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# National Report on Schooling in Australia

# 2024

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## Executive Summary

The *National Report on Schooling in Australia 2024* is the 36th 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 2024 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](#), providing data, analysis and commentary. It also includes other high-level statistical information on Australian schooling in 2024 and for the period 2014–2024 inclusive.

### Overview of the report

*Chapter 1 provides an introduction to the report.*

This chapter also provides an overview of the Measurement Framework for Schooling in Australia and a description of the data sources used in the report.

*Chapter 2, 'Schools and schooling', provides information on the status of Australian schooling in 2024, 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. School structures and age requirements in states and territories are summarised in section 2.1.

### School numbers

School numbers are shown in section 2.2. In 2024, there were 9,653 schools in Australia, an increase of 24 schools since 2023.

The majority (69.7%) of schools were government schools, established and administered by state and territory governments through their education departments or authorities. The remaining 30.3% were non-government schools, mostly associated with religious organisations.

### Student numbers

Section 2.3 reports on numbers of students by school sector, state and territory, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander status. A total of 4,132,006 students were enrolled in Australian schools in 2024, an increase of 1.1% from 2023. Almost two-thirds (63.4%) of school students were enrolled in government schools, 19.9% were in Catholic schools and 16.8% in independent schools.

### School students with disability

More than one-quarter of school students (25.7%) received an educational adjustment due to disability. Further details about educational adjustments for students with disability are provided in section 2.4.

## School staff numbers

School staff numbers are provided in section 2.5. Staff numbers closely reflect enrolments, with 62.3% of school teachers employed in government schools and 37.7% in non-government schools.

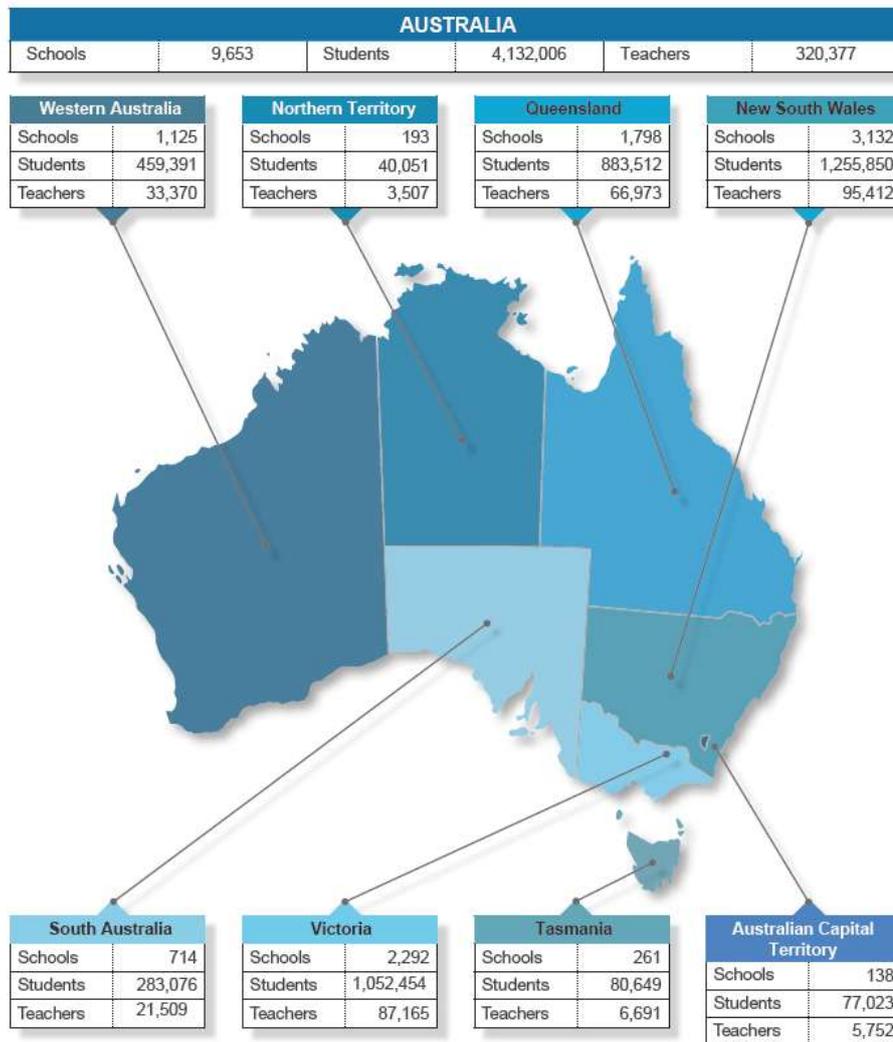
Australia’s teaching workforce continued to be predominantly female, with women making up 72.0% of FTE teachers in 2024. The gender difference was more pronounced at the primary level (82.4% female) than at secondary level (61.5% female).

## Student-teacher ratios

Section 2.6 reports on student-teacher ratios by school sector, state and territory. The average student to teaching staff ratio was 12.9 students per teacher – a reduction from 13.1 students per teacher in 2023. Student-teacher ratios were lower in independent schools (11.7 students per teacher) compared to Catholic schools (13.3 students per teacher) and government schools (13.1 students per teacher). Section 2.6 reports on student-teacher ratios by school sector, state and territory.

School, student, and teacher numbers in 2024 are shown for Australia and by state and territory in Figure 1.

**Figure 1:** Numbers of schools, students and teachers by state and territory, Australia, 2024



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

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), *Schools*, 2024.

*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 2024 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.<sup>1</sup>

Progress towards these commitments to action reported for 2024 included:

- The advancement of universal early childhood education with a \$1 billion fund for new centres, a 3 Day Guarantee of subsidised care from 2026, and a data-driven pricing model to support quality service delivery.
- Progress in the implementation of the National Teacher Workforce Action Plan, with targeted measures to strengthen and sustain the teaching profession, through scholarships and high-achieving placements, removal of barriers to teacher training, and pilot programs to reduce teacher workload.
- Commitment to culturally responsive, community-led approaches to improving outcomes for First Nations students, including a partnership with the national peak body, the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Council, as well as collaboration with other key organisations to co-develop and implement the National First Nations Education Policy.
- Continued investment in First Nations education, including initiatives such as the Indigenous Boarding Provider Grants, the Good to Great Schools pilot to lift literacy and numeracy, and On-Country Learning funding to increase engagement and attendance in Central Australian schools.
- A focus on inclusion through continued funding for the Nationally Consistent Collection of Data (NCCD) Continuous Quality Improvement Measure, helping schools build capacity to implement the NCCD effectively.

*Chapters 4 to 8 report on the performance of Australian schooling in 2024, using the nationally agreed KPMs for schooling specified in the Measurement Framework for Schooling in Australia.*

These chapters report on the agreed KPMs scheduled for reporting in 2024. The measures are reported at the national level, and by various breakdowns, such as state and territory, school sector, school year and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander status. For relevant KPMs, time series for the previous 10 years (2014–2023) are also included. Where relevant breakdowns or time series are not reported, they are provided in the [National Report on Schooling data portal](#), as part of extensive statistical information on schooling in Australia, along with technical notes and caveats.

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<sup>1</sup> 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.

## Enrolment, Attendance and Apparent Retention

Chapter 4 reports on student enrolment, attendance, and apparent retention. In 2024:

- The proportion of 6–15-year-olds enrolled in school in Australia was 98.6% – the same as in 2022 and 2023, but down from 99.0% in 2021.
- The attendance rate for students in Years 1–10 was 88.3%, down slightly from 88.6% in 2023.
- The student attendance level (the percentage of students with above 90 per cent attendance) was 59.8%, down from 61.6% in 2023.
- 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 the gap between attendance rates of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and non-Indigenous students increased slightly (0.2 percentage points) between 2023 and 2024, the gap in attendance levels narrowed by 0.7 percentage points.
- Apparent retention rates estimate the progression of students through school over several years through several year levels. In 2024, the national apparent retention rate from Year 10 to Year 12 was 79.9%, an increase of 1.2 percentage points since 2023. The apparent retention rate from Year 10 to Year 12 for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students was 57.0%, increased by 1.2 percentage points, an increase of 1.2 percentage points since 2023.

## Student Achievement

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

From 2023, the numerical 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. 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 2024:

- NAPLAN participation rates for students in Years 3, 5 and 7 were over 96%. Year 9 students had lower levels of participation in NAPLAN, at 92.6%.
- Among Year 3 students:
  - The percentage with NAPLAN scores at or above the Strong proficiency level was 66.3% for reading, 76.8% for writing and 63.5% for numeracy.
  - The percentage with NAPLAN scores at or above the Exceeding proficiency level was 20.1% for reading, 8.3% for writing and 10.2% for numeracy.

- Among Year 5 students:
  - The percentage with NAPLAN scores at or above the Strong proficiency level was 71.3% for reading, 67.3% for writing and 67.8% for numeracy.
  - The percentage with NAPLAN scores at or above the Exceeding proficiency level was 21.5% for reading, 11.4% for writing and 12.5% for numeracy.
- Among Year 7 students:
  - The percentage with NAPLAN scores at or above the Strong proficiency level was 67.3% for reading, 65.3% for writing and 67.2% for numeracy.
  - The percentage with NAPLAN scores at or above the Exceeding proficiency level was 19.9% for reading, 17.7% for writing and 13.5% for numeracy.
- Among Year 9 students:
  - The percentage with NAPLAN scores at or above the Strong proficiency level was 63.0% for reading, 61.0% for writing and 63.4% for numeracy.
  - The percentage with NAPLAN scores at or above the Exceeding proficiency level was 18.0% for reading, 21.1% for writing and 8.9% for numeracy.

Nationally, for reading, writing and numeracy, across all year levels, there were no significant differences in mean scale scores or the percentage of students achieving at or above the Strong or Exceeding proficiency levels since 2023. This was to be expected, given that only one year has passed since the NAPLAN measurement scales were reset.

Section 5.2 reports on student achievement in National Assessment Program – Civics and Citizenship (NAP–CC). In 2024:

- The proportion of participating Year 6 students achieving at or above the proficient standard for Civics and Citizenship was 43%. This was significantly lower than the proportion achieving at or above the proficient standard in 2019 (53%).
- The proportion of participating Year 10 students attaining the proficient standard for Civics and Citizenship was 28%. This was significantly lower than the proportion achieving at or above the proficient standard in 2019 (38%).

### **Vocational Education and Training**

Chapter 6 reports on participation of young people aged 15–19 in Vocational Education and Training (VET). In Australia in 2024:

- 26.0% of 15–19-year-olds completed at least one unit of competency at Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) Certificate II or above, up from 25.5% in 2023.
- Almost half (49.1%) of qualifications gained by 15–19-year-olds were at AQF level II and one-third (33.3%) were at AQF level III.
- The long-term trend in the proportion of 15–19-year-olds participating in VET was downward, from 28.5% in 2015 to 26.0% in 2024.
- The number of 15–19-year-olds undertaking a school-based apprenticeship or traineeship increased by 11.1% from 2023 and the number of 15–19-year-olds undertaking other VET courses at school increased by 5.2%.

## Participation in Education and 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 2024:

- The proportion of 15–19-year-olds who were fully engaged in education, training or work was 86.6%, down from 87.3% in 2023 and 90.3% in 2021. This rate is slightly lower than the 2019 (pre-pandemic) rate of 87.0%.
- The proportion of 20–24-year-olds who were fully engaged in education, training or work was 75.1%, down from 77.4% in 2023, which was the highest rate recorded since 2008.
- The proportion of 17–24-year-olds who had left school and were fully engaged in education, training or work was 73.1%, down from 75.4% in 2023.

## Student Attainment

Chapter 8 reports on levels of educational attainment of young people aged 20 to 24.<sup>2</sup> Among 20–24-year-olds in 2024:

- The proportion who had attained at least Year 12 or AQF Certificate II or above was 90.5% (93.4% of females and 88.1% of males).
- The proportion who had attained at least Year 12 or AQF Certificate III or above was 89.6% (93.0% of females and 87.4% of males).

Since 2014:

- The proportion of 20–24-year-olds who had attained at least Year 12 or AQF Certificate II or above has risen 4.4 percentage points from 86.1% to 90.5%.
- The proportion of 20–24-year-olds who had attained at least Year 12 or AQF Certificate III or above has risen 5.1 percentage points from 84.9% to 90.0%.

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.

*Chapter 9, 'School funding', reports on government funding for Australian schools, school income (from all sources) and schools' capital expenditure.*

Chapter 9 outlines intergovernmental funding arrangements for school education, and reports on state and territory and Australian Government expenditure on government and non-government schools. It also summarises data on school income from all sources and capital expenditure on schools. Schools are funded through a combination of state or territory government funding, Australian Government funding, fees and charges and other parental or private contributions.

Government funding for schools in the 2023/24 financial year:

- Total recurrent government funding for schooling was \$91.04 billion. This was made up of \$61.88 billion (68.0%) from state and territory budgets and \$29.16 billion (32.0%) from the Australian Government (Commonwealth) budget.
- Overall, 75.0% (\$68.27 billion) of total recurrent government funding was allocated to government schools and 25.0% (\$22.77 billion) to non-government schools.

<sup>2</sup> At the time of publication, data on Year 12 Certification rates for 2023 and 2024 was not available. When this data becomes available, it will be updated on the National Report on Schooling in Australia data portal.

- Total recurrent government funding was \$26,140 per student in government schools and \$15,262 per student for non-government schools.
- The bulk of state and territory funding (92.3%) was allocated to government schools, while 61.7% of Australian Government funding was allocated to non-government schools.

School income in the 2024 calendar year:

- In government schools, average school income per student was \$20,368. State and territory governments provided 75.0% of total gross income, Australian Government funding accounted for 21.0%, and the remaining 4.0% came from fees, charges, parent contributions and other private sources.
- In Catholic schools, average school income per student was \$22,067. The Australian Government contributed 60.4% of gross school income, and state and territory governments provided 14.8%. Fees, charges, parent contributions and other private sources made up the remaining 24.8% of Catholic sector income.
- In independent schools, average school income per student was \$28,642. Income from fees, charges and parent contributions made up 46.6% of total school income, with income from other private sources contributing an additional 5.2%. Australian Government funding accounted for 38.4% of total gross income, and state and territory governments provided 9.8%.

School Expenditure:

- In government schools, in the 2023/24 financial year, average total recurrent expenditure (money spent for all school operations) was \$26,140 per student.
- In non-government schools, in the 2024 calendar year, average total recurrent expenditure was \$22,534 per student.
- In the 2024 calendar year, capital expenditure (money spent to buy or improve long-term fixed assets, such as renovating classrooms, or constructing a new library) was \$5.28 billion in government schools, \$2.15 billion in Catholic schools, and \$3.90 billion in independent schools.

## Key Performance Measures

Table 1 summarises the national KPMs for 2024 in comparison with 2023, or the most recent calendar year for which comparable data exists.<sup>3</sup> This is expressed as the short-term change to each KPM.

Table 1 also summarises longer-term trends in the movement of KPMs. This data demonstrates that while changes in KPMs from year to year are generally small, successive increments over time may result in measurable long-term trends.

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<sup>3</sup> For NAP–Civics and Citizenship, the most recent previous calendar year is 2019.

**Table 1: Key Performance Measures for schooling, Australia, 2023–2024 and long-term trends**

Key Performance Measures	Short-term change			Long-term trend		
	2023 or previous calendar year	2024	Change	Trend period	Average annual change (percentage points)	Trend
<b>1. Student participation</b>						
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	88.6	88.3	↔	2014–24	-0.5	↓
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	61.6	59.8	↔	2018–24	-3.2	↓
1(d) NAPLAN participation: Proportion of students in Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 participating in NAPLAN						
Year 3	96.2	96.4	↔	2008–24	-0.1	↔
Year 5	96.7	96.7	↔	2008–24	-0.1	↔
Year 7	96.3	96.3	↔	2008–24	-0.1	↓
Year 9	92.3	92.6	↔	2008–24	-0.3	↓
1(e) Apparent retention rate from Year 10 to Year 12	78.7	79.9	↔	2010–24	0.0	↔
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	25.5	26.0	↔	2015–24	-0.2	↓
1(g) Proportion of 15–19-year-olds in full-time education or training, in full-time work, or both in part-time work and part-time education or training) [ABS Survey of Education and Work]	87.3	86.6	↔	2004–24	0.1	↑
1(h) Proportion of 20–24-year-olds in full-time education or training, in full-time work, or both in part-time work and part-time education or training [ABS Survey of Education and Work]	77.4	75.1	↔	2004–24	-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 Survey of Education and Work]	75.4	73.1	↔	2004–24	-0.2	↓

Table 1 continues on the next page.

Key Performance Measures	Short-term change			Long-term trend		
	2023 or previous calendar year	2024	Change	Trend period	Average annual change (percentage points)	Trend
<b>2. Student Achievement: NAP–Literacy</b>						
2(a)(i) Proportion of students achieving at or above the national Strong proficiency level for reading:						
Year 3	66.8	66.3	↔	–	N/A	N/A
Year 5	74.2	71.4	↔	–	N/A	N/A
Year 7	68.4	67.3	↔	–	N/A	N/A
Year 9	62.8	63.0	↔	–	N/A	N/A
2(a)(ii) Proportion of students achieving at or above the national Exceeding proficiency level for reading:						
Year 3	18.3	20.1	↔	–	N/A	N/A
Year 5	21.3	21.5	↔	–	N/A	N/A
Year 7	19.2	19.9	↔	–	N/A	N/A
Year 9	16.9	18.0	↔	–	N/A	N/A
2(b) NAPLAN mean scaled scores for Reading (points on NAPLAN scale)						
Year 3 (2023 scale)	404.6	404.1	↔	–	N/A	N/A
Year 5 (2023 scale)	495.9	492.1	↔	–	N/A	N/A
Year 7 (2023 scale)	536.3	535.0	↔	–	N/A	N/A
Year 9 (2023 scale)	564.4	565.0	↔	–	N/A	N/A
2(c)(i) Proportion of students achieving at or above the national Strong proficiency level for writing:						
Year 3	76.0	76.8	↔	–	N/A	N/A
Year 5	66.2	67.3	↔	–	N/A	N/A
Year 7	62.5	65.3	↔	–	N/A	N/A
Year 9	58.0	61.0	↔	–	N/A	N/A
2(c)(ii) Proportion of students achieving at or above the national Exceeding proficiency level for writing:						
Year 3	9.1	8.3	↔	–	N/A	N/A
Year 5	11.5	11.4	↔	–	N/A	N/A
Year 7	14.8	17.7	↔	–	N/A	N/A
Year 9	17.6	21.1	↔	–	N/A	N/A
2(d) NAPLAN mean scaled scores for writing (points on NAPLAN scale)						
Year 3 (2023 scale)	416.3	415.9	↔	–	N/A	N/A
Year 5 (2023 scale)	482.9	484.8	↔	–	N/A	N/A
Year 7 (2023 scale)	533.7	540.2	↔	–	N/A	N/A
Year 9 (2023 scale)	566.6	573.9	↔	–	N/A	N/A

Table 1 continues on the next page.

Key Performance Measures	Short-term change			Long-term trend		
	2022 or previous calendar year	2023	Change	Trend period	Average annual change (percentage points)	Trend
<b>3. Student Achievement – Numeracy</b>						
3(a)(i) Proportion of students achieving at or above the national Strong proficiency level for numeracy:						
Year 3	64.7	63.5	↔	–	N/A	N/A
Year 5	67.7	67.8	↔	–	N/A	N/A
Year 7	67.2	67.2	↔	–	N/A	N/A
Year 9	63.9	63.4	↔	–	N/A	N/A
3(a)(ii) Proportion of students achieving at or above the national Exceeding proficiency level for numeracy:						
Year 3	12.3	10.2	↔	–	N/A	N/A
Year 5	12.0	12.5	↔	–	N/A	N/A
Year 7	12.6	13.5	↔	–	N/A	N/A
Year 9	9.9	8.9	↔	–	N/A	N/A
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	403.8	↔	–	N/A	N/A
Year 5 (2023 scale)	487.6	489.1	↔	–	N/A	N/A
Year 7 (2023 scale)	538.4	539.8	↔	–	N/A	N/A
Year 9 (2023 scale)	567.7	565.3	↔	–	N/A	N/A
<b>5. Student Achievement: NAP – Civics and Citizenship</b>						
5(a) Proportion of participating students achieving at or above the proficient standard in Civics and Citizenship (Comparison year is 2019):						
Year 6 – Level 2	52.8	43.5	↓	2004–24	-0.2	↔
Year 10 – Level 3	38.4	27.8	↓	2004–24	-0.6	↔

Table 1 continues on the next page.

Key Performance Measures	Short-term change			Long-term trend		
	2022 or previous calendar year	2023	Change	Trend period	Average annual change (percentage points)	Trend
<b>7. Student Attainment</b>						
7(a) Proportion of the 20–24-year-old population having attained at least Year 12 or equivalent or AQF Certificate II or above [ABS Survey of Education and Work]	90.4	90.5	↔	2004–24	0.2	↑
7(b) Proportion of the 20–24-year-old population having attained at least Year 12 or equivalent or AQF Certificate III or above [ABS Survey of Education and Work]	89.6	90.0	↔	2004–24	0.3	↑

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 point 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 Key Performance Measures 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 Key Performance Measures data set in the National Report on Schooling data portal.

## Chapter 1: Introduction



The National Report on Schooling 2024 is the 36<sup>th</sup> annual national report on Australia's school education sector.<sup>3</sup> It has been produced by the Australian Curriculum and Reporting Authority (ACARA) on behalf of Australian education ministers.

The report highlights progress in 2024 towards the [Alice Springs \(Mparntwe\) Education Declaration](#) released by Australian education ministers in 2019 and is the third National Report on Schooling that has addressed these nationally agreed goals and commitments.

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

The written report addresses the 11 areas of commitment to action specified in the Alice Springs (Mparntwe) declaration, describes the national policy and reporting context for school education in Australia, and reports against the nationally agreed Key Performance Measures (KPMs) for schooling specified in the [Measurement Framework for Schooling in Australia](#), providing data, analysis and commentary. This report also includes other high-level statistical information on Australian schooling in 2024 and for the period 2014–2024 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.<sup>4</sup> 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 2009–2023 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 2025* provides the basis for national reporting on the performance of schooling, as agreed by education ministers. It defines the national KPMs for schooling, specifies the data sources for these KPMs and outlines the reporting cycle for the period 2023–2027. This framework is the primary focus of the statistical data included in this report.

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. Each NAP Assessment (science literacy, civics and citizenship, information and communication technology literacy) is implemented every three years. The Organisation for Economic Cooperations and Development (OECD) Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) reading, mathematics and science tests and the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) tests are implemented every 4 years, and the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) tests are implemented every 5 years. For this reason, there were no international assessments (PISA, PIRLS or TIMSS) undertaken in 2024.

As 2024 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 (2014–2024) 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. KPM data for previous years 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 Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) by state and territory departments of education. Data for non-government schools in all states and territories is collected by the Australian Government Department of Education, Skills and Employment and a subset is provided to the ABS for the NSSC. Data from the collection is published by the ABS in [Schools](#).

Other major data sources for the National Report on Schooling in Australia include the NSSC finance collection (states and territories); the National Student Attendance Data Collection (ACARA); the Survey of Education and Work (ABS); the Census of Population and Housing (ABS); National, state and territory population (ABS); NAP national reports (ACARA) and National VET Provider and National VET in Schools (VETiS) collections (National Centre for Vocational Education Research [NCVER]).

Please note that, due to rounding, percentages in this report may not total exactly 100%, and component figures may not sum precisely to their stated totals.

## Chapter 2: Schools and Schooling



This chapter provides information on the status of Australian schooling in 2024, including school structures, student and teacher numbers, and teacher education.

Under Australia's constitutional arrangements, state and territory governments are responsible for providing school education. State and territory governments own and manage government schools and are responsible for registering non-government schools in their jurisdictions. The Commonwealth does not own or operate schools, but it does provide significant funding and is involved in setting national education policies.

### 2.1 School structures

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.

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 2024, 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.<sup>4</sup>

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 the ages of 4 and a half and 5 and a half.

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.

<sup>4</sup> 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, 2024

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 Western Australia, 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 Tasmania, 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*, 2024.

Within the overall structure of primary and secondary education, individual schools may be primary only, secondary only or combined primary and secondary.<sup>5</sup> 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.

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.

<sup>5</sup> Combined schools deliver both primary and secondary education. Special schools cater for students with disability and/or additional learning support needs. In special schools, students may include primary students, secondary students, ungraded students, or a combination of primary, secondary, and ungraded students.

