at the 5 Koori Pre sites. Identified staff members created a website to support the induction of new staff into the Koori Preschool. Before beginning formal schooling, vulnerable or disadvantaged Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children can participate in up to 30 hours a week of high-quality early childhood education by enrolling in Koori Preschool and Early Entry to preschool.
- The NSW Department of Education held its first ever state-wide School Development Day with a focus on Aboriginal education on 24 April 2023. All schools were required to participate in 6 hours of accredited professional learning. A suite of online options was developed to support schools in the successful planning and implementation of the day.

- In NSW, Aboriginal Learning and Engagement Centres provided support to more than 3,100 Aboriginal students across 37 schools. All schools prepared a Strategic Improvement Plan, which outlined the steps they will take to improve learning outcomes, and work towards more Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander students completing school.
- The NSW Department of Education released the Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan 2023–2025, founded on building trust and confidence with Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander employees, families and communities to create safe workplaces and to ensure Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children get the best possible educational outcomes.
- The Association of Independent Schools of NSW’s Waratah Project continued into its eighth year, with participation increasing to 40 schools. The project supports improving 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.
- Catholic Schools NSW published its second report on Aboriginal Education Outcomes in NSW Catholic schools. The report is based on the CSNSW Aboriginal Education Strategy, which is a commitment to an annual reporting framework to monitor Aboriginal student outcomes against state and national KPIs, as well as collecting and sharing best practice case studies.
- The *Leaders of Tomorrow* program supported 48 Aboriginal students from across 9 schools in the NT to connect with business and local industries to gain skills, qualifications and future employment opportunities. The program provides personal development opportunities and promotes student voice. Students participated in a range of opportunities throughout the year such as workshops, work placements, interstate trips, forums and collaborations.
- Indigenous Languages and Cultures, including bilingual education, provides students with the opportunity to learn about Indigenous cultures, through the Australian Curriculum and through Indigenous languages. Forty-three schools across the NT offered this curriculum to over 4,000 students.
- The Qld Department of Education:
 - Established an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled organisation and stakeholder group to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and their families to participate in early childhood services.
 - Funded a range of excellence programs for high-achieving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in Qld state schools. This includes *Solid Pathways-STEM* - an online program for students in Years 4 to 6 and the *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Aspirations Program* - a challenge-based competition for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in Years 7 to 12.
 - Continued to promote culturally safe and inclusive workplaces to improve the attraction and retention of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees, through implementation of its ATSI workforce strategy.
 - Progressed implementation of the Department’s cultural capability framework, providing a common understanding of what cultural capability looks like and how to visibly demonstrate this through actions and values.
- The SA Department for Education launched its 2023–2026 Stretch Reconciliation Action Plan. It continued to work with the Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Education Committee, an Anangu-run organisation that leads the strategy for the education of Anangu in the Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Lands, Maralinga Tjarutja Lands and Yalata Lands; and continued to partner

with external agencies such as the Clontarf Foundation and Glass Jar Australia to support the mentoring and engagement of Aboriginal students, families and community.

- To support equity, well-being and recognition of Aboriginal ways of knowing and being the SACE Board completed 2 pilots in allyship with Aboriginal communities.
- In SA, 28 students received credits towards SACE completion for their cultural knowledge and learning as part of the second pilot of the *Recognition of Aboriginal Cultural Knowledge and Learning* project.
- The Tas Department for Education, Children and Young People supported Tasmania's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander learners by ensuring that:
 - Learning plans were in place for all Aboriginal students.
 - Aboriginal Educators worked in schools with the highest learning and wellbeing gaps.
 - Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures curriculum and pedagogy professional learning was provided to teachers.
 - Culturally responsive resources were created for teachers and students.
 - Scholarships were provided for Tasmanian Aboriginal students from remote or rural areas to pursue tertiary education.
 - Aboriginal learning facilitators brought learning to life for students in museums.
- The Victorian Department of Education's Koorie Outcomes Division undertook multiple initiatives to enhance the educational landscape for Koorie students:
 - The *Strengthening Professional Capability of Principals in Koorie Education* program delivered 22 workshops focusing on leadership in First Peoples education to 259 participants, including school leaders and school-based staff from over 136 total schools.
 - 181 participants from 107 schools engaged in 55 anti-racism workshops, facilitated by the Centre for Multicultural Youth in collaboration with the Koorie Heritage Trust.
 - The *Koorie Clusters* project made progress by focusing on integrating First Peoples histories, cultures, and perspectives into the Victorian Curriculum F-10, thereby enriching the educational content and fostering a deeper understanding and respect for First Peoples' knowledge among Victorian students.
 - 1,011 school staff from 125 schools completed an anti-racism eLearning course, developed by the Australian Human Rights Commission. This highlights the ongoing commitment to anti-racism education within the Victorian education sector.
- Independent Schools Victoria fostered a deeper understanding and integration of Indigenous perspectives and reconciliation within the educational landscape. Schools and early learning services accessed tailored support and resources, aiming to embed Indigenous cultures, histories, and contributions meaningfully into their curricula and communities. Through its partnership with Reconciliation Australia's Narragunnawali program, ISV offered workshops, webinars, and tools and resources to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. These programs delved into policy development, curriculum design that integrates Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures, and strategies for supporting Indigenous students' well-being and academic pathways.
- The Department of Education WA established a system-level Aboriginal Advisory Body, with 10 Aboriginal members appointed, to advise on the Department's progress towards reconciliation and creating a culturally responsive education system.

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”.

Commonwealth Regional Scholarship Program

The Australian Government is investing \$10.9 million over 7 years (2023–24 to 2029–30) in the *Commonwealth Regional Scholarship Program* pilot. In 2023 the Government announced that the pilot will deliver 100 scholarships commencing in 2024 to students from regional, rural and remote areas in Australia, to assist with secondary school boarding fees and associated costs. The pilot will provide additional financial support to low-income families and families experiencing financial hardship, who are unable to afford the full cost of boarding school fees and associated costs even with existing government support, with the intention to reduce families’ financial contribution towards boarding school fees.

Needs-based school funding

Under the *Australian Education Act 2013*, Australian Government recurrent funding for schools is calculated using a base per-student amount plus 6 loadings for school size, school location and student 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.²⁶

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.

Nationally Consistent Collection of Data on School Students with Disability

The Australian Government will invest \$20 million over 4 years to continue the Nationally Consistent Collection of Data on Students with Disability (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 2005.²⁷

²⁶ 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.

²⁷ For more information about Students with Disability in 2023, refer to Chapter 2, Section 2.4: School Students with Disability.

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 supports over 76,000 disadvantaged high school students 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 the ACT:
 - The ACT Government released *Inclusive Education: A Disability Inclusion Strategy for ACT Public Schools 2024–2034* which was developed after an extensive consultation process with schools, families, teachers and other stakeholders. The Strategy and its First Action Plan will strengthen inclusive education for students with disability and diverse learning needs by making sure schools have the support to meet the needs of all learners.
 - ACT schools continued to receive access to professional learning and facilitated networks and expert advice from the Allied Health Service and School Psychology Service. Infrastructure modifications were made to schools and all schools now offer disability education programs (which feature a smaller class size and a dedicated space for regulation) and inclusion support in general education classrooms.
 - The ACT Education Directorate recruited additional social and youth workers as part of a 4-year commitment to provide early intervention and support to students and their families in public schools.
- In NSW:
 - The Equity Placement Model was introduced to ensure that students from all backgrounds have fair access and opportunity to attend selective high schools and opportunity classes. Under the Model, up to 20% of places are held for high potential and gifted students from low socio-educational advantage areas, Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander students, students from rural and remote areas, and students with disability.
 - The *COVID Intensive Learning Support Program* was extended to the end of 2023. In 2023, 1,670 NSW public schools employed 4,021 educators to support 50,539 students.
 - *Get Back in the Game* offered a wraparound case management service for young people aged 15- 19 supporting them into education, training or employment. Enrolment into the GBIG program included a thorough assessment phase to identify young people at risk of disengaging and tailoring individual transition plans to build their job readiness and subsequent workforce capability.

- The Framework for Inclusion 2019–29 sets out the department’s 10-year plan for inclusive education in the NT. A multi-disciplinary team of 83 wellbeing and inclusion professionals was established in January 2023. The team is made up of specialist teachers, occupational therapists, psychologists and social workers, school counsellors and behaviour advisors. These professionals will help schools build best practice wellbeing and inclusion supports to meet the needs of students across the NT. Projects under the Framework include development of a needs-based resourcing model for students with disability; development of professional learning for educators to improve capabilities in de-escalation and positive behaviour; and continued support of a student advocacy service, in which 89 families were supported to resolve complaints, with 24 families receiving information to self-advocate and 65 families receiving more intensive support.
- The Qld Department of Education:
 - Introduced the *Kindy Uplift* program, supporting kindergarten services across Qld to better respond to the educational and developmental needs of kindergarten children, particularly children more likely to experience educational disadvantage.
 - Introduced a new *Students with disability – Reasonable adjustment* resourcing model, providing resources to Qld state schools, informed by the NCCD.
 - Continued to administer Regional Youth Engagement Service supporting young people who have become disengaged to reconnect with education, training or employment. In 2023, the RYES connected with and supported 4,186 disengaged school aged young people with 1,500 supported to make a transition back to education, training and/or employment.
- The number of mental health and learning support specialists in SA public schools increased in 2023. The South Australian Government funded access to an Autism Inclusion Teacher in every public primary school from the 2023 school year.
- The SA Department for Education’s Digital Strategy includes the Student Device Program ensuring all school card students in Years 7 and 10 receive a digital device at no cost to them by 2026. This also includes the Student Home Internet Program which provides any student in the public education system with access to free, reliable internet at home for educational and learning purposes. This can be requested at any point throughout the year.
- The South Australian Certificate of Education Board strategic plan has a targeted focus on broadening the definition of success through intentional curriculum and assessment recognition policy changes that recognise the diversity of students’ backgrounds and matching to diverse pathways.
- The Association of Independent Schools of South Australia developed a series of e-modules that drew together best practice in inclusive education provision, the Australian Curriculum and supporting student diversity. Approximately one third of the SA Independent sector completed the e-modules, developing capacity to create universally designed units of study and assessment tasks, inclusive of curriculum adjustments.
- In Tas, funding of \$4.4 million over 2023–24 forward estimates was allocated to provide free access to speech pathologists, psychologists and social workers in every Child and Family Learning Centre. This included \$1.1 million in 2023–24.

- Tasmania’s approach in supporting student wellbeing is well advanced, underpinned by the Child and Student Wellbeing Strategy ‘*Wellbeing for Learning*’. Almost 30,000 student voices were heard through the annual Student Wellbeing and Engagement Survey and the whole-of government Child and Youth Wellbeing Strategy ‘*It Takes a Tasmanian Village*’.²⁸
- In Vic:
 - The Victorian Department of Education continued and expanded support for disadvantaged families to access uniforms, educational items, and free vision screening and glasses to enable students to fully participate in their education.
 - Funding was expanded for refugee education support initiatives that aim to build school workforce capacity to support the educational engagement, participation, achievement and wellbeing of children and young people from refugee backgrounds and their families.
 - The Victorian Department of Education continued to implement the *Disability Inclusion Reform* which saw over 850 government schools transition to a strengths-based funding and support model, ahead of state-wide implementation in 2025. School workforce capability-building initiatives also continued to operate state-wide. These initiatives include the *Diverse Learners Hub* and *Inclusion Outreach Coaching Initiative*.
 - The Tutor Learning Initiative provides government and low-fee non-government schools with funding to employ tutors to deliver targeted small group learning to students needing additional support in literacy and numeracy.
 - Diocese of Ballarat Catholic Education Limited (DOBCEL) developed a resource to support gender diverse students. This is a practical tool for schools and their leadership teams to support students within their school community who wish to affirm their gender.
- In WA:
 - All public schools with secondary students were provided access to free period products and dispensers. More than 220 schools benefited from the program, and it has helped to normalise and de-stigmatise the issue, provide dignified access to students who need it and address one of the barriers to school attendance.
 - An updated action plan, *Standing Together Against Violence*, with additional support and resources for WA public schools to prevent and respond to violent, aggressive or threatening behaviour, was released.
 - The Student-Centred Funding Model was strengthened to provide an additional \$8.5 million for increased resources to promote early interventions for students with literacy and numeracy difficulties and to improve explicit teaching in classrooms.
 - Under the Association for Independent Schools Western Australia’s *Wellbeing and Mental Health in Schools Pilot Project*, 20 schools were supported to engage in wellbeing and mental health strategy development. Schools were provided with a small grant to engage a designated wellbeing and mental health school coordinator. Further support is provided via the AISWA psychology team.

²⁸ In Tas, the Student Wellbeing and Engagement Survey is completed annually by students in Years 4 – 12. It provides measures of student wellbeing through the voice of our learners. Schools use this data to inform School Improvement Planning, and students use this data to plan action with teachers. At a system level, data informs aspects of performance reporting and the delivery of support to schools.

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 USI; establishing AERO to inform teacher practice, system improvement and policy development; and improving national data quality, consistency, and collection.

The National Unique Student Identifier

The USI for school students is one of the 8 national policy initiatives in the NSRA. This initiative will provide every Australian school student with a USI number that will travel with them throughout school and into VET and higher education.

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.

In 2023, the Schools USI project focussed on developing and delivering enabling components for implementation of this national initiative. These activities included consultation on proposed legislative amendments, privacy and data management, technical design and stakeholder engagement.

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 2023, AERO published resources to inform teacher practice, system improvement and policy development using evidence-based approaches in the schooling and early childhood education sectors.

The Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority

The data collection and reporting functions of The Australian Curriculum and Reporting Authority (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 2023.

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.

For the first time in 2023, sections of the National Report on Schooling in Australia were released progressively, allowing more timely access to data and commentary and more closely aligning the National Report on Schooling in Australia and the National Report on Schooling data portal. Sections of the National Report on Schooling in Australia 2022 were published in June, August and December 2023, with the final report released in February 2024.

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. In 2023, as part of the progressive release of the National Report on Schooling in Australia, PDFs containing commentary were progressively added to each data portal page.

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.

State and territory initiatives

- In the ACT:
 - The evaluation framework for the ACT Government's 10-year plan *Set up for Success: An Early Childhood Strategy for the ACT* outlines the approach to evaluating the outcomes of the strategy. The Phase One (January 2020 to December 2022) evaluation report was released in 2023. The report outlined the key actions and initiatives delivered throughout Phase One and the impact of their implementation.
 - Schools develop individual learning plans for all students accessing formal disability programs. This is audited annually and reported in the annual report. Individual learning plans must also be developed for students in out of home care.
 - The Student-Centred Improvement Framework increases the use of system and school real-time data and contextual evidence to evaluate the effectiveness of its structures, processes and practices that impact the inclusive and equitable education for every child and young person.
- In October 2023, the NSW Department of Education launched *Our Plan for NSW Public Education*, which serves as a guide to improve the education system over the next 4 years. The plan outlines the department's commitment to enhancing accountability and transparency in public education through robust, data-driven success measures within 6 focus areas and enablers. The measures will provide the most comprehensive set of metrics to date to measure the department's work to improve outcomes for all public-school students. This commitment to evidence-driven actions, coupled with systematic progress reports, ensures that the goals of the plan are achieved efficiently and effectively, with clear visibility of progress against strong and meaningful measures.
- The *Education NT Strategy 2021–25* is supported by 6 headline improvement measures (relating to improvements in teacher student relationships as assessed through the school survey, foundational early literacy skills, attended days, NAPLAN growth, A-E grades, and Year 12 achievement).

- The Department of Education in Qld used priority measures identified within the *Equity and Excellence* strategy to provide clarity to schools, and the broader system, about the measures used to monitor educational achievement, wellbeing and engagement, and culture and inclusion. The priorities focus on knowing the needs of children and students, achievement in English and Mathematics, maximising learning days and post school transitions. In SA new subject pilots and Capabilities and Learner Profile pilots involved testing new approaches to quality assurance. This provided better feedback (earlier in the school year) that strengthened the expertise of teachers to make professional assessment decisions and build capability in the system.
- In SA, capabilities assessments were made for over 1,200 students by utilising the SACE capabilities as an assessment instrument alongside subject assessment. This supported a more meaningful measure of student success.
- The Association of Independent Schools of South Australia supported SA Independent schools for the earlier 2024 NAPLAN in March, ensuring successful compliance with national participation requirements for students in years 3, 5, 7, and 9. Training opportunities, including those focusing on student disability and accessibility, were delivered, in addition to help-desk service.
- Tasmania's public release of key data on the Department for Education, Children and Young People website has been made more accessible and includes more frequent updates for some measures.
- The Victorian Department of Education implemented a comprehensive review of education performance measures in the Victorian State Budget papers. This review strengthened the range of performance measures through better alignment to service delivery outputs.
- The Department of Education WA successfully introduced a range of new financial compliance services and refinements to existing practice. This included 40 desktop-based school compliance reviews in addition to the normal on-site reviews and piloting of a new report format designed to make recommendations and available resources easier to understand for principals and other non-finance professionals.
- In WA, improvements to the Public School Review model were informed by the findings and recommendations of the 2023 Office of the Auditor General performance audit '*Effectiveness of Public School Reviews*'.
- The Catholic Education Western Australia Student Learning Journey was launched in 2023. This is a digital platform that provides access to a range of academic data and allows educators to measure the learning growth of each child. The data in the Student Learning Journey should be triangulated against other student-centred information to provide meaningful planning, assessment, feedback and measurement of student growth. It is designed to complement the CEWA *Learning Insights Application*. It can be used in a variety of ways, e.g. data informed discussion, student insights, personalising learning and communicating with parents. The Common Assessment Framework and collection of consistent data across schools through the Student Learning Journey provides system-wide growth data and enables greater tracking of students moving between schools, supporting teachers to cater to individual student needs.

Chapter 4: Enrolment and Attendance



This chapter reports on student enrolment, attendance, and apparent retention in 2023, using the nationally agreed key performance measures for schooling specified in the Measurement Framework for Schooling in Australia 2020.

4.1 Enrolment rates

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 NT, which had an enrolment rate of 98.6%.
- Data from the NSSC indicates that in 2023, the proportion of 6–15-year-olds enrolled in school in Australia was 98.6% – the same as in 2022, but down from 99.0% in 2021.

This section reports on the number of students enrolled, as a proportion of the Australian population in the corresponding age group, as a KPM for schooling.²⁹ The KPM is specified as the number of students aged 6–15 years enrolled in school, expressed as a proportion of the 6–15-year-old population. As this approximates the age range of students for whom schooling is compulsory, the enrolment rate for this group is close to 100%.

Key Performance Measure 1(a)

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

²⁹ 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.

Data for this KPM is drawn from the 5-yearly Australian Census of Population and Housing.³⁰ 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 2023 was 98.6% – the same as in 2022, but 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, 2013–2023

	KPM1(a) Proportion of 6–15-year-olds enrolled in school, Australia (%) (Census of population and housing)	Number of children aged 6–15 years enrolled in school (NSSC)	Population, Australia (aged 6–15 years)	Proportion of 6–15-year-olds enrolled in school, Australia (%)
2013	–	2,844,983	2,833,866	100.4
2014	–	2,889,292	2,875,596	100.5
2015	–	2,930,612	2,919,394	100.4
2016	99.4	2,974,656	2,970,505	100.1
2017	–	3,022,905	3,024,364	100.0
2018	–	3,071,847	3,081,581	99.7
2019	–	3,131,591	3,143,378	99.6
2020	–	3,174,506	3,196,673	99.3
2021	99.3	3,198,158	3,229,459	99.0
2022	–	3,215,223	3,259,377	98.6
2023	–	3,242,001	3,287,156	98.6

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

Sources: ABS, Australian Census of Population and Housing, 2011, 2016, 2021; ABS, Schools Australia, 2013–2023; ABS, National, state and territory population June 2023 (release date 14/12/2023).