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

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

Each state and territory also has an early childhood education sector that is separate from primary and secondary schooling, although early childhood centres are often attached to, or accommodated in, primary or combined schools. In some jurisdictions, part-time early childhood education programs in the year before full-time schooling that are conducted in primary schools are considered to be a part of schooling. However, these programs are outside the scope and definition of schooling in the NSSC. Statistical data on these and other early childhood education programs is not included in this report.<sup>6</sup>

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 vocational education and training (VET) programs undertaken by secondary school students.

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<sup>6</sup> Statistical data on preschool education is available in ABS, [Preschool Education](#).

## 2.2 School numbers

### Key Facts

In Australia in 2024:

- There were 9,653 schools – an increase of 24 schools since 2023.
- 69.7% of schools were government schools, 18.2% were Catholic and 12.1% independent.

In Australia, 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 2024 are shown in Table 2.2.

**Table 2.2:** Number and proportion of schools by school type and school sector, Australia, 2024

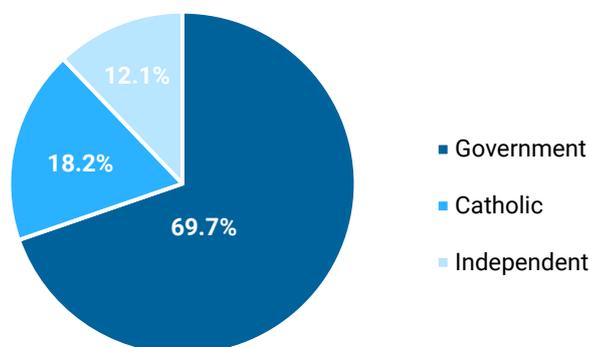
School type	Government schools		Catholic schools		Independent schools		All non-government schools		All schools	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Primary	4,804	77.1	1,231	19.7	199	3.2	1,430	22.9	6,234	100.0
Secondary	1,074	73.7	318	21.8	65	4.5	383	26.3	1,457	100.0
Combined	506	35.4	162	11.3	763	53.3	925	64.6	1,431	100.0
Special	343	64.6	48	9.0	140	26.4	188	35.4	531	100.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>6,727</b>	<b>69.7</b>	<b>1,759</b>	<b>18.2</b>	<b>1,167</b>	<b>12.1</b>	<b>2,926</b>	<b>30.3</b>	<b>9,653</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: ABS, *Schools*, 2024.

In 2024 there were 9,653 schools in Australia.<sup>7</sup> This total included primary, secondary, combined (primary and secondary) and special schools, across government and non-government school sectors.

Of the total number of schools, 69.7% were administered by state and territory governments, 18.2% identified as having Catholic affiliation, and 12.1% were classified as independent. Most independent schools are affiliated with religious denominations or promote a particular educational philosophy. The proportion of schools by school sector in 2024 is illustrated in Figure 2.1.

**Figure 2.1:** Proportion of schools by school sector, Australia, 2024 (%)



Source: ABS, *Schools*, 2024.

<sup>7</sup> As at the NSSC schools census date, 9 August 2024.

In 2024, almost two-thirds (64.6%) of schools were primary schools. In general, primary schools are smaller and more localised than secondary schools. More than three-quarters (77.1%) of primary schools were government schools. Most secondary schools (73.7%) and special schools (64.6%) were also government schools, while most combined schools (64.6%) were non-government schools, mainly in the independent school sector. The number and proportion of schools by state and territory in 2024 are shown in Table 2.3.

**Table 2.3: Number and proportion of schools by school type and state/territory, Australia, 2024**

School type	State/Territory								Australia
	NSW	Vic	Qld	SA	WA	Tas	NT	ACT	
Primary	2,091	1,567	1,146	436	686	153	71	84	6,234
Secondary	513	349	276	85	143	41	24	26	1,457
Combined	342	255	281	165	214	59	92	23	1,431
Special	186	121	95	28	82	8	6	5	531
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,132</b>	<b>2,292</b>	<b>1,798</b>	<b>714</b>	<b>1,125</b>	<b>261</b>	<b>193</b>	<b>138</b>	<b>9,653</b>
<b>Proportion (%)</b>	<b>32.4</b>	<b>23.7</b>	<b>18.6</b>	<b>7.4</b>	<b>11.7</b>	<b>2.7</b>	<b>2.0</b>	<b>1.4</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: ABS, *Schools*, 2024.

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 24 from 9,629 in 2023 to 9,653 in 2024. Proportions of schools per state and territory in 2024 did not change substantially from 2023.

The numbers and proportions of schools in the 3 school sectors over this period are shown in Table 2.4. Over the ten-year period from 2014 to 2024, the total number of schools in Australia increased by 264 (2.8%). Between 2014 and 2024, the number of Catholic schools increased by 37 (2.1%), the number of government schools increased by 76 (1.1%) and the number of independent schools increased by 151 (14.9%).

**Table 2.4: Number and proportion of schools by school sector, Australia, 2014–2024**

Year	Government schools		Catholic schools		Independent schools		All non-government schools		All schools	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
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
2024	6,727	69.7	1,759	18.2	1,167	12.1	2,926	30.3	9,653	100.0

Source: ABS, *Schools*, 2024 and previous releases.

## 2.3 Student numbers

### Key Facts

In Australia in 2024:

- A total of 4,132,006 students were enrolled in Australian schools, an increase of 1.1% from 2023.
- 63.4% of school students were enrolled in government schools, 19.9% were in Catholic schools and 16.8% in independent schools.
- 54.9% of students were primary school students and 45.1% 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 437,905 (11.9%), largely reflecting the growth in the school-age population.
- The number of students in independent schools rose from 529,857 in 2014 to 692,271 in 2024 – a 30.7% increase. This has resulted in a 2.5 percentage point increase in the proportion of students attending independent schools.

### Enrolments by school level and sector

In 2024, a total of 4,132,006 students were enrolled in Australian schools, an increase of 1.1% from 2023. The numbers and proportions of individual students by school level and school sector in 2024 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, 2024

School level	Government schools		Catholic schools		Independent schools		All schools	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	% (by school level)
Primary	1,549,371	68.2	416,739	18.4	304,131	13.4	2,270,241	54.9
Junior secondary	755,648	57.6	286,680	21.9	269,252	20.5	1,311,580	31.7
Senior secondary	314,494	57.2	116,803	21.2	118,888	21.6	550,185	13.3
Total secondary	1,070,142	57.5	403,483	21.7	388,140	20.8	1,861,765	45.1
Total	2,619,513	63.4	820,222	19.9	692,271	16.8	4,132,006	100.0

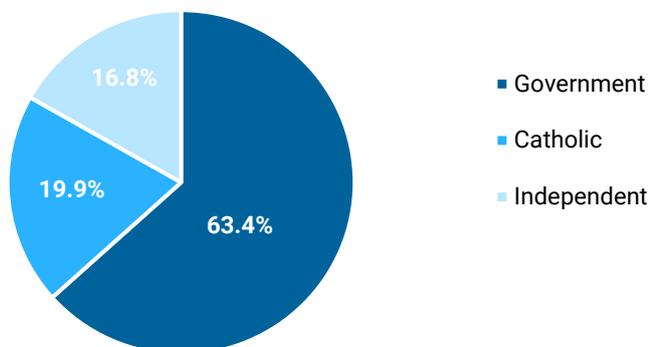
Note: Primary education includes a Foundation (pre-Year 1) year followed by Years 1–6. Secondary education consists of Years 7–12. Junior secondary: the years from Year 7 to Year 10, including 'ungraded' secondary. Senior secondary: Years 11 and 12. Students attending special schools are allocated to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

Source: ABS, *Schools*, 2024.

Of the 4.13 million school students, 2.27 million (54.9%) were primary students, and 1.86 million (45.1%) 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 2024, 63.4% of Australian school students were enrolled in government schools, 19.9% of students were enrolled in Catholic schools and 16.8% of students were enrolled in independent schools. This is illustrated in Figure 2.2.

**Figure 2.2:** Proportion of students (full-time plus part-time) enrolled in schools by sector, Australia, 2024 (%)



Source: ABS, *Schools*, 2024.

The proportions of students enrolled in each school sector differed between levels of education, with government schools accounting for 68.2% of primary students but less than 60% (57.5%) of secondary students.

Part-time students (11,209 students) accounted for only 0.3% of total enrolments. They were concentrated in Years 11 and 12 (72.5%), and in government schools (89.9%).<sup>8</sup>

## Enrolments by school level, and state and territory

Enrolments of students (full-time plus part-time) by state and territory and school level in 2024 are shown in Table 2.6.

**Table 2.6:** Number and proportion of students by school type and state/territory, Australia, 2024

School level	State/Territory								Australia
	NSW	Vic	Qld	SA	WA	Tas	NT	ACT	
Primary	696,154	579,447	477,311	152,510	256,363	43,487	23,409	41,560	2,270,241
Junior secondary	402,603	328,816	285,813	89,155	142,242	26,408	12,231	24,312	1,311,580
Senior secondary	157,093	144,191	120,388	41,411	60,786	10,754	4,411	11,151	550,185
<b>Total secondary</b>	<b>559,696</b>	<b>473,007</b>	<b>406,201</b>	<b>130,566</b>	<b>203,028</b>	<b>37,162</b>	<b>16,642</b>	<b>35,463</b>	<b>1,861,765</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,255,850</b>	<b>1,052,454</b>	<b>883,512</b>	<b>283,076</b>	<b>459,391</b>	<b>80,649</b>	<b>40,051</b>	<b>77,023</b>	<b>4,132,006</b>
<b>Proportion of Australian total (%)</b>	<b>30.4</b>	<b>25.5</b>	<b>21.4</b>	<b>6.9</b>	<b>11.1</b>	<b>2.0</b>	<b>1.0</b>	<b>1.9</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Note: See notes for Table 2.5.

Source: ABS, *Schools*, 2024.

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 (77.2%) were enrolled in the 3 most populous states (NSW, Victoria and Queensland).

<sup>8</sup> Part-time student numbers disaggregated by gender and state/territory are available in the Student Numbers data set, National Report on Schooling in Australia data portal.

## Growth in enrolments

Table 2.7 summarises the change in student enrolments, by school sector, from 2014 to 2024. The number of students enrolled in Australian schools grew by 45,008 (1.1%) between 2023 and 2024. During this period, there was an increase of 5,419 students (0.2%) in government schools and 39,589 students (2.7%) in non-government schools. Primary school enrolments increased by 9,859 students (0.4%) and secondary school enrolments increased by 35,149 students (1.9%).<sup>9</sup>

**Table 2.7:** Number and proportion of students (full-time plus part-time) by school sector, Australia, 2014–2024

Year	Government schools		Catholic schools		Independent schools		All schools
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.
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
2024	2,619,513	63.4	820,222	19.9	692,271	16.8	4,132,006

Source: ABS, *Schools*, 2024 and previous releases.

Between 2023 and 2024, primary school enrolments in government schools decreased by 4,312 (0.3%) and junior secondary enrolments in government schools decreased by 3,520 (0.5%). The increase of 13,251 (4.4%) in senior secondary enrolments in government schools resulted in an overall increase of 9,731 (0.9%) secondary enrolments in government schools.<sup>10</sup>

The non-government sector experienced growth in total enrolments in primary and secondary school, but with proportionately lower growth in Catholic schools (1.7%) than in independent schools (3.9%). In Catholic schools, primary enrolments increased by 1.2% (4,863 students) and secondary enrolments increased by 2.3% (9,036 students). In independent schools, primary enrolments increased by 3.2% (9,308 students) and secondary enrolments increased by 4.4% (16,382 students).

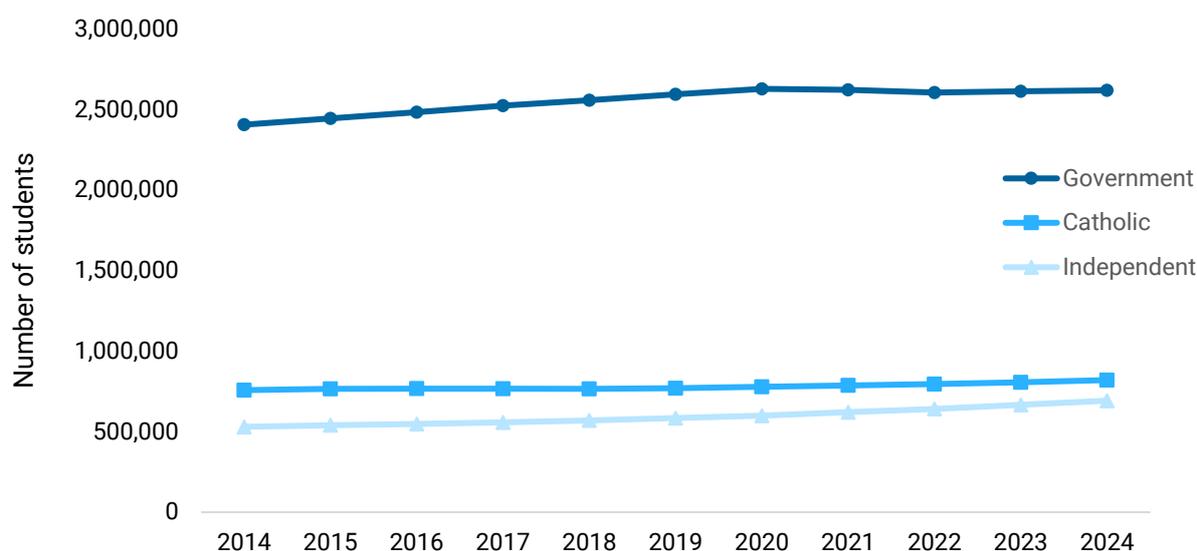
There was a shift between 2023 and 2024 in the share of total enrolments between government and non-government schools, with government schools falling by 0.6 percentage points to 63.4%, Catholic schools rising by 0.2 percentage points to 19.9% and independent schools rising by 0.5 percentage points to 16.8% of total enrolments.

<sup>9</sup> The number of Full-Fee Paying Overseas Students (FFPOS) contributed to the higher growth rate, increasing by 23.4% from 2023 to 26,068 students in 2024. This represents a rebound in the number of FFPOS to pre-COVID-19 levels (26,593 students in 2019) after substantial declines between 2020 and 2022 (ABS, *Schools*, 2024).

<sup>10</sup> Student numbers disaggregated by school sector and school level are available in the Student Numbers data set, National Report on Schooling in Australia data portal.

Between 2014 and 2024, total enrolments grew by 437,905 (11.9%), largely reflecting the growth in the school-age population, as schooling is essentially compulsory between the ages of 6 and 17. Growth in senior secondary enrolments, including 17-year-olds and 18-year-olds, is also influenced by Year 11 and 12 retention rates and the number of Full-Fee Paying Overseas Students (FFPOS) enrolled in Australian schools. Figure 2.3 illustrates the changes in student enrolments between 2014–2024, by school sector.

**Figure 2.3:** Number of students enrolled (full-time plus part-time) by school sector, Australia, 2014–2024



Source: ABS, *Schools*, 2024.

Overall, enrolments have risen both in government and in non-government schools over the past 10 years. The number of students in government schools rose by 213,018 (8.9%) and the number of students in Catholic schools rose by 62,473 (8.2%). The number of students in independent schools rose from 529,857 in 2014 to 692,271 in 2024 – a 30.7% increase over 10 years. This has resulted in a 2.5 percentage point increase in the proportion of students attending independent schools.

Over the ten-year period from 2014 to 2024, the government sector share of total school enrolments declined by 1.7 percentage points, from 65.1% to 63.4%. Between 2014 and 2019 the government sector share of total enrolments increased by 0.6 percentage points. However, from 2020 to 2022, total enrolments in government schools declined, mainly due to the fall in the number of overseas students enrolled in Australian schools resulting from the continued disruption of international travel due to the COVID-19 pandemic.<sup>11</sup> While total enrolments in government schools increased in 2023 and 2024, the government sector share of students declined by 0.5 percentage points in 2023 and 0.6 percentage points in 2024. During this period, independent school enrolments rose by 2.5 percentage points to 16.8% of the total, while Catholic sector enrolments fell by 0.6 percentage points to 19.9% of total enrolments. This continues a long-term trend in the relative growth of the independent sector.

<sup>11</sup> Between 2020 and 2021 the number FFPOS fell by 5,355, followed by a fall of 1,561 between 2021 and 2022. In 2023, the number of FFPOS increased by over a third (36.6%) to 21,124 students and in 2024 FFPOS numbers had further increased 23.4% to pre-COVID levels (ABS, *Schools*, 2024). 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 2024 there were 274,700 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students enrolled in Australian schools, making up 6.6% of the total school population.<sup>12</sup> Table 2.8 shows the number and proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in 2024, 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 2024, with 93,142 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students (33.9% of the national total). This is more than the NSW share of total enrolments nationally (30.4%) and represented 7.4% of the state's students, more than the national average of 6.6%. Queensland schools accounted for 30.2% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students (compared with 21.4% of total enrolments) and Western Australia had 12.0% of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students (compared with 11.1% of total enrolments).

The highest concentration of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students was in the Northern Territory, which accounted for only 1.0% of total school enrolments in 2024, but for 5.7% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander enrolments. The 15,765 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students enrolled in Northern Territory schools made up 39.4% of the Territory's school population. Because of this, data on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students has a greater impact on overall statistics for the Northern Territory than for any other state or territory.

**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, 2024

School level	State/Territory								
	NSW	Vic	Qld	SA	WA	Tas	NT	ACT	Australia
Primary	55,072	12,993	47,587	8,922	19,295	5,048	9,365	1,510	159,792
Junior secondary	30,426	7,166	26,637	5,056	10,101	2,968	5,064	805	88,223
Senior secondary	7,644	2,403	8,658	1,829	3,459	1,006	1,336	350	26,685
Total secondary	38,070	9,569	35,295	6,885	13,560	3,974	6,400	1,155	114,908
Total	93,142	22,562	82,882	15,807	32,855	9,022	15,765	2,665	274,700
Proportion of the Australian total of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students per state/territory (%)	33.9	8.2	30.2	5.8	12.0	3.3	5.7	1.0	100.0
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students as a proportion of total students in each state/territory (%)	7.4	2.1	9.4	5.6	7.2	11.2	39.4	3.5	6.6

Note: See notes for Table 2.5.

Source: ABS, *Schools*, 2024.

<sup>12</sup> 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.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students were under-represented in senior secondary years, with 4.9% of senior secondary students identifying as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander in 2024, compared with 6.7% of junior secondary students and 7.0% of primary school students.<sup>13</sup> 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.<sup>14</sup>

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students predominantly attended government schools, with 81.2% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander enrolments in government schools compared with 63.4% of enrolments for all students. Overall, 18.8% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students were enrolled in non-government schools (11.6% in Catholic schools, 7.1% in independent schools) with this proportion rising from 15.7% for primary students to 26.8% for senior secondary students.

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<sup>13</sup> Numbers of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, disaggregated by school sector and school level are available in the Student Numbers data set, National Report on Schooling in Australia data portal.

<sup>14</sup> Apparent retention rates are presented in Chapter 4 of this Report.

## 2.4 School students with disability

### Key Facts

In Australia in 2024:

- 1,062,638 school students received an educational adjustment due to disability. This represents 25.7% of total enrolments, up from 24.2% in 2023 and 18.0% in 2015.
- 2.5% 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 4.7% were provided with substantial support, 11.1% 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, 53.9% of adjustments were provided to students with cognitive disability, 35.0% to students with social/emotional disability, 8.6% for students with physical disability and 2.5% 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.<sup>15</sup> 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.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>15</sup> 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.

<sup>16</sup> Further details about the NCCD, levels of adjustment, and categories of disability are available on the NCCD portal ([www.nccd.edu.au](http://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.<sup>17</sup>

In 2024, 1,062,638 school students received an educational adjustment due to disability. This represented 25.7% of total enrolments. Table 2.9 shows the number and proportion of students that received an adjustment due to disability in 2024, by level of educational adjustment and category of disability.

**Table 2.9:** School students with disability receiving adjustments, by category of disability and level of adjustment, 2024 (% of total school enrolments)

Level of adjustment	Category of disability				
	Cognitive	Physical	Sensory	Social/emotional	All categories
Support within QDTP	3.3	1.5	0.2	2.3	7.3
Supplementary	6.6	0.4	0.3	3.8	11.1
Substantial	2.5	0.2	0.1	1.9	4.7
Extensive	1.4	0.1	0.1	0.9	2.5
<b>Total (All levels)</b>	<b>13.8</b>	<b>2.2</b>	<b>0.6</b>	<b>9.0</b>	<b>25.7</b>

Source: NCCD, 2024.

Table 2.10 shows the proportion of school students with disability, by school sector and level of adjustment provided in 2024. Overall, the proportion of students receiving adjustments due to disability in Catholic schools (23.0%) and independent schools (23.4%) was lower than that of government schools (27.2%). The proportion of students receiving an adjustment for a physical disability was higher in the independent sector (3.2%) than in the Catholic (2.1%) and government (2.0%) sectors. The proportion of students receiving an adjustment for cognitive, sensory, or social/emotional disability was higher among students in government schools than in non-government schools. This may be at least partly due to the fact that the majority of special schools are government schools.

**Table 2.10:** School students with disability receiving adjustments, by category of disability and school sector, 2024 (% of total school enrolments)

School sector	Category of disability				
	Cognitive	Physical	Sensory	Social/emotional	All categories
Government	14.3	2.0	0.8	10.1	27.2
Catholic	13.8	2.1	0.4	6.7	23.0
Independent	12.1	3.2	0.5	7.7	23.4
<b>Total (All sectors)</b>	<b>13.8</b>	<b>2.2</b>	<b>0.6</b>	<b>9.0</b>	<b>25.7</b>

Source: NCCD, 2024.

<sup>17</sup> Education Council (2017), 2017 data on students in Australian schools receiving adjustments for disability.

Table 2.11 shows the proportion of students with disability in 2024, 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 (8.4%) and government schools (7.9%). The proportion of students receiving extensive support was higher in government schools (3.4%) than in Catholic (1.0%) and independent schools (1.2%). 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.

**Table 2.11:** School students with disability receiving adjustments, by level of adjustment and school sector, 2024 (% of total school enrolments)

School sector	Level of adjustment				
	Support within QDTP	Supplementary	Substantial	Extensive	All levels
Government	7.9	10.8	5.1	3.4	27.2
Catholic	4.6	12.8	4.6	1.0	23.0
Independent	8.4	10.3	3.6	1.2	23.4
<b>Total (All sectors)</b>	<b>7.3</b>	<b>11.1</b>	<b>4.7</b>	<b>2.5</b>	<b>25.7</b>

Source: NCCD, 2024.

The proportion of students receiving an adjustment due to disability was higher than average in the Northern Territory, Victoria, and South Australia, as shown in Table 2.12. The Northern Territory had the highest proportion of school students receiving an adjustment due to disability (32.9%), with higher proportions receiving supplementary or substantial support (12.3% and 10.5% respectively, compared to extensive support (5.4%) and support within QDTP (4.7%). In South Australia, 30.3% of school students received an adjustment due to disability, with higher proportions receiving support within QDTP (9.0%) and supplementary support (14.5%) than substantial or extensive support (4.2% and 2.6% respectively).

**Table 2.12:** School students with disability receiving adjustments, by level of adjustment and state/territory, 2024 (% of total school enrolments)

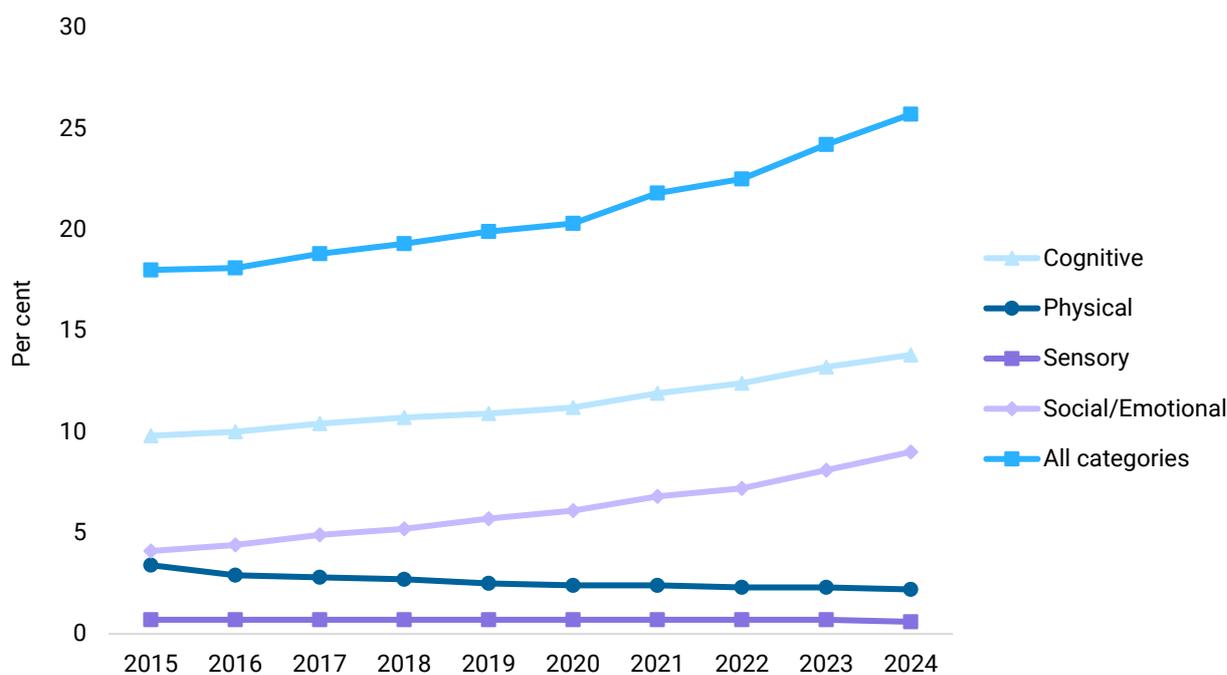
Level of support	State/Territory								
	NSW	Vic	Qld	SA	WA	Tas	NT	ACT	Australia
Support within QDTP	7.2	8.4	5.0	9.0	9.5	4.1	4.7	7.4	7.3
Supplementary	12.0	9.9	11.0	14.5	9.5	9.7	12.3	10.5	11.1
Substantial	4.3	5.2	5.4	4.2	3.3	6.2	10.5	4.5	4.7
Extensive	2.4	3.6	2.1	2.6	1.2	1.8	5.4	1.3	2.5
<b>Total (All levels)</b>	<b>25.9</b>	<b>27.2</b>	<b>23.6</b>	<b>30.3</b>	<b>23.5</b>	<b>21.8</b>	<b>32.9</b>	<b>23.6</b>	<b>25.7</b>

Source: NCCD, 2024.

In 2024, the proportion of Australian school students receiving an adjustment due to disability increased by 1.5 percentage points from 2023, with a 0.6 percentage point increase in the proportion of students receiving an adjustment for a cognitive disability, a 0.9 percentage point increase in the proportion of students receiving an adjustment for a social-emotional disability and the proportions of students receiving adjustments for physical or sensory disability each declining by 0.1 percentage point.

Between 2015 and 2024, the proportion of school students receiving an adjustment due to disability increased by 7.7 percentage points, from 18.0% to 25.7%, as shown in Figure 2.4.<sup>18</sup> While the proportion of school students receiving adjustments for cognitive and social-emotional disabilities increased by 4.0 and 4.9 percentage points respectively, the proportion of students receiving adjustments for sensory disabilities declined by 0.1 percentage point and the proportion receiving adjustments for physical disabilities declined by 1.2 percentage points, from 3.4% in 2015 to 2.2% in 2024.<sup>19</sup>

**Figure 2.4:** School students with disability receiving adjustments as a percentage of the total student population, by category of disability, 2015–2024



Source: NCCD, 2024 and previous years.

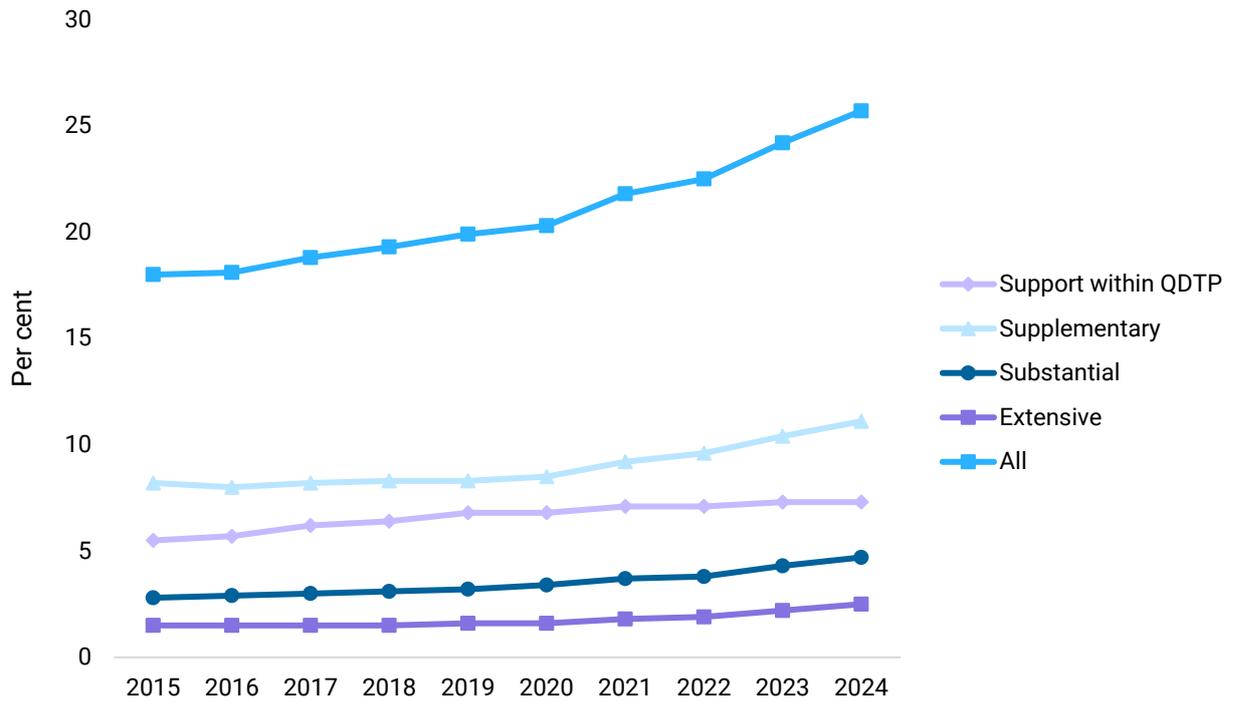
At the national level, the proportion of students receiving supplementary support increased by 0.7 percentage points between 2023 and 2024, while the proportion of students receiving extensive and substantial support increased by 0.3 and 0.4 percentage points respectively and the proportion receiving support within QDTP remained stable at 7.3%.

Figure 2.5 shows that between 2015 and 2024, the proportion of school students receiving support within QDTP increased by 1.8 percentage points, the proportion receiving supplementary support increased by 2.9 percentage points, and the proportion of students receiving substantial and extensive support increased by 1.9 percentage points and 1.0 percentage points respectively.

<sup>18</sup> NCCD data on students with disability is only available from 2015.

<sup>19</sup> 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).

**Figure 2.5:** School students with disability receiving adjustments as a percentage of the total student population, by level of adjustment, 2015–2024



Source: NCCD, 2024 and previous years.

## 2.5 School staff numbers

### Key Facts

In Australia in 2024:

- There were 320,377 full time equivalent (FTE) teaching staff— an increase of 8,723 (2.8%) from 2023.
- Staff numbers closely reflected enrolments, with 62.3% of school teachers employed in government schools, 19.2% in Catholic schools and 18.5% in independent schools.
- Australia’s teaching workforce continued to be predominantly female, with women making up 72.0% of FTE teachers in 2024. The gender difference was more pronounced at the primary level (82.4% female) than at secondary level (61.5% female).

In 2024, there were 320,377 FTE teaching staff across primary and secondary schooling in Australia. This was an increase of 8,723 (2.8%) from 2023. It was made up of a rise of 4,048 non-government school teachers (3.5% increase) and 4,674 government school teachers (2.4% increase). The percentage increase in teaching staff in independent schools (4.4%) was larger than that of Catholic schools (2.6%). The numbers and proportions of full-time equivalent (FTE) teaching staff by school sector, school level and gender in 2024 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, 2024

	Government schools	Catholic schools	Independent schools	Total non-government schools	All schools
<b>Primary level</b>					
Male	20,088	4,174	4,339	8,513	28,600
Female	92,086	23,629	17,767	41,396	133,482
<b>Total</b>	112,174	27,802	22,106	49,908	162,083
<b>% of all staff</b>	69.2	17.2	13.6	30.8	100.0
<b>Secondary level</b>					
Male	32,824	12,933	15,211	28,144	60,968
Female	54,625	20,861	21,841	42,702	97,327
<b>Total</b>	87,449	33,794	37,051	70,846	158,295
<b>% of all staff</b>	55.2	21.3	23.4	44.8	100.0
<b>Total</b>					
Male	52,912	17,107	19,550	36,657	89,569
Female	146,712	44,489	39,608	84,097	230,809
<b>Total</b>	199,623	61,596	59,158	120,754	320,377
<b>% of all staff</b>	62.3	19.2	18.5	37.7	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. 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) column shows the number and proportion of total FTE teaching staff employed at each level.

Source: ABS, *Schools*, 2024.

Across Australia in 2024, 62.3% of FTE teachers were employed by the government school sector, 19.2% by the Catholic school sector and 18.5% by the independent sector. This remains broadly consistent with the distribution of (full-time plus part-time) students across school sectors.

In 2024, Australia's teaching workforce continued to be predominantly female, with women making up 72.0% of FTE teachers. This gender gap is similar to that in previous years. In 2024, the difference was again more pronounced at the primary level (82.4% female) than at secondary level (61.5% female). The number and proportion of FTE teaching staff by state and territory and school level in 2024 is shown in Table 2.14. The distribution of FTE teaching staff between states and territories remains broadly consistent with the overall distribution of students.

**Table 2.14: Number and proportion of FTE teaching staff by state and territory and school level, Australia, 2024**

School level	State/Territory								
	NSW	Vic	Qld	SA	WA	Tas	NT	ACT	Australia
Primary	48,730	44,295	32,882	10,995	16,849	3,374	1,991	2,967	162,083
Secondary	46,682	42,871	34,091	10,514	16,521	3,317	1,516	2,785	158,295
Total	95,412	87,165	66,973	21,509	33,370	6,691	3,507	5,752	320,377
Proportion (%)	29.8	27.2	20.9	6.7	10.4	2.1	1.1	1.8	100.0

Note: See notes for Table 2.12.

Source: ABS, *Schools*, 2024.

Changes in teaching staffing levels for the period 2014–2024 are shown in Table 2.15. Between 2014 and 2024, the total number of FTE teaching staff grew by 56,312 (21.3%). This was substantially more than the percentage growth in (full-time plus part-time) student enrolments (11.9%) over the same period.<sup>20</sup>

**Table 2.15: Number of FTE teaching staff by school sector, Australia, 2014–2024**

Year	School sector				
	Government schools	Catholic schools	Independent schools	Total non-government schools	All schools
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
2024	199,623	61,596	59,158	120,754	320,377

Note: See notes for Table 2.12.

Source: ABS, *Schools*, 2024 and previous releases.

In 2024, FTE teaching staff accounted for 65.3% of the FTE of all school staff. In addition to teaching staff, 170,170 FTE staff were employed in administrative and clerical roles, as teacher aides and assistants (27.7% of all staff), as specialist support staff (3.7%) or in building and maintenance (3.3%).

<sup>20</sup> Time series data on school staff by state and territory, school sector and school level is available in the National Report on Schooling in Australia data portal.

## 2.6 Student-teacher ratios

### Key Facts

In Australia in 2024:

- The average student to teaching staff ratio was 12.9 students per teacher, compared to 13.1 students per teacher in 2023 and 13.9 students per teacher in 2014.
- The average student to teaching staff ratio was lower in independent schools (11.7 students per teacher) compared to Catholic schools (13.3 students per teacher) and government schools (13.1 students per teacher).
- The average student-teacher ratio was 11.7 students per teacher at the secondary level, compared with 14.0 students per teacher at the primary level.

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 2024 by school level across the 3 school sectors.

**Table 2.16:** FTE student-teacher ratios, by school sector and school level, Australia, 2024

School sector	Primary schools	Secondary schools	All schools
Government	13.8	12.2	13.1
Catholic	15.0	11.9	13.3
Independent	13.7	10.5	11.7
All non-government	14.4	11.2	12.5
All schools	14.0	11.7	12.9

Source: ABS, *Schools*, 2024.

For all Australian schools, the average FTE student-teacher ratio in 2024 was 12.9 students per teacher, compared to 13.1 students per teacher in 2023.

Student-teacher ratios are consistently lower for secondary education than for primary education in all school sectors and across all states and territories. In 2024, the average FTE student-teacher ratio was 11.7 teachers per student at the secondary level, compared with 14.0 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.

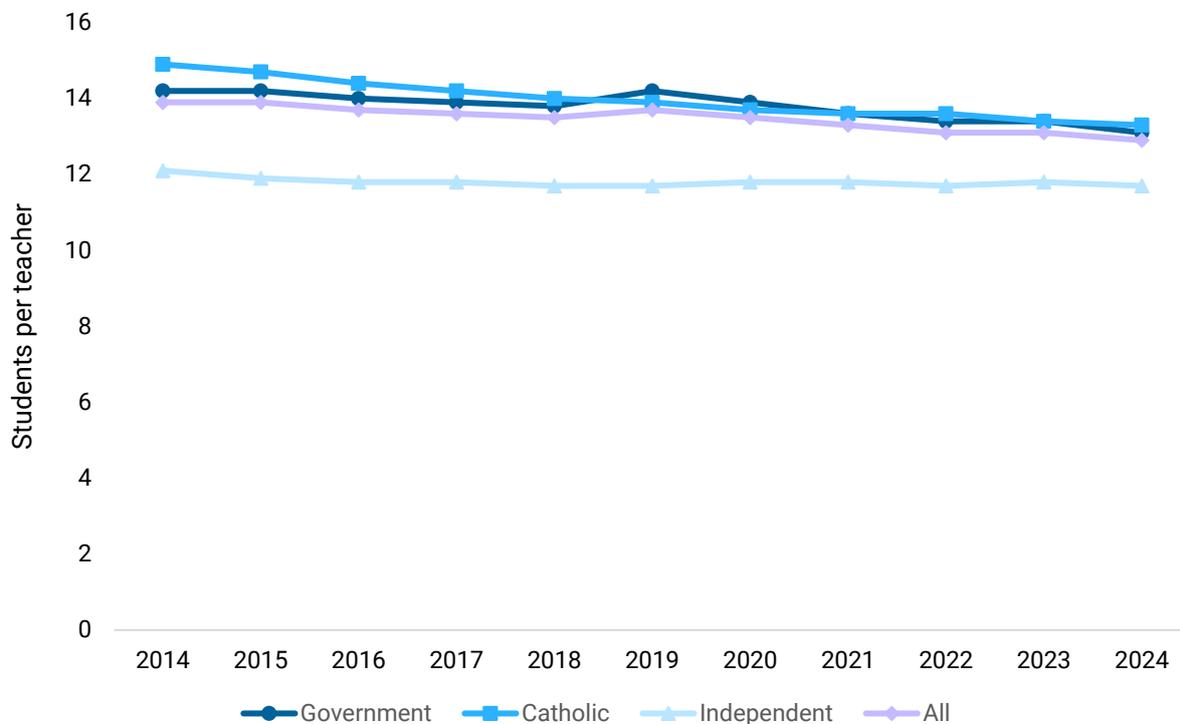
In 2024, average student-teacher ratios were lowest in the Northern Territory (11.4 students per teacher) and highest in Western Australia (13.8 students per teacher). Table 2.17 shows average student-teacher ratios in 2024 by school level and state and territory.

**Table 2.17:** FTE student-teacher ratios, by state/territory and school level, Australia, 2024

School level	State/Territory								
	NSW	Vic	Qld	SA	WA	Tas	NT	ACT	Australia
Primary schools	14.3	13.1	14.5	13.9	15.2	12.9	11.7	14.0	14.0
Secondary schools	12.0	11.0	11.9	12.4	12.3	11.1	10.9	12.7	11.7
All schools	13.2	12.1	13.2	13.1	13.8	12.0	11.4	13.4	12.9

Source: ABS, *Schools*, 2024.

Figure 2.6 shows the change in the average number of school students per teacher, by sector, over the ten-year period from 2014 to 2024. During this period, the average national student-teacher ratio fell from 13.9 students per teacher in 2014 to 12.9 teachers per student in 2024, with reductions across all school sectors.<sup>21</sup>

**Figure 2.6:** Average number of school students per teacher, by sector, 2014–2024

Source: ABS, *Schools*, 2024.

<sup>21</sup> Time series data (2001–2024) 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 2024 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 2024, the Education Ministers Meeting (EMM) was the forum responsible for school education. Skills and training ministers had responsibility for the ongoing management of the Vocational Education and Training (VET) system through the Skills and Workforce Ministerial Council (SWMC).

The Education Ministers Meeting (EMM) is a forum for collaboration and decision-making on early childhood education and care (ECEC), school education, higher education and international education. Australian, State and Territory government ministers responsible for education attend the meeting. The Commonwealth Minister for Education is the chair of the EMM. In December 2022, Education Ministers agreed to focus on the following national priorities:

- Developing a long-term vision for the Early Childhood Education and Care 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 National School Reform Agreement, which is an important vehicle through which governments across Australia work together to deliver quality school education.

In 2024, Ministers continued to progress work across early education, school education and higher education.

## **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 Northern Territory. 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 should 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 Key Performance Measures (KPMs) for schooling.

## National School Reform Agreement

The National School Reform Agreement (NSRA) was in place from 2019 to 2024.<sup>22</sup> This was a joint agreement between the Commonwealth, states and territories that underpins Commonwealth funding for schooling over this period. The NSRA specified 8 national policy initiatives, grouped under 3 reform directions:

### 1. Supporting students, student learning and student achievement:

- enhancing the Australian Curriculum to support teacher assessment of student attainment and growth against clear descriptors
- 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
- reviewing senior secondary pathways into work, further education, and training.

### 2. Supporting teaching, school leadership and school improvement:

- 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
- strengthening the initial teacher education (ITE) accreditation system.<sup>23</sup>

### 3. Enhancing the national evidence base:

- 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 base<sup>24</sup>
- establishing an independent national evidence institute to inform teacher practice, system improvement and policy development
- 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 2024 is noted below and in the following sections of this chapter.

<sup>22</sup> 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 focused on driving real and measurable improvements for students most at risk of falling behind. Findings from the Review helped to shape the new agreement, to take effect from 2025. To provide time for this work to occur, the NSRA was extended for a further 12 months, to 31 December 2024.

<sup>23</sup> ITE refers to degrees and/or diplomas required for professional employment in teaching.

<sup>24</sup> 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.

## Review to Inform a Better and Fairer Education System

The National School Reform Agreement underpins Commonwealth funding for schooling and seeks to lift student outcomes. In 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.

In 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. In 2024, the Australian Government worked closely with state and territory governments and key education stakeholders to develop the *Better and Fairer Schools Agreement 2025–2034* (BFSA) and the *Better and Fairer Schools Agreement – Full and Fair Funding 2025–2034* (the Full and Fair Funding Agreement), which replaces the National School Reform Agreement.

## National Teacher Workforce Action Plan

On 15 December 2022, Education Ministers agreed to the *National Teacher Workforce Action Plan* (NTWAP) 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:

- improving teacher supply
- strengthening initial teacher education
- keeping the teachers we have
- elevating the profession
- better understanding future teacher workforce needs.

More information is provided in Section 3.4: Supporting Quality Teaching and Leadership.

## Australian Curriculum review

The Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (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 2024, the final phase of the curriculum review was completed, with curricula for languages progressively released for public comment and updated. More information is provided in Section 3.10: Delivering world class curriculum and assessment.

## 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. In 2024, the Australian Government Department of Education continued to work closely with state and territory governments and non-government education authorities to implement the Review recommendations. The focus was on the development of information products to help children and students with disability and their caregivers understand their rights under the Standards. More information is provided in Section 3.12: Supporting all young Australians at risk of educational disadvantage.

## Skills and Workforce Ministerial Council

The Skills and Workforce Ministerial Council (SWMC) consists of portfolio ministers with responsibility for skills and training in their jurisdiction, including the Commonwealth Minister for Skills and Training as the Chair.<sup>25</sup> It provides a forum for national cooperation and stewardship across the vocational education and training (VET) system and on the intersection of skills and training policy with workforce issues.

The Council collaboratively progresses items of national importance within the portfolio to achieve agreed objectives, outcomes and priorities, including those set out in the National Skills Agreement. The SWMC is focused on supporting skills reform including:

- embedding the stewardship model to deliver national priorities,
- delivery of key initiatives and reforms,
- placing TAFE at the Heart of the VET sector,
- oversight of the national training system, and
- First Nations engagement and Closing the Gap.

## Skills Reform

The Australian, state and territory governments have committed to working collaboratively on long-term improvements to the VET sector through a new National Skills Agreement. The National Skills Agreement, which commenced on 1 January 2024, is a 5-year agreement between the Australian and state and territory governments, working in partnership to ensure that the national VET system provides high-quality, responsive and accessible education and training to boost productivity, support Australians to obtain the skills and capabilities they need to obtain well-paid, secure jobs, and ensure Australia has the skilled workforce it needs now and into the future, with TAFE at the heart of the VET sector.

In September 2024, Federal, state and territory Skills and Training Ministers met to launch a key part of the National Skills Agreement, the inaugural *National Skills Plan* (the Plan), which will guide the work of all governments to deliver a shared vision for strengthening the national VET system. It will focus on national training priorities and outcomes by providing a vision for unions, employers and the VET sector. Ministers also discussed how to support workers and communities impacted by the net zero transition, opportunities for new and emerging higher-level apprenticeship models, revised Standards for Registered Training Organisations and approaches to accelerate action to meet Closing the Gap commitments.

## 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 2024, all states and territories participated in national policy initiatives under the NSRA. Other state and territory policy initiatives are noted in the following sections of this chapter. 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 (NCEC) and Independent Schools Australia (ISA).

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<sup>25</sup> 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.

## 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; and 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 2024 in addressing the 11 areas for action is reported in the following sections of this chapter.

### National Agreement on Closing the Gap

The [National Agreement on Closing the Gap](#) is an agreement between the Australian Government, state, and territory governments, the Coalition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peak Organisations and the Australian Local Government Association. It includes 4 Priority Reforms that focus on changing the way governments work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and 19 national socio-economic targets across areas that have an impact on life outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, including the following targets related to school 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% (Target 3).
- By 2031, increase the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people (age 20–24) attaining Year 12 or equivalent qualification to 96% (Target 5).
- 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% (Target 6).
- By 2031, increase the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth (15–24 years) who are in employment, education, or training to 67% (Target 7).<sup>26</sup>

<sup>26</sup> Details of the Closing the Gap targets and outcomes are available at: <https://www.closingthegap.gov.au/national-agreement/targets>.

### 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”.

#### National Teacher Workforce Action Plan

Through the NTWAP all Australian governments work together to implement 27 interconnecting actions in 5 priority areas. A cross-government and sectoral working group oversees its implementation. In 2024, implementation of NTWAP was a standing item on the agendas of the Schools Policy Group, the Australian Education Senior Officials Committee and the Education Ministers Meeting.

#### Consent and Respectful Relationships Education

The Australian Government has 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 in schools. This included \$77.6 million in funding to be provided to states, territories and non-government school systems and \$5.9 million in departmental funding to support delivery of the measure through:

- The National Respectful Relationships Education Expert Working Group to inform and guide the measure (established June 2023).
- Development of a National Respectful Relationships Education Framework (the Framework – expected for release in 2025).
- A rapid review on current delivery (completed in October 2023 as an input to the Framework).

#### Partnership with the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Council

The Australian Government will provide \$12.5 million over 4 years from 2024–25 to the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Council (NATSIEC) to undertake its role as the national peak representative body for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education and to facilitate working in partnership with the Australian Government.

In 2024, the Department of Education and NATSIEC undertook discussions to develop a formal Partnership Agreement. This Partnership Agreement will make a significant change in direction for the Department of Education's approach to the education of First Nations' children and young people. It is the doorway for the department to engage in meaningful shared decision making through NATSIEC's independent Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Controlled Network of education experts.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> This work is consistent with the Australian Government's commitment to the National Agreement on Closing the Gap, specifically the 4 Priority Reforms, and targets 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 14 and 16.