Data disaggregated by state and territory, and other disaggregations for the census years 2011, 2016, and 2021 is available in the National Report on Schooling data portal.

³⁰ The Census of Population and Housing 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 2023:

- the attendance rate for students in Years 1-10 was 88.6%, up from 86.5% in 2022.
- the student attendance level (the percentage of students with above 90 per cent attendance) was 61.6%, up from 49.9% in 2022.
- attendance rates and attendance levels:
 - increased with the level of socio-educational advantage of the school
 - were higher among students in major cities than in remote areas
 - were lower among students from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander backgrounds than for non-Indigenous students.
- While student attendance rates and attendance levels increased substantially in 2023, they have not returned to their pre-COVID levels, owing to continuing COVID outbreaks. In 2019, national attendance rates were 91.4% and attendance levels 73.1%.
- The increase in attendance rates for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students between 2022 and 2023 was larger than that for non-Indigenous students, resulting in a 0.8 percentage point reduction in the national gap in attendance rates.

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 available from 2014 for the attendance rate and from 2015 for the attendance level.³¹

³¹ NSW implemented the national standards in 2018. Attendance rates for NSW and Australia for 2018 onward are not fully comparable to previous years, due to changes in the calculation method for NSW government schools in 2018.

Attendance rates

Table 4.2 reports KPM 1(b) by state and territory and school sector for 2023. The average school attendance rate for Years 1–10 across Australia in 2023 was 87.5% for government schools, 90.3% for Catholic schools, 91.2% for independent schools and 88.6% for schools overall.

Table 4.2: Student attendance rates, Years 1–10, by state/territory and school sector, Australia, 2023 (%)

State/territory	NSW	Vic	Qld	SA	WA	Tas	NT	ACT	Australia
Government	88.1	88.6	87.1	86.6	86.8	84.9	75.2	87.8	87.5
Catholic	90.7	90.1	90.5	90.1	90.2	88.5	79.0	89.4	90.3
Independent	91.6	91.5	91.0	90.8	90.8	90.2	85.2	91.1	91.2
All	89.2	89.3	88.3	88.0	88.0	86.4	77.2	88.8	88.6

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

Source: ACARA, National Student Attendance Data Collection.

The average attendance rate for Years 1–10 in 2023 exceeded 85% in all states and territories except the NT, where, as in previous years, the much lower average attendance rate (59.0%) for the high proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students led to an average rate for all students of 77.2%.

There was little difference in the 2023 national average attendance rate for girls (88.7%) and boys (88.6%). Average attendance rates were higher in major cities (89.6%) than in remote areas (81.1%), and lowest in very remote areas (66.1%).³² As in previous years, a common characteristic across all states and territories was lower average attendance rates in Years 7–10 than in Years 1–6. At the national level in 2023, the average attendance rate for Years 7–10 was 86.4% compared with 90.2% for Years 1–6.

Table 4.3 reports KPM 1(b) nationally, by school sector, for 2013–2023. After a 4.4 percentage point decrease from 2021 to 2022 – which was a result of the impact of the COVID-19 Omicron variant, high Influenza season outbreaks and floods in certain regions across Australia – student attendance rates across Australia increased by 2.1 percentage points nationally in 2023, with increases occurring in all three school sectors.

All states and territories reported higher student attendance rates in 2023 compared to 2022, with increases ranging from 1.2 percentage points in the NT to 2.9 percentage points in the ACT. While student attendance rates were higher in 2023 than in 2022, they have not returned to pre-COVID levels. The [Key Performance Measures Dashboard](#) in the National Report on Schooling data portal reports a downward trend in student attendance rates over the period 2014–2023 of -0.6 percentage points per annum. Further analysis of reasons for absences is required to determine whether there has been an ongoing impact of COVID on attendance rates.

³² Student attendance rates disaggregated by year level, sex and geolocation are available in the National Report on Schooling data portal, Student Attendance data set.

Table 4.3: Student attendance rates, Years 1–10, by school sector, Australia, 2014–2023 (%)

School sector	Government	Catholic	Independent	All
2014	91.9	93.9	94.3	92.7
2015	92.0	93.6	93.9	92.6
2016	91.9	93.6	93.8	92.5
2017	91.8	93.4	93.7	92.4
2018	91.3	92.9	93.5	91.9
2019	90.7	92.4	93.1	91.4
2020	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
2021	90.0	92.3	93.0	90.9
2022	85.6	87.9	88.8	86.5
2023	87.5	90.3	91.2	88.6

Notes:

See note for Table 4.2.

Data is only available from 2014 for the attendance rate.

Attendance rates for NSW and Australia for 2018 onward are not fully comparable to previous years, due to changes in the calculation method for NSW government schools in 2018. Attendance data for 2021 to 2023 in NSW is not comparable with previous years due to changes to the attendance calculations for government schools to align with the revised 2020 National Standards for student attendance data reporting.

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

Source: ACARA National Student Attendance Data Collection.

Table 4.4 shows comparative attendance rates for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous students in Years 1–10 by state and territory, and the gaps between them, in 2014, 2022 and 2023. In all three years, above average gaps in attendance rates were recorded in the NT, WA, and SA.

At a national level, the increase in attendance rates for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students between 2022 and 2023 (2.9 percentage points) was larger than that for non-Indigenous students (2.1 percentage points). This reduced the national gap in attendance rates by 0.8 percentage points to 12.1 percentage points in 2023. Increases in student attendance rates among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students were largest in WA (3.7 percentage points), NSW (3.5 percentage points) and SA (2.5 percentage points).

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 2023 was 89.9% in major cities, 87.6% in remote areas and 87.0% in very remote areas. For Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, attendance rates were 80.5% in major cities, 67.7% in remote areas and 55.4% in very remote areas. This results in a difference of 9.4 percentage points between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and non-Indigenous students in major cities, 20.0 percentage points in remote areas, and a gap of 31.5 percentage points between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous students in schools in very remote areas.³³

³³ National Report on Schooling data portal, Student Attendance data set.

Table 4.4: Student attendance rates, Years 1–10, by state and territory and Indigenous status, Australia, 2014, 2022 and 2023 (%)

State/territory	NSW	Vic	Qld	SA	WA	Tas	NT	ACT	Australia
2014									
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students	87.5	86.8	85.2	81.1	77.4	88.5	70.2	85.2	83.5
Non-Indigenous students	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 students (percentage points)	6.4	6.3	7.6	11.5	15.4	3.9	20.7	7.4	9.6
2022									
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students	77.3	79.6	76.8	72.5	66.4	79.9	57.8	77.1	74.5
Non-Indigenous students	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	76.0	85.9	86.5
Gap: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander/non-Indigenous students (percentage points)	9.7	8.2	10.9	13.9	21.3	5.8	30.1	9.1	12.9
2023									
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students	80.8	81.0	79.1	75.0	70.1	80.9	59.0	79.4	77.4
Non-Indigenous students	89.9	89.5	89.3	88.8	89.4	87.1	89.2	89.1	89.5
All students	89.2	89.3	88.3	88.0	88.0	86.4	77.2	88.8	88.6
Gap: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander/non-Indigenous students (percentage points)	9.1	8.5	10.2	13.8	19.4	6.2	30.2	9.7	12.1
Change in gap 2014–22 (percentage points)									
Change in gap 2014–22 (percentage points)	3.3	1.9	3.2	2.4	5.9	1.9	9.4	1.7	3.2
Change in gap 2014–23 (percentage points)									
Change in gap 2014–23 (percentage points)	2.7	2.2	2.5	2.3	4.0	2.3	9.5	2.3	2.4
Change in gap 2022–23 (percentage points)									
Change in gap 2022–23 (percentage points)	-0.7	0.3	-0.7	-0.1	-1.9	0.4	0.1	0.6	-0.8

Note: See notes for Tables 4.2 and 4.3.

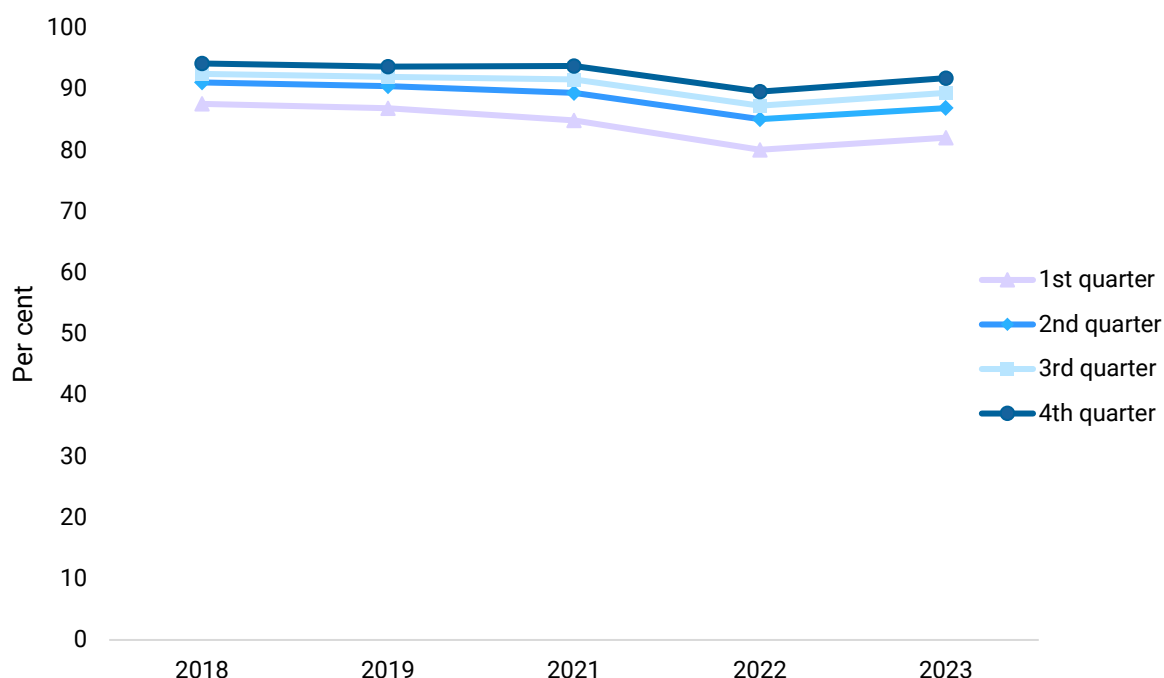
Source: ACARA, National Student Attendance Data Collection.

The average attendance rate for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students was lower for older year groups; and increases in attendance rates in 2023 were larger among students in younger year groups. In 2023, the average attendance rate for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students was 81.3% for Years 1–6, up 3.5 percentage points from 77.8% in 2022. For Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in Years 7–10 the average attendance rate was 71.3% in 2023, up 1.8 percentage points, from 69.5% in 2022.

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 39.7% for Year 10 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in very remote areas, compared to 79.7% for non-Indigenous Year 10 students in very remote areas. As a result, the attendance gap is larger at higher year levels in these areas.

Across all states and territories, attendance rates increased with socio-educational advantage (measured by the Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage (ICSEA)), as shown in Figure 4.1. In 2023, the average attendance rate for schools in the lowest ICSEA quarter was 82.1%, compared to 91.8% for students in schools in the highest ICSEA quarter. This difference was more pronounced in the NT than in other states and territories, with average attendance rates of 64.1% among students in schools in the lowest ICSEA quarter, compared to 91.4% for students in schools in the highest ICSEA quarter. Declines in attendance rates in 2021 and 2022 were largest among students in schools in the lowest ICSEA quarter. This has resulted in an increase in the gap in attendance rates in the lowest and highest ICSEA quarters – from 6.6 percentage points in 2018 to 9.7 percentage points in 2023.

Figure 4.1: Student attendance rates, Years 1–10, by ICSEA quarter, Australia, 2018–2023 (%)



Note: 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%. Several studies have shown that learning outcomes and educational achievement decline markedly when student attendance is below 90%.³⁴ KPM 1(c) aims to identify populations or groups for whom attendance is over 90%. Conversely, it identifies groups whose lower levels of attendance may put them at a disadvantage.

Table 4.5 shows KPM 1(c) by state and territory, by school sector, for 2023.

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, 2023 (%); Change 2022–2023 (percentage points)

State/territory	NSW	Vic	Qld	SA	WA	Tas	NT	ACT	Australia
2023									
Government	59.9	62.1	56.1	56.3	57.2	50.6	41.6	56.5	58.6
Catholic	65.9	65.0	66.1	63.4	66.5	58.3	44.8	60.3	65.2
Independent	70.9	70.6	68.9	67.9	68.7	64.1	56.6	68.1	69.6
All	63.0	64.0	59.9	59.7	60.6	54.0	44.2	59.5	61.6
Change 2022–2023									
Government	15.7	7.7	6.6	9.5	9.6	6.5	5.1	15.2	10.3
Catholic	14.9	15.4	15.1	18.9	6.5	10.9	9.3	26.4	14.7
Independent	16.5	13.4	9.1	20.3	12.0	13.1	6.7	16.8	14.0
All	15.7	10.1	8.5	13.2	9.6	8.3	6.0	17.8	11.8

Note: See notes for Tables 4.2 and 4.3.

Source: ACARA, National Student Attendance Data Collection.

In 2023, 61.6% of Australian students in Years 1–10 attended school for at least 90% of school days, increasing from 49.9% in 2022, with increases in attendance levels in all school sectors and in all states and territories. Increases in attendance levels were larger for non-government schools compared to government schools, and larger in the ACT, NSW and SA than for other states and territories.³⁵

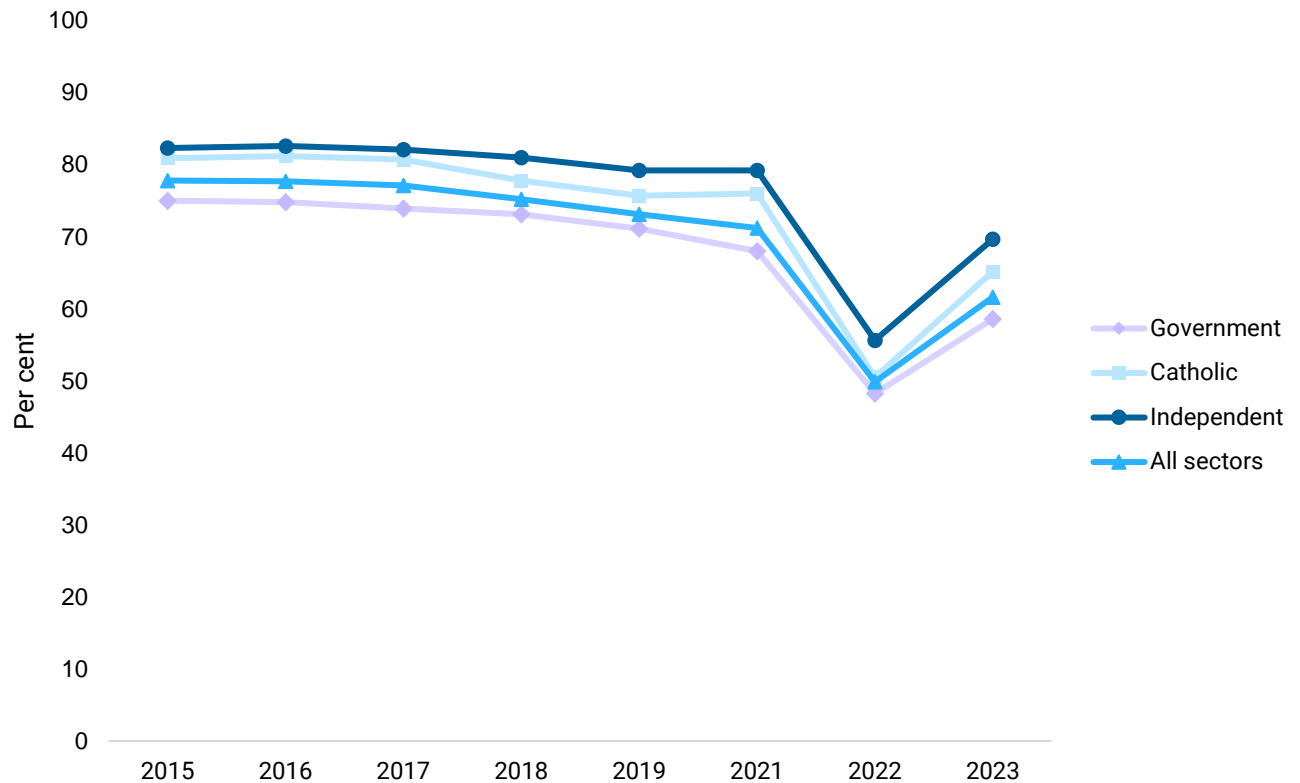
This increase in attendance levels follows a significant drop in 2022, as shown in Figure 4.2. It is likely that this decrease resulted from the spread of COVID-19 and its impact on school operations in 2022. This included public health advice that students with cold and flu symptoms should not attend school.

As was the case for student attendance rates, while student attendance levels were higher in 2023 than 2022, they have not returned to pre-COVID levels. The Key Performance Measures Dashboard in the National Report on Schooling data portal reports a downward trend in student attendance levels over the period 2018–2023 of -3.9 percentage points per annum. The lower attendance rates in 2023 compared to 2021 and previous years can thus be seen as consistent with a long-term trend.

³⁴ 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.

³⁵ In NSW, the attendance level increase for NSW Government schools was higher than for NSW Catholic schools.

Figure 4.2: 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, 2015–2023 (%)



Notes:

See notes for Table 4.2.

Data is only available from 2015 for the attendance level. For NSW government schools, attendance level data is only available from 2018.

Source: ACARA, National Student Attendance Data Collection.

KPM 1(c) is intended to monitor progress in Australia’s priority to close the gaps in educational outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people. The measure for 2023 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 student attendance levels for 2023 by Indigenous status and state and territory, and the gap in this measure between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous students.

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, 2023 (%); Change 2022–2023

State/territory	NSW	Vic	Qld	SA	WA	Tas	NT	ACT	Australia
2023									
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	40.6	42.7	37.4	31.7	27.2	40.9	18.7	37.2	36.4
Non-Indigenous	64.7	64.4	62.2	61.3	63.2	55.6	61.2	60.3	63.4
All students	63.0	64.0	59.9	59.7	60.6	54.0	44.2	59.5	61.6
Gap Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander/non-Indigenous (percentage points)	24.1	21.7	24.8	29.7	36.0	14.7	42.5	23.1	27.1
Change 2022–2023									
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	13.8	7.9	7.0	9.0	8.3	7.3	3.7	13.1	9.7
Non-Indigenous	15.9	10.2	8.7	13.4	9.7	8.5	7.8	18.0	12.0
All students	15.7	10.1	8.5	13.2	9.6	8.3	6.0	17.8	11.8
Gap Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander/non-Indigenous (percentage points)	2.1	2.3	1.7	4.5	1.4	1.2	4.2	4.9	2.2

Notes: See notes for Table 4.2.

Source: ACARA, National Student Attendance Data Collection.

In 2023, 36.4% of Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students attended school for 90% of the time or more, with a gap of 27.1 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 increase in attendance levels between 2022 and 2023 was larger for non-Indigenous students than for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, resulting in an increase of 2.2 percentage points in the gap in attendance levels since 2022. Between 2022 and 2023, attendance levels for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students increased, however with larger increases in attendance levels for non-Indigenous students, the gap widened in all jurisdictions, with the NT, SA and ACT experiencing the largest increases 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 0.3 percentage points – from 79.0% in 2022 to 78.7% in 2023.
- The apparent retention rate from Year 10 to Year 12 for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students decreased by 0.6 percentage points, from 56.4% in 2022 to 55.8% in 2023.
- Between 2013 and 2023, Year 10 to Year 12 apparent retention for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students was net unchanged, at 55.8% in 2013 and 2023. Among non-Indigenous students, apparent retention rates decreased by 1.8 percentage points over this period, leading to a narrowing of the gap between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous students.

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 the state and territory level than at the sector level, and less reliable for geographic areas with mobile populations and for individual schools.³⁶

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 4.3 show KPM 1(e) by school sector for the period 2013–2023.

³⁶ 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.

Table 4.7: Apparent retention rates (uncapped), Year 10 to Year 12, by school sector, Australia, 2013–2023 (%)

School sector	Government	Catholic	Independent	All
2013	76.7	85.4	88.9	80.7
2014	78.6	86.8	90.9	82.5
2015	79.2	86.3	90.0	82.7
2016	79.5	86.4	89.7	82.9
2017	79.8	86.5	90.9	83.3
2018	79.2	85.4	91.1	82.8
2019	78.0	84.9	91.0	82.0
2020	78.2	85.5	90.5	82.1
2021	77.2	85.4	90.8	81.6
2022	73.5	84.4	90.3	79.0
2023	73.0	84.3	90.4	78.7

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, resulting from the ongoing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on immigration, may have impacted the numerator and/or the denominator for this measure for 2020, 2021 and 2022.

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

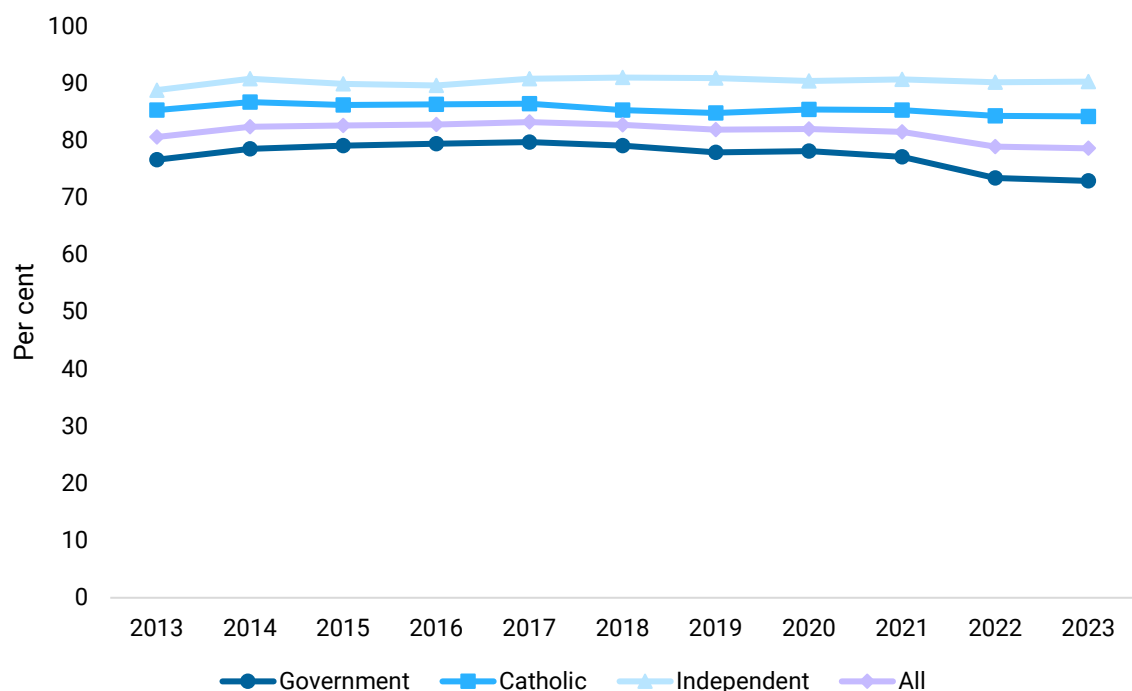
Source: ABS, Schools, 2023 and previous releases.

After 5 successive years of growth from 2012, following the implementation of strengthened participation requirements for 15- and 16-year-olds in 2010 the national apparent retention rate from Year 10 to Year 12 fell in 2018 and 2019.³⁷ It then rose by 0.1 percentage point in 2020 before falling by 0.5 percentage points in 2021, 2.6 percentage points in 2022 and 0.3 percentage points in 2023.

The Key Performance Measures data set in the National Report on Schooling data portal reports a long-term flat/neutral trend in this measure of 0.1 percentage points per annum for the period 2010–2023.

³⁷ 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 4.3: Apparent retention rates (uncapped), Year 10 to Year 12, by school sector, Australia, 2013–2023 (%)



Source: ABS, *Schools*, 2023 and previous releases.

In 2023, apparent retention rates from Year 10 to Year 12 increased slightly (0.1 percentage point) in the independent sector and decreased slightly in the government and Catholic sectors (0.1 and 0.5 percentage points respectively).

The gap in apparent retention rates between the government and independent sectors narrowed from 12.2 percentage points in 2013 to 10.2 percentage points in 2016, but, by 2023, this had widened to 17.4 percentage points, resulting in a net increase in this gap of 5.2 percentage points over the 10-year period 2013–2023.

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, 2013, 2022 and 2023 (%) and changes 2022–2023 and 2013–2023 (percentage points)

State/territory	NSW	Vic	Qld	SA	WA	Tas	NT	ACT	Australia
2013	75.8	83.1	84.0	87.8	81.0	67.8	62.9	90.4	80.7
2022	73.2	82.1	81.0	86.0	82.0	71.7	62.6	87.8	79.0
2023	73.0	81.9	80.7	85.0	82.0	69.0	61.8	87.7	78.7
Change 2022–2023	-0.2	-0.2	-0.3	-1.0	0.0	-2.7	-0.8	-0.1	-0.3
Change 2013–2023	-2.8	-1.2	-3.3	-2.8	1.0	1.2	-1.1	-2.7	-2.0

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, 2023 and previous releases.

In 2023, apparent retention rates ranged from 61.8% in the NT to 87.7% 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.

Table 4.9 and Figure 4.4 report this KPM for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and non-Indigenous students for the period 2013–2023.

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, 2013–2023

School sector	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	Non-Indigenous	Gap
2013	55.8	81.9	26.1
2014	60.4	83.6	23.2
2015	60.6	83.8	23.2
2016	60.9	84.0	23.1
2017	63.0	84.3	21.3
2018	62.6	83.9	21.3
2019	60.0	83.2	23.2
2020	61.5	83.3	21.8
2021	60.5	82.7	22.2
2022	56.4	80.4	24.0
2023	55.8	80.1	24.3

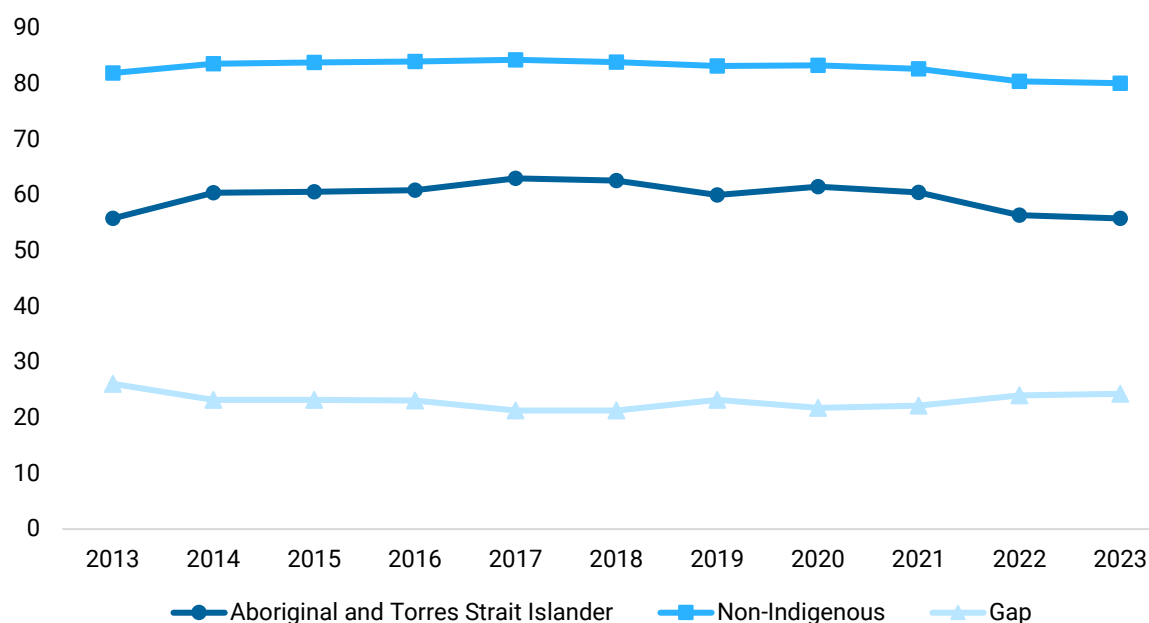
Notes:

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, 2023 and previous releases.

Figure 4.4: Apparent retention rates (uncapped), Year 10 to Year 12, by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander status, Australia, 2013–2023 (%)



Source: ABS, Schools, 2023 and previous releases.

The apparent retention rate for Year 10 to Year 12 for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students fell from 56.4% in 2022 to 55.8% in 2023. This 0.6 percentage point decrease followed a fall of 4.1 percentage points in 2022.

Over the last ten years, Year 10 to Year 12 retention for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students was net unchanged at 55.8 in 2013 and 2023. For non-Indigenous students, apparent retention rates decreased by 1.8 percentage points over this period, leading to a narrowing of the gap between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous students (by 1.8 percentage points.)

With the gap at 24.3 percentage points in 2023, 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.³⁸

Table 4.10 reports KPM 1(e) by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander status and state and territory for 2013, 2022 and 2023. 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.

³⁸ 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.

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 2013, 2022 and 2023

State/territory	NSW	Vic	Qld	SA	WA	Tas	NT	ACT	Australia
2013									
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students	46.7	58.0	67.0	75.4	53.5	47.5	43.4	64.2	55.8
Non-Indigenous students	77.2	83.4	85.2	88.3	82.6	69.4	75.3	90.9	81.9
All students	75.8	83.1	84.0	87.8	81.0	67.8	62.9	90.4	80.7
Gap	30.5	25.4	18.2	12.9	29.1	21.9	31.9	26.7	26.1
2022									
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students	45.0	62.4	64.1	74.4	62.5	62.0	42.7	79.5	56.4
Non-Indigenous students	75.1	82.4	82.5	86.6	83.2	72.8	75.7	88.1	80.4
All students	73.2	82.1	81.0	86.0	82.0	71.7	62.6	87.8	79.0
Gap	30.1	20.0	18.4	12.2	20.7	10.8	33.0	8.6	24.0
2023									
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students	44.5	67.6	63.8	64.8	61.9	53.7	44.7	75.8	55.8
Non-Indigenous students	75.0	82.1	82.1	86.1	83.3	70.7	72.4	88.0	80.1
All students	73.0	81.9	80.7	85.0	82.0	69.0	61.8	87.7	78.7
Gap	30.5	14.5	18.3	21.3	21.4	17.0	27.7	12.2	24.3
Change in gap 2022–2023	0.4	-5.5	-0.1	9.1	0.7	6.2	-5.3	3.6	0.3
Change in gap 2013–2023	0.0	-10.9	0.1	8.4	-7.7	-4.9	-4.2	-14.5	-1.8

Notes:

See notes for Tables 4.7 and 4.9.

Source: ABS, Schools, 2023 and earlier releases.

Between 2022 and 2023, the gap in apparent retention between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and non-Indigenous students widened in NSW, SA, WA, Tas and the ACT and narrowed in Vic Qld and the NT. This resulted in an overall widening of the gap by 0.3 percentage points at a national level.

Over the ten-year period from 2013 to 2023, the gap in apparent retention between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and non-Indigenous students has widened in SA (by 8.4 percentage points) and in Qld (by 0.1 percentage point), has remained constant in NSW and has narrowed in all other states and territories (ranging from 4.2 percentage points in the NT to 14.5 percentage points in 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.

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 2023, the student achievement measures include outcomes for NAP – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN reading, writing and numeracy outcomes), NAP – Science Literacy, and Mathematics and Science KPMs from the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS).

5.1 NAP– Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN)

Key Facts

In Australia in 2023:

- NAPLAN participation rates for students in Years 3, 5 and 7 were over 96%. Year 9 students had the lowest participation in NAPLAN, at 92.2%.
- Mean scaled scores do not increase consistently across year levels. For example, for reading, the difference in mean scaled scores is 91.3 points between Year 3 and Year 5, and 28.1 points between Year 7 and Year 9.
- Among Year 3 students, the percentage with NAPLAN scores at or above the Strong proficiency level was 66.8% for reading, 76.0% for writing and 64.7% for numeracy.
- The percentage of Year 9 students with NAPLAN scores at or above the Strong proficiency level was 74.2% for reading, 66.2% for writing and 67.7% for numeracy.
- Among Year 7 students, the percentage with NAPLAN scores at or above the Strong proficiency level was 68.4% for reading, 62.5% for writing and 67.2% for numeracy.
- The percentage of Year 9 students with NAPLAN scores at or above the Strong proficiency level was 62.8% for reading, 58.0% for writing and 63.9% for numeracy.

In 2023, the fifteenth 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. From 2023, the numerical NAPLAN bands and national minimum standards were replaced with 4 levels of proficiency:

- **Exceeding:** the student’s result exceeds expectations at the time of testing.
- **Strong:** the student’s result meets challenging but reasonable expectations at the time of testing.
- **Developing:** the student’s result indicates that they are working towards expectations at the time of testing.
- **Needs additional support:** the student’s result indicates that they are not achieving the learning outcomes that are expected at the time of testing. They are likely to need additional support to progress satisfactorily.³⁹

The new standards, which are set at a “challenging but reasonable” expectation of what students know and can do at the time of testing, are reported on a reset NAPLAN measurement scale that makes better use of the online adaptive tests.⁴⁰ Together with the move to earlier NAPLAN testing (in March rather than May), these changes met an initiative of the 2019 NRSA.

Due to the change to the reporting standards for NAPLAN in 2023 and the changes to the timing of the NAPLAN tests, results from 2023 onwards cannot be directly compared to results from 2008 to 2022. Therefore, a new NAPLAN time series was established from 2023 and this section reports only on NAPLAN 2023.⁴¹

NAPLAN participation rates, mean scaled scores and proportions of students achieving scores at the ‘Strong’ or ‘Exceeding’ levels in reading, writing and numeracy are reported in this section.

NAPLAN participation

Since 2019, the KPM for NAPLAN participation has been reported as participation in at least one NAPLAN assessment. Table 5.1 reports KPM 1(d), the proportion of students participating in at least one NAPLAN test, for 2023.

Key performance measure 1(d)

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

³⁹ The Measurement Framework for Schooling in Australia 2020 (updated in September 2023) lists the Key Performance Measures for student achievement in NAPLAN as ‘at or above the national proficient standard’ and ‘at or above the national highly proficient standard’. Prior to the release of the 2023 NAPLAN results, ministers agreed to rename the proficiency levels ‘proficient’ and ‘highly proficient’ to ‘strong’ and ‘exceeding’, respectively. For more information about the NAPLAN proficiency levels, see <https://www.nap.edu.au/naplan/results-and-reports/proficiency-level-descriptions>.

⁴⁰ The objective of moving NAPLAN online was to deliver better, more precise, and more engaging assessments for schools and students. In 2023, almost all students completed online tests. Year 3 writing tests continued to be delivered on paper and alternative-format tests (paper, large-print, Braille, electronic PDF) were made available for students who required them.

⁴¹ The 2023 NAPLAN National Report and the NAPLAN results page of the [NAP website](#) provide nationally comparable information on 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. 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.

Table 5.1: Proportion of students participating in at least one NAPLAN test for Years 3, 5, 7 and 9, 2023 (%)

	Year 3	Year 5	Year 7	Year 9
Proportion of students participating in at least one NAPLAN test (%)	96.1	96.6	96.2	92.2

Note: 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.

Source: ACARA, unpublished data.

In 2023, participation rates for students in Years 3, 5 and 7 were over 96%. Among Year 9 students in 2023, the participation rate was 92.2%. As with previous years, participation rates in NAPLAN in 2023 were lower for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students than for non-Indigenous students.

Across all year levels that participated in NAPLAN, participation rates were higher in 2023 than in 2022. However, differences in participation rates in 2022 and 2023 were not statistically significant.

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. In 2023, withdrawal rates ranged from 2.3% for Year 7 Writing and numeracy to 4.0% for Year 9 numeracy.⁴²

Reading

Key performance measure 2(b)

NAPLAN mean scaled scores for reading in Years 3, 5, 7, and 9

Table 5.2 reports the mean scales scores and percentage of students with reading scores in each proficiency level for Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 in 2023.

Table 5.2: NAPLAN reading proficiency levels and mean scaled scores – Years 3, 5, 7 and 9, 2023 (%)

	Year 3	Year 5	Year 7	Year 9
Exempt (%)	1.9	1.6	1.5	1.8
Needs additional support (%)	9.1	7.0	9.0	10.6
Developing (%)	22.2	17.2	21.0	24.7
Strong (%)	48.5	52.9	49.3	45.9
Exceeding (%)	18.3	21.3	19.2	16.9
At or above the strong proficiency level (%)	66.8	74.2	68.4	62.8
NAPLAN mean scaled score for reading (2023 scale)	404.6	495.9	536.3	564.4
CI ±	1.1	1.1	1.8	1.8

Notes: Exempt students do not sit the test. Percentages of students at or above the strong proficiency level may not add to total (Strong + Exceeding) due to rounding.

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 the mean scaled scores. 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%.

Source: ACARA, National Report on Schooling data portal.

⁴² Additional information on participation and achievement by test domain and by subgroups including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students is reported on the [NAPLAN National Results](#) page of the National Report on Schooling in Australia Data Portal.

At the national level, the proportion of students that achieved at or above the 'strong' standard for reading ranged from 62.8% of Year 9 students to 74.2% of Year 5 students, and the proportion of students that achieved at or above the 'Exceeding' standard ranged from 16.9% of Year 9 students to 21.3% of Year 5 students.

Writing

Key performance measure 2(d)

NAPLAN mean scaled scores for writing in Years 3, 5, 7, and 9

The writing genre assessed in NAPLAN 2023 was narrative writing. Students and teachers were not advised in advance whether the genre would be narrative or persuasive. In 2023, 4 writing prompts were used across Years 3, 5, 7 and 9, and the paper and online modes. Two of the 4 prompts were assigned to the Years 3 and 5 tests, and 2 to the Years 7 and 9 tests. The prompt that each student received depended on whether the test was taken on paper or online, and on which day of the writing test window the student sat the test.

Table 5.3 reports the mean scaled scores for writing and the percentage of students with scores in each proficiency level for Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 in 2023. At the national level, the proportion of students that achieved at or above the 'Strong' standard for writing ranged from 58.0% of Year 9 students to 76.0% of Year 3 students, and the proportion of students that achieved at or above the 'Exceeding' standard ranged from 9.1% of Year 3 students to 17.6% of Year 5 students.