## Early Childhood Care and Development Policy Partnership

In the 2024–25 Mid-Year Economic and Fiscal Outlook, the Commonwealth Government announced a further \$11.4 million to extend the Early Childhood Care and Development Policy Partnership (ECCDPP) over 3 years from 1 July 2025 to 30 June 2028, to continue to bring together governments and First Nations representatives to develop recommendations to improve early childhood outcomes for First Nations children and families. The measure includes funding for the Commonwealth Department of Education and a grant to SNAICC – National Voice for our Children to continue their roles as co-chair and co-secretariat of the Partnership and a research fund for the Partnership to commission research.<sup>28</sup>

In 2024, ECCDPP made its first set of recommendations to the Joint Council on Closing the Gap and published two pieces of independent research, including funding model options for integrated Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation early years services and an evidence review on optimal hours of ECEC for First Nations children.

### State, territory and sector initiatives

Partnerships with the early childhood sector continued 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 Yerrabi Yurwang Child and Family Aboriginal Corporation was engaged to deliver a culturally safe early childhood scholarships program for Indigenous early childhood educators.

The *University of Canberra Affiliated Schools Program*, a key initiative under the ACT’s Future of Education Strategy, 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:
  - Continued to strengthen its partnership with the Federation of Parents and Citizens Associations of New South Wales (NSW P&C Federation) under a ten-year [partnership agreement](#).
  - Signed a three-year funding agreement with the NSW P&C Federation to support their work with members and with parents, carers and families of NSW Public Schools. Key initiatives under the agreement include the development of a Diversity and Inclusion Strategy to encourage Culturally and Linguistically Diverse and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families to join their local P&C, and enhanced engagement channels with parents, carers and families.
  - Continued to strengthen its work with the NSW Aboriginal Education Consultative Group Incorporated through its ongoing formal Partnership Agreement *Walking Together, Working Together*.
  - Worked in formal partnership with the NSW Coalition of Aboriginal Peak Organisations to implement and deliver on the education Closing the Gap targets.
- In the Northern Territory, a key program for developing stronger partnerships with parents is the *Families as First Teachers* (FaFT) program which targets the development of childrens’ early literacy and numeracy skills through parents. FaFT is established in 55 communities across the Northern Territory, with children attending from birth to compulsory school age. A core element of FaFT is engagement with community to ensure a responsive and relevant place-based program delivery. In 2024, 2,636 children participated in FaFT and 41 of the 80 educators who

<sup>28</sup> ‘SNAICC – National Voice for our Children’ was formerly called the Secretariat of National Aboriginal and Islander Child Care (SNAICC).

delivered the program were Aboriginal. Aboriginal Family Liaison Officers codesign and deliver FaFT and are critical to engaging families and community. Developing relationships with local families early through the FaFT program builds the foundations for partnership and engagement through schooling.

- The Queensland *Equity and Excellence: realising the potential of every student* education strategy sets the direction for Queensland’s state schooling system with the aim of lifting educational outcomes. In 2024, work continued with:
  - establishing dedicated educational precincts to implement targeted responses to local needs
  - supporting schools in the most complex communities by collaborating with partners and across government to deliver locally responsive and integrated strategies
  - delivering integrated school-based hub models that provide a full range of services to support children, students, families and communities
  - piloting a new Parent Liaison Service to help support parents and staff where student behaviour has contributed to conflict in the partnership between home and school.
- The *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Shared Decision-Making in Queensland State Schools Framework*, which aims to support communities and schools share decision-making to improve educational outcomes, was piloted across a number of socio-educationally disadvantaged Queensland state schools.
- The South Australian Department for Education:
  - implemented the Aboriginal Voice Framework to ensure Aboriginal expertise, knowledge, experience, perspectives and voices are embedded in all corporate policy and project development
  - partnered with Tauondi Aboriginal College to co-design and co-deliver professional learning to support the implementation of this framework
  - collaborated with over 350 employers to host more than 240 employer immersion events, involving 12,000 students and 640 teachers, to increase career awareness and preparedness
  - partnered with Flinders University to fast-track Findon Technical College students to complete their first year of university while in Year 12.
- In Tasmania, the Department for Children, Education and Young People provided funding and worked in partnership with multiple organisations to support student wellbeing and readiness for learning:
  - Stay ChatTY: \$250,000 (one-year portion of three-year agreement) to deliver the *Stay ChatTY Schools Program* to students in Years 9 to 12 in Tasmanian Government Schools
  - Australian Childhood Foundation: \$449,000 (one-year portion of two-year agreement) to deliver the *Trauma Informed Practice in Schools* professional learning program
  - Working It Out: \$300,000 (one-year portion of three-year agreement) to expand the *Valuing Diversity in Schools* program
  - Sexual Assault Support Service: \$312,000 to deliver its *Sexual Assault Awareness and Prevention* and *Consent is a Conversation* programs to multiple secondary schools
  - Bravehearts: \$230,000 to deliver *Ditto’s Keep Safe Adventure* program to primary schools in 2024 to raise awareness about consent and protective behaviours.

- The Victorian Department of Education partnered with 17 African Australian-led organisations to provide tailored and culturally appropriate education support to 1,350 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.
- In Western Australia:
  - A 5-year partnership with Woodside, the *Karratha and Roebourne Education Initiative*, was formed. The partnership aims to increase educational attainment and achievement; improve educational opportunities and pathways support for students; support pathways to employment and assist the attraction and retention of quality teachers through the delivery of professional learning and development.
  - The BHP Pilbara Education Partnership was extended for schools in Newman, Port Hedland and surrounding areas for the 2024 school year. Worth more than \$3 million, the programs provided through the Partnership have a focus on the early years and pathways to employment or further studies. In addition, the *Rise Up* program continued to provide a whole school framework and targeted support to assist students to meet individual goals around attendance, achievement, leadership and community engagement.
- The *Innovative New Models for Recognition of Holistic Learning Project* connected South Australian Independent schools to a global learning network. Collaborating with international thought leaders, participants explored new ways to recognise holistic learning and use the Learning Impact Tool, designed to assess and enhance student learning through narrative and digital storytelling.
- The Association of Independent Schools of Western Australia developed several partnerships to enhance educational outcomes including partnerships with:
  - the Department of Training and Workforce Development to implement VET programs
  - University of Western Australia on the research project Teaching Einsteinian Physics
  - FORM (Building a State of Creativity) on a Creative Learning project to engage secondary students at risk.
- Examples of partnerships in the Catholic education sector included:
  - In Western Australia, cross-sector partnerships were established to support First Nations students in boarding, including collaboration with transition support services in Western Australia, the Northern Territory and Queensland. A joint initiative between education authorities enabled coordinated monitoring of student movement and interstate transfers. Work was undertaken with the School Curriculum and Standards Authority to pilot a Generative Artificial Intelligence tool to reduce teacher workload.
  - In NSW, partnerships between schools, families and communities were strengthened through the *Connected Catholic Communities* project, a successful symposium in August and the launch of an interactive website to support ongoing collaboration and engagement.
  - National and international interest in the *Catalyst* evidence-based teaching and learning program, with 30 visits to Canberra-Goulburn Catholic schools to observe the program in action, reflecting a shared commitment to collaboration and continuous improvement in explicit practice.
  - Brisbane Catholic Education became an ambassador for the *Rome Call for AI Ethics* program and partnered with Microsoft to analyse the impact of AI in education.

### 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

All Australian governments worked together to implement 27 actions across 5 priority areas under the [National Teacher Workforce Action Plan](#) (NTWAP). Progress and achievements from 2024 included:

- Round 1 of the Commonwealth Teaching Scholarships was delivered, with 985 scholarships awarded to new Initial Teacher Education (ITE) students.
- Ten providers were successful in obtaining \$70.9 million in grants for the *High Achieving Teachers* program to provide an additional 1,497 places in innovative pilots.
- Microcredentials on Explicit Teaching and Classroom management were released, available online at no cost to teachers, with the third on Teaching Phonics to be released in early 2025.
- All jurisdictions participated in a trial that provided students with unlimited attempts at the *Literacy and Numeracy Test for Initial Teacher Education* (LANTITE) and improved feedback on results. Following the trial, Education Ministers agreed to continue to permanently remove test limits and continue improved feedback from 2025.
- Several Workload Reduction Fund pilots were agreed, to explore new approaches to reduce teacher and school leader workloads and maximise the value of their time.

#### Commonwealth Teaching Scholarships

Round 1 of the Commonwealth Teaching Scholarships was delivered, with 985 scholarships of up to \$40,000 awarded to ITE students commencing an accredited ITE degree in 2024. Targeted cohorts include First Nations peoples, people from regional, rural, remote areas, mid-career professionals and school leavers with an Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR) over 80. In return for the scholarship, recipients are required to teach in government schools or government-run early learning settings for a time equivalent to the length of their teaching degree. Applications for Round 2 opened in November 2024.

#### The Teacher Education Expert Panel

In 2023, the Teacher Education Expert Panel (TEEP) delivered a report to the Minister for Education suggesting a series of reforms to strengthen ITE programs and 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 initial teacher education (recommendations 4–7)
- improve practical teaching experience (recommendations 8–11)
- enhance postgraduate initial teacher education programs for mid-career entrants (recommendations 12–14).

In 2024, a number of TEEP recommendations were fully implemented, including establishment of a new, independent Initial Teacher Education Quality Assurance Oversight Board (recommendation 3) in June 2024 and the launch of the Australian Professional Experience Guidelines (recommendation 9) in November 2024. The Australian Government also established the Strong Beginnings (Transition) Fund (recommendation 6) to provide funding to support eligible providers to embed the core content in their ITE programs by December 2025. Providers were able to receive \$15,000 per eligible ITE course they deliver. Applications for the Transition Fund opened on 23 April 2024 and closed on 20 May 2024. A total of \$4.275 million in funding was approved and distributed amongst all 46 eligible ITE providers following assessment of applications by the department.

## **Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership**

The Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) is a not-for-profit Commonwealth company established to promote excellence in teaching and school leadership across Australia. AITSL works to ensure that every child and young person in Australia has access to excellent teaching and leadership, and that every teacher and leader has the support, development, and recognition they need to be effective in their roles. For example, AITSL has responsibility for supporting the implementation of the *Australian Professional Standards for Teachers* and the *Australian Professional Standard for Principals*; and implementing the *Australian Teacher Workforce Data (ATWD)* in partnership with the Australian Government Department of Education, state and territory governments, teacher regulatory authorities and the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare.

## **High Achieving Teachers Program**

In 2022, through the National Teacher Workforce Action Plan, the Government committed 1,500 more places to the *High Achieving Teachers* program as part of expansion pilots. This is being delivered in two phases. The first 105 places, delivered by La Trobe University in two cohorts in Victoria and New South Wales, commenced in primary schools in 2024.

In 2024, 10 providers were selected through a competitive grant process to pilot new and innovative employment-based pathways into teaching across all states and territories, with 1,497 places to be delivered under Phase 2 from 2025.

## **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. The program provided leadership development and training to teachers with leadership potential working in regional and rural schools. A total of 206 participants completed the program over 4 years between 2021 and 2024. An evaluation of the program found that it had a positive impact on teachers wanting to progress to position of leadership or higher responsibility.<sup>29</sup> Australian Government support for the pilot ceased in December 2024.

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<sup>29</sup> Further details of the evaluation are available at: <https://www.education.gov.au/teaching-and-school-leadership/resources/evaluation-future-leaders-program-final-report>.

## State, territory and sector initiatives

- In the ACT:
  - Implementation of the ACT Government's *Inclusive Education: A Disability Inclusion Strategy for ACT Public Schools 2024–2034* included recruitment of 9 inclusion coaches to promote inclusive practice and develop system resources within schools.
  - 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.
  - A new Inclusion Community of Practice focused on universal design and multi-tiered systems of support.
  - Leadership programs have provided universal and targeted supports to build the capability of instructional leaders and managers to deliver the Student-Centred Improvement Framework.
  - Work has progressed to establish *Strong Foundations*, a new approach to supporting consistent high-quality teaching of literacy and numeracy. This has included system licences to Progressive Assessment Tests and provision of evidence-based resources for schools.
- In NSW, the School Leadership Institute (SLI) provided leadership development programs and support. In 2024, the SLI engaged with more than 6,100 current and future school leaders in nearly 1,780 schools, through leadership induction conferences, leadership development programs, and online resources. The SLI launched the *Regional, Rural and Remote Middle Leaders program* to provide equitable access to professional learning across the state, piloted mentoring programs to nurture school leaders, developed a teacher leader development program and continued offering ongoing leadership development and on-demand resources.
- The NSW Department of Education introduced a range of measures to attract and retain quality teachers and to reduce administrative burden, including management of restrictions on before and after school regular meetings; additional school development days to provide classroom teachers access to additional time for planning, programming and professional learning; increased flexible work arrangements; changes to school-based assessment reporting requirements and additional and varied leave entitlements supporting teachers with family, work and care responsibilities.
- The Northern Territory Learning and Teaching model released in 2024 is an evidence-based approach to pedagogical practice, developed with the Australian Education Research Organisation (AERO) based on AERO's model. This model provides clear guidance and support to teachers in the Northern Territory, and professional development and support for its implementation has coincided with its release. The model provides evidence-based teaching practices aligned with how students learn.
- English Assessment Design and Performance Standards (ADaPS) materials for Transition to Year 10 teachers were released in the Northern Territory in January 2024. These materials provide detailed descriptions of performance at each grade level, with specific references to the year level achievement standards and support parameters for educators. ADaPS is intended to facilitate professional discussions around curriculum standards, assessment design, and student achievement within a Quality Assurance Cycle and collaborative planning in and across school contexts.

- The Queensland Department of Education empowered early years workforce and school teachers to build their professional expertise through the:
  - Early Childhood Workforce Strategy
  - Queensland Teaching Workforce Strategy 2024–2027
  - The department’s *We All Belong Equity and Diversity Plan*
  - *More Teachers, Better Education* policy that commits to freeing up teachers to spend more time in the classroom
  - Queensland Virtual Academy that lifted teaching expertise by leveraging digital and virtual learning to support excellence for Queensland state school students
  - Education Futures Institute which delivered new and existing flagship programs to support early career teachers and statewide professional learning
  - Partnership with AITSL to support and build key capabilities of effective middle leaders in schools
  - Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Capability Framework to build an understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, shared history, and how to integrate this knowledge into teaching, learning and service delivery.
- In South Australia:
  - The *Safeguarding Democracy* initiative provided training for Humanities and Social Sciences (HASS) teachers in Years 7 and 8, aiming to have a Civics and Citizenship teacher in every secondary school by 2027. Professional learning was also extended to non-HASS teachers in Years 9 and 10 to integrate democratic values across curricula.
  - The Specialist Teacher Workforce Plan supported curriculum specialists through Orbis Curriculum Professional Learning programs. Efforts to increase teacher permanency resulted in over 1,800 temporary contracts being converted, focusing on preschool and younger teachers.
  - The Literacy Guarantee Unit, with 28 coaches, enhanced literacy instruction, while an online Literacy Summit attracted over 3,000 participants. There was also a face-to-face Numeracy Summit that provided professional learning to over 1,300 numeracy leaders.
  - The South Australian Department for Education provided professional learning in reading for all early years of schooling teachers including foundational reading skills, phonemic awareness, phonics and oral reading fluency.
  - The South Australian Teacher Certification Committee streamlined the certification process for teachers at the Highly Accomplished and Lead career stages, used across all South Australian educational sectors to recognize and enhance teacher quality.
- Tasmanian Principals, school leaders, teachers, and school staff received explicit guidance and instruction on using a Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) framework within the context of Department for Education, Children and Young People (DECYP) priorities, school priorities, and student needs. The MTSS framework, as defined in the DECYP position statement, relies on layers of support to ensure all students are known, engaged, and learning every day by providing the right amount and type of support at the right time.
- The Tasmanian DECYP’s *Our Approach to School Improvement* publication was revised to provide clarity on 2024 expectations and to provide guidance to schools as they navigate collaborative inquiry and improvement processes.

- In Victoria:
  - the Victorian Government announced that all government schools will implement a refreshed Victorian Teaching and Learning Model (VTLM 2.0) and reading position, setting out contemporary evidence of how students learn and the teaching practices that best support learning.
  - The Victorian Government developed high quality Victorian Lesson Plans and resources to support teacher workload and teachers working out of field. In 2024, the first lesson plans were published in Phonics Plus and mathematics, alongside professional learning webinars to support implementation.
  - The learning component of the Arc Platform was launched, with resources including *Mathscots* – an animation series that supports numeracy at home for early primary school aged children; and *Resilience, Rights and Respectful Relationships* guides.
  - The Victorian Academy of Teaching and Leadership provided high-quality, evidence-informed professional learning and pathways to enhance the capability and confidence of aspiring, emerging, new and established school leaders from the government, Catholic and independent school sectors.
- In Western Australia:
  - *Teaching for Impact*, part of the Quality Teaching Strategy, continued to guide schools to focus on the elements that have the greatest impact on student wellbeing, engagement and learning. It provided practical support to drive school improvement and increase student outcomes through 51 partnership schools.
  - *Leading Cultures of Teaching Excellence* equipped school leaders with frameworks and resources to build school cultures that enhance student learning. It provided tiered support to principals and their teams, focusing on school context, collaborative problem-solving, and improving classroom practice.
  - An attraction and retention package of \$15.49 million was provided to 68 schools in 2024. These schools were identified in the Regional Incentive Framework as experiencing significant recruitment pressures.
  - Thirteen aspirant Aboriginal leaders participated in the *Djiraly-ak djinda bidi 'North Star'* program, which supports career and leadership development. The program helped participants identify their professional goals, fostering leadership growth within Aboriginal communities.
  - The Association of Independent Schools of Western Australia participated in a Generative Artificial Intelligence pilot project with the Department of Education WA and Catholic Education WA to reduce teacher workload.
- Independent Schools Victoria's leadership and professional learning programs, including the *Aspiring Principals Program*, Highly Accomplished and Lead Teacher (HALT) Certification, and the *Teacher Fellowship Program*, helped attract and retain quality educators. These programs build leadership capacity, recognize excellence, and foster innovation.
- Independent Schools Queensland offered a middle leaders program to 50 leaders from 27 schools, providing professional learning and mentorship to develop leadership skills. Additionally, it partnered with YXL Institute for the *Beginning Teachers Support* program, allowing over 50 new teachers to network, discuss classroom practices, and share successes.

- The Catholic sector has continued to invest in high-quality teaching and leadership development:
  - Catholic Education Canberra-Goulburn provided professional learning to over 1,400 teachers in High Impact Teaching Practice, grounded in the Science of Learning, to strengthen evidence-based approaches in reading, writing, and mathematics.
  - Catholic Education Western Australia's *Vision for Learning* program fostered collaboration across secondary and regional networks, sharing effective practices supported by evidence and shared accountability.
  - Catholic Schools NSW offered a comprehensive suite of professional learning options for educators, including the *Avila Leadership Programme*, which graduated its first cohort in 2024.
  - Catholic Education South Australia supported pre-service and early career teachers through scholarships and mentoring. A new *Aspiring Principals' Program* further expanded leadership development pathways.
  - The *Highly Accomplished and Lead Teacher Certification Program* for the Queensland Catholic sector continued to gain strength, with 22 teachers certified as Highly Accomplished Teachers and six certified as Lead Teachers in 2024.

### 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.<sup>30</sup>

#### National Quality Framework

The National Quality Framework (NQF) drives continuous improvement in the nationally consistent quality, regulation and assessment of early childhood education and care services. It includes National Law and National Regulations, the National Quality standard (NQS), assessment and quality rating processes and the national learning frameworks. The NQF applies to most long day care, family day care, kindergarten or preschool and outside school-hours care services in Australia. The Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA) is the independent national body that supports regulatory authorities in states and territories in administering the NQF.

There are two national approved learning frameworks (ALFs) in operation under the NQF:

- **Belonging, Being and Becoming: The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia (EYLF) V2.0 2022:** the national approved learning framework for young children from birth to 5 years of age
- **My Time Our Place: Framework for School Age Care in Australia V2.0 2022:** the national approved learning framework for school age children.

These frameworks outline principles, practices and learning outcomes that guide educational leaders and educators in their curriculum decision-making, and assist them in planning, delivering and evaluating quality programs in early childhood and school age settings.

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 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.

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<sup>30</sup> More information on early childhood education is available on the Australian Government Department of Education ([www.education.gov.au/early-childhood](http://www.education.gov.au/early-childhood)).

## National Children's Education and Care Workforce Strategy

The National Children's Education and Care Workforce Strategy was co-designed by ACECQA, all governments, and sector stakeholders, and released in October 2021. It 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. In July 2023, ACECQA launched an online dashboard to track progress against the 21 nationally agreed actions and complementary initiatives supporting the strategy's 6 focus areas.

## 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 a preschool outcomes measure from 2025. The focus of activity in 2024 was preparation for the preschool outcomes measure trial in 2025.

## Productivity Commission Inquiry into Australia's early childhood education and care system

On 18 September 2024, the Productivity Commission released the final report of its comprehensive inquiry into Australia's early childhood education and care (ECEC) system. The report considers how to build a high-quality early learning system that is affordable, accessible, and inclusive. The report included 56 recommendations across 3 volumes and was informed by a consultation process over 16 months, which included 329 written submissions and 11 days of public hearings. The report made it clear that more needs to be done to ensure children experiencing vulnerability and disadvantage, who would benefit the most from high-quality ECEC, are not missing out.

## Building a universal early childhood education and care system

On 11 December 2024, the Australian Government announced the next steps to building a universal ECEC system through:

- a \$1 billion Building Early Education Fund, which will see more ECEC centres built and expanded in areas of need, including in the outer suburbs and regional Australia
- a 3 Day Guarantee to replace the current Child Care Subsidy activity test from January 2026, with a guaranteed entitlement to 3 days per week (72 hours per fortnight) of subsidised ECEC for children who need it
- development of an Early Education Service Delivery Price to provide a data-driven understanding of the cost of quality ECEC service delivery around the country.

These reforms have been informed by the Productivity Commission and the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission's work on early education.

## Review of Child Safety Arrangements under the National Quality Framework

In 2023, the Minister for Education and Minister for Early Childhood Education commissioned ACECQA to undertake a Review of Child Safety Arrangements under the NQF (the Review). The Final Report: *Findings and recommendations for the NQF and inter-related child safety mechanisms* (the Report), which was published on the ACECQA website in December 2023, made 16 recommendations about physical and online safety, child supervision and staffing requirements.

In 2024, Education Ministers accepted in-principle key recommendations from the Review and agreed they would work with other Ministers where recommendations went beyond Education.

Implementation advice provided to Ministers was informed by consultation with ECEC sector, with further consultation to come. In consultation with senior Education officials and Education Ministers, the Child Safety Review Group is implementing the recommendations. Recommendations for priority action include reducing notification reporting timeframes for allegations of physical or sexual abuse, making services free from e-cigarettes/ vaping and options to restrict the use of personal devices that take images or videos of children. Actions agreed will improve existing safeguards and enhance safety arrangements for children across ECEC services throughout Australia.

## Early Childhood Education and Care Worker Retention Payment

Announced on 8 August 2024, the *Early Childhood Education and Care Worker Retention Payment* was introduced to support a meaningful increase to the wages of ECEC professionals. The initiative aims to address workforce shortages in a historically undervalued sector, while ensuring ECEC remains accessible and affordable for families.

The grant will fund a 15% wage increase above award rates over a two-year period from December 2024 for Child Care Subsidy (CCS) approved Centre-Based Day Care (CBDC) or Outside School Hours Care services, including CCS approved CBDC that deliver preschool, that opt-in. Providers must comply with fee constraints and engage workers under a legally enforceable workplace instrument.

## National Agreement on Closing the Gap

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 Priority Reforms across its work in early childhood education and care. This includes the announcement in December 2024 that the Child Care Subsidy would be amended from January 2026, to enable families caring for First Nations children to access up to 100 hours per fortnight of subsidised early childhood education and care. This will support progress towards meeting Target 4 of Closing the Gap.

## Formal Partnership Agreement with SNAICC – Voice for our Children

A formal Partnership Agreement was co-developed between the Department of Education and SNAICC to support all priority reforms under the *National Agreement on Closing the Gap*. The Partnership Agreement:

- fulfills a key commitment made in the Commonwealth 2024 Implementation Plan to establish formal partnership agreements with First Nations peaks and to develop fundamentally new ways of working with First Nations people
- affirms SNAICC will share decision making with the department on initiatives affecting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families in early childhood education and care
- provides accountability and transparency to how the department engages SNAICC and how its independent policy advice is incorporated into early childhood education and care policy reform.

As announced in the 2024–25 Budget, the Australian Government will provide \$16.6 million to SNAICC as core funding from 2024–25 to 2027–28 (and \$4 million [indexed] per year ongoing thereafter) to partner with Government on matters affecting First Nations children in early childhood education. Core funding will provide stable funding for the operations of SNAICC as the peak body for First Nations children and families and will facilitate their engagement with Government to ensure a coordinated approach to improving outcomes for First Nations children.

### **The Smith Family’s *Let’s Count* program**

*Let’s Count* is an early mathematics program for children aged 3 to 5 years which is aligned to the Early Years Learning Framework. The program aims to significantly improve the mathematical capabilities of preschool children and thus support successful transition to school. The Australian Government has funded this program since 2016–17.

### **State, territory and sector initiatives**

- In the ACT:
  - The *Quality Engagement Program* provided targeted support to eligible ECEC approved providers and their services to lift quality and improve outcomes for children.
  - Preschool Pathways Partners and Preschool Practice Coaches continued to support educators to build knowledge, confidence and capacity in quality pedagogy and universal practices. Professional learning on play-based learning and intentionality was delivered. This was complemented by a career pathways program providing scholarships and wrap-around supports for women to undertake early childhood education qualifications.
  - Public preschools were provided with access to the *Everyone, Everyday* program which aims to create a cultural shift in community attitudes towards disability and includes free access to quality resources and Teacher Quality Institute accredited professional learning.
  - The Koori Pre implementation of the Cultural Safety Framework and the Koori Pre-Curriculum continued, with the creation of a new website to support induction of staff into Koori Preschool.
- The NSW Department of Education:
  - committed \$430 million in preschool fee relief to support families with 3 to 5-year-olds in community preschool, long day care and mobile preschools,
  - continued the *Building Early Learning Places Program*, a targeted grants program that supports the creation of additional community preschool and long day care places for 0 to 6-year-old children, in identified undersupplied areas and for Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations, and
  - committed \$769 million, including \$552 million for capital funding to build 100 new public preschools by 2027. Gulyangarri Public Preschool, the first of the 100 new public preschools to be delivered, opened in October 2024.
- In the Northern Territory:
  - The Department of Education and Training continued to build the capacity of the ECEC workforce through the delivery of free professional development programs including the *NT Preschool STEM Games* and the *Little Scientists* training workshops.
  - The FaFT program is an established and culturally competent foundational learning program that operates throughout the Northern Territory. It uses the Abecedarian Approach Australia (3a), an evidence-based set of language rich teaching and learning

strategies for early literacy and numeracy that supports intentional adult-child interactions. The program has four core elements: Language Priority (the overarching element), Learning Games, Conversational Reading, and Enriched Caregiving. It is supported by the Education NT Strategy 2021–2025 strategic actions, by building the foundations for learning and placing the child and student at the centre of the Northern Territory education system.

- The Department of Education and Training was the first jurisdiction to trial the national Preschool Outcomes Measure tool. Work was undertaken to develop, trial and evaluate the tool, which is designed to support teachers and educators with making informed pedagogical decisions, and tailor learning experiences to children’s development in oral language and literacy, and executive function.
- The Queensland Government delivered free kindergarten to all eligible children. Funding of \$2 billion (including \$382 million from the Commonwealth National Partnership Agreement) was allocated to support this over 4 years as part of the 2023–24 State Budget. In 2024, more than 2,200 approved kindy services are participating in *Free Kindy*, and approximately 62,000 children were able to attend kindergarten for free (15 hours per week for 40 weeks).
- The South Australian Department of Education implemented several initiatives to enhance early childhood education:
  - The *Kindy Care* trials were conducted at 10 government-operated sites, offering increased flexibility and support for families by extending care beyond regular preschool hours.
  - The number of autism-qualified staff in preschools was increased.
  - The *Inklings* pilot program for early intervention services was introduced. This included delivery of the service in children’s centres.
  - South Australian government schools offered a mid-year intake to over 4,600 reception students, giving families earlier access to high quality educational programs for their child. This strategy alleviates issues of large age gaps in early years classes and schools have embraced this opportunity to be innovative and install practices to support a smooth transition for children from preschool to school to set them up for the best possible start.
- In Tasmania,
  - The *Working Together* program provided 220 fully funded places for three-year-olds to attend up to 20 hours per week over 50 weeks in 43 early-childhood education and care services.
  - The *Early Learning for Three-Year-Olds* (EL3) initiative aims to increase access to early learning for three-year-olds in partnership with the ECEC sector, families and communities. In 2024, trial sites continued to be established in communities across Tasmania to test different models of early learning service delivery to meet local community needs. DECYP has partnered with the ECEC and the Catholic and Independent education sectors since 2023 to co-design and deliver the EL3 initiative.
  - The DECYP engaged a consultancy to undertake stakeholder engagement and economic modelling to better understand issues, barriers to ECEC service expansion and opportunities to overcome them, including in Greater Hobart and Greater Launceston. Findings from this project will help to better understand the supports and action needed for future expansion of EL3 in Tasmania.

- Victoria continued implementation of the *Best Start, Best Life* reforms:
  - In 2024, approximately 97% of services participated in *Free Kinder*, which allows all families to access free or low cost three- or four-year-old kindergarten; and 90% of eligible children participated in three-year-old kindergarten.
  - Work continued to support the transition from 15 hours per week of four-year-old kindergarten to 30 hours per week of pre-prep, with pre-prep roll-out to begin in six rural local government areas in 2025.
  - Early Learning Victoria was established in September 2024 to oversee the operation of 50 government-owned early learning and childcare centres in the areas where they are needed most, with the first 4 centres to open in January 2025.
- *KindiLink* enabled Western Australian preschool Aboriginal children and their families to attend six hours a week at their nearest participating school. Early childhood teachers and Aboriginal and Islander Education Officers designed learning activities using the Early Years Learning Framework to develop social, emotional, language and cognitive abilities of Aboriginal children.
- Twelve Local Government Authorities in Western Australia received funding under the Australian Early Development Census Grants Program to enhance early childhood education and outcomes. The initiatives focused on improving the wellbeing and school readiness of children up to 5 years old. Collaborating with local organisations, including families, schools, Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations, and Early Childhood Education providers, local government authorities delivered tailored programs that addressed community-specific needs.
- The Association of Independent Schools of South Australia actively contributed to the Minister's Early Childhood Advisory Forum cross-sectoral consultation, which informed implementation plans for introducing three-year-old preschool from 2026. Key sector perspectives were shared in support of the aim that all South Australian children thrive.
- The Association of Independent Schools of Western Australia implemented a *Leadership in Early Childhood* program using the Early Years Learning Framework to build educator understanding and skills enabling them to lead ongoing improvement and change.
- Independent Schools Victoria continued to provide early childhood services with professional learning opportunities. A newsletter is sent to the sector each month providing an overview of key events in early childhood and promoting evidence informed professional learning opportunities to educators.
- Catholic education systems have continued to strengthen early childhood education through strategic partnerships and targeted professional learning:
  - Catholic Education South Australia partnered with South Australia's Office for Early Childhood Development to support universal, quality preschool for all three-year-olds, including onsite allied health services and early identification pathways.
  - Catholic Education Northern Territory delivered its *Developing Early Years Leaders* program, building leadership capability and promoting quality practice. It also introduced an Early Years Assessment initiative, helping teachers analyse pre-primary data to inform programming and support individual growth.
  - Catholic Education Western Australia supported early years staff through workshops on the On-entry assessment and data analysis to guide learning decisions. System-wide professional learning also built understanding of the Early Years Learning Framework (v2.0).
  - Catholic Schools NSW expanded its professional learning modules covering transition, assessment, play, and pedagogy. The modules are available online and on demand to strengthen educator capability across diverse settings.

### 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.

#### Literacy Hub

The [Literacy Hub](#) was established in 2020 and contains quality-assured, evidence-based resources primarily aimed at teachers and school leaders. In 2024 it was enhanced and the first four phases of a series of 25 Phonics and Morphology Lesson Packs aligned to the Literacy Hub Phonics Progression were published. Work also began on a 7-module Professional Learning program, to be launched in 2025.

#### 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. This includes free, self-paced mathematics Massive Open Online Courses for teachers of Foundation to Year 10 students and explicit teaching modules to enhance primary school teachers' understanding and skills in the explicit teaching of mathematics, with supporting webinars and podcasts. In 2024, the Mathematics Hub published an additional 84 lesson plans covering material from Foundation to Year 10 of the Australian Curriculum.

#### Civics and Citizenship Education Hub

The [Civics and Citizenship Education \(CCE\) Hub](#), published in November 2024, is a new, freely available, online teaching hub created to save teachers time and help them develop interesting and engaging ways of teaching civics and citizenship subjects to their students. The CCE Hub contains more than 200 resources for teachers to help students learn about our system of government, legal system, media literacy and Australian citizenship. The resources are aimed at students from Years 3 to 10 and are aligned with the Australian Curriculum.

#### State, territory and sector initiatives

- In the ACT, the *Strong Foundations* program was announced to support schools to deliver literacy and numeracy education. This program of work implements the recommendations from the Final Report of the Literacy and Numeracy Education Expert Panel's review of literacy and numeracy education in ACT public schools. *Strong Foundations* is founded on evidence-informed, practical suggestions that will strengthen the education system by working together as one system delivering high quality, consistent teaching practices, reduce workloads for teachers and improve equity across schools. The Education Directorate prioritised the following actions in the first phase of the implementation plan:
  - the development of a Learning and Teaching Policy outlining the requirements for a system-wide approach to learning, including K- 6 literacy and numeracy requirements
  - phased implementation of Year 1 Phonics Checks
  - additional funding was provided to schools with P–2 students to support the purchase of evidence-informed literacy and numeracy resources.

- The NSW Department of Education:
  - commenced the development of a number screening check for Year 1 students, engaging 19 schools in a small trial in Term 4 2024, with further phases planned in preparation for release to all schools. The screening check aims to assist teachers to identify and support students requiring intervention to meet stage expectations in numeracy.
  - 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 Northern Territory Department of Education and Training supported all government schools to develop a quality Annual School Improvement Plan (ASIP) in which schools set goals and plan for strengthened instruction with a focus on boosting literacy and numeracy. They focused on curriculum, pedagogy and use of data, with schools identifying actions to support improved outcomes for students. During 2024, the department set school improvement priorities for 2025 which were developed with a particular focus on boosting literacy and numeracy. In addition, schools were required to ensure this was effectively reflected in whole school data planning, whole school curriculum and assessment planning, and development of a whole school pedagogical model.
- In the Northern Territory, \$3 million will be provided to all schools to deliver swimming and water safety lessons to all children in Years 1 to 6 from Term 1 2025. In 2024, planning was underway to establish the delivery and funding models for the program.
- The Queensland Department of Education:
  - Had a strengthened focus on English and Mathematics and continued to prioritise foundational literacy and numeracy skills across the phases of learning. Teachers continued to have access to a range of high-quality, evidence informed literacy and numeracy resources and monitoring tools. In 2024, Reading remained a key departmental priority, supporting implementation of the Australian Curriculum Version 9 with a strengthened focus on phonics and evidence informed practices. The department’s approach to the teaching of reading included a comprehensive suite of resources; advice and guidelines informed by research; and system-wide capability development to support Queensland state schools.
  - Provided support to state and non-state schools through the Reading Disorders – Language and Literacy team’s *Reading and Writing Disorders Service*. The *Reading and Writing Disorders Service* provides resources and built capability in the identification and support of reading disorders, including dyslexia.
- The South Australian Department for Education:
  - Implemented the Phonics Screening Check for Year 1 students, reaching 11,884 students in government schools.
  - Provided fully funded professional learning for all early years of schooling teachers in reading including foundational reading skills, phonemic awareness, phonics and oral reading fluency. It also published the Monitoring Reading progress guide to support teachers to implement sequenced reading checks and interventions for students.

- Conducted a trial of the Mathematics Assessment Interview in 95 public schools, assessing over 7,000 students to identify those who were 'mathematically vulnerable'. This trial was part of a broader strategy to implement a Numeracy Check for Year 1 students by 2026. These efforts are aimed at early identification and intervention to support students' literacy and numeracy development.
- The Tasmanian DECYP undertook research and analysis of evidence-based approaches to foundational literacy instruction to support schools to meet the Minimum Schooling Guarantee within a Multi-Tiered System of Supports. The University of Florida Literacy Institute *UFLI Foundations* program was endorsed as the DECYP selected phonics program for Prep to Year 2. *Word Origins* was endorsed as the preferred spelling and word study program to be used in Tasmanian Government schools. Training, resources and guidance were provided for schools to begin implementation of these two programs in 2024 to ensure Tasmania's teachers are equipped to deliver high quality literacy instruction for primary school students.
- With the Victorian Government's announcement of Victoria's reading position in 2024, schools were supported to implement this work through a comprehensive free reading program called *Phonics Plus* on the Arc Platform. *Phonics Plus* provides a scope and sequence of the curriculum in English from Foundation to Year 2 and daily lesson plans for every year level to Year 2.
- In Victoria, the *Primary Mathematics and Science Specialists (PMSS)* initiative 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 full-time equivalent time release to develop their skills and those of their colleagues across their school. In 2024, Cohort 7 (a mathematics-only cohort of 100 teachers from approximately 50 schools) completed the PMSS program.
- As described in Section 3.4, Victorian Lesson Plans in Phonics Plus and mathematics were published in 2024, alongside professional learning webinars for teachers and leaders to support implementation.
- In Western Australia:
  - The *Action Respect Initiative* strengthened Western Australian students' understanding of respectful relationships and consent by supporting schools with primary school students in whole-school approaches to respectful relationships education. The initiative was designed to provide schools with the tools and resources necessary to foster a culture of respect and consent, supporting the broader goal of improving student wellbeing and safety.
  - The Department of Education's *Phonics Initiative* focused on building staff capacity through professional learning and consultations, emphasising effective phonics instruction and assessment. The *Leading Phonics in Schools* series was launched to help instructional leaders establish a consistent approach to phonics instruction.
- The Association of Independent Schools of South Australia supported primary and secondary teachers to investigate strategies and models for initiating and leading change in Mathematics and English in their schools. School-based change management approaches were supported by expert input from learning area specialists, protocols for reflection, discussion and action planning.
- The Association of Independent Schools of Western Australia provided targeted support to improve the performance of students in reading, writing and numeracy as identified in NAPLAN.

- Independent Schools Queensland offered a Mathematics program to 10 schools and an English program to 12 schools which included professional learning and support to design and implement school improvement.
- Catholic education authorities established standardised assessments and benchmarks to monitor literacy and numeracy development in the early years. Student data is used to inform targeted next steps in learning, guided by the NCEC Literacy and Numeracy Strategy's evidence-based approach.
- Catholic Education Canberra-Goulbourn strengthened its Science of Reading-aligned practice by training over 400 K–2 teachers in effective literacy instruction.
- Catholic Education Tasmania (CET) funded part-time Literacy Practice Leaders in each school to lead consistent, evidence-based pedagogy in literacy, supported by structured reading and spelling programs across Foundation to Year 2. In numeracy, CET partnered with Shaping Minds Australia to implement a sequential, spaced, and interleaved scope and sequence for mathematics from Prep to Year 6. Teachers were supported with explicit teaching resources, daily review materials, and clear guidance on embedding the four mathematical proficiencies, all aligned with the Science of Learning and Version 9 of the Australian Curriculum.

### 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”.

#### Online Resources for Students, Parents and Educators

In 2024, a range of online resources were available for students in the middle years, as well as their parents and educators. For example:

- The Mathematics Hub, which 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.
- The Civics and Citizenship Education (CCE) Hub, which contains resources for teachers to help students from Years 3 to 10 to learn about our system of government, legal system, media literacy and Australian citizenship.

#### State, territory and sector initiatives

- In the ACT:
  - the *Strong Foundations* program was developed in response to recommendations related to a range of areas including student transitions, particularly related to student needs in the transition from primary school to high school.
  - young people with disability and diverse learning needs were 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.
  - a new Inclusion Transitions and Careers Coach was recruited to work with high schools and colleges to support students with disability in transitioning into college and preparing for career pathways post college.
- 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. The transition to Year 7 literacy and numeracy assessment was available for individual students who did not complete Year 6 Check-in assessments in semester 2 of the previous year. The assessment provides teachers with a snapshot of literacy and numeracy skills students demonstrate on entry to Year 7.
- The *Review of Secondary Education in the Northern Territory* was released in February 2024. The aim of the review is to inform the design of a secondary education system that is responsive to the diverse delivery contexts in the Northern Territory, with a specific focus on government schools in remote and very remote locations. The review set out 15 recommendations to address the findings of the review and the Northern Territory Government has accepted all recommendations. The review proposes moving away from the current model of middle schools, towards comprehensive secondary schools over time. Throughout 2024, the Northern Territory Department of Education department worked towards the design of an implementation plan to ensure a smooth transition to the new delivery model.

- As part of the Queensland Department of Education *Equity and Excellence: realising the potential of every student* strategy, the system priority of 'On track for success' recognises the changing needs and support that every student needs to stay on track with positive transitions from upper primary through junior secondary. An ongoing whole of system sustainable response to transforming junior secondary was underway in 2024, to:
  - align to the strategic vision laid out in *Equity and Excellence: realising the potential of every student*, through the design and implementation of evidence-informed approaches to junior secondary engagement that prioritise educational achievement, wellbeing and engagement, and culture and inclusion
  - provide strategies to build the professional capabilities required to support the learning and engagement of all contemporary junior secondary learners
  - create the conditions for innovation and for reimagining how the junior secondary phase of schooling is implemented in Queensland through a bold and responsive approach.
- The South Australian Department of Education:
  - Released the *Safe and Supportive Learning Environments Plan of Action*, which includes 15 targeted actions to improve student safety and belonging. These efforts are designed to create a nurturing and inclusive environment that supports the diverse needs of students during these critical years.
  - Initiated a pilot program to provide access to Autism Inclusion Teachers in public secondary schools, building on the success of the program in public primary schools. This was to support students making the transition between primary and secondary school environments.
  - Launched *CareerChat*, a generative AI chatbot offering personalised career advice for students, and *MyCareerPortal* for students in Years 7 to 10 to build career awareness and planning, connect with industry and develop their career management capabilities.
- In Tasmania:
  - Government schools trialled a consistent approach to screening for foundational reading skills across Prep to Year 8. This screening tool provided timely measures of literacy proficiency as students moved from primary to secondary years. Training was provided to ensure school staff were confident capturing, analysing and interpreting student data to inform the specific literacy support and interventions provided.
  - An explicit word study program, which was endorsed in 2024, provided a structured approach to literacy instruction, and supported students to develop the skills needed as they learn to read.
- In Victoria:
  - the *Middle Years Literacy and Numeracy Support* (MYLNS) initiative supported over 6,700 Year 10 students in government schools at risk of finishing school without the literacy and numeracy skills they need for future work and study. Schools were funded to release experienced teachers as MYLNS Improvement Teachers, who supported students one-on-one, in small groups or within class.
  - Over 20,000 places were provided for Year 5 to 8 students in Victorian government schools to participate in the *Victorian High-Ability Program* (VHAP), a 10-week online extension program in English and Mathematics delivered by [Virtual School Victoria](#). After completing the virtual program, students participated in a face-to-face masterclass with other high-ability students from schools in their local area.

- In Western Australia, resources for students in Years 7 to 12 promoted early engagement in pathway planning and a focus on self-awareness, career exploration and action planning. A *Career Taster* program provided a range of engaging activities for Year 9 students to see, explore and experience career options in a practical way.
- The Association of Independent Schools of South Australia provided early intervention training for secondary leaders and teachers on youth mental ill-health, including depression, anxiety, eating disorders, substance misuse, and psychosis. Foundational skills were explored and advice was provided for developing evidence-based school action plans.
- Independent Schools Victoria's School Improvement Team led targeted middle years initiatives to boost student engagement and learning. Through expert-led workshops, educators were empowered with evidence-informed strategies to drive improvement and build leadership capacity.
- Catholic Education South Australia, Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools and Catholic Education Canberra-Goulburn developed comprehensive Mathematics and English resources for the middle years aligned to the Australian and state content and standards. Created by Catholic school teachers, these high-quality resources are accessible to all Australian schools.
- To address teacher turnover and varying experience in remote areas, Catholic Education Northern Territory has developed contextually appropriate middle years units, ensuring consistent and effective teaching.
- In Tasmania, teachers in Catholic schools received coaching and mentoring in high-impact strategies, supported by system-wide professional learning days focused on the Science of Learning and the Science of Reading.
- Catholic Schools NSW advanced middle years practice through its 2024 Curriculum Reform Conference, highlighting best practice in K–6 English and Mathematics, Science of Reading, and its High Potential and Gifted Education Toolkit. Ongoing collaboration was supported through the CSNSW Curriculum Reform Working Group.

### 3.8 Supporting senior years of schooling

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.<sup>31</sup>

**Table 3.1:** Senior secondary certificates of education (SSCEs), Australian states and territories, 2024

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) ([www.acaca.edu.au](http://www.acaca.edu.au)), states and territories.

#### National Schools Constitutional Convention

The 29th National Schools Constitutional Convention, held from 19–21 March 2024 at the Museum of Australian Democracy, provided 94 senior secondary students with a platform to engage in high-level discussions on Commonwealth-State financial relations. Under the guidance of constitutional experts, delegates explored Section 96 of the Constitution, examining its implications for equity, governance, and fiscal responsibility. Through workshops, debates, and expert presentations, students critically assessed the balance of power between federal and state governments and proposed reforms to ensure greater transparency and efficiency in funding allocation. The culminating referendum-style vote demonstrated their capacity for civic engagement and constitutional inquiry, reinforcing the NSCC's role in enhancing critical thinking and policy awareness among Australia's future leaders.

<sup>31</sup> 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 Australian National University and the University of Canberra to provide university extension courses for senior secondary students in the ACT. These courses provide tertiary pathways for students who may not have previously considered further study and assist students to transition to tertiary education. The ACT also has a range of vocational education pathways and supports the diversity of learner needs and interests. The ACT's unique college system provides senior secondary students with opportunities to explore a range of career pathways and prepare for future life.
- In NSW, the HSC *Common Start* program provided funds to support HSC teachers and students involved in newly created Year 12 extension classes.
- The NSW Department of Education continued *Stay Healthy HSC*, which provided resources to assist students to stay healthy, active and connected during the HSC. It also supported the implementation of Stage 6 Syllabuses through comprehensive packages including professional learning, scope and sequences, units and other support documents. The teachers of Stage 6 courses were also supported through Statewide Staffrooms using Microsoft Teams.
- In the Northern Territory:
  - The *Student Tracking System (STS)* was improved to better identify student pathways, expected year of completion, and students who are registered in the Nationally Consistent Collection of Data on School Students with Disability (NCCD). An STS User Guide, STS stakeholder roles and responsibilities and STS data schedule were developed, and professional learning was delivered across the regions.
  - Clontarf and Stars foundations (18 Clontarf and 19 Star Academies in total) continued to provide Aboriginal students with mentoring and wellbeing support to finish Year 12. Services included academic support, personal health, wellbeing and targeted activities for students' transition after Year 12.
  - The *Youth Voice Peak Group* provided students in Years 10 to 12 with an opportunity to contribute to policies and programs that affected them and ensured their voice was represented. In 2024, members were introduced to co-designing and consulting with the department on the Strategic Digital Vision, Student Wellbeing Officers, and the Learner Profile.
- Queensland state schools progressed implementation of a range of strategies and interactive resources to support students to be on track for success and ready for the future, including:
  - The *Career Education: Pathways Program (CEPP)*, which establishes a strong foundation for educators to provide students with high-quality, evidence-informed career education and advice. While CEPP is aimed at Years 7 to 10, they also make a significant contribution to pathways planning in the senior secondary years.
  - Queensland's *VET Pathway Program* which provided Queensland young people, particularly Indigenous students, with opportunities to gain foundation skills in literacy and numeracy and increases employment prospects for students in real world contexts, enriching cultural knowledge and connecting to community.