Table 5.3: NAPLAN writing proficiency levels and mean scaled scores – Years 3, 5, 7 and 9, 2023 (%)

	Year 3	Year 5	Year 7	Year 9
Exempt (%)	1.8	1.6	1.5	1.8
Needs additional support (%)	6.1	9.6	10.9	12.1
Developing (%)	16.0	22.6	25.1	28.1
Strong (%)	66.9	54.7	47.7	40.5
Exceeding (%)	9.1	11.5	14.8	17.6
At or above the strong proficiency level (%)	76.0	66.2	62.5	58.0
NAPLAN mean scaled score for writing (2023 scale)	416.3	482.9	533.7	566.6
CI ±	1.0	1.1	1.7	1.9

Note: See notes for Table 5.2.

Source: ACARA, National Report on Schooling data portal.

Numeracy

Key performance measure 3(b)

NAPLAN mean scaled scores for numeracy in Years 3, 5, 7, and 9

Table 5.4 reports the mean scales scores for numeracy and the percentage of students with scores at each proficiency level for Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 in 2023.

At the national level, the proportion of students that achieved at or above the 'Strong' standard for Numeracy ranged from 63.9% of Year 9 students to 67.7% of Year 5 students, and the proportion of students that achieved at or above the 'Exceeding' standard ranged from 9.9% of Year 9 students to 12.6% of Year 7 students.

Table 5.4: NAPLAN numeracy proficiency levels and mean scaled scores—Years 3, 5, 7 and 9, 2023 (%)

	Year 3	Year 5	Year 7	Year 9
Exempt (%)	1.8	1.6	1.5	1.8
Needs additional support (%)	10.0	9.3	9.3	10.2
Developing (%)	23.5	21.4	22.0	24.1
Strong (%)	52.4	55.8	54.5	54.0
Exceeding (%)	12.3	12.0	12.6	9.9
At or above the strong proficiency level (%)	64.7	67.7	67.2	63.9
NAPLAN mean scaled score for numeracy (2023 scale)	407.3	487.6	538.4	567.7
CI ±	1.1	1.2	2.1	2.2

Note: See notes for Table 5.2.

Source: ACARA, National Report on Schooling data portal.

5.2 NAP Sample Assessments – Science Literacy

Key Facts

In Australia in 2023:

- The proportion of participating Year 6 students achieving at or above the proficient standard for Science Literacy was 57%. This was not significantly different to the proportion achieving at or above the proficient standard in 2018 (58%).
- The proportion of participating Year 10 students attaining the proficient standard for Science Literacy was 54%. This was not significantly different to the proportion achieving at or above the proficient standard in 2018 (50%).

Science literacy is defined as “an ability to use scientific knowledge, understanding, and inquiry skills to identify questions, acquire new knowledge, explain science phenomena, solve problems and draw evidence-based conclusions in making sense of the world, and to recognise how understandings of the nature, development, use and influence of science help us make responsible decisions and shape our interpretations of information”.

The NAP–Science Literacy assessment commenced in 2003 for Year 6 students and in 2018 for Year 10 students. Assessments are undertaken by sample groups of Year 6 and Year 10 students across Australia every three years. The NAP–Science Literacy 2023 assessment is the second NAP sample assessment to occur since the 2-year pandemic hiatus, following the NAP–ICT Literacy assessment in 2022. It is also the first of the NAP sample assessments to shift to the earlier main study testing window of May, a shift of 5 months from the previous cycle of the assessment, which took place in October 2018.

Across Australia, 589 schools participated in the NAP–Science Literacy main study in 2023. At the Year 6 level, 6,069 students from 368 schools participated. For Year 10, 3,433 students from 221 schools took part. National overall response rates were acceptable for both Year 6 (88%) and Year 10 (82%). These response rates are in line with international standards for large-scale sample assessments.⁴³

The NAP Science Literacy scale comprises 5 proficiency levels that are used to describe student achievement for both Year 6 and Year 10. There are two proficient standards – one for Year 6 (Level 3) and one for Year 10 (Level 4). Each standard is a point on the scale that represents a “challenging but reasonable” expectation of student achievement at that year level.

Key performance measure 4(a)

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

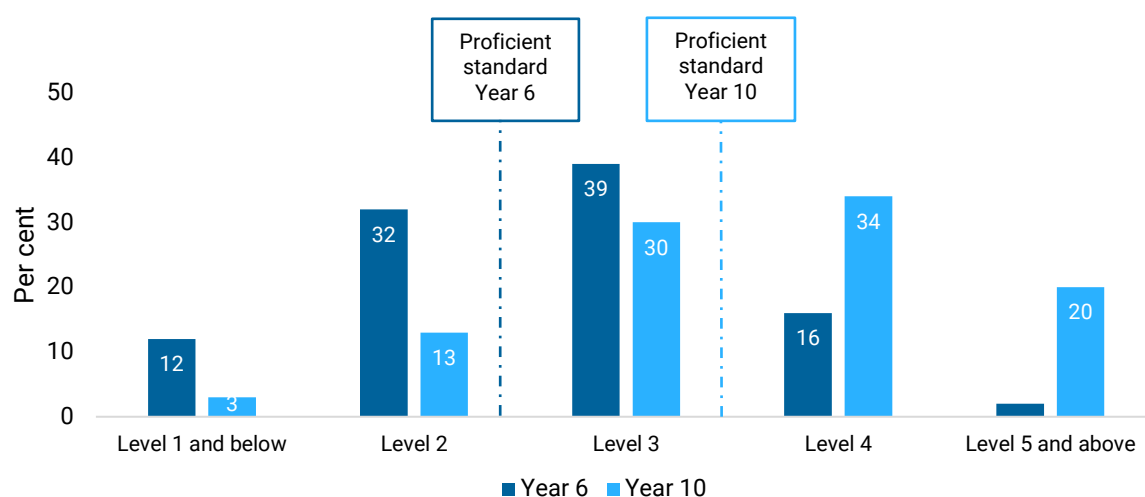
Year 6 – Level 3
Year 10 – Level 4

⁴³ The 2023 assessment instrument comprised a series of test items grouped into content-themed units, which were rotated in clusters to counteract any “position effect” within a test form. Each test form comprised an inquiry task and a set of objective test items. The format of the items used in the main study included multiple-choice, interactive non-multiple-choice, short response and constructed response. For participating students, the online assessment platform enforced a time limit of 60 minutes for Year 6 and 75 minutes for Year 10.

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

Figure 5.1 shows the percentage of Year 6 and Year 10 students across proficiency levels in 2023. In 2023, 57% of Year 6 students and 54% of Year 10 students achieved the proficient standard for their year level. The Year 6 average scale score was 407 score points, which was near the bottom of Level 3. The Year 10 average was 503 score points, which was close to the bottom of Level 4. For each year level, both averages were just above the proficient standard.

Figure 5.1: Proportion of Year 6 and Year 10 students achieving each proficiency level in NAP–Science Literacy, 2023 (%)



Source: ACARA NAP–Science Literacy Public Report 2023.

Average scale scores and the percentage of students attaining the proficient standard in Science Literacy for Year 6 students from 2006 and for Year 10 students from 2018 are shown in Table 5.5. For Year 6 students, average scores in 2023 were not significantly different to those for any other cycle since 2006 and for Year 10 students, average scores in 2023 were not significantly different from those for 2018. The percentage of students attaining the proficient standard in 2023 was not significantly different from any of the percentages reported in previous cycles.

Table 5.5: Average scaled scores and percentages of Year 6 and Year 10 students attaining the proficient standard in NAP–Science Literacy, 2006 to 2023

	2006	2009	2012	2015	2018	2023
Year 6						
Students attaining the proficient standard (%)	54	52	51	55	58	57
CI ±	2.1	2.2	2.0	1.8	2.4	2.5
Average scaled score	400	392	394	403	407	407
CI ±	5.4	5.1	4.4	4.3	5.0	5.2
Year 10						
Students attaining the proficient standard (%)					50	54
CI ±					2.8	2.9
Average scaled score					490	503
CI ±					7.3	6.9

Source: ACARA NAP–Science Literacy Public Report 2023.

5.3 International Assessments – Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study

Key Facts

In Australia in 2023:

- 72% of Year 4 students and 64% of Year 8 students had TIMSS Mathematics scores at or above the proficient standard.
- 83% of Year 4 students and 70% of Year 8 students had TIMSS Science scores at or above the proficient standard.

The TIMSS measures the mathematics and science achievement of students in Year 4 and Year 8. TIMSS assessments are supported with data about country, home, school and classroom learning environments.

Australia has participated in TIMSS since the first cycle in 1995 and in every 4-year cycle since then. Over this 28-year period, rich data about trends in mathematics and science achievement has been collected. The 2023 cycle of TIMSS completed its transition to a completely online assessment. In 2023, a total of 58 countries at Year 4 (and 6 benchmarking entities) and 44 countries at Year 8 (and 3 benchmarking entities) participated in TIMSS. At least one intact class from the relevant year level from each school was selected, resulting in a sample of 5,470 Year 4 students and 8,442 Year 8 students.⁴⁴

The proportions of students achieving at or above the proficient standard (Intermediate international benchmark) in TIMSS mathematics and science are KPMs in the Measurement Framework for Schooling in Australia 2020.

Key performance measure 3(d)

Proportion of students achieving at or above the proficient standard (Intermediate international benchmark) on the TIMSS Mathematics scales

Key performance measure 4(c)

Proportion of students achieving at or above the proficient standard (Intermediate international benchmark) on the TIMSS Science scales

The proportions of students achieving at or above the proficient standard and mean scale scores for each subject are reported in tables 5.6 and 5.7.

In TIMSS 2023, 72% of Australian Year 4 students attained the proficient standard in mathematics, similar to the international median of 70%. Since 2019, Australia's average mathematics achievement for Year 4 students increased by 9 points; and since 1995 average mathematics achievement for Year 4 students has increased by 30 points.

Among Australian Year 8 students in 2023, 64% had scores at or above the proficient standard in mathematics, compared to the international median of 55%. The proportion of Year 8 students with scores at or above the proficient standard has not changed significantly over the 28-year period from 1995 to 2023.

⁴⁴ Information about the background of TIMSS, the framework that is used to design the assessments, the management of the assessment and further technical information is available from ACER. TIMSS is specified as a component of the National Assessment Program (NAP) in the Measurement Framework for Schooling in Australia 2020.

Table 5.6: Proportion of students achieving at or above the proficient standard on the TIMMS Mathematics scale and mean scale scores, Australia, 1995 to 2023

	1995	2003	2007	2011	2015	2019	2023
Year 4							
Mean Scale Score	495	499	516	516	517	516	525
Standard Error	3.5	3.9	3.5	3.0	3.1	2.8	2.6
Proportion of students attaining at or above the proficient standard (%)	61	64	71	70	70	70	72
Year 8							
Mean Scale Score	509	505	496	505	505	517	509
Standard Error	3.7	4.7	3.8	5.2	3.1	3.8	3.5
Proportion of students attaining at or above the proficient standard (%)	68	65	61	63	64	68	64

Note: There was no Year 4 data collection in 1999. The Australian Year 8 sample that participated in 1999 was not comparable to that in other cycles, so trend results are not provided for Australia at Year 8 in 1999.

Source: Wernert, N., Schmid, M., & Rodrigues, S. (2024), [TIMSS 2023 Australia. Volume I: Student performance](#), Australian Council for Educational Research.

In 2023, Australian Year 4 students achieved a mean score of 550 points in science, with 83% attaining the national proficient standard, compared to the international median of 70%. Average science achievement for Year 4 students in Australia has increased by 17 points since 2019 and by 28 points since 1995.

Australian Year 8 students achieved a mean score of 520 points in TIMMS science in 2023, with 70% attaining the national proficient standard, compared to the international median of 56%. Among Year 8 students, average science achievement decreased by 8 points since 2019, but this change was not statistically significant. Since 1995, Australia's average science achievement for Year 8 students has increased by 6 points but, as with the change since 2019, this change is not statistically significant.

Table 5.7: Proportion of students achieving at or above the proficient standard on the TIMMS Science scale and mean scale scores, Australia, 1995 to 2023

	1995	2003	2007	2011	2015	2019	2023
Year 4							
Mean Scale Score	521	521	527	516	524	533	550
Standard Error	3.7	4.3	3.3	2.9	2.9	2.4	2.3
Proportion of students attaining at or above the proficient standard (%)	72	74	76	72	75	78	83
Year 8							
Mean Scale Score	514	527	515	519	512	528	520
Standard Error	3.9	3.9	3.6	4.7	2.7	3.2	3.2
Proportion of students attaining at or above the proficient standard (%)	69	76	70	70	69	74	70

Note: See Notes for Table 5.6.

Source: Wernert, N., Schmid, M., & Rodrigues, S. (2024), [TIMSS 2023 Australia. Volume I: Student performance](#), Australian Council for Educational Research.

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 2023:
 - 26.8% of 15–19-year-olds completed at least one unit of competency at AQF Certificate II or above, up from 26.3% in 2022.
 - Almost half (49.2%) of qualifications gained by 15–19-year-olds were at AQF level II and 33.6% were at AQF level III.
- At the national level, the long-term trend in the proportion of 15–19-year-olds participating in VET was downward, from 29.6% in 2015 to 26.8% in 2023.

Vocational Education and Training (VET) is a part of the Australian tertiary education system. It 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.⁴⁵

⁴⁵ 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 which also provides guidelines for SSCE (Year 12) qualifications and qualifications in the higher education sector. For more information see www.aqf.edu.au.

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.⁴⁶ These arrangements are summarised in the National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER) [VOCEDplus](#) website.

6.1 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.⁴⁷

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.

In Australia in 2023, 26.8% of 15-19-year-olds completed at least one unit of competency at AQF Certificate II or above, up from 26.3% in 2022. Figure 6.1 shows national data for this KPM for the period 2013–2023.⁴⁸

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.

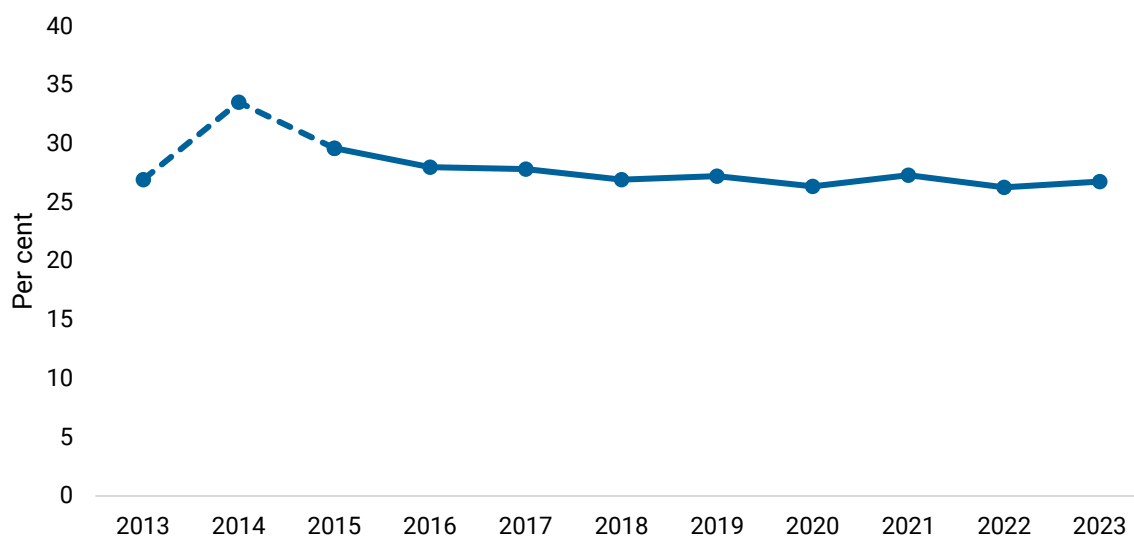
⁴⁶ For example, the VCE VM and the Victorian Pathways Certificate (VPC) were introduced in Victorian secondary schools in 2023. All government secondary schools in Victoria now offer the VCE VM to their students, with 25 schools delivering a vocational senior secondary certificate for the first time in 2023.

⁴⁷ AQF Certificate II is regarded as entry-level training for employment.

⁴⁸ 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.

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 2014.⁴⁹

Figure 6.1: Proportion of 15–19-year-olds successfully completing at least one unit of competency at AQF Certificate II or above (%), Australia, 2013–2023 (%)



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 Australian VET Management Information Statistical Standard data on all nationally accredited training. This represents a break in the series.

From January 2015, VET students have been allocated a 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 (and data prior to 2015 is represented by a dashed line). For further information, please refer to [Counting Students in Total VET students and courses](#).

Sources: NCVET, National VETiS Collection 2013–2023; NCVET, National VET Provider Collection 2013–2023; ABS, *National, state and territory population December 2023* (release date 13/06/2024).

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 0.3 percentage points per annum from 2015 to 2023.

⁴⁹ However, as data for many VETiS students was provided without a USI, some duplication may occur in the count of these students.

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, 2013–2023

	Number of 15–19-year-olds successfully completing at least one unit of competency at AQF Certificate II or above ('000)	15–19-year-old population ('000)	Proportion of 15–19-year-olds successfully completing at least one unit of competency at AQF II or above (%)
2013	395.5	1,466.7	27.0
2014	494.8	1,474.7	33.6
2015	435.6	1,469.9	29.6
2016	413.4	1,475.2	28.0
2017	412.6	1,481.6	27.8
2018	401.1	1,488.4	27.0
2019	407.5	1,495.1	27.3
2020	392.1	1,486.8	26.4
2021	404.5	1,479.6	27.3
2022	403.4	1,533.9	26.3
2023	431.4	1,608.8	26.8

Note: See notes for Figure 6.1.

Sources: NCVER, National VETiS Collection 2013–2023; NCVER, National VET Provider Collection 2013–2023; ABS, *National, state and territory population December 2023* (release date 13/06/2024).

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.