- The South Australian Department for Education:
  - opened Findon Technical College, the first of five planned technical colleges, to provide students with practical skills and pathways to apprenticeships or university, and
  - expanded flexible industry programs by introducing new school pathways for students to develop their skills in school for a career in the defence industries, including ICT, cyber security, engineering and electrotechnology.
- The Tasmanian Department for Education, Children and Young People implemented programs to increase student access to quality learning programs, including:
  - Extension of all secondary schools to include Years 11 and 12, ensuring accessible education pathways.
  - Establishment of regional partnerships to enable students to transition from Year 10 to Years 11 and 12 in the program and location of their choice.
  - Provision of online learning programs for students in Years 11 and 12 to mitigate barriers to access and equity in remote geographical locations.
  - A range of face-to-face and online short qualifications that enhanced learner success and employability skills.
  - The Department's Registered Training Organisation, enabling 42 schools to deliver Vocational Education and Training qualifications.
  - Provision of equitable pathways through partnerships with TasTAFE and the University of Tasmania to facilitate higher education access for young Tasmanians.
- The Victorian Department of Education and the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (VCAA) continued to progress significant reform to senior secondary schooling. In 2024, student enrolments in the VCE Vocational Major were 26% higher than its predecessor, the Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL). Over 30,000 students participated in VET in 2024, representing 10% more than 2023 and the third year of consecutive growth. The *Head Start* program supported students in school-based apprenticeships and traineeships in 288 government schools, with 78% of students staying in their apprenticeship or traineeship beyond 12 months.
- In Victoria, significant policy and program design was undertaken to enable 2 studies from the VCE Vocational Major to be available to all VCE students in 2025. A pilot will give students access to *Vocational Taster* experiences in 2025 and 2026 to support their decision making about senior secondary pathways.
- In Western Australia:
  - The *Pathways to Post-School Success Review* was led by the Department of Education in partnership with Catholic Education Western Australia (CEWA) and the Association for Independent Schools Western Australia (AISWA) and in consultation with stakeholders across Western Australia. The final report was published on 11 November 2024. The comprehensive review examined the suitability of secondary school pathways in meeting students' needs for post-school success. The report made 33 recommendations across 3 main reform areas aimed at ensuring all Western Australian students can reach their full potential. The review also proposed new offerings for students with disabilities and expanded methods for demonstrating literacy and numeracy standards for the Western Australian Certificate of Education (WACE).

- The *School-based Apprenticeship and Traineeship Support Scheme* provided targeted funding to individual students to support successful completion of their qualification. Funding was available for protective personal equipment, appropriate work attire, public transport, equipment or tools and tutoring.
- The Association of Independent Schools of South Australia initiated a professional learning series to educate and empower schools in engaging with AI as a tool for learning. Insights, case studies and evidence of achievements were shared, fostering a collaborative environment for educators to develop cohesive, ethical approaches to AI integration.
- Independent Schools Victoria implemented professional learning programs with additional support to build capacity and ensure leaders have a deep understanding of important policies and processes. These programs aim to enhance the delivery of the curricula's key knowledge and skills and foster excellence and creativity amongst senior secondary teachers.
- Catholic Education South Australia collaborated with the South Australian Certificate of Education (SACE) Board to pilot, trial, and implement several key initiatives. These included the *Recognition of Aboriginal Cultural Knowledge and Learning*; the integration of *Capabilities and Learner Profile* as an adjunct to the Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR); the development of *Exploring Identities and Futures* (EIF); and subject renewal groups.
- Catholic Schools NSW hosted the 2024 Curriculum Reform Conference: 'Animating the Curriculum for Human Flourishing', bringing together 400 delegates to explore reformed syllabuses, vocational education, and the Catholic curriculum. Its *Virtual Learning Collaborative* expanded access to 12 senior courses across 10 colleges, supporting over 100 students, with 25 completing their HSC or ACT Senior Certificate through alternative pathways.
- Catholic Education Western Australia (CEWA) supported VET and career pathways through four statewide network days with Association of Independent Schools of Western Australia, providing professional learning and updates from tertiary and industry representatives. CEWA also expanded its Virtual School Network, increased VET places for Year 10–12 students and contributed to the *Pathways to Post-School Success* review.

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

#### First Nations VET leadership roundtable forums

Commencing in 2024, First Nations partner organisations, the Australian Government, and state and territory governments are coming together for a series of leadership roundtables to:

- listen to the experiences of First Nations peoples in Australia’s VET sector
- ensure First Nations culture is at the core of training delivery for First Nations learners
- collaborate on ways skills and training outcomes for First Nations peoples can be improved.

#### GENERATION Survey

The GENERATION survey of post-school destinations, a 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 3 waves of interviews, in 2022, 2023 and 2024. Survey datasets are publicly released each year on the Australian Data Archive. Participants will be followed up annually until around age 25.

#### State, territory, and sector initiatives

- In the ACT:
  - an ACT-wide approach to support effective transitions for children from birth to 5 years old was launched, including a range of resources for families, educators, early childhood settings, and schools.
  - Transition sessions were organised for families of children with disabilities moving between all school settings. ACT specialist schools collaborated with the National Disability Insurance Scheme to provide information nights on post-school transitions and options.

- Early advice was given to schools about enrolling students with disabilities, allowing for early implementation of supports including infrastructure improvements, additional staffing, professional learning, and meetings with families.
- Public schools offered services and programs to support students to effectively transition from school to work and flexible learning pathways, including early exposure to careers, skills development and a Vocational Learning Program. *HeadStart*, an Australian School-based Apprenticeship (ASbA) initiative also supported 50 students from public schools to undertake ASbAs in emerging industries and those experiencing skills shortage.
- The NSW Department of Education:
  - Continued to improve education and career outcomes for young people through the *Educational Pathways Program*, designed to introduce high school students to a range of vocational training and employment pathways. In 2024, the program was delivered across 171 government high schools. The program complements existing careers education activities through the provision of additional resources, including two key roles: Head Teachers Careers and SBAT Engagement Officers, who work closely with schools.
  - Continued the *Regional Industry Education Partnerships* (RIEP) program as an ongoing service for schools. The RIEP program designs and delivers opportunities for employers to connect with secondary schools. Through these connections, students learn about jobs and pathways to employment, develop new skills and create employer networks. Employers educate students about their industry and actively participate in the development of talent pipelines.
- Recommendation 2.1 of the *Review of Secondary Education in the Northern Territory* called for the development and implementation of a system-wide pathways plan across the Northern Territory to provide students with meaningful opportunities to employment opportunities. Phase 1 of the implementation of the *Secondary Reform Program* consists of the development of a secondary education delivery framework that puts students at the centre of their learning journey. The development of the framework began in 2024 and is expected to be finalised in 2025.
- The Queensland Department of Education provided a number of programs that supported students to find the right pathway and transition successfully, including supporting young people who were disengaged or at-risk of disengaging from education. This included career education and Senior Education and Training (SET) planning, student wellbeing staff, attendance and engagement programs and flexible and alternative learning environments. For those students most at risk, further support was available including regional case management services and alternative learning options. This included support for Year 12 completers who were not in education, training or employment to find and transition into a post-school pathway. Specific supports were also available for students involved in the youth justice system. This included the *Education Justice Initiative*, which works with students appearing before the Childrens Court to support them to engage with appropriate pathways.

- The South Australian Department of Education:
  - Piloted a transition support service for 49 at-risk Year 12 students in 4 schools. Key outcome measures are South Australian Certificate of Education (SACE) completion, entry into further education, and work outcomes including apprenticeships, full-time work and casual work.
  - Opened the first of five technical colleges that provides students a place to train and connect with industry, undertake practical learning and competency-based assessment, and opportunities to undertake both on-job and off-job training with RTOs and employers. These technical colleges support a pathway straight from school to work and to provide apprenticeship and traineeship opportunities with local businesses. They also provide an opportunity to transition to university through alternate pathways.
  - Implemented the *Autism Inclusion Teachers Program*, which had previously been successful in South Australian primary schools, in secondary schools to help students with autism transition between primary and secondary schooling.
- In Tasmania:
  - Government Schools continued to be supported to strengthen their career education provision and transition planning through the delivery of the Graduate Certificate in Career Development Practice to school and support staff, with 57 qualified career practitioners working across Department schools and portfolios.
  - The DECYP online career education portal, *Careerify*, continued to support students, parents and industry as a place-based information service.
  - Government school teachers were supported to obtain or upgrade their Training and Assessment (TAE) qualifications, achieving an increase in the availability of VET training to Tasmanian Senior Secondary Students, and expanding and retaining the VET school workforce.
  - The school-based *Driving for Jobs* program continued to help students from areas of high socioeconomic disadvantage develop safe driving skills, navigate the licensing system, and gain their driver licence.
  - Promotional videos were released to support schools, students, parents and employers to understand the benefits of School based Apprenticeships and Traineeships.
- In Victoria:
  - Career exploration and work-based learning activities continued, with 87% of Year 9 government school students participating in the My Career Insights diagnostic tool and unpacking interview to support informed decision making about subjects and post-school pathways. The *Enhanced My Career Insights* pilot began, with students experiencing disadvantage provided with 4 individually tailored sessions.
  - The Victorian Department of Education piloted the Work-Based Learning app to streamline work experience and Structured Workplace Learning placements, for roll out in all government schools in 2025.
  - New supports for early school leavers were designed including a Career Advice Service for early school leavers, and appropriate supports for Koorie young people and young people with a disability, to be implemented in 2025.
  - Victoria's 10 Tech Schools continued to enhance Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics learning and pathways through hands-on, immersive experiences.

- In Western Australia, qualified career practitioners were placed in 70 public schools to lead whole-school career development and facilitate engagement with industry. Career conversation events were delivered throughout the state for students and parents, with local industry panels discussing employment opportunities, attributes they are looking for and how to access entry level positions.
- The Association of Independent Schools of Western Australia distributed state funding to support the engagement of schools in Year 9 career taster activities.
- Independent Schools Queensland collaborated with various sectors to support lifelong learning and effective transitions from school to further education or work. It provided VET program funding incentives (Department of Trade, Employment and Training VET investment budget) and accredited training support for teachers and career advisors. In 2024, VET enrolments in Queensland Independent schools increased by 33% to 30,676. Initiatives included *VET Reform*, *Gateway to Industry Schools*, and *Trade to Teach* programs.
- In South Australia, a VET workshop series enabled new staff from metropolitan and regional South Australian Independent Schools to build foundational knowledge in VET, Workplace Learning and apprenticeships. Participants heard from experienced VET leaders and explored ways to implement new ideas and processes to effectively support students and school communities.
- Catholic education systems continued work on lifelong learning pathways and supporting effective transitions:
  - South Australia introduced the *BECOME Career Education Program* from Year 5, encouraging early career exploration to build self-efficacy, purpose, and broaden aspirations.
  - In Victoria Catholic Education, Catholic schools use Transition Learning and Development Statements to strengthen partnerships with early childhood providers and support seamless school transitions.
  - Catholic Schools NSW supported VET delivery through 150 teacher training applications and 50 upgrades to meet current industry standards. Over 1,200 students accessed external VET courses via the *Externally Delivered VET (EVET)* program.
  - Catholic Education Western Australia (CEWA) promoted *Transition to Adult Life* resources and provided targeted support for students with disability and those at risk of disengagement. The CEWA Transition Service Unit guided post-school pathways and boarding transitions for First Nations students. CEWA also piloted *Capabilities for Learning* and implemented the *Student Learning Journey* to ensure accurate progress data is shared at key transition points.

### 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 functions of the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) 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	Health and Physical Education
Mathematics	Languages
Science	Technologies
Humanities and Social Sciences	The Arts.

The Australian Curriculum incorporates 7 general capabilities:

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

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.

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 occurred in February 2024.

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

## **FIRST framework**

In February 2024, ACARA published the FIRST Framework. This framework was developed in consultation with ACARA's advisory groups and key stakeholders. Developed with teachers and school communities in mind, it acts as a guide to assist teachers and schools to engage with their local First Nations communities to support the implementation of the Australian Curriculum.

In 2024, work commenced on developing professional learning modules to further support teachers and schools.

## **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. In 2024, work commenced on the updating and realignment of the 15 Australian Curriculum Senior Secondary subjects.

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

## Curriculum projects

In 2024, ACARA undertook a range of activities. These included:

- Enhancing functionality of the Australian Curriculum Version 9.0 website, through the National Formative Assessment Resource Bank project to explore solutions to enable the publication of advice and resources to support the implementation of the Australian Curriculum Version 9.0.
- Publishing additional annotated work samples to the Resources section of the Australian Curriculum Version 9.0 website. By May 2024, 268 work samples had been published.
- Publishing new modules on ACARA's Professional Learning Hub including Student Diversity – Using the CASE model in October 2024. The PL Hub is a key resource for supporting the implementation of the Australian Curriculum.
- Developing and publishing an enhanced search function on the website to support user engagement with the Australian Curriculum.
- Conducting a national and international review of Work studies and career education and sharing findings and considerations with jurisdictions and the ACARA Board.
- Undertaking preliminary research to support the updating and realignment of the Australian Curriculum: Senior Secondary.

## 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 National Quality Standard 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. They 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 were 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 Australian Government Department of Education (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*.

## NAPLAN 2024

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. Education Ministers also agreed 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, and 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.

2024 marked the second year the NAPLAN test event was held in March, with all schools across Australia completing the NAPLAN tests online. More than 1.2 million Year 3, 5, 7 and 9 students across 9,411 schools and campuses completed their NAPLAN testing online in 2024. Schools and education authorities received preliminary school and student results (excluding writing results) from the assessments early in Term 2, around 4 weeks after the test period ended. This was 8 weeks earlier than in 2023, and a full school term earlier than 2022. This development meant that teachers had more time to consider the results alongside their own assessments and then use them to inform their teaching and learning programs in the current school year.

NAPLAN results data for 2024 is available in interactive form on the ACARA NAP website. The interactive report for 2024 provides 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 2024 NAPLAN National Report and 2024 Test Incident Report are also available on the NAP website.

## 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.<sup>32</sup> Participating schools are sampled from all states and territories and school sectors. In 2022, Australian Education Ministers agreed that the NAP sample main study assessments should take place in May, following the earlier NAPLAN test window.

From 2024, separate opt-in assessments have been made available for all schools, starting with science literacy in 2024, to be followed by civics and citizenship in 2025, and ICT literacy in 2026.

<sup>32</sup> 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.

Progress for each of the NAP sample assessments outlined below:

- **NAP – Civics and Citizenship (NAP–CC):** The seventh NAP–Civics and Citizenship (NAP–CC) assessment main study was conducted from 6 to 24 May 2024, following a successful field trial in October–November 2023, where items were trialled and analysed for inclusion in the main study. The 2024 NAP–CC assessment instrument comprised 181 new items and 74 trend items distributed across 24 test forms. Assessment items were aligned with the relevant strands and sub-strands of the Australian Curriculum: HASS F–6, the Australian Curriculum: Civics and Citizenship, and the Australian Curriculum: History. In total, 5,294 Year 6 students from 319 schools and 4,550 Year 10 students from 288 schools participated. Response rates were 87% for Year 6 and 78% for Year 10 students. The NAP–CC 2024 Public Report was published in early 2025.
- **NAP – Science Literacy (NAP–SL):** The seventh NAP–Science Literacy sample assessment was conducted in May 2023 and was delivered online to students in Year 6 and Year 10 (6,069 Year 6 students in 368 schools and 3,433 Year 10 students in 221 schools). 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 was published in May 2024.

The NAP Opt-in assessments in science literacy were available for registered schools from 6–31 May 2024. Overall, there were 157 schools and 11,707 students (6,163 Year 6 and 5,544 Year 10 students) that participated in NAP Opt-in science literacy tests.

- **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. It involved just under 10,000 students from 636 schools across Australia. 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.

## 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 Organization for Economic Co-operation Development (OECD). In 2020, OECD member countries and associates decided to postpone PISA 2021 to 2022 and PISA 2024 to 2025 to reflect post-COVID difficulties. Results for PISA 2022 were released in December 2023.
- *Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS):* 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 and results were released in December 2024.

- *Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS)*: PIRLS is a 5-yearly assessment of reading literacy for Year 4 students, administered by the IEA. 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 (ABLES) assessment and reporting suite.
- As part of the implementation of the ACT Education Directorate's updated fit-for-purpose school improvement plan (the Student-Centred Improvement Framework), Education continues to refine its evidence-led approach to leadership professional development, focusing on enabling capabilities for implementing effective strategies to improve student outcomes.
- The NSW Education Standards Authority continued to deliver a new curriculum, working to streamline and strengthen what is taught in NSW schools, with 30 new syllabuses and support materials released across K–12. New syllabuses focus on essential content identifying the core knowledge and skills that students should know and need to progress in each subject. NSW syllabuses continued to have strong community ownership through public consultation and stakeholder engagement, with 23 draft syllabuses released for consultation in 2024. An easy to navigate Digital Curriculum website for all syllabuses and support materials was launched.
- In NSW, the *Inclusive Assessment Program* provided educators in Schools for Specific Purposes and schools with support units with 2 optional assessment tools for students with complex learning needs: the Literacy and Numeracy Precursors, and Passport for Learning. These tools support educators to identify students' learning ability, determine individual learning goals and report on and celebrate learning progress.
- In the Northern Territory, the Department of Education and Training Curriculum, Assessment, Reporting and Certification (CARC) released its updated policy in mid-2024. The policy enables school staff in Northern Territory Government schools and approved services to understand and implement the legislated curriculum, assessment reporting and certification requirements, appropriate to each main learning stage from birth to Year 12. It has been strengthened to align to Version 9 of the Australian Curriculum, EYLF v2 and evidence-based practices.
- The Queensland Department of Education provided the Australian Curriculum in Prep to Year 10, as written, to ensure all students, of all identities and abilities, were able to access and participate in the curriculum alongside their similar-aged peers. This included achieving academically and socially with tailored supports including reasonable adjustments that met their learning needs. The Department also provided a suite of high-quality Prep to Year 10 curriculum planning and assessment resources that supported schools in implementing all eight learning areas of the curriculum.
- The South Australian Department for Education introduced the new South Australian Curriculum for Public Education, adapted from the Australian Curriculum version 9. This curriculum supports the Strategy for Public Education by ensuring students develop conceptual knowledge, foundational literacy, and numeracy skills. It also focuses on capabilities and dispositions essential for effective learning and future employment.

- In South Australia:
  - A civics and citizenship cross-curriculum priority was introduced for Reception to Year 10 as part of the *Safeguarding Democracy through Public Education* reforms, promoting active citizenship.
  - The *South Australian Aboriginal Contexts in Science* initiative was launched, contextualising science elaborations in collaboration with First Nations Elders and communities.
- In 2024, all Tasmanian Government schools planned, taught and assessed based on the Australian Curriculum (V9). Teachers were supported to implement the curriculum with resources and professional learning focused on developing their understanding of the knowledge, skills and the progression of learning across the years of schooling. The Tasmanian Department of Education, Children and Young People (DECYP):
  - Produced an Assessment Guide in collaboration with AERO, setting system expectations for assessment from Kindergarten to Year 12.
  - Introduced system-wide standardised screening for foundational reading skills. This initiative identifies students struggling with reading early on, allowing for targeted interventions to develop essential literacy skills.
  - Continued to implement a revised Reporting and Communicating with Families Policy and Procedure, fully in place for Prep to Year 10 and phasing in for Years 11 and 12 in 2025. This policy ensures consistent and transparent updates on student progress for families.
- The Victorian Curriculum F–10 Version 2.0 was launched in June 2024. The revised curriculum ensures the Australian Curriculum Version 9.0 to be implemented in Victorian government and Catholic schools while maintaining Victorian priorities and standards and making the curriculum more teachable and manageable. The curriculum has been published on a new website which supports schools to implement the curriculum. The new website centralises all curriculum content, familiarisation and planning resources, and professional learning, making it easier for teachers and school leaders to access what they need. A suite of Lesson Plans to support classroom teaching aligned to Version 2.0 of the Curriculum focused on English, Mathematics, Science, Design Technologies and Digital Technologies are being progressively released. Victoria is also refreshing its suite of online digital classroom assessments to ensure that they align to Version 2.0.
- In Western Australia:
  - The School Curriculum and Standards Authority (SCSA) Strategic Plan 2024–2027 was released. SCSA also released a series of Early Childhood Education videos and delivered professional learning to support the teaching and learning practices in the Early Years Learning Framework v2.
  - A phased approach to adopting and adapting the Australian Curriculum version 9 to the Western Australian Curriculum and Assessment Outline was introduced. In 2024, Pre-primary to Year 10 English and Physical Education were in the familiarisation stage, providing teachers with the opportunity to engage with professional learning prior to implementation in 2025. The Authority consulted on revisions to Pre-primary to Year 10 Humanities and Social Sciences, Mathematics, Science and Technologies, for familiarisation in 2025.

- New courses for Years 11 and 12 commencing in 2024, including Aboriginal and Intercultural Studies, Agribusiness, Agricultural Science and Technology, Hindi, Korean, Punjabi Science in Practice and Tamil, were introduced.
- South Australian Independent schools were supported with implementing the Australian Curriculum v9 in each of the eight learning areas and for each stage of schooling (F–6 and 7–10). This focused on strategies for enacting the curriculum and protocols for action planning, learning area specialists facilitated rigorous dialogue about implementation, enactment, and pedagogical practices.
- Independent Schools Queensland hosted four Curriculum Leaders Forums, offering professional learning for over 120 leaders at each event. These forums provided essential information to curriculum leaders as well as opportunities to hear from ACARA, Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority (QCAA), the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) and other professional bodies. The forums were repeated in regional locations to ensure statewide opportunities.
- Catholic education systems consistently provide a curriculum that aligns with national expectations:
  - Catholic Education South Australia continued to prioritise deep engagement with the Australian Curriculum through carefully mapped teaching and learning sequences and aligned assessment practices that support both formative and summative learning.
  - CET developed a knowledge-rich, low-variance curriculum in English, Mathematics, and HASS, grounded in Science of Learning principles. Sequenced and interleaved content includes spaced practice and regular review. CET also refined their formative and summative assessment, with common tasks used to measure system-wide impact.
  - Catholic Education Tasmania implemented the *Toddle Learning Management System*, integrating AI-supported planning and assessment tools aligned to Australian Curriculum v9.
  - Victorian Catholic dioceses developed over 4,000 F–9 mathematics and 2,000 Years 3–6 English resources, aligned with curriculum requirements to support classroom delivery.

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

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

#### First Nations Education Policy

Through the 2024–25 Budget, the Australian Government committed \$5 million to develop a new First Nations Education Policy in partnership with key First Nations and education stakeholders.

The Policy will offer high-level guidance to support both national and state and territory led First Nations education initiatives, aligning with the Mparntwe Education Declaration, the Better and Fairer Schools Agreement and its reform directions, and the National Agreement on Closing the Gap.

#### Indigenous Advancement Strategy

The Indigenous Advancement Strategy (IAS) is the way the Australian Government funds and delivers a range of programs for First Nations people. In the 2023–24 Budget, the Australian Government allocated \$7.2 billion to the IAS for grant funding processes and administered procurement activities. This allocation is over 4 years, extending to 2026–27. ‘Children and schooling’ is one of the 6 key funding components of the IAS and aims to provide First Nations Australians a good start in life, improve schooling and school attendance and provide better access to developmental and educational opportunities.

#### On-Country Learning

Through the On-Country Learning measure, every school in Central Australia received funding to develop and roll out activities to increase student engagement and attendance. School Action Plans developed by schools and agreed by community representatives identified community priorities and activities to be funded. This approach reflects the Commonwealth’s Closing the Gap commitment to community partnership and shared decision making.

More than 210 staff were employed through the measure in 2024, with 42.7% being First Nations individuals. Activities implemented in 2024 resulted in increased attendance and enrolments in very remote areas of Central Australia compared to 2023. The average number of students significantly disengaged from government schools in very remote areas was also lower in 2024.

#### Boarding support

On 22 October 2024, the Australian Government announced an additional \$44.2 million to extend the Indigenous Boarding Provider grants through to the end of 2026. This investment, which will commence in Term 1 2025, will support more than 50 boarding providers to deliver accommodation and wrap-around supports for 2,500 First Nations students.

#### Scaling Up Proven Primary Reading Programs

The *Scaling Up Proven Primary Reading Programs* supported the scaling-up of 3 targeted literacy programs which support teacher professional practice and improve early literacy outcomes for First Nations students – the *Good to Great Schools Australia Pilot* program, *MultiLit (Making Up Lost Time in Literacy)* program and the *Scaling Up Success in Remote Schools* program.

In the 2024–25 Budget, the Australian Government committed a further \$5.26 million through grants to extend the *Good to Great Schools Australia* program to the end of the 2026 school year, providing a total of \$30.29 million over 2021–22 to 2025–26.

## State, territory and sector initiatives

- The ACT continued to strengthen its cultural integrity to meet the educational needs and aspirations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. Key initiatives included:
  - provision of an additional 66 Koori preschool places, cultural competency training, On Country walks, Ngunnawal language workshops and Engoori training (a strength-based approach to team culture)
  - awarding secondary and tertiary scholarships to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, and the Mura Awards providing bursaries to students demonstrating high engagement and leadership
  - Indigenous Education Officers and Cultural Integrity Coordinators supporting schools to develop and implement resources and programs that embed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives, knowledge and cultures
  - curriculum development projects focused on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives, languages, histories, and cultures, that ensure students see themselves reflected in their education and are empowered to achieve their full potential.
- The NSW Department of Education:
  - progressed strategic planning and goal setting to improve outcomes for Aboriginal students and staff through implementation of *Our Plan for NSW Public Education*,
  - developed the *Guiding Principles in Leading Aboriginal Education*, to support the complexity and competing priorities within schools and the need for Aboriginal Education consideration in the Schools Excellence Framework,
  - continued the *Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) 2023–2025*,<sup>33</sup>
  - strengthened cross-sector leadership for meeting its National Agreement on Closing the Gap targets.
- In the Northern Territory, the *Plan for a Better, Safer Future for Central Australia: On Country Learning Measure* (OCLM) provided \$40 million of additional funding to schools in Central Australia to support students and their families to engage in education and pathways to employment on-country. The OCLM aims to strengthen education experiences through:
  - intensive literacy and numeracy support
  - increased quality flexible learning for secondary students with a focus on students obtaining qualifications that align to jobs in the industries in their communities and regions and/or provide skills in industries that support community life
  - increased employment of local Aboriginal staff in schools to support cultural wellbeing, music, art, language and identity
  - targeted engagement, re-engagement and attendance initiatives, which are culturally responsive
  - initiatives that support two-way learning opportunities, foster culturally responsive learning environments, and invite Indigenous language and culture into the day-to-day delivery of curriculum, including through bilingual education programs
  - increased allied health services to deliver a selection of universal and targeted services to support inclusion of all students in learning.

<sup>33</sup> The Innovate RAP is founded on building trust and confidence with Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander employees, families and communities to create safe workplaces and to ensure the best possible educational outcomes.

- Queensland Department of Education *First Nations Attendance and Engagement Programs* aim to maximise days of learning by improving attendance, reducing school disciplinary absences and increasing Year 10 to 12 retention. These programs were delivered in 2024 and are ongoing, with the Department expanding these to communities of high needs and to achieve gender equity. The programs provide mentorship, case management and extracurricular activities.
- In 2023–24, the Queensland Government invested approximately \$31.4 million to promote and improve the participation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in kindergarten through the *Deadly Kindies* program. This investment aims to increase access to early childhood services for these children, including free kindergarten, Child and Family Centre programs, Early Years Services, and support from the Institute of Urban Indigenous Health. Priority area 1 under the *Kindy Uplift* program is to create ‘Culturally safe, inclusive and responsive kindergarten programs’, including ‘Embedding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives’. The 2024 *Kindy Uplift* funding allocated towards embedding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives was \$8 million.
- In South Australia:
  - A new 3-year Aboriginal Funding Model was introduced to enhance educational outcomes for Aboriginal children, offering flexible support for local decision-making.
  - 7,000 students participated in Aboriginal languages programs, fostering cultural engagement and language preservation.
  - The preschool entitlement for three-year-old Aboriginal children and children in care was increased from 12 to 15 hours per week.
  - The SA Department Education strengthened its commitment to culturally responsive and inclusive environments through the release of a renewed Culturally Responsive Framework, the launch of foundational cultural learning resources, and the establishment of the Department’s Aboriginal Workforce Network. Development of an Anti-Racism Action Plan also commenced, further supporting these initiatives.
  - The SA Department Education progressed its second Stretch Reconciliation Action Plan, forming partnerships with 48 Aboriginal organisations comprising 21 actions and 96 deliverables to promote relationships, understanding, accountabilities and sustainable opportunities.
- In Tasmania, a specific focus for 2024 was ensuring that all Aboriginal Education Service staff undertook the *Qualiteach* training package to build foundational knowledge in structured literacy and multi-tiered systems of support. The Tasmanian Department of Education, Children and Young People also supported Tasmania’s Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander learners by ensuring 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 were 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, and Aboriginal Learning Facilitators brought learning to life for students in museums.
- The Victorian Department of Education progressed work through the Marrung: Aboriginal Education Plan 2016–2026 to support improved outcomes for First Nations students, including through the following initiatives:
  - *Strengthening Professional Capacity of Principals in Koorie Education* delivered programs in 70 schools across the state; 108 schools engaged in anti-racism workshops facilitated

by the Centre for Multicultural Youth in collaboration with the Victorian Koorie Heritage Trust; and 1,333 school staff from 190 schools completed an anti-racism eLearning course developed by the Australian Human Rights Commission.

- The Koorie Curriculum Clusters project continued, focusing on integrating First Peoples histories, cultures, and perspectives into the Victorian Curriculum F–10 through schools partnering with Registered Aboriginal Parties.
- The *Strengthening Aboriginal Self-determination in Education* report was released, informed by Campfire Conversations with over 3,000 people. It identified 6 reform directions – accountability, truth-telling, partnerships, voice, capacity building, and a culturally safe and responsive school system.
- In Western Australia:
  - The *Culturally Responsive School Leadership* program empowered leaders to deepen their cultural understanding and practice, which is essential for creating supportive environments for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander learners. The focus was on organisational culture and system change, cultural safety, and developing the cultural responsiveness of the principal. The program aims to promote reconciliation and strengthen Aboriginal student outcomes.
  - The *Ngaparrtji Ngaparrtji Two-way Science Initiative* supported schools to build partnerships with local Aboriginal communities or Aboriginal organisations. *Learning on Country* was led by Aboriginal experts who taught students Aboriginal cultural knowledge connected to the science curriculum and related science activities.
  - In response to the 2023 Yamatji On-Country Call to Action statement, 22 schools delivered alternative On-Country education programs in the Midwest region.
- The Association of Independent Schools of South Australia facilitated a series on creating culturally safe classrooms and schools featuring local Kurna Elders who guided staff teams in reflecting on their contexts. Continuous engagement empowered participants to enhance their advocacy and practice for greater impact in their school settings.
- The Association of Independent Schools of Western Australia's *Future Footprints* program continued to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander boarding students in non-government schools, promoting strength through cultural connection and culturally safe learning environments. The program offered students and schools a range of events and activities, including a Careers Expo, to enhance educational opportunities and community engagement.
- Independent Schools Victoria's Reconciliation Action Plan aligns with the Australian Government's goal to empower Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and close the education gap. The Reflect RAP 2024–25 includes actions supporting cultural safety, competency, and inclusive learning, ensuring Indigenous students and staff feel valued, respected, and supported.
- Catholic education is committed to fostering cultural identity, belonging, safety, and success for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander learners. For example, in 2024:
  - Catholic Education Western Australia supported boarding students and families through its Transition Service Unit.
  - Catholic Education South Australia introduced Cultural Learning Plans, co-developed with students and families, to guide both cultural and academic growth, ensuring tailored support and meaningful enrichment for every Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student.

### 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”.

#### Needs-based school funding

Under the *Schooling Resource Standard* funding arrangements, Australian Government recurrent funding for schools is calculated using a base per-student amount plus 6 loadings for student disadvantage, school size and school location. For most non-government schools, the base amount is discounted by the estimated capacity of parents to contribute towards the school’s operating costs.

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

- students with disability
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students
- students at a socio-educational disadvantage
- students with low English proficiency
- location of the school (remoteness)
- the size of the school.

#### School Funding Agreements

In 2024, the Australian Government worked closely with state and territory governments, in partnership with key education stakeholders, to put all government schools on a pathway to 100% of the *Schooling Resource Standard*. The Better and Fairer Schools Agreement 2025–2034 (BFSA) and the Better and Fairer Schools Agreement 2025–2034 – Full and Fair Funding (the Full and Fair Funding Agreement) will replace the National School Reform Agreement in 2025.

The Agreements aim to improve educational outcomes for all Australian students, with funding tied to reforms focused on 3 priority areas: equity and excellence, wellbeing for learning and engagement, and a strong and sustainable workforce.

#### 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. The pilot commenced in 2024 and is delivering 100 scholarships to students from regional, rural and remote areas to assist with secondary school boarding fees and associated costs. The pilot provides 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.

#### The Smith Family’s Growing Careers Project

The Australian Government provided funding of \$38.2 million from 2020–21 to 2026–27 to support the Smith Family’s *Growing Careers* Project. The project supports over 76,000 disadvantaged high school students from Years 7 to 12 across Australia to stay at school, complete Year 12 (or equivalent) and successfully transition to further education, training or work. As students move through school, they engage with careers-related programs that focus on enabling students to develop critical thinking about the labour market and their potential roles within it. Students also engage with a diversity of employees in a mediated and supported way.

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

The Australian Government provided funding of \$3 million between 2021–22 and 2025–26 to support 4,500 disadvantaged young people 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.

## Disability Standards for Education

During 2024, 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. The focus was on the development of information products to help children and students with disability and their caregivers understand their rights under the Standards. Nine new practical and easy-to-use resources, including two animations, were published in 2024.<sup>34</sup> These were co-designed with young people with disability and their families with the help of Children and Young People with Disability Australia.

## Literacy Support for Tasmanian Students

The Australian Government provided \$2 million in 2024–25 to support specialist literacy and numeracy programs for Tasmania's most vulnerable children. From 2024, all Tasmanian educators have been given access to evidence-based training to implement structured literacy. The funding supports the delivery of Tasmania's *Literacy Framework and Literacy Action Plan* – including the establishment of a Literacy Implementation Team, professional development, and ongoing support for 85 Literacy Coaches and development and dissemination of new literacy resources.

## Parliament and Civics Education Rebate

The *Parliament and Civics Education Rebate* (PACER) program is an Australian Government initiative that provides financial assistance to support on-site learning at national democratic, historical, and cultural institutions in Canberra for students in Years 4 to 12.<sup>35</sup> The program aims to enhance students' understanding and participation in Australian democracy through hands-on educational experiences that align directly with the Australian Curriculum. In 2024, over 81,500 students participated in the program, with the government providing more than \$8.1 million in rebates to schools to support their visits. The Australian Government has committed a total of \$40.1 million in approved funding for the PACER program from 2024–25 to 2028–29.

## Curious Minds

The *Curious Minds* program, jointly delivered by the Australian Mathematics Trust and Australian Science Innovations, provides a summer camp accompanied by mentoring and a winter camp for high potential female students in Years 8, 9 and 10, over a period of 8 months. The program aims to ignite girls' passion and participation in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics. *Curious Minds* targets female students who have had limited opportunities because of where they live, including regional and remote locations, their socio-economic background, and/or their Indigenous status. The Australian Government has funded this program since 2014–15.

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<sup>34</sup> These resources are available in English, Easy Read English, Auslan and 8 community languages at <https://www.education.gov.au/disability-standards-education-2005>.

<sup>35</sup> To ensure that funding is equitably and consistently distributed, reflecting the diverse educational settings across different regions, schools located in Outer Regional, Remote, or Very Remote areas automatically received additional loadings. Additional loadings were also provided based on the school Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage (ICSEA) scores. Further details are available at: [www.pacer.org.au](http://www.pacer.org.au).

## National Lending Library

Through the National Lending Library, the University of Adelaide has developed a range of resource kits and curriculum resources to assist with the delivery of digital technologies, including Artificial Intelligence (AI) and emerging technologies, content in the Australian Curriculum. This is the only national service that provides free access to digital and emerging technology equipment for schools that may otherwise be unable to afford it, particularly in regional and rural areas, with demand from schools exceeding the amount of equipment available. The National Lending Library has been funded by the Australian Government since 2016–17.

## State, territory and sector initiatives

- In the ACT:
  - The *Inclusive Education: A Disability Inclusion Strategy for ACT Public Schools 2024–2034 Strategy* began implementation and aims to deliver greater inclusion for students with disability in public schools by ensuring schools have the support required to meet the needs of all learners.
  - Three-year-old vulnerable children could access 2 days per week, 48 weeks per year of quality early childhood education. 300 hours of universal preschool was also provided for all eligible three-year-olds.
  - The *ACT Future of Education Equity Fund* helped low-income families to cover educational costs.
  - A *Meals in Schools* pilot provided universal meal offerings (breakfast and lunch) 3 days per week at 5 public schools, supporting approximately 1,600 students.
  - there was continued recruitment of social and youth workers to provide early intervention and support to students and their families in public schools.
  - schools continued to receive access to professional learning, facilitated networks and expert advice from the Allied Health Service and School Psychology Service.
- In NSW:
  - The Equity Placement Model ensured that students from all backgrounds had fair access and opportunity to attend selective high schools and opportunity classes, with up to 20% of places held for high potential and gifted students from equity groups.
  - All public schools received funding to implement the *Small Group Tuition* program offering short-term, targeted literacy and numeracy support for students identified as needing additional support. In 2024, 1,950 schools reported that 91,045 students received support.
  - The *Perfect Presence Program* provided targeted, early intervention for students identified at risk of disengaging from school and their learning. In 2024, providers established 213 programs across 69 NSW secondary schools, supporting over 2,477 students.
  - *Get Back in the Game* offered case management services for young people aged 15–19 to enter education, training or employment. Enrolment included assessment to identify those at risk of disengaging, and tailoring transition plans to build job readiness and workforce capability.

- The Northern Territory Department of Education and Training:
  - Reformed the direct funding model for government schools. A key change was to move to enrolment-based funding, such that schools are no longer funded based on attendance. This means that schools are provided with resources to teach students who are attending and re-engage students with low attendance.
  - Commenced implementation of strategies including a media campaign and expanding the student attendance workforce, focussed on raising attendance and holding parents accountable for sending their children to school.
  - Published resources to implement the *Team Around the Learner* case management framework, providing a structured model to support learners at risk of disengaging.
  - Continued implementing the *Quality Standards Framework for Flexible Education* programs to support schools and program providers to plan and develop culturally responsive, inclusive programs. These programs aim to address inclusion of all students in Northern Territory schools and improving offerings of flexible education programs.
- The Queensland *Equity and Excellence: realising the potential of every student* education strategy sets the direction for Queensland's state schooling system with the aim of lifting educational outcomes, particularly those at risk of educational disadvantage. This starts at an early age with *Kindy Uplift*, which provides targeted funding to support children more likely to experience educational disadvantage. The Queensland Government increased its investment to \$112 million over four years, extending an invitation to all approved kindergarten program providers to participate in *Kindy Uplift*. This expansion increased the participating services from 930 to over 2,000 and the increased investment enables funding and support to be directed where there is the greatest opportunity to improve early learning outcomes for kindergarten aged children in the community.
- In South Australia, the Literacy Guarantee Unit assisted a network of 15 schools using a train-the-trainer model to enhance teacher and leader capacity in supporting students with dyslexia.
- The South Australian Department for Education:
  - Launched initiatives to support students at risk. The *Student Device Program* provided over 14,700 devices, as well as ensuring all school card students in Years 7 and 10 receive a digital device at no cost to them by 2026. The Student Home Internet Program also ensured connectivity for educational purposes.
  - Piloted a Transition Support Service. It provided individualised and place-based transition support to identified government secondary students. The goal of the pilot has been to test and evaluate the effectiveness of the service-provider approach as a model for transitioning 'at risk' students to sustainable employment.
- Tasmania continued to prioritise and invest in wellbeing for learning. Over the 2024–2025 forward estimates, the following funding was provided: \$24 million to support students impacted by trauma, \$29.7 million for School Health Nurses and \$9.8 million to expand the network of professional support staff working with schools. Schools drew on the data and results of DECYP's annual *Student Wellbeing and Engagement Survey* to ensure they met the needs of their students and that their focus/activity was on addressing identified areas.

- In Victoria:
  - The Tutor Learning Initiative continued to provide Victorian government and low-fee non-government schools with funding to employ tutors for students needing additional support in literacy and numeracy.
  - Implementation of the *Disability Inclusion Reform* continued. At the end of 2024, over 1240 Victorian government schools transitioned to the new strengths-based funding and support model.
  - A range of strategies were implemented to support young people at risk of educational disadvantage, including:
    - establishment of the School Saving Bonus providing a one-off \$400 to help families cover the costs of school uniforms, textbooks, excursions and activities,
    - expansion of the *Glasses for Kids* program, which provides free vision screening and glasses if required, for Pre-Year 3 students from disadvantaged schools,
    - provision of educational items in partnership with State Schools' Relief,
    - expansion of the *School Breakfast Clubs* program,
    - free period products in all Victorian government schools,
    - the development of tools, guidance and training for school staff to promote child wellbeing and safety and identify and respond to family violence.
- In Western Australia:
  - A review of the *School Education Act 1999 (WA)*, led by an independent Expert Panel and Disability Advisory Council, was conducted to identify opportunities to strengthen access and inclusion for students with disability. The purpose of the review was to identify any barriers to access and inclusion within the legislation and propose recommendations for reform. The review was guided by comprehensive public consultation and research, highlighting evolving community expectations. The review reflects changes in understanding since the Act's introduction in 1999, with an emphasis on adapting to current needs and improving support for students with disability to thrive.
  - The *WA Student Assistance Payment* program distributed more than \$75 million cost of living support to almost 400,000 school students and their families in 2024. The government also provided \$9.5 million of additional support to low-income families through the *Secondary School Clothing Allowance* in 2024.
- In South Australia, the *Allied Health Specialist Support Services Program* was available to all independent schools, focusing on rural and low socioeconomic status regions. This program focused on building staff capacity to cater more effectively for students with diverse needs, particularly those 'at risk' of not developing their educational potential.
- The second cohort of the Association of Independent Schools of Western Australia's *Wellbeing and Mental Health in Schools Pilot Project* commenced in 2024. Ten schools, including rural and remote, were provided a grant to engage a part-time wellbeing co-ordinator.
- Independent Schools Queensland worked closely with Special Assistance Schools through one-on-one support opportunities to assist schools to meet the needs of their contexts and maintain legislative compliance.

- Independent Schools Victoria (ISV) continued its commitment to equal educational opportunities for disadvantaged students. Guided by values of collaboration, integrity, innovation, respect, and trust, ISV partnered with schools to create inclusive strategies, ensuring positive outcomes and educational equity while recognising the expertise within schools.
- Catholic education systems continued to prioritise equity through targeted support for students facing disadvantage:
  - In South Australia, universal, targeted, and intensive support was provided via Diversity and Inclusion System Coaches, partnering with National Disability Insurance Scheme coordinators and the Department for Child Protection to deliver over 500 student scholarships.
  - Queensland dioceses supported educationally disadvantaged students by improving learning outcomes through targeted support and personalised planning.
  - Catholic Education Canberra-Goulbourn trained 350 teachers in literacy intervention to support students needing additional instruction in reading.
  - Catholic Education Northern Territory's Inclusion Team strengthened trauma-informed practice, curriculum access, and family engagement, particularly for neurodiverse students.
  - In Tasmania, Ludo centres offered two years of quality preschool in low socio-economic status areas to support vulnerable children with early literacy and school transition.
  - Catholic Education Western Australia supported student re-engagement through bespoke programs, Curriculum and Re-engagement in Education school networks, and culturally responsive practice.

### 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 National School Reform Agreement (NSRA). Agreed policy initiatives in this area are implementing a National Unique Student Identifier (USI); establishing the Australian Education Research Organisation (AERO) to inform teacher practice, system improvement and policy development; and improving national data quality, consistency, and collection.

#### 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 2024, 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, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) are to:

- collect, manage, and analyse student assessment data and other data relating to schools and comparative school performance
- 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 2024.

## National Report on Schooling in Australia

In February 2024, ACARA published the National Report on Schooling in Australia 2022 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.

Since 2023, sections of the National Report on Schooling in Australia have been released progressively, allowing more timely access to data and commentary and closer alignment of the National Report on Schooling in Australia and the National Report on Schooling data portal. Sections of the National Report on Schooling in Australia 2023 were published in April, June and December 2024, with the final report to be released in February 2025.

## 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 gender and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander status. As part of the progressive release of the National Report on Schooling in Australia, data portal pages were updated in February, April, June and December 2024.

## 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 to align with the beginning of each school term. In 2024, ACARA continued to provide third parties access to ACARA-collected data under the Data Access Protocols 2015.

## Australian Teacher Workforce Data

Funded by all Australian governments, the Australian Teacher Workforce Data (ATWD) links initial teacher education (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.

AITSL lead the implementation of the ATWD in collaboration with the Australian Government Department of Education, states and territories and teacher regulatory authorities. The [ATWD Portal](#) is updated regularly with annual reporting on ITE data and Teacher Workforce Characteristics. Additional specialty publications have also been developed utilising the ATWD including as well as on [early childhood teachers](#) and [Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers](#).

## The National Unique Student Identifier

The *National Unique Student Identifier* (USI) for school students is a national enabling initiative in the Better and Fairer Schools Agreement. This initiative will provide every Australian school student with a USI number that will travel with them throughout their school years and into vocational education and training and higher education.

The Australian Government is leading the implementation of the *Schools USI*, in collaboration with state and territory governments and the non-government schooling sector. In 2024, the project focused on delivering enabling components for implementation of this initiative. These activities included supporting the passage of legislation to extend the USI system to the schools sector, as well as consultation on privacy, data management and technical design.

## Nationally Consistent Collection of Data on School Students with Disability

The Australian Government is investing \$20 million to continue the Nationally Consistent Collection of Data on School Students with Disability (NCCD) Continuous Quality Improvement Measure. 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. The program, which extends to 2026–27, is delivering a new course to uplift the capability of educators to understand their obligations under the *Disability Standards for Education 2005* (Standards) and support professional development within sectors and schools. It will also contribute to the 2025 Review of the Standards.

## State and territory initiatives

- In the ACT:
  - Schools continued to develop Individual Learning Plans (ILPs) for all students accessing formal disability programs. ILPs were audited and related data included in the ACT Education Directorate's Annual report.
  - Data collection processes commenced to support development of the evaluation report for Phase Two of *Set up for Success*.
  - Three evidence-based and meaningful strategic indicators (learning gain, equity, and identification with school) continued to be publicly reported. Learning gain and equity measure methodologies were updated to reflect the new NAPLAN proficiency levels.

- The NSW Department of Education continued implementing *Our Plan for NSW Public Education*, which launched in 2023, serving as a guide to improve NSW's 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. New system-wide measures provide clear guidance for school leaders, and are designed to lift outcomes for all students, including at comprehensive primary and high schools, selective schools, regional and rural schools, and Schools for Specific Purposes. 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 provided of progress against strong and meaningful measures.
- In the Northern Territory:
  - Targets for the Department of Education and Training's key performance indicators were published in the Northern Territory Budget Paper. In 2024, new measures were introduced to reflect the new NAPLAN proficiency standards measure, with targets set to increase the proportion of students in the Strong and Exceeding proficiency levels and reduce the proportion of students in the Needs Additional Support proficiency level.
  - As part of their Annual School Improvement Plan (ASIP), schools set student improvement targets and identified the implementation outcomes for their students, parents and families, and staff. The department supported schools to develop their ASIP, providing access to data for meaningful measures.
  - Custom school survey reports were produced for all Northern Territory Government schools. The department continued its commitment to publishing system-level school survey data and incorporated various school survey results for the first time in the *NT Department of Education Annual Report, 2023–24*.
- The Queensland Department of Education continued to embed 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.
- The South Australian Department for Education fully released the new Education Dashboard to school-based and corporate staff. The dashboard uses Power BI and replicates useful information, reports and functions from legacy systems, while incorporating improvements based on consultation and feedback from department staff. The dashboard is designed to search for and summarise centrally collected data on students and includes enrolments, demographics, attendance, behaviour, and academic achievement. The department continues to undertake the Wellbeing and Engagement Collection and provides department staff with the findings to help understand the needs of students on a yearly basis.
- The Tasmanian Department for Education, Children and Young People (DECYP) remained a lead contributor to the Tasmanian Government's whole-of-community approach to *Lifting Literacy* in Tasmania. In 2024, DECYP delivered on first-year milestones of the *Lifting Literacy Implementation Plan 2024–2026*. Progress was reported to the independent Lifting Literacy Outcomes Monitoring Group, whose role is to ensure the recommendations of the Literacy Advisory Panel's Final Report to Government are on track and being reflected in improved literacy outcomes.