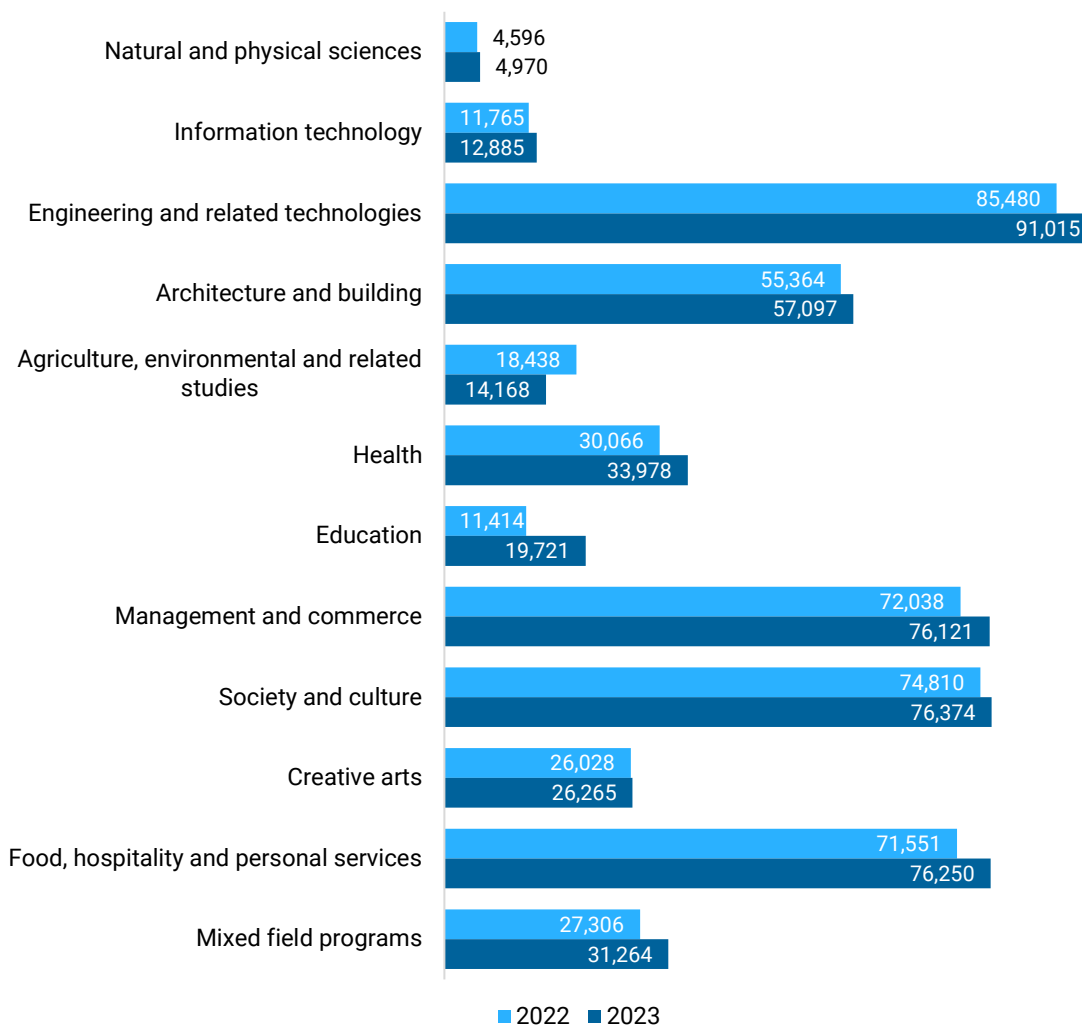
VET Program Measure 1

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

Figure 6.2 reports VET program measure 1 for 2022 and 2023 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.⁵⁰

⁵⁰ 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 and 2023



Notes: The number of students by field of education is greater than the unique count of students (431,347), as students undertaking multiple courses are counted once for each field of education in which they have successfully completed at least one unit of competency in at AQF II or above. Field of education is categorised according to ABS 1272.0 – Australian Standard Classification of Education (ASCED), 2001.

Sources: NCVET, National VETiS Collection 2022 and 2023; NCVET, National VET Provider Collection 2022 and 2023.

In 2023, Engineering and related technologies had the highest number of 15–19-year-olds who had completed at least one unit of competency (91,015), followed by Society and culture (76,374), Food, hospitality and personal services (76,250), and Management and commerce (76,121). These were also the fields with the highest number of completions in 2022.

Between 2022 and 2023, the number of 15–19-year-olds who had completed at least one unit of competency increased across all fields of education except Agriculture, Environmental studies and related studies, where completions declined from 18,438 in 2022 to 14,168 in 2023 (a 23.2% decline).

The number of 15–19-year-olds who had completed at least one unit of competency in the education field increased by 72.8%, from 11,414 in 2022 to 19,721 in 2023. These courses mainly covered ECEC or education support.

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 2023, by the AQF level of qualifications. In 2023, 221,090 VET qualifications were completed, up 13.0% from 198,825 in 2022. Of the VET qualifications gained by 15–19-year-olds in 2023, 49.2% were at AQF level II and 33.6% were at AQF level III.

Table 6.2: VET qualifications completed by 15–19-year-olds, by qualification level of major course, Australia, 2023

Qualification level	Number	%
Certificate I	15,842	7.2
Certificate II	108,751	49.2
Certificate III	74,215	33.6
Certificate IV	12,578	5.7
Diploma or higher	9,704	4.4
Total	221,090	100.0

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

Sources: NCVER, National VETiS Collection 2023; NCVER, National VET Provider Collection 2023.

Numbers of qualifications completed by 15–19-year-olds and numbers of students completing a qualification 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.⁵¹

⁵¹ 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.

6.2 Vocational Education and Training 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. Students now have more options to engage in VET with a wider range of pathways that can include VET and an increasing number of VET subjects available to secondary school students. This flexibility allows students to tailor their education to their career interests and goals.

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.

VET delivered to secondary students is regulated by the VET sector and is identical to VET offered in any other context.⁵² Some, but not all, VET courses completed by secondary students provide credit towards their Senior Secondary Certificate of Education and/or ATAR scores.⁵³

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 VETiS data collection⁵⁴, these are students who are undertaking accredited VET as a part of a SSCE.⁵⁵ This data is not restricted to Certificate II or above, or to students who have successfully completed at least one unit of competency.⁵⁶

In 2023, there were 249,695 students aged 15–19 years enrolled in VET in Schools/VET delivered to secondary students, up 4.0% from 240,120 in 2022. Based on this data, it is estimated that nearly half of senior secondary students (47.4%) undertook one or more VET courses in 2023 as part of their SSCE.⁵⁷

Among secondary students undertaking VET in 2023, most (49.0%) were enrolled in Certificate II qualifications and a further 42.1% were enrolled in Certificate III qualifications, while 19,250 (7.7%) were undertaking a school-based apprenticeship or traineeship.

Overall, the most common training packages undertaken by secondary students in 2023 were Sport, Fitness and Recreation; Tourism, Travel and Hospitality; Business Services; Community Services and Creative Arts and Culture.

⁵² The term 'VET delivered to secondary students' has generally replaced the term 'VET in Schools (VETiS)' historically used for these programs. However, in 2023, 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.

⁵³ 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 *MySchool* website for schools with senior secondary enrolments.

⁵⁴ The national VET in Schools data collection is compiled by NCVET from data provided by states and territories.

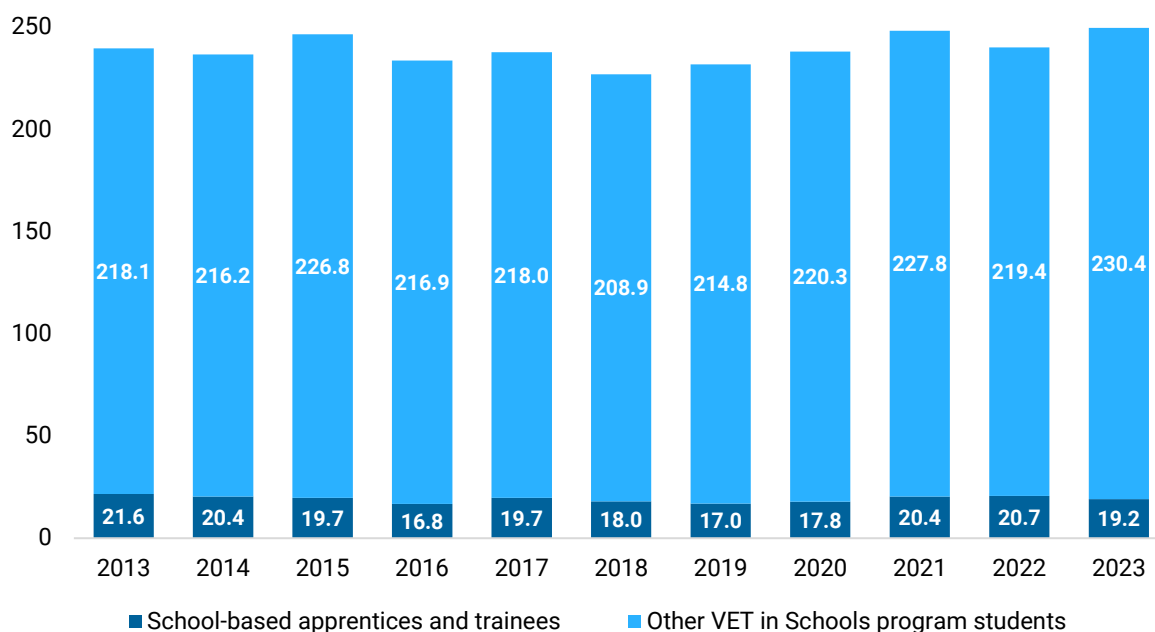
⁵⁵ In some jurisdictions, students who have left school (that is, they are not secondary students) but are receiving credit for a VET course towards a senior secondary certificate may be included in these counts. To the extent that these students are included, this inflates the data as a measure of the number of secondary school students undertaking VET.

⁵⁶ Enrolments and qualifications achieved in VET by secondary students are reported at the school level, by field of education and qualification level on the *MySchool* website.

⁵⁷ 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.

Figure 6.3 shows the number of 15–19-year-old students undertaking VET delivered to secondary students each year in the period 2013–2023 with school-based apprentices and trainees disaggregated. Between 2022 and 2023, the number of secondary students aged 15–19 years undertaking VET increased by 4.0% after a 3.3% decline between 2021 and 2022. After a 14.6% increase in the number of school-based apprentices and trainees between 2020 and 2021, largely due to increases in Queensland, the number of school-based apprentices and trainees in Australia declined by 7.2% between 2022 and 2023.⁵⁸

Figure 6.3: Number of 15–19-year-old students undertaking VET in School, Australia, 2013–2023 ('000)



Note: '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 VETiS Collection, 2023; NCVER [VET in Schools 2023](#); NCVER, [DataBuilder](#).

Further detailed information, including data disaggregated by state and territory, data definitions and data quality issues, is available in NCVER [VET in Schools 2023](#) and NCVER, [DataBuilder](#).

⁵⁸ 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 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

Fluctuations in participation rates between 2020 and 2023 were closely related to the effects of COVID-19 on the employment of young people.

In Australia in 2023:

- The proportion of 15–19-year-olds who were fully engaged in education, training or work was 87.3% – down from 88.3% in 2022 and 90.3% in 2021. Despite this, the current rate is still higher than rates reported in 2019, before the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The proportion of 20–24-year-olds who were fully engaged in education, training or work increased to 77.4% – up from 76.4% in 2022. This is the highest rate since 2008.
- The proportion of 17–24-year-olds who had left school and were fully engaged in education, training or work increased to 75.4% – up from 75.0% in 2022. This represents a full recovery to pre-pandemic levels.

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 be undertaking further study and/or work.

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

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 of Population and Housing, are reported for census years.

KPMs 1(g) and 1(h) for the period 2012–2023 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 2013–2023.

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 2013 to 2019 there was a net increase in full-time participation for 15–19-year-olds (0.7 percentage points), and for 20–24-year-olds (1.7 percentage points). 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.⁵⁹

⁵⁹ 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.

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, 2013–2023 (%)

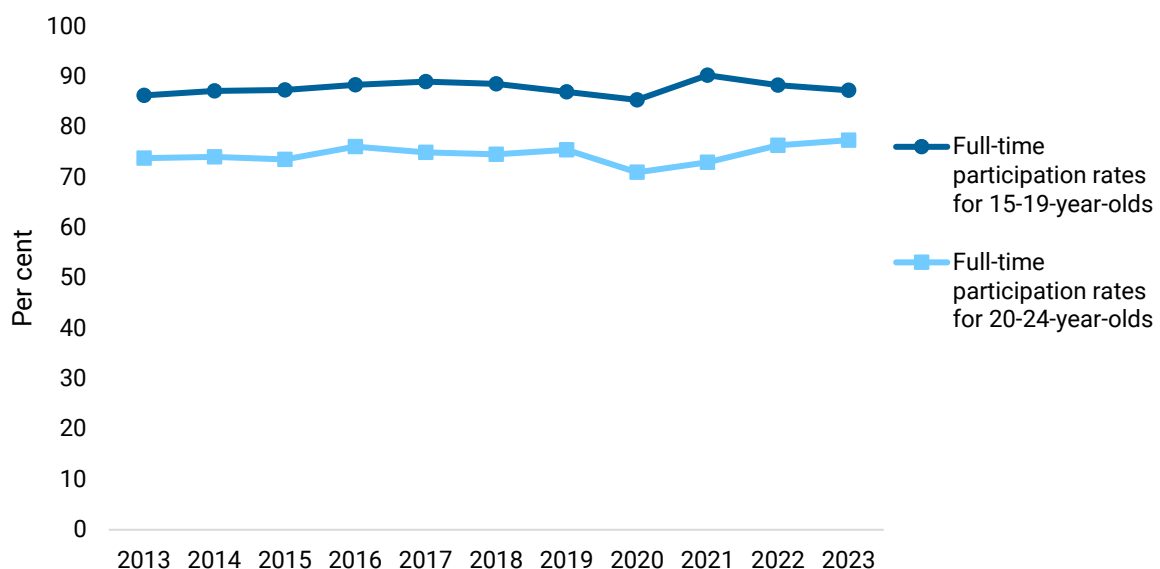
Calendar year	15–19-year-olds			20–24-year-olds		
	Full-time participation rate	CI±	Full-time participation rate (Census measure)	Full-time participation rate	CI±	Full-time participation rate (Census measure)
2013	86.3	1.2		73.8	1.1	
2014	87.2	1.1		74.1	1.6	
2015	87.4	0.3		73.6	1.7	
2016	88.4	1.3	86.4	76.1	1.5	72.2
2017	89.0	1.0		75.0	1.5	
2018	88.6	1.2		74.6	1.6	
2019	87.0	0.9		75.5	1.8	
2020	85.4	1.2		71.0	2.2	
2021	90.3	0.9	86.9	73.0	1.9	72.3
2022	88.3	1.4		76.4	2.2	
2023	87.3	0.9		77.4	1.8	

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.

Sources: ABS, Education and Work, Australia, May 2023; 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, 2013–2023 (%)



Source: ABS, Education and Work, Australia, May 2023.

For 15-19-year-olds, there was a significant increase in full-time participation rates, from 85.4% in 2020 to 90.3% in 2021. 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.⁶⁰ While there was a decrease in full-time participation rates for 15-19-year-olds to 88.3% in 2022 and a further decline to 87.3% in 2023, these rates remain higher than pre-pandemic levels.

For 20-24-year-olds, full-time participation increased by 2 percentage points between 2020 and 2021, and by 3.4 percentage points to 76.4% in 2022. The significant increase between 2021 and 2022 represented a full recovery to pre-COVID levels. With a one percentage point increase to 77.4% in 2023, full-time participation rates for 20-24-year-olds were at their highest recorded level since 2008, when they were 80.1%.

Trend data for the annual SEW measures of these KPMs for the period 2004–2023 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 0.2 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 2013–2023 in Table 7.2, along with Census data for the years 2016 and 2021.

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, 2013–2023 (%)

Calendar year	Full-time participation rates for 17–24-year-olds who have left school	CI±	Full-time participation rates for 17–24-year-olds who have left school (Census measure)
2013	72.7	1.1	
2014	73.2	1.4	
2015	72.9	1.4	
2016	75.5	1.2	71.0
2017	74.7	1.3	
2018	74.3	1.6	
2019	74.0	1.6	
2020	69.3	1.8	
2021	73.9	1.6	73.4
2022	75.0	1.8	
2023	75.4	1.8	

Note: See notes for Table 7.1.

Sources: ABS, Education and Work, Australia, May 2023; ABS, Census of Population and Housing, 2016, 2021.

⁶⁰ 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.

There was little change in KPM 1(i) between 2013 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.

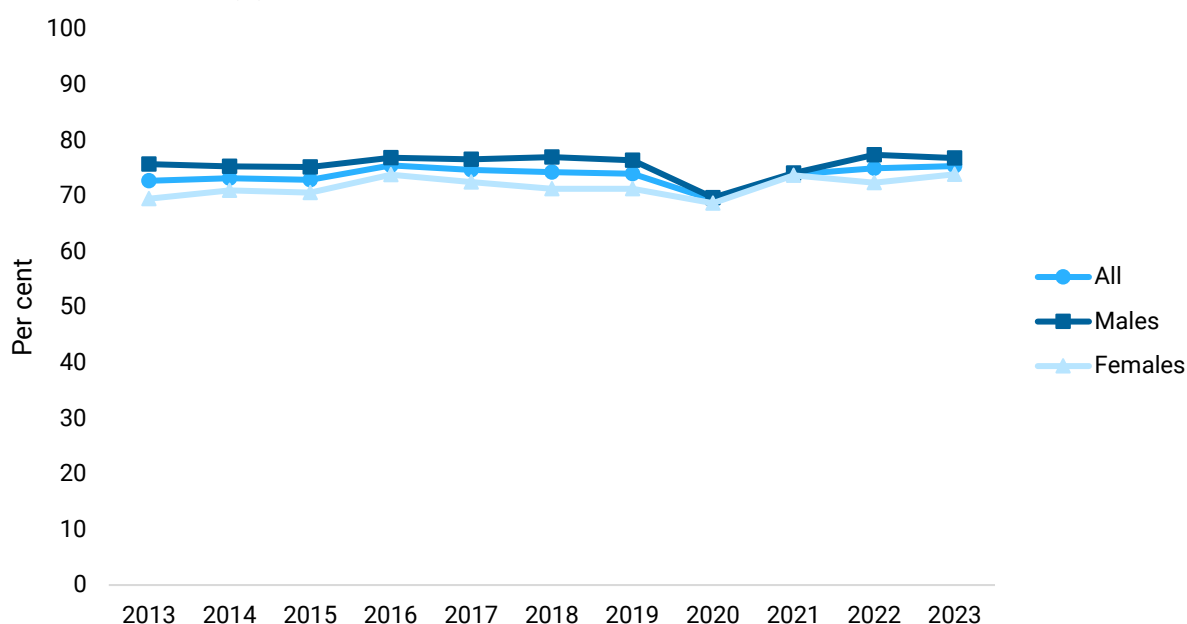
The Census reports KPM 1(i) as 73.4% in 2021. This is substantially up on the result of 71.0% from the 2016 Census. The KPM data set in the National Report on Schooling data portal reports no evident trend in the census measure for this KPM over the period 2011–2021.

While not statistically significant, the 1.1 percentage point increase from 73.9% in 2021 to 75.0% in 2022 represents a return to pre-pandemic levels. The 0.4 percentage point increase to 75.4% in 2023 was also not statistically significant, and there is a significant long-term downward trend of 0.2 percentage points per annum between 2004 and 2023.

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. 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.

SEW data for KPM 1(i), by gender, for the period 2013–2023 is presented in Figure 7.2. In 2023, full-time participation rates for 17–24-year-old males who had left school were 76.8%, compared to 73.9% for females. After falling to 69.7% and 68.7% respectively in 2020, rates in 2023 were above their pre-pandemic levels for both males and female, with a net increase between 2019 and 2023 of 0.4 percentage points for males and 2.6 percentage points for females.

Figure 7.2: 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, by gender, Australia, 2013–2023 (%)



Source: ABS, Education and Work, Australia, May 2023.

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.⁶¹

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%.⁶²

Data on levels of educational attainment 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.

8.1 Year 12 certification rates

Year 12 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.⁶³

At the time of publication, data on Year 12 Certification rates for 2023 was not available. When this data becomes available, it will be updated on the National Report on Schooling in Australia data portal, and commentary on Year 12 certification rates will be added as an appendix to this report.

⁶¹ Australian Government Australia's Welfare School Retention and Completion, 2017.

⁶² Certificate III is recognised as the international standard of equivalence of upper secondary education.

⁶³ 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 TAFE institutes are included in reporting for some jurisdictions and not others.

8.2 Student Attainment

Key Facts

Among 20–24-year-olds in 2023:

- the proportion who had attained at least Year 12 or AQF Certificate II or above was 90.4%
- the proportion who had attained at least Year 12 or AQF Certificate III or above was 89.6%

Since 2013:

- the proportion of 20–24-year-olds who had attained at least Year 12 or AQF Certificate II or above has risen 3.7 percentage points from 86.7% to 90.4%
- the proportion of 20–24-year-olds who had attained at least Year 12 or AQF Certificate III or above has risen 3.9 percentage points from 85.7% to 89.6%.

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 7.1 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 2006 and 2021.

The KPMs for student attainment 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 reflect the targets for youth attainment in education and training set by the former by COAG and in the current NSRA. It is recognised that Year 12 attainment creates improved social and economic opportunities for young people and contributes to a skilled workforce and improved living conditions for Australians.⁶⁴

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 KPMs are based on the ABS SEW, which is conducted in May each year, and on the 5-yearly Census of Population and Housing.

⁶⁴ Australian Government, *Australia's Welfare School Retention and Completion*, 2017.

Table 8.1 reports KPMs 7(a) and 7(b) at the national level for the period 2013–2023. It also includes these proportions as measured by the 2016 and 2021 censuses. 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).

While the attainment KPMs 7(a) and 7(b) refer to the completion of Year 12 or equivalent or an Australian Qualifications Framework (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.⁶⁵

Table 8.1: Educational attainment of the 20–24-year-old population, Australia, 2013–2023 (%)

Calendar year	KPM 7(a): Proportion of the 20–24-year-old population that has attained at least Year 12 or equivalent, or AQF Certificate II or above			KPM 7(b): Proportion of the 20–24-year-old population that has attained at least Year 12 or equivalent, or AQF Certificate III or above			Proportion of the 20–24-year-old population that has attained at least Year 12 or equivalent		
	SEW measure	CI±	Census measure	SEW measure	CI±	Census measure	SEW measure	CI±	Census measure
2013	86.7	1.5		85.7	1.5		77.2	1.6	
2014	86.1	1.5		84.9	1.5		76.8	1.8	
2015	88.4	1.1		87.1	1.1		78.7	1.6	
2016	90.2	1.6	88.6	89.2	1.6	87.9	81.3	1.9	79.5
2017	87.1	1.2		86.4	1.2		79.1	1.4	
2018	90.0	1.2		88.8	1.2		82.1	1.4	
2019	89.3	1.4		88.2	1.6		82.5	1.6	
2020	89.9	1.2		89.4	1.2		84.6	1.8	
2021	89.9	1.2	90.3	89.5	1.4	89.9	84.3	1.7	83.7
2022	90.6	1.1		90.1	1.1		86.2	1.4	
2023	90.4	1.1		89.6	1.1		84.9	1.7	

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).

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.

Sources: ABS, Education and Work, Australia, May 2023; ABS, Census of Population and Housing, 2016, 2021.

⁶⁵ 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.

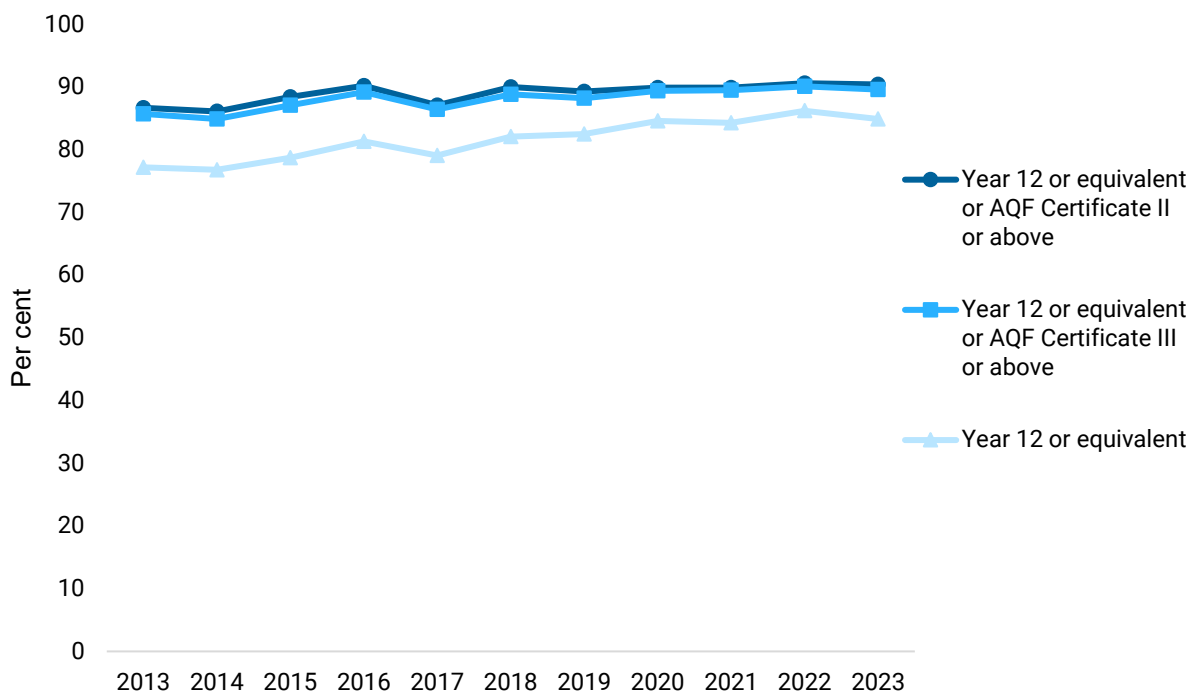
Between 2022 and 2023 attainment across both KPM 7(a) and 7(b), as measured by SEW, declined slightly. The proportion of 20-24-year-olds who had attained at least Year 12 or equivalent, or AQF Certificate II or above was 90.4%, compared to 90.6% in 2022. The proportion of 20-24-year-olds who had attained at least Year 12 or equivalent, or AQF Certificate III or above was 89.6%, compared to 90.1% in 2022.

However, over the longer-term, attainment across both KPM 7(a) and 7(b), as measured by SEW, has increased. The proportion of 20-24-year-olds who had attained at least Year 12 or equivalent, or AQF Certificate II or above has risen 3.7 percentage points from 86.7% in 2013 to 90.4% in 2023. The proportion of 20-24-year-olds who had attained at least Year 12 or equivalent, or AQF Certificate III or above has risen 3.9 percentage points from 85.7% in 2013 to 89.6% in 2023.

Trend data for the annual measures of these KPMs for the period 2004-2023 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 8.1 depicts the annual movement in the 2 attainment measures from 2013 to 2023, as measured by the SEW, along with the proportion of 20-24-year-olds having attained at least Year 12 or equivalent.

Figure 8.1: Educational attainment of the 20-24-year-old population, Australia, 2013-2023 (%)



Source: ABS, Education and Work, Australia, May 2023.

As shown in Figure 8.1, the proportion of 20–24-year-olds that have attained at least Year 12 or an equivalent VET qualification has remained quite steady over the five-year period from 2019 to 2023. There is no observable impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the SEW measures of KPMs 7(a) and 7(b) in 2023. However, the qualifications held by 20–24-year-olds in May 2023 would have been attained in 2022 or earlier. The significant falls in participation in education, training and work due to COVID for 15–24-year-olds in 2020 may be reflected in the future SEW and Census attainment measures.⁶⁶

The 2 attainment KPMs have generally moved in parallel over the period 2013–2023. There has been little difference between the 2 measures, with an average difference of 0.9 percentage points over this period and a difference of 0.8 percentage points in 2023.

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.⁶⁷ 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 Certificate II or Certificate III qualifications.

In 2023, 84.9% of 20–24-year-olds had attained at least Year 12 or equivalent. This was a decrease of 1.3 percentage points from 2022, after a net rise of 9.0 percentage points from 2013 to 2022. The proportion of 20–24-year-olds with equivalent VET qualifications, but who had not completed Year 12, has declined from 9.5% in 2013 to 5.5% in 2023.

In 2023, 93.0% of females aged 20-24 years held qualifications at year 12 or certificate II level or above, compared to 88.1% of males. Between 2013 and 2023, these rates increased by 3.8 percentage points for males and females, resulting in no change in the 4.9 percentage point gender gap over this period. The percentage of 20-24-year-old women with at least a Year 12 or equivalent qualification was 88.4% in 2023, an increase of 7.0 percentage points since 2013. For males, the percentage of 20-24-year-olds with at least a Year 12 or equivalent qualification increased to 81.4% in 2023, an increase of 8.2 percentage points.

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. The Student Attainment data set also includes data on the attainment of Year 12 or equivalent and other AQF qualifications.

⁶⁶ For details of participation of young people aged 15 to 24 in education and/or work, please refer to Section 7.1 of this report.

⁶⁷ This is 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.

Chapter 9: School Funding



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

In Australia, responsibility for school funding is shared. 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.

This chapter is structured as follows. Section 9.1 reports on government recurrent funding for school education, using data from the National Schools Statistics Collection (NSSC) and the Report on Government Services (RoGS). Section 9.2 uses the ACARA *My School* 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 AGDE 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.

In this chapter, time-series figures have been adjusted for inflation to 2023 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.

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 adjusting for inflation is to provide a “real-dollar” comparison of monetary values over time.⁶⁸ In most years there is not a substantial amount of difference in the adjusted values when CPI or the ABS Wage Price Index (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.

⁶⁸ Nominal values and values adjusted using the General Government Final Consumption Expenditure (GGFCE) chain price deflator and the ABS WPI are available on the National Report on Schooling Data Portal. The use of deflators that focus only on wages (e.g. the 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.

9.1 Government recurrent funding for school education

Key Facts

In the 2022–23 financial year:

- Total recurrent government funding for schooling was \$85.92 billion. This was made up of \$58.85 billion (68.5%) from state and territory budgets and \$27.08 billion (31.5%) from the Australian Government (Commonwealth) budget.
- Total recurrent government funding was \$24,857 per student in government schools and \$14,561 per student for non-government schools.
- Overall, 75.4% (\$64.75 billion) of total recurrent government funding was allocated to government schools and 24.6% (\$21.17 billion) to non-government schools.
- The bulk of state and territory funding (92.4%) was allocated to government schools, while 61.8% of Australian Government funding was allocated to non-government schools.

Under funding arrangements set out in the Australian Education Act 2013, the Australian Education Regulations 2023, and agreements between the Australian Government and state and territory governments, every school receives funding from the Australian Government and its state or territory government. State and territory governments are responsible for providing most of the public funding for public schools, which they own and operate, while the Australian Government is responsible for providing the majority of public funding to non-government schools.

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

The Australian Government calculates the bulk of its funding through a recurrent funding model, set out in the *Australian Education Act 2013* (the Act). Under the Act, 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 6 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.⁶⁹

All state and territory governments and non-government approved system authorities are then expected to redistribute Australian Government funding between schools within their jurisdiction according to their own funding arrangements. This means that each state and territory and non-government approved system authority should have its own model for distributing Australian Government funding. For government schools, these include, for example, the Student Resource Package in Victoria or the Resource Allocation Model in New South Wales. The Act requires these models to address specific educational needs using a base and loadings structure which is similar to the SRS.

⁶⁹ To receive Australian Government funding, state and territory governments must be signatories to a national agreement and associated bilateral agreements. The bilateral agreements set out minimum funding contributions, as a percentage of the SRS, that state and territory governments must make for government and non-government schools for them to receive Australian Government funding.

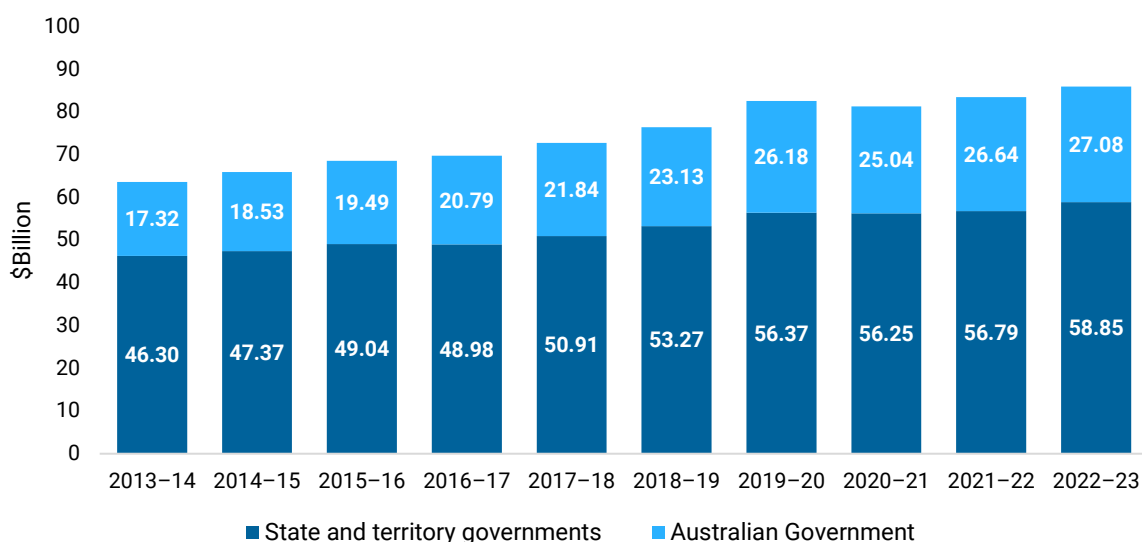
For most non-government schools, the SRS base amount is reduced by the school's Capacity to Contribute (CTC) – a measure of the capacity of the parents and guardians of students at the school to contribute financially to operating costs, relative to the capacity at other non-government schools.⁷⁰

Government recurrent funding in the 2022–23 financial year

In the 2022–23 financial year, total government recurrent funding of \$85.92 billion was provided for school education, with total government expenditure on primary and secondary education making up 2.7% of Australia's gross domestic product (GDP). This funding included \$58.85 billion (68.5%) through state and territory budgets and \$27.08 billion (31.5%) through the Australian Government budget.⁷¹

After adjusting for inflation, this represents an increase of 3.0% from the previous financial year, made up of a 1.6% increase in funding from the Australian Government and a 3.6% increase in funding from state and territory governments. Funding of school education over time by the Australian Government and state and territory governments, adjusted for inflation, is shown in Figure 9.1.

Figure 9.1: Australian and State/Territory government recurrent funding for all schools 2013–14 to 2022–23 (\$billion, \$2023)



Notes:

Amounts are adjusted for inflation to 2023 dollars, based on the CPI for June of each year. Nominal values and values adjusted using the GGFCE chain price deflator and the ABS 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: Government Schools Finance Statistics Group, *National Schools Statistics Collection (NSSC) – Finance 2023*, unpublished; the Australian Government Department of Education (unpublished); Steering Committee for the Review of Government Service Provision (SCRGSP), *Report on Government Services 2025*, Productivity Commission; ABS, *Schools*, 2024; ABS, Consumer Price Index, Australia, 2024.

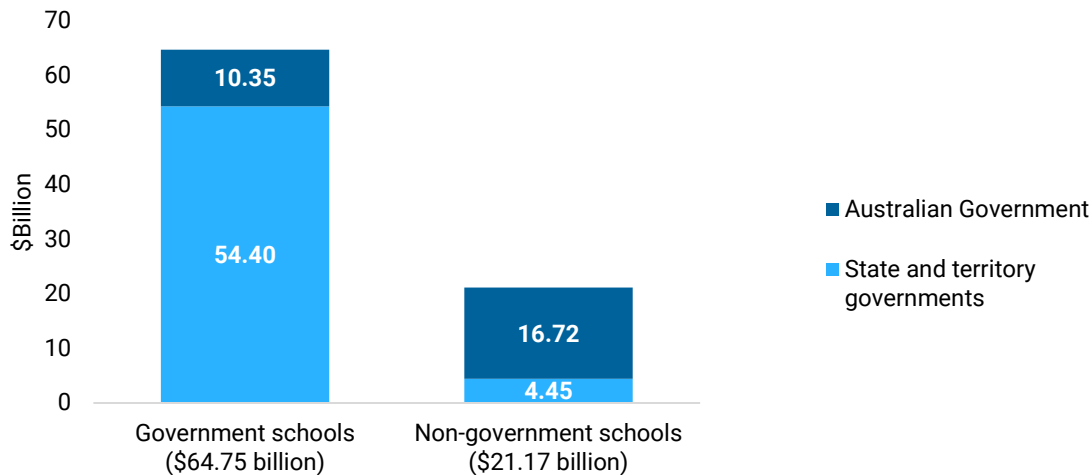
⁷⁰ The CTC for most non-government schools is calculated using a Direct Measure of Income (DMI) based on the actual income of parents and guardians of students at each school using taxation and other data held by the Australian Government. The CTC does not apply to government schools, or non-government 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.

⁷¹ Components of government recurrent funding may not sum to total due to rounding.

Government recurrent funding, by school sector

Of total government recurrent funding in 2022–23, the government school sector received 75.4% (\$64.75 billion) and the non-government sector received 24.6% (\$21.17 billion). This breakdown is shown in Figure 9.2. The bulk of state and territory funding (92.4%) was allocated to government schools, while 61.8% of Australian Government funding was allocated to non-government schools.

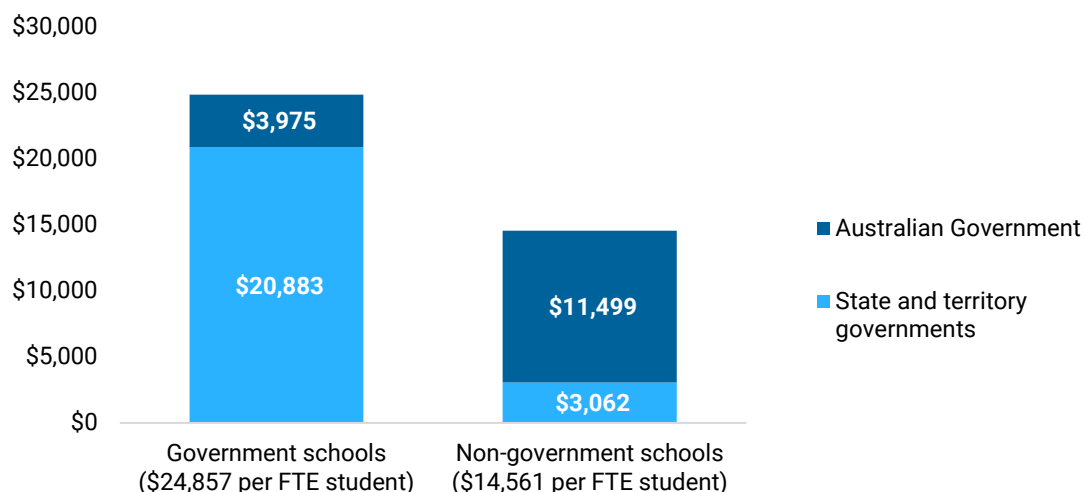
Figure 9.2: Total government recurrent funding for school education, by funding source and school sector, Australia, 2022–23 (\$ billion)



Sources: Government Schools Finance Statistics Group, National Schools Statistics Collection (NSSC) – Finance 2023, unpublished; the Australian Government Department of Education (unpublished); Steering Committee for the Review of Government Service Provision (SCRGSP), *Report on Government Services 2025*, Productivity Commission.

In 2022–23, total government recurrent funding was \$24,857 per student in government schools and \$14,561 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.

Figure 9.3: Government recurrent funding for school education by funding source and school sector, Australia, 2022–23, (\$ per student)



Note: Student numbers are the average full-time equivalent (FTE) student populations for the years being reported. Components of government recurrent funding may not sum to total due to rounding.

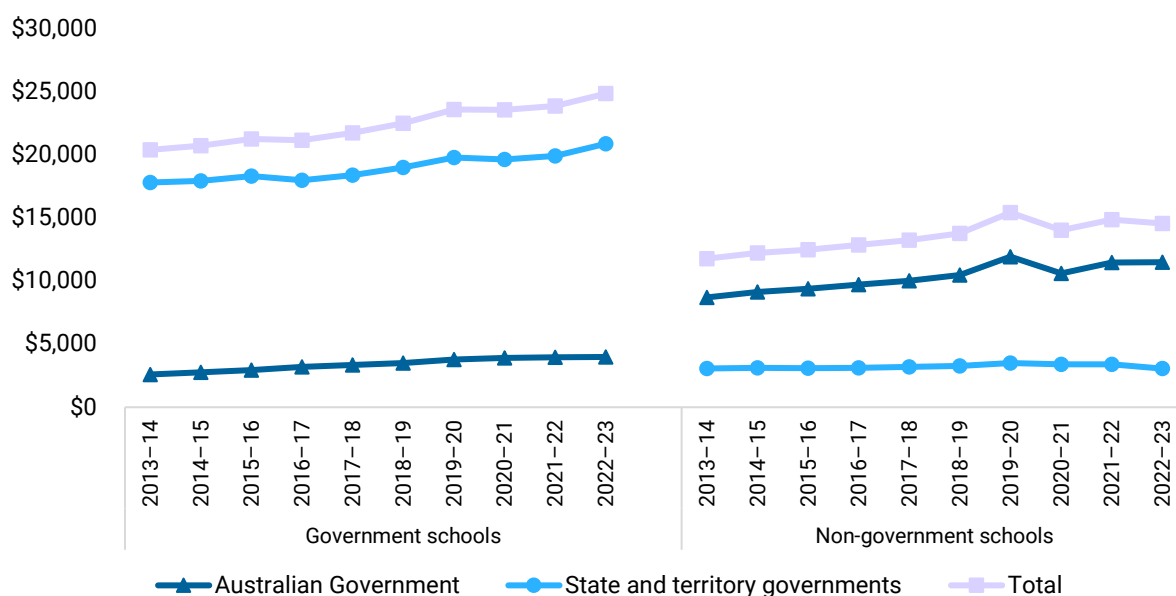
Sources: Government Schools Finance Statistics Group, NSSC – Finance 2023, unpublished; the Australian Government Department of Education (unpublished); Steering Committee for the Review of Government Service Provision (SCRGSP), *Report on Government Services 2025*, Productivity Commission.

Between the 2021–22 and 2022–23 financial years, after adjusting for inflation:

- Across all schools, total government recurrent funding per student increased by \$471 (2.3%) per student, with increases of \$409 (2.9%) in Australian government funding and \$62 (0.9%) in state/territory funding.
- In government schools, total government recurrent funding per student increased by \$989 (4.1%), with increases of \$18 (0.4%) in Australian government funding and \$972 (4.9%) in state/territory funding.
- In non-government schools, total government recurrent funding per student declined by \$317 (2.1%), with a decrease of \$341 (10.0%) in state/territory funding and almost no change in Australian government funding (an increase of \$24 or 0.2%).

Figure 9.4 shows changes in government funding per student in government and non-government schools since the 2013–14 financial year, after adjusting for inflation.

Figure 9.4: Government recurrent funding for school education by funding source and school sector, Australia, 2022–23, (\$ per student, \$2023)



Notes: Student numbers are the average full-time equivalent (FTE) student populations for the years being reported. Amounts are adjusted for inflation to 2023 dollars, based on the CPI for June of each year. Nominal values and values adjusted using the GGFCE chain price deflator and the ABS WPI are available on the National Report on Schooling Data Portal. Sources: Government Schools Finance Statistics Group, NSSC – Finance 2023, unpublished; the Australian Government Department of Education (unpublished); Steering Committee for the Review of Government Service Provision (SCRGSP), *Report on Government Services 2025*, Productivity Commission.

Over the ten-year period from 2013–14 to 2022–23, after adjusting for inflation:

- Across all schools, total government recurrent funding per student increased by \$3,775 (21.7%), with increases of \$1,936 (40.9%) in Australian government funding and \$1,839 (14.5%) in state/territory funding.
- In government schools, total government recurrent funding per student increased by \$4,447 (21.8%), with increases of \$1,375 (52.9%) in Australian government funding and \$3,071 (17.2%) in state/territory funding.
- In non-government schools, total government recurrent funding per student increased by \$2,785 (23.6%), with increases of \$2,790 (32.0%) in Australian government funding and almost no change (a decline of \$6 or 0.2%) 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 2023:

- In government schools:
 - Average school income per student was \$19,428.
 - State and territory governments provided 75.1% of total gross income, Australian Government funding accounted for 21.0%, and the remaining 3.9% came from fees, charges, parent contributions and other private sources.
- In Catholic schools:
 - Average school income per student in Catholic schools was \$21,114.
 - The Australian Government contributed 60.4% of gross school income, state and territory governments provided 15.1%. Fees, charges, parent contributions and other private sources made up the remaining 24.5% of Catholic sector income.
- In independent schools:
 - Average school income per student in independent schools was \$27,279.
 - Income from fees, charges and parent contributions made up 46.5% of total school income, with income from other private sources contributing an additional 4.9%. Australian Government funding accounted for 38.6% of total gross income, and state and territory governments provided 10.0%.

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 *My School* 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 *My School* 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 *My School* 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.⁷²

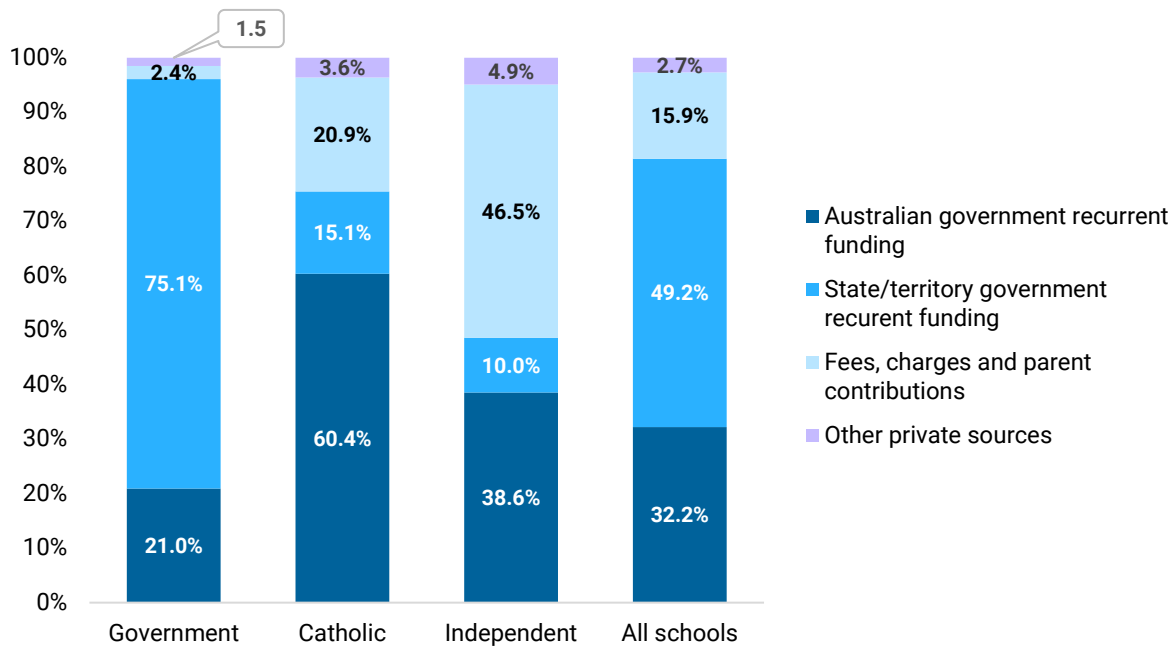
⁷² As these items are included in the NSSC finance data, school funding amounts reported in Section 9.1 are considerably higher than school income from government funding based on the *My School* data, particularly for state/territory government funding for government schools.

Recurrent income for schools

In 2023, total gross recurrent income for all schools in Australia was \$86.84 billion, made up of \$28.00 billion (32.2%) from Australian Government recurrent funding, \$42.75 billion (49.2%) from state/territory government recurrent funding, \$13.77 billion (15.9%) from fees, charges and parent contributions, and \$2.32 billion (2.7%) from other private contributions.

Australian Government recurrent funding accounted for 21.0% of the total gross income for government schools in 2023, with state and territory governments providing 75.1% of funds. For non-government schools, the Australian Government contributed 60.4% of Catholic sector gross income and 38.6% of independent sector gross income.⁷³ Income from fees, charges and parent contributions made up 20.9% of Catholic sector income and 46.5% 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, 2023 (%)

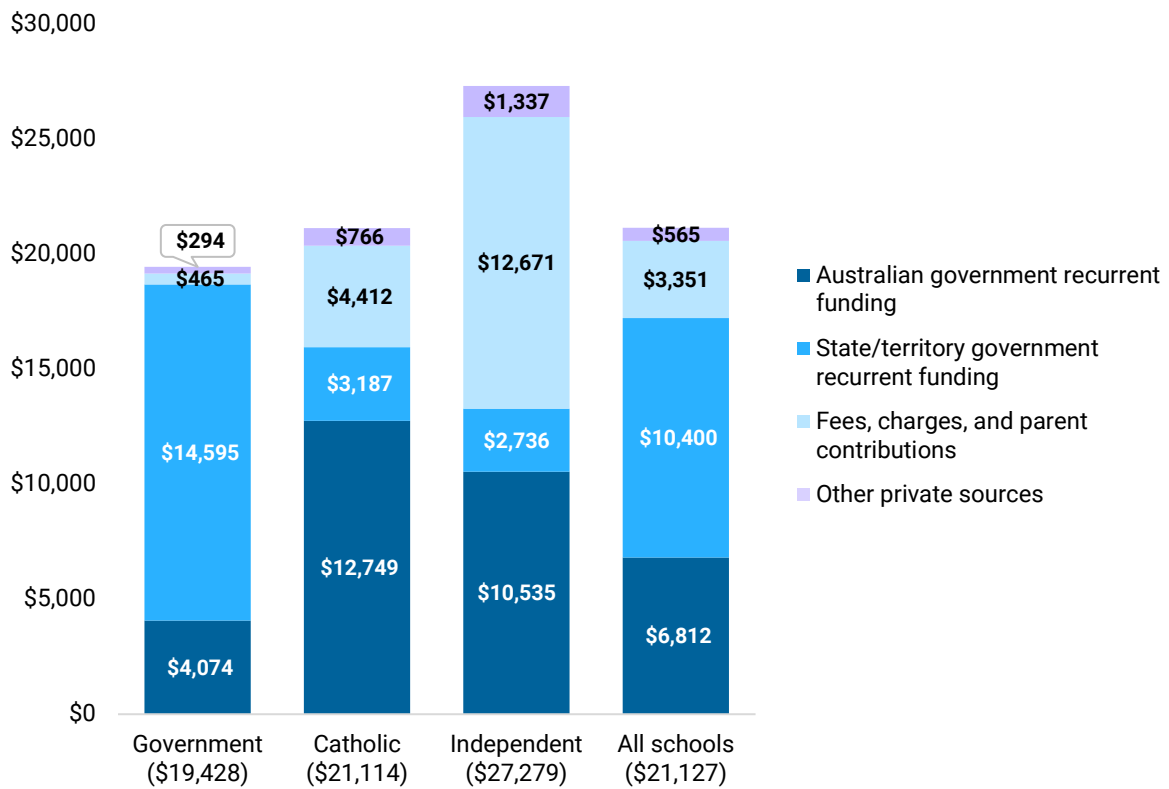


Source: ACARA, *My School* finance data collection.

In 2023, average gross recurrent income per student, across all Australian schools, was \$21,127. It was higher for independent schools (\$27,279) than for Catholic schools (\$21,114) and government schools (\$19,428). Figure 9.6 provides a breakdown by source of income and school sector.

⁷³ 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, 2023 (\$ per FTE student)

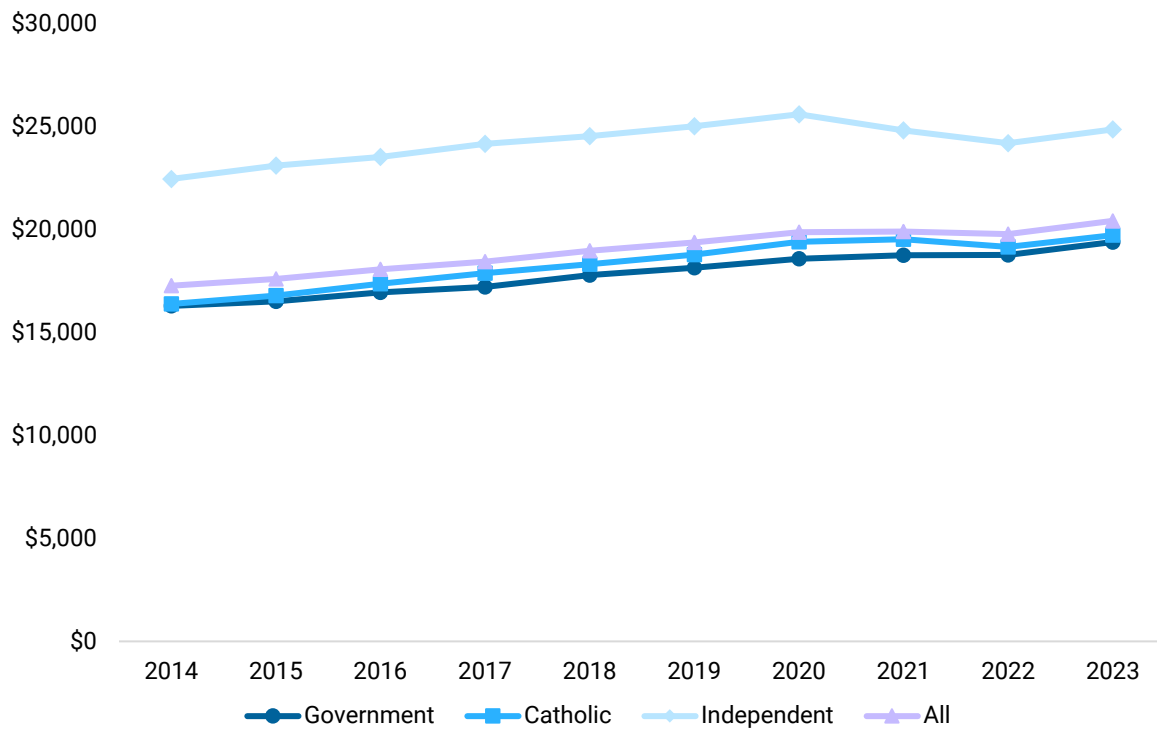


Source: ACARA, My School finance data collection.

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 2023, average NRIPS across all schools was \$20,444. It was higher for independent schools (\$24,882) than for Government schools (\$19,416) and Catholic schools (\$19,746).

In real terms (after adjusting for inflation), between 2022 and 2023, NRIPS increased by \$621 (3.3%) in government schools, \$571 (3.0%) in Catholic schools and \$666 (2.7%) in independent schools. Across all sectors, NRIPS was \$643 (3.2%) higher in 2023 than in 2022. Figure 9.7 shows NRIPS, adjusted for inflation, for the period 2014 to 2023.

Figure 9.7: Net recurrent income per student, by school sector, Australia, 2014–2023 (\$ per student, \$2023)



Note: Amounts are adjusted for inflation to 2023 dollars, based on the CPI for June of each year. Nominal values and values adjusted using the GGFCE chain price deflator and the ABS WPI are available on the National Report on Schooling Data Portal.

Sources: ACARA, *My School* finance data collection. ABS, *Schools*, 2023; ABS, Consumer Price Index, Australia, 2024.

After adjusting for inflation, NRIPS across all schools was \$3,153 (18.2%) higher in 2023 compared to 2014, with increases of \$3,107 (19.1%) in government schools, \$3,342 (20.4%) in Catholic schools and \$2,400 (10.7%) in independent schools.

9.3 School Expenditure

Key Facts

- In government schools, in the 2022–23 financial year:
 - average total government recurrent expenditure (money spent for all school operations) was \$24,857 per student
 - \$11,378 per student (45.8% of total government recurrent expenditure) was spent on teaching staff salaries.
- In non-government schools, in the 2023 calendar year:
 - average total recurrent expenditure was \$21,252 per student
 - \$9,461 per student (44.5% of total recurrent expenditure) was spent on teaching staff salaries.
- In the 2023 calendar year, capital expenditure (money spent to buy or improve long-term fixed assets, such as renovating classrooms, or constructing a new library) was \$5.37 billion in government schools, \$2.37 billion in Catholic schools, and \$3.64 billion in independent schools.

There are 2 types, or functions, of school expenditure. Recurrent expenditure is money spent on the day-to-day 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.⁷⁴ Capital expenditure amounts reported in this chapter were derived from *My School* data both government and non-government schools.

In this section, school expenditure is reported separately for government and non-government schools. For government schools, recurrent expenditure data is sourced from the NSSC and reported on a financial year basis. Only expenditure from government funding is reported.⁷⁵

⁷⁴ Non-government schools derive their income from Australian Government and state/territory government sources, 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 per cent 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.

⁷⁵ 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.

For non-government schools, recurrent 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.⁷⁶

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 the 2022–23 financial year was \$64.75 billion (\$24,857 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.

Table 9.1: Recurrent expenditure by government education systems, Australia, 2022–23 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	\$29,637,447	\$0	\$29,637,447	\$11,378
Salaries - Non-teaching staff	\$8,245,857	\$1,914,306	\$10,160,163	\$3,900
Redundancies	\$2,742	\$2,495	\$5,237	\$2
Non-salary costs	\$12,649,386	\$1,159,677	\$13,809,063	\$5,301
Total recurrent expenditure (excluding user cost of capital)	\$50,535,432	\$3,076,478	\$53,611,910	\$20,581
User cost of capital	\$11,064,267	\$74,497	\$11,138,764	\$4,276
Total recurrent expenditure (including user cost of capital)	\$61,599,699	\$3,150,975	\$64,750,674	\$24,857

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, 2023.

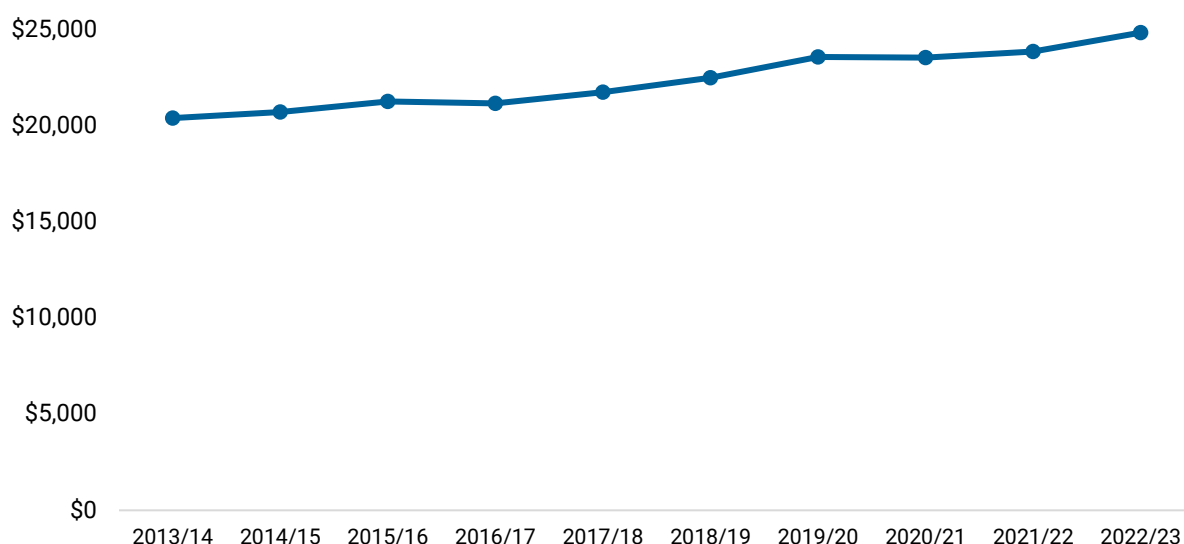
Salaries are by far the largest component of expenditure on schools, with teacher salaries comprising the majority of this expenditure. Teaching salary costs (average \$11,378 per student) represented 74.5% of total salary costs in 2022–23 and 45.8% of total recurrent expenditure inclusive of user cost of capital, down marginally from 46.5% in 2021–22. In 2022–23, non-salary costs including user cost of capital made up 38.5% of total operating expenditure (inclusive of user cost of capital).⁷⁷

⁷⁶ In this data collection, compiled by the Australian Government, non-systemic Catholic schools are counted as Catholic.

⁷⁷ Expenditure data for government and non-government schools, aggregated up to 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.

After adjusting for inflation, average total recurrent expenditure per student in government schools increased by \$989 (4.1%) between the 2021–22 and 2022–23 financial years. Figure 9.8 shows average total recurrent expenditure per student in government schools, adjusted for inflation, for the period 2013–14 to 2022–23. During this period, average total recurrent expenditure per student increased by \$4,447 (21.8%) in real terms.

Figure 9.8: Total recurrent expenditure per student (including user cost of capital), government schools, Australia, 2013-14 to 2022-23 (\$ per student, \$2023)



Note: Amounts are adjusted for inflation to 2023 dollars, based on the CPI for June of each year. Nominal values and values adjusted using the GGFCE chain price deflator and the ABS WPI are available on the National Report on Schooling Data Portal.

Sources: National Schools Statistics Collection (NSSC) (Finance), unpublished, 2023; ABS, Consumer Price Index, Australia, 2024.

Recurrent expenditure in non-government schools

In 2023, total recurrent expenditure in non-government schools was \$32.5 billion (\$21,252 per student). Table 9.2 shows total recurrent expenditure per student for non-government schools in the 2023 calendar year.

Table 9.2: Recurrent expenditure in non-government schools, by function, Australia, 2023 calendar year (\$'000 and \$ per student)

	Total recurrent expenditure (\$'000)	Total recurrent expenditure per student (\$)
Salaries - Teaching staff	\$14,491,110	\$9,461
Salaries - Non-teaching staff	\$5,701,842	\$3,723
Other staff-related expenditure	\$3,681,722	\$2,404
Debt servicing	\$470,469	\$307
Other operating expenditure	\$8,204,849	\$5,357
Total recurrent expenditure	\$32,549,991	\$21,252

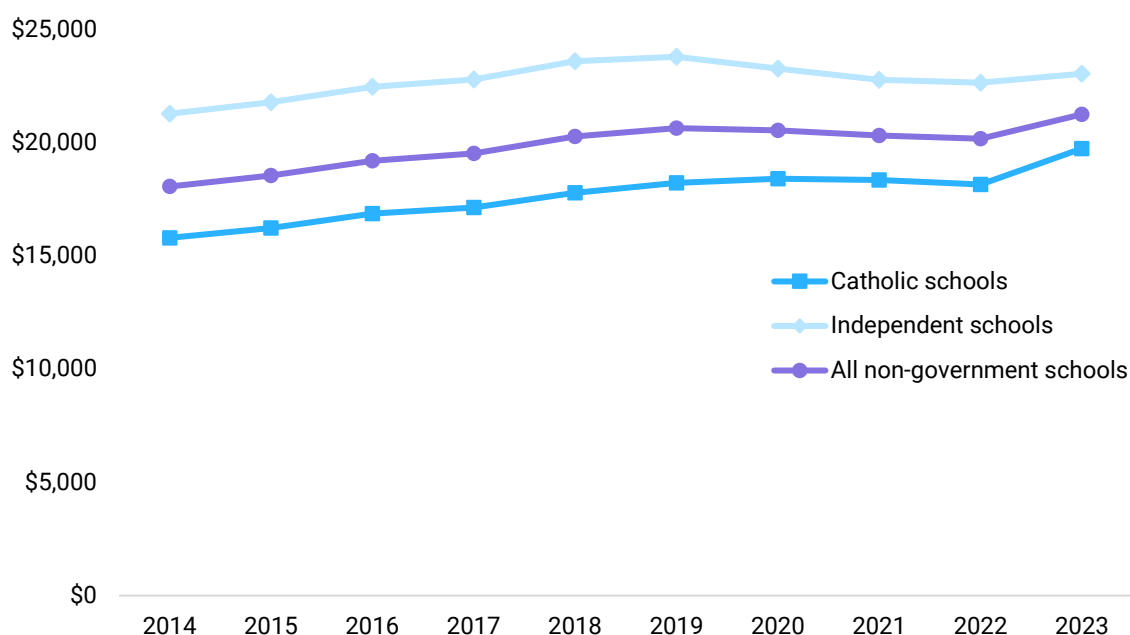
Note: Expenditure per student for the components of recurrent expenditure is derived based on the percentage of total recurrent expenditure (including user cost of capital) of each component.

Source: Australian Government Department of Education, unpublished data.

As was the case for government schools, salaries are the largest component of expenditure in non-government schools, with teacher salaries comprising the majority of this expenditure. In 2023, teaching salary costs (average \$9,461 per student) represented 71.8% of total salary costs and 44.5% of total recurrent expenditure, down from 46.6% of total recurrent expenditure in 2022. Non-staff related expenditure (debt servicing and other operating expenditure) made up 26.7% of total recurrent expenditure in non-government schools in 2023.

In 2023, total recurrent expenditure per student was higher for independent schools (\$23,047 per student) than in Catholic schools (\$19,742 per student). Average total recurrent expenditure per student for the period from 2014 to 2023, adjusted for inflation, is shown in Figure 9.9.

Figure 9.9: Total recurrent expenditure per student, non-government schools, Australia, by sector, 2014–2023 (\$ per student)



Note: Amounts are adjusted for inflation to 2023 dollars, based on the CPI for June of each year. Nominal values and values adjusted using the GGFCE chain price deflator and the ABS 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 increased by \$1,077 (5.3%) between 2022 and 2023, with increases of \$1,593 (8.8%) for Catholic schools and \$402 (1.8%) for independent schools.

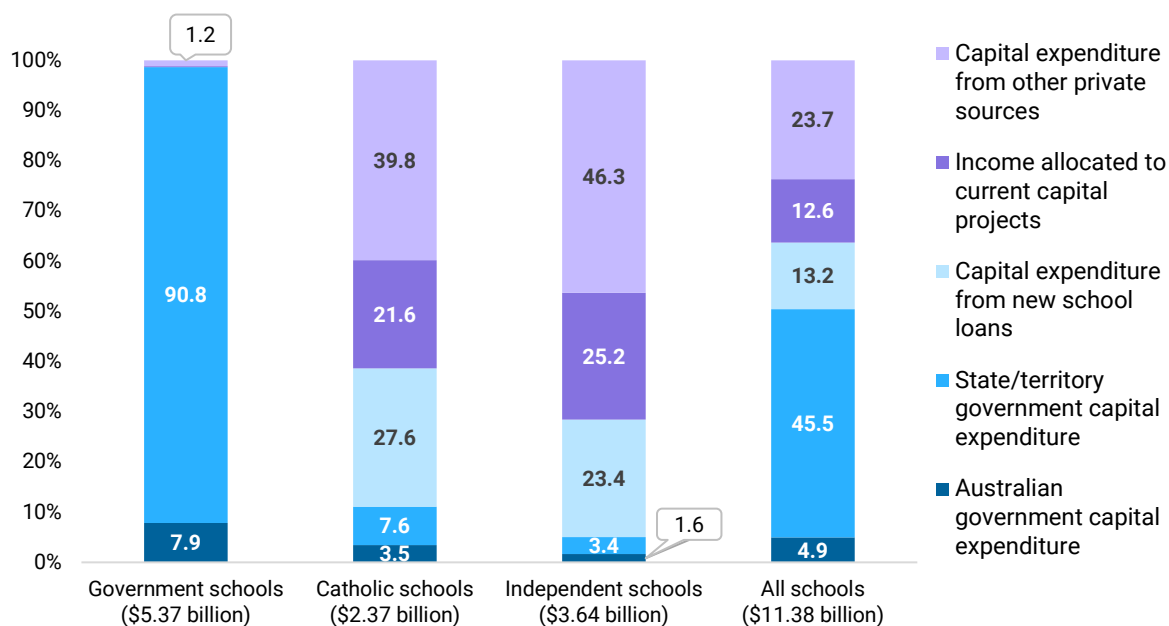
Average total recurrent expenditure per student in non-government schools, after adjusting for inflation, increased by 17.6% (\$3,186 in 2023 dollars) over the period from 2014 to 2023, with increases of 25.0% (\$3,942) for Catholic schools and 8.3% (\$1,769) for independent schools.

Capital expenditure in government and non-government schools

My School allows for comparable reporting of capital expenditure by all schools.⁷⁸ In 2023, capital expenditure was \$5.37 billion across 6,712 government schools, \$2.37 billion over 1,764 Catholic schools, and \$3.64 billion across 1,153 independent schools.

In government schools, capital expenditure was mainly sourced from state/territory funding (90.8%), with an additional 7.9% from Australian government funding, and 1.2% from other private sources, as shown in Figure 9.10.

Figure 9.10: Capital expenditure in government and non-government schools, Australia, by sector, 2023 (%)



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 (7.6% for Catholic schools and 3.4% for independent schools) or Australian government funding (3.5% for Catholic schools and 1.6% for independent schools).

In Catholic schools, 39.8% of capital expenditure was sourced from private income sources, as was 46.3% of capital expenditure in independent schools. Capital expenditure from income allocated to current capital projects made up 21.6% of total capital expenditure for Catholic schools and 25.2% of total capital expenditure for independent schools, while capital expenditure from new school loans made up 27.6% of total capital expenditure for Catholic schools and 23.4% of total capital expenditure for independent schools.

⁷⁸ Capital expenditure for both government and non-government schools were derived from *My School* data. These amounts differ from the capital expenditure amounts based on NSSC data for government schools and data provided by the AGDE for non-government schools. For the *My School* 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.

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 2022–23 (ending in reporting year)	Calendar year 2023 (same as reporting year)	Calendar year 2023 (same as reporting year)	Financial year 2022–23 (ending in reporting year)
Scope of reporting	Government schools only. Disaggregation by state/territory and primary/secondary 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. Disaggregation by state/territory No disaggregation by Catholic/Independent for non-government schools. Disaggregation by primary/secondary for 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
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



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. The term 'origin' is considered to relate to people's Australian Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander descent and for some, but not all, their cultural identity.

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.

Australian Government recurrent funding

Income sourced from funding provided by the Australian Government for recurrent purposes.

Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF)

The Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) is the comprehensive national framework of qualifications in the school, vocational education and training (VET) and higher education sectors. Qualifications within the AQF include:

- senior secondary certificates of education issued by state and territory school curriculum, assessment and certification authorities to students meeting requirements on completion of Year 12
- VET qualifications at various certificate and diploma levels delivered by TAFE and other registered training organisations (RTOs)
- higher education diplomas and degrees provided through Australian universities and other educational institutions.

Band (NAPLAN)

Between 2008 and 2022, the NAPLAN measurement scale for each assessment area was divided into 10 bands used to report student progress through Years 3, 5, 7 and 9. Band 1 was the lowest band and band 10 the highest. Each band contained a range of scores and was not a specific point. From 2023 student achievement is reported using proficiency levels.

Capital expenditure

Expenditure by a school or school system to purchase or improve land, buildings and other capital assets and equipment.

Capital project

A capital project is a long-term, capital-intensive investment to build upon, add to, or improve a capital asset (e.g. renovating classrooms, or constructing a new library).

Capital works

Capital works are large-scale, long-term investment projects that involve the construction, expansion, renovation, or replacement of physical assets.

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.

Combined school

A school that has classes from both primary and secondary year levels.

Domain

A domain is the term used to describe a subject or learning area that is the focus of a test. The 4 domains tested in NAPLAN are reading, writing, conventions of language (spelling, grammar and punctuation), and numeracy. These are called test domains. There are 3 domains for NAP sample assessments: civics and citizenship, information and communications technology literacy, and science literacy.

Estimated resident population

The ERP (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](#).

Exempt (NAPLAN and NAP sample)

All students should have an opportunity to participate in testing, but eligible students may be exempted following consultation between the school and parent/carer. Eligible students include those with a language background other than English, who arrived from overseas less than a year before the test window/s, and students with significant intellectual disabilities or significant coexisting conditions.

For NAPLAN, exempt students are not included when calculating the average score for a school. Students who meet the criteria for exemption but participate in testing will be counted as assessed students with the score that they achieved.

Full-time equivalent students

The Full-time equivalent (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.

Jurisdiction

One of the 8 states and territories of Australia. For NAP administration and reporting, a jurisdiction includes all 3 educational sectors (government, Catholic and independent) that sit within an Australian state or territory. The jurisdiction level is the most granular level of analysis undertaken for national reporting of NAPLAN and NAP sample assessments.

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 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) comprises a suite of national and international assessments which provide nationally comparable data on student achievement in literacy, numeracy, science, civics and citizenship and ICT. For more information on NAP, visit the [NAP website](#).

NAP sample assessments

The National Assessment Program (NAP) sample assessments test students' skills and understanding in science literacy, civics and citizenship and information and communication technology (ICT) literacy. Only selected samples of students in Years 6 and 10 participate in these sample assessments, which are held on a rolling three-yearly basis.

NAPLAN

The National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) is an annual national assessment for all students in Years 3, 5, 7 and 9. All students in these year levels are expected to participate in NAPLAN tests in reading, writing, language conventions (spelling, grammar and punctuation) and numeracy. For more information on NAPLAN, visit the [NAP website](#).

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.

Net recurrent income

The amount of income received by a school from the Australian Government, and state or territory government, plus fees, charges, parent contributions and other private sources, which is available for expenditure relating to the ongoing costs of schools.

Non-teaching staff

A member of a school who supports the school by providing educational services but does not directly teach students. Non-teaching staff can be engaged at one or more schools and includes specialist support staff, such as counsellors, teachers' aides and assistants, administrative and clerical staff, building operations, general maintenance and other service staff. For government schools, this information is provided by a school's state or territory jurisdiction, so the number on My School includes only non-teaching staff employed by the jurisdiction.

Primary education

Primary schools start with pre-Year 1 and finish with Year 6. Year 7 became part of secondary education from 2015 in Queensland and WA, and from 2022 in SA.

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 year⁷⁹ followed by Years 1–6 in New South Wales (NSW), Victoria (Vic), Queensland (Qld), Western Australia (WA)⁸⁰, Tasmania (Tas), the Northern Territory (NT) and the Australian Capital Territory (ACT). Primary education generally comprises a Foundation year followed by Years 1–7 in South Australia.⁸¹

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.

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.

ABS *Schools* uses the term 'affiliation' rather than 'school sector' to make these distinctions. A further distinction is sometimes made between systemic and non-systemic non-government schools. Systemic schools are formally affiliated with a group or system of schools. Non-systemic non-government schools do not belong to a system.

In ABS *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 NSW, 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.

⁷⁹ 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.

⁸⁰ 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.

⁸¹ 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.

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.

School-based apprenticeships and traineeships

Legal and/or contractual arrangements that allow students to undertake a part-time apprenticeship or traineeship while still at school. Students can combine paid part-time employment with training towards a nationally accredited vocational education and training (VET) qualification under the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) and other school studies. Depending on their pattern of study in the senior secondary certificate, students may be eligible for an Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR).

Secondary education

Secondary schooling starts in Year 7 in all states. 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. Year 7 became part of secondary education from 2015 in Queensland and WA, and from 2022 in SA.

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	Senior secondary certificates of education
NSW	Higher School Certificate (HSC)
Vic	Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE) Victorian Certificate of Education Vocational Major (VCE VM)
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: The Australasian Curriculum, Assessment and Certification Authorities (ACACA), states and territories.

Socio-educational advantage (SEA) quarters

The four socio-educational advantage (SEA) quarters, represent a scale of relative disadvantage (bottom quarter) through to relative advantage (top quarter). These quarters are calculated using only the student-level factors of educational advantage.

SEA quarters give contextual information about the socio-educational composition of students in the school. No SEA quarter information is displayed when there is insufficient information in the parent background variables to calculate a quartile distribution.

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).⁸²

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

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](#).

Student attendance level

Student attendance level is defined as the proportion of Years 1–10 full-time students, whose attendance rate is greater than, or equal to, 90 per cent over the (reporting) period.

Student attendance rate

Student attendance rate is defined as a number of actual full-time equivalent student days attended by full-time students in Years 1–10 as a percentage of the total number of possible student days attended over the (reporting) period.

⁸² 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.

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 NT.

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 VET delivered to secondary students / VETiS was derived from the National VETiS Collection and the National VET Provider Collection, compiled by NCVET under the Australian VET Management Information Statistical Standard 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
AITSL	Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership
ALFs	Approved Learning Frameworks
AQF	Australian Qualifications Framework
ATAR	Australian Tertiary Admission Rank
ATWD	Australian Teacher Workforce Data
COAG	Council of Australian Governments
CPI	Consumer Price Index
CRRE	Consent and Respectful Relationships Education
CTC	Capacity to Contribute
DMI	Direct Measure of Income
DOBCEL	Diocese of Ballarat Catholic Education Limited
ECEC	early childhood education and care
ECPP	Early Childhood Care and Development Policy Partnership
EMM	Education Minister’s Meeting
ERP	Estimated Resident Population
FFPOS	full fee-paying overseas students
FTE	full-time equivalent
GGFCE	General Government Final Consumption Expenditure
IAS	Indigenous Advancement Strategy
ICSEA	Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IEA	International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement
ITE	Initial Teacher Education
KPM	Key Performance Measure
MYLNS	Middle Years Literacy and Numeracy Support
NAP	National Assessment Program
NAPLAN	National Assessment Program - Literacy and Numeracy
NCVER	National Centre for Vocational Education Research
NCCD	Nationally Consistent Collection of Data on School Students with Disability
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
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
QDTP	quality differentiated teaching practice
Qld	Queensland
RTO	Registered Training Organisation
SA	South Australia
SACE	South Australian Certificate of Education
SEW	Survey of Education and Work
SLI	School Leadership Institute
SRS	Schooling Resource Standard
SSCE	Senior Secondary Certificates of Education
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics
TAFE	Technical and Further Education
Tas	Tasmania
TIMSS	Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study
USI	Unique Student Identifier
VCE	Victorian Certificate of Education
VCE VM	Victorian Certificate of Education Vocational Major
VET	Vocational education and training
VETiS	VET in Schools
Vic	Victoria
VPC	Victorian Pathways Certificate
WA	Western Australia
WPI	Wage Price Index