- In Victoria, all government schools were required to set a 12-month target to decrease the number of students achieving in the 'Needs Additional Support' level in reading and numeracy in NAPLAN and to include actions towards implementing the [Victorian Teaching and Learning Model](#) and [Victoria's approach to teaching reading F–2](#) in their Annual Implementation Plan (AIP). Each year every government school is required to prepare an AIP which outlines how the school will implement the goals and key improvement strategies that will be their focus for improvement in the coming year. The Victorian Department of Education introduced and reported new measures reflecting the NAPLAN Writing domain results in the objective indicators section of the *Department of Education 2023–24 Annual Report*.
- The Association of Independent Schools of South Australia (AISSA) held a four-part series of human resources and legal workshops for Principals, Business Managers, and Human Resource professionals, reinforcing AISSA's commitment to equipping schools with the knowledge to make informed and legally sound decisions while fostering a fair and compliant environment.
- Catholic education authorities continued to enhance accountability through evidence-based, transparent practices:
  - Catholic Education Western Australia (CEWA) engaged a consulting firm to review its Students with Disability (SWD) policies, programs and processes. The review involved input from school staff, parents, and external service providers, with the aim of ensuring that system policies addressed the diverse needs of students with disability, aligned with the legal framework and regulations governing their rights and provisions, and assessed the efficacy of SWD processes.
  - CEWA's *Student Learning Journey* Power BI platform enabled educators to track growth using national and state comparators, integrating assessment data for planning, feedback, and parent communication.
  - Catholic Schools NSW launched its *2024–2029 Funding Distribution Model* and delivered biannual *State of the System* reports on school performance.
  - In South Australia, a standardised assessment schedule was implemented to monitor literacy and numeracy, while strengthening teachers' assessment literacy and leaders' data capability.

## Chapter 4: Enrolment and Attendance



This chapter reports on student enrolment, attendance, and apparent retention in 2024, using the nationally agreed Key Performance Measures (KPMs) for schooling specified in the Measurement Framework for Schooling in Australia.

### 4.1 School enrolment rates

#### Key Facts

- At the 2021 Australian Census of Population and Housing, the national enrolment rate for 6–15-year-olds was 99.3%. Enrolment rates were 99.0% or higher in all states and territories except the Northern Territory, which had an enrolment rate of 98.6%.
- Data from the National Schools Statistics Collection indicates that in 2024, the proportion of 6–15-year-olds enrolled in school in Australia was 98.6% – the same as in 2022 and 2023, 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.<sup>36</sup> 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%.

<sup>36</sup> Section 2.1 of this report outlines the structure of Australian schooling, including age requirements for compulsory enrolment in school for children and teenagers living in each of the states and territories. Section 2.3 provides data on the number of students enrolled by school sector, by school level, by state and territory, and over time.

**Key Performance Measure 1(a)**

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

Data for this KPM is drawn from the Australian Census of Population and Housing (Census).<sup>37</sup> 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 Northern Territory, 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 National Schools Statistics Collection (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 2024 was 98.6% – the same as in 2022 and 2023, 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. Data disaggregated by state and territory, and other disaggregations for the last 4 Census years is available in the National Report on Schooling data portal.

**Table 4.1:** Proportion of the population aged 6–15 years enrolled in school, Australia, 2014–2024

	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 (%)
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
2024	–	3,260,497	3,306,775	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 estimated resident 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%, and, in the case of ACT, to significantly exceed 100%.

Sources: ABS, Australian Census of Population and Housing, 2011, 2016, 2021; ABS, *Schools*, 2014–2024; ABS, National, state and territory population June 2024 (release date 12/12/2024).

<sup>37</sup> 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 2024:

- The attendance rate for students in Years 1–10 was 88.3%, down slightly from 88.6% in 2023.
- The student attendance level (the percentage of students with attendance at or above 90 per cent) was 59.8%, down from 61.6% in 2023.
- 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 the gap between attendance rates of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and non-Indigenous students increased slightly (0.2 percentage points) between 2023 and 2024, the gap in attendance levels narrowed by 0.7 percentage points.
- Student attendance rates and attendance levels have not returned to their pre-COVID levels. In 2019, national attendance rates were 91.4% and attendance levels 73.1%.

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 possible number of student-days attended in Semester 1

### Key Performance Measure 1(c)

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

All school sectors in all states and territories use a common reference period – Semester 1 in each school year – for the collection of attendance data for national reporting. This is consistent with the [National Standards for Student Attendance Data Reporting](#), which came into operation for the 2014 data collection period and onwards. Data is available from 2014 for the attendance rate and from 2015 for the attendance level.<sup>38</sup>

<sup>38</sup> NSW government sector 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 2024. The average school attendance rate for Years 1–10 across Australia in 2024 was 87.1% for government schools, 90.1% for Catholic schools, 91.0% for independent schools and 88.3% for schools overall.

**Table 4.2:** Student attendance rates, Years 1–10, by state/territory and school sector, Australia, 2024 (%)

State/territory	NSW	Vic	Qld	SA	WA	Tas	NT	ACT	Australia
Government	87.5	87.5	86.9	87.2	87.1	85.3	74.5	87.8	87.1
Catholic	90.3	89.8	90.3	90.1	90.8	89.0	80.8	88.9	90.1
Independent	90.9	91.5	90.6	91.1	91.6	90.5	84.2	90.5	91.0
All	88.6	88.6	88.1	88.4	88.4	86.8	76.7	88.6	88.3

Note: Excludes part-time students. For data definitions, see the National Standards for Student Attendance Data Reporting.  
Source: Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA), National Student Attendance Data Collection.

The average attendance rate for Years 1–10 in 2024 exceeded 85% in all states and territories except the Northern Territory, where, as in previous years, the much lower average attendance rate (58.3%) for the high proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students led to an average rate for all students of 76.7%.

There was little difference in the national average attendance rate for girls (88.4%) and boys (88.2%) in 2024. Average attendance rates were higher in major cities (89.2%) than in remote areas (81.0%), and lowest in very remote areas (65.8%).<sup>39</sup> 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 2024, the average attendance rate for Years 7–10 was 85.9% compared with 90.0% for Years 1–6.

Table 4.3 reports KPM 1(b) nationally, by school sector, for 2014–2024. 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. However, there was a small decline in national attendance rates (0.3 percentage points) in 2024, with declines of 0.4 percentage points in government schools and 0.2 percentage points in non-government schools.

While the national attendance rate was lower in 2024 than in 2023, some states reported higher attendance rates in 2024 than in 2023, with South Australia, Western Australia and Tasmania all reporting increases of 0.4 percentage points. Declines in attendance rates in the other states ranged from 0.2 percentage points in Queensland to 0.6 percentage points in NSW and 0.7 percentage points in Victoria.

While student attendance rates were higher in 2024 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 2014–2024 of -0.5 percentage points per annum. Further analysis of reasons for absences is required to determine the reason for this decline.

<sup>39</sup> Student attendance rates disaggregated by year level, gender and geolocation are available in the National Report on Schooling in Australia data portal, [Student Attendance](#) data set.

**Table 4.3:** Student attendance rates, Years 1–10, by school sector, Australia, 2014–2024 (%)

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
2024	87.1	90.1	91.0	88.3

Notes: See note for Table 4.2.

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

School attendance data for 2020 has not been published due to inconsistencies in the data as a result of the varying health advice and schooling arrangements across the country in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The inconsistencies in data collection have now been addressed through national agreement by schools and systems. However, the impact of the pandemic 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, 2023 and 2024. In all three years, above average gaps in attendance rates were recorded in the Northern Territory, Western Australia, and South Australia.

At a national level, the decline in attendance rates for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students between 2023 and 2024 (0.5 percentage points) was slightly larger than that for non-Indigenous students (0.3 percentage points). This increased the national gap in attendance rates by 0.2 percentage points to 12.3 percentage points in 2024. However, in South Australia and Tasmania, attendance rates among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students increased between 2023 and 2024, by 0.8 and 0.6 percentage points respectively. Declines in attendance rates for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students were largest in Victoria (1.6 percentage points) and NSW (1.0 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 2024 was 89.6% in major cities, 88.2% in remote areas and 87.0% in very remote areas. Among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, attendance rates were 79.9% in major cities, 66.6% in remote areas and 54.9% in very remote areas. This results in a difference of 9.7 percentage points between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and non-Indigenous students in major cities, 21.6 percentage points in remote areas, and 32.1 percentage points in very remote areas.

**Table 4.4:** Student attendance rates, Years 1–10, by state and territory and Indigenous status, Australia, 2014, 2023 and 2024 (%)

	NSW	Vic	Qld	SA	WA	Tas	NT	ACT	Australia
<b>2014</b>									
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	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
<b>2023</b>									
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
<b>2024</b>									
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students	79.8	79.4	78.7	75.8	69.8	81.5	58.3	79.2	76.9
Non-Indigenous students	89.4	88.8	89.1	89.2	89.9	87.5	89.2	88.9	89.2
All students	88.6	88.6	88.1	88.4	88.4	86.8	76.7	88.6	88.3
Gap: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander/non-Indigenous students (percentage points)	9.5	9.4	10.4	13.4	20.1	6.0	30.9	9.7	12.3
Change in gap 2014–2023 (percentage points)	2.7	2.2	2.6	2.3	4.0	2.3	9.5	2.3	2.5
Change in gap 2014–2024 (percentage points)	3.1	3.1	2.8	1.9	4.7	2.1	10.2	2.3	2.7
Change in gap 2023–2024 (percentage points)	0.4	0.9	0.2	-0.4	0.7	-0.2	0.7	0.0	0.2

Note: See notes for Tables 4.2 and 4.3.

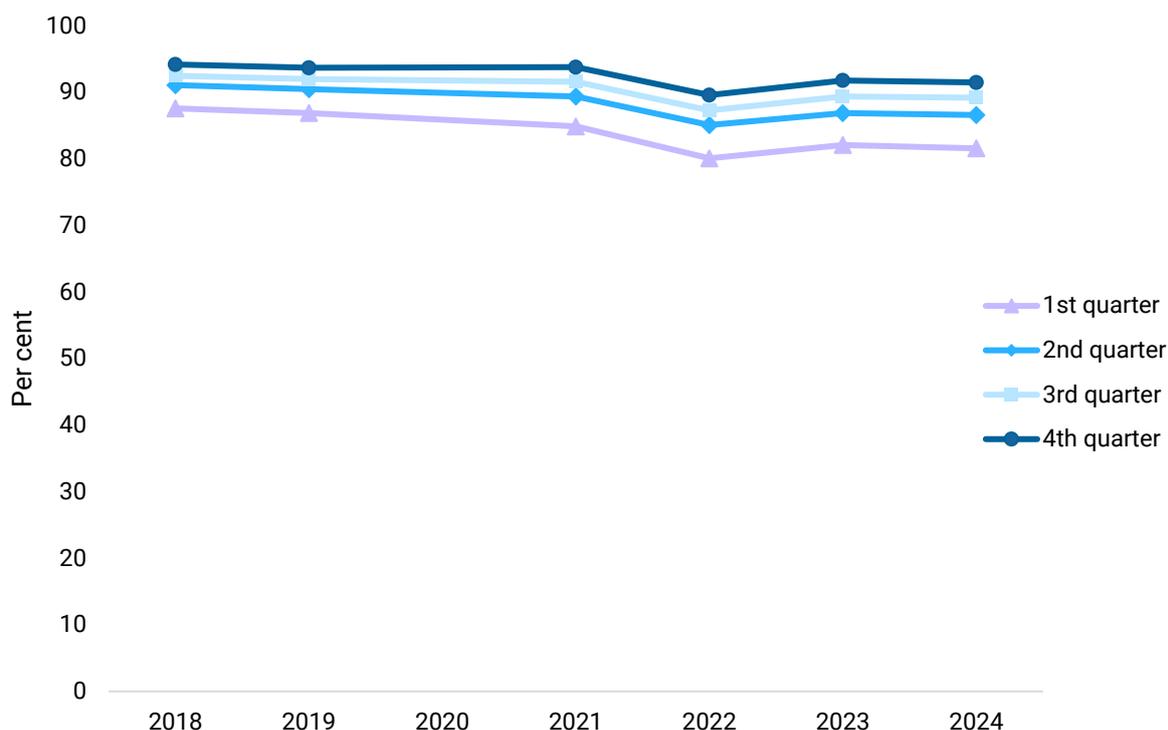
Source: ACARA, National Student Attendance Data Collection.

The average attendance rate for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students was lower for older year groups. In 2024, the average attendance rate for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students was 80.9% for Years 1–6, compared to 70.7% for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in Years 7–10.

Attendance rates in 2024 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 39.2% for Year 10 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in very remote areas, compared to 79.0% 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 2024, the average attendance rate for schools in the lowest ICSEA quarter was 81.6%, compared to 91.5% for students in schools in the highest ICSEA quarter. This difference was more pronounced in the Northern Territory than in other states and territories, with average attendance rates of 63.1% among students in schools in the lowest ICSEA quarter, compared to 91.5% for students in schools in the highest ICSEA quarter.

**Figure 4.1:** Student attendance rates, Years 1–10, by ICSEA quarter, Australia, 2018–2024 (%)



Note: See notes for Tables 4.2 and 4.3.

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%.<sup>40</sup> 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 2024.

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

**Table 4.5:** 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, 2024 (%); Change 2023–2024 (percentage points)

	NSW	Vic	Qld	SA	WA	Tas	NT	ACT	Australia
<b>2024</b>									
<b>Government</b>	55.8	56.4	55.6	58.4	59.6	53.7	41.3	56.8	56.3
<b>Catholic</b>	63.8	62.6	64.8	63.8	69.0	60.4	44.8	58.4	63.8
<b>Independent</b>	67.8	70.3	67.2	68.8	71.7	67.5	55.9	65.3	68.6
<b>All</b>	59.5	59.7	59.1	61.3	63.2	57.1	43.9	58.8	59.8
<b>Change 2023–2024</b>									
<b>Government</b>	-4.1	-5.7	-0.5	2.1	2.4	3.1	-0.3	0.3	-2.3
<b>Catholic</b>	-2.1	-2.4	-1.3	0.4	2.5	2.1	0.0	-1.9	-1.4
<b>Independent</b>	-3.1	-0.3	-1.7	0.9	3.0	3.4	-0.7	-2.8	-1.0
<b>All</b>	-3.5	-4.3	-0.8	1.6	2.6	3.1	-0.3	-0.7	-1.8

Note: See notes for Tables 4.2 and 4.3.

Source: ACARA, National Student Attendance Data Collection.

In 2024, 59.8% of Australian students in Years 1–10 attended school for at least 90% of school days, down 1.8 percentage points from 61.6% in 2023. Attendance levels declined across all school sectors, with larger declines for government schools (2.3 percentage points) than non-government schools (1.4 percentage points in Catholic schools and 1.0 percentage point in independent schools).

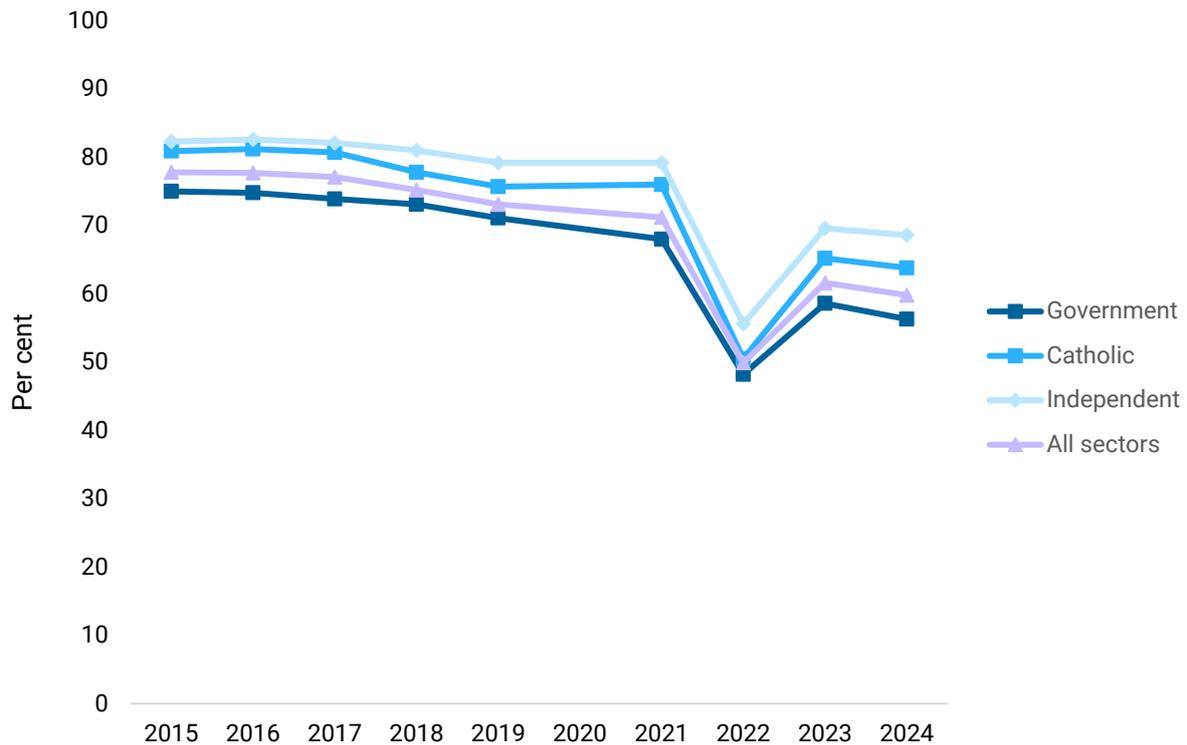
As was the case for attendance rates, there were increases in attendance levels in South Australia (1.6 percentage points), Western Australia (2.6 percentage points) and Tasmania (3.1 percentage points) and declines for all other states. The largest declines in attendance rates were in NSW (3.5 percentage points) and Victoria (4.3 percentage points), with larger declines for government schools than for non-government schools in these states.

In South Australia, increases in attendance levels were larger for government schools than for non-government schools; and in the ACT there was a small increase in attendance levels in government schools and declines in attendance levels in non-government schools.

The decline in attendance levels follows a significant increase in 2023, after a substantial drop in 2022, as shown in Figure 4.2. It is likely that the decline in 2022 resulted from the spread of COVID-19 and its impact on school operations in that year. This included public health advice that students with cold and flu symptoms should not attend school.

As was the case for student attendance rates, student attendance levels in 2024 are still lower than 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 2018–2024 of -3.2 percentage points per annum. The lower attendance rates in 2024 compared to 2021 and previous years can thus be seen as consistent with a long-term trend.

**Figure 4.2:** Student attendance levels: proportion of students in Years 1–10 whose attendance rate is equal to or greater than 90%, by school sector, Australia, 2015–2024 (%)



Note: See notes for Table 4.2. 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 2024 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 2024 by Indigenous status and state and territory, the gap in this measure between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous students and the change in attendance levels between 2023 and 2024.

**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, 2024 (%); Change 2023–2024 (percentage points)

State/territory	NSW	Vic	Qld	SA	WA	Tas	NT	ACT	Australia
<b>2024</b>									
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	37.1	38.2	37.1	33.8	28.7	44.2	18.5	35.5	35.2
Non-Indigenous	61.4	60.2	61.5	63.0	66.0	58.7	60.9	59.6	61.6
All students	59.5	59.7	59.1	61.3	63.2	57.1	43.9	58.8	59.8
Gap Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander/non-Indigenous (percentage points)	24.3	22.0	24.4	29.1	37.2	14.6	42.4	24.1	26.4
<b>Change 2023–2024</b>									
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	-3.5	-4.5	-0.3	2.1	1.5	3.3	-0.2	-1.7	-1.2
Non-Indigenous	-3.3	-4.2	-0.7	1.7	2.8	3.1	-0.3	-0.7	-1.8
All students	-3.5	-4.3	-0.8	1.6	2.6	3.1	-0.3	-0.7	-1.8
Gap Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander/non-Indigenous (percentage points)	0.2	0.3	-0.4	-0.6	1.2	-0.1	-0.1	1.0	-0.7

Note: See notes for Table 4.2.

Source: ACARA, National Student Attendance Data Collection.

In 2024, 35.2% of Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students attended school for 90% of the time or more, with a gap of 26.4 percentage points between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous students. The gaps in South Australia, Western Australia and the Northern Territory were above the national average.

The decline in attendance levels between 2023 and 2024 was larger for non-Indigenous students (1.8 percentage points) than for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students (1.2 percentage points), resulting in a 0.7 percentage point reduction in the gap in attendance levels since 2023.

Between 2023 and 2024, the gap in attendance levels widened in NSW, Victoria, Western Australia and the ACT, and narrowed in Queensland, South Australia, Tasmania and the Northern Territory, with Queensland and South Australia experiencing the largest decreases 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.
- In 2024, the national apparent retention rate from Year 10 to Year 12 was 79.9%, an increase of 1.2 percentage points from 2023.
- The apparent retention rate from Year 10 to Year 12 for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students increased by 1.2 percentage points, from 55.8% in 2023 to 57.0% in 2024.
- Between 2014 and 2024, the gap between Year 10 to Year 12 apparent retention rates for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students compared to non-Indigenous students increased by 1.2 percentage points, from 23.2 percentage points in 2014 to 24.4 percentage points in 2024.

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 or sector level, and less reliable for geographic areas with mobile populations and for individual schools.<sup>41</sup>

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 2014–2024.

<sup>41</sup> 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, 2014–2024 (%)

School sector	Government	Catholic	Independent	All
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
2024	74.3	85.3	91.0	79.9

**Notes:**

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

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

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

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

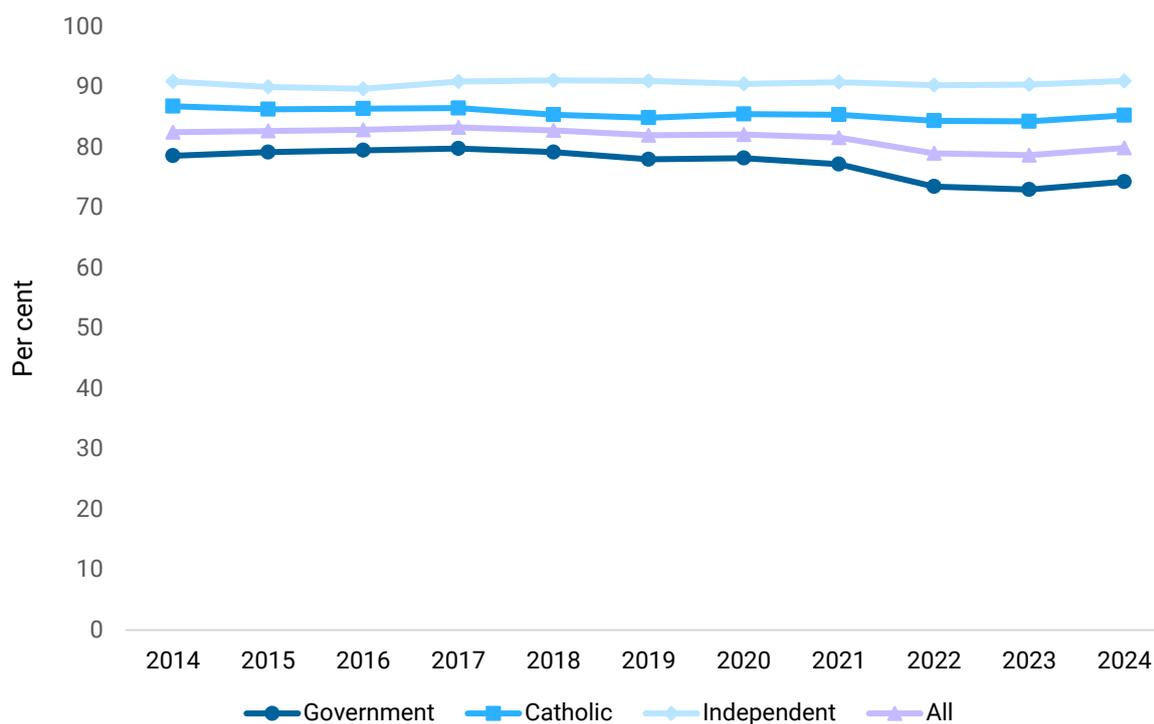
Source: ABS, *Schools*, 2024 and previous releases.

After an increase of 1.2 percentage points between 2014 and 2017, the national apparent retention rate from Year 10 to Year 12 fell in 2018 and 2019.<sup>42</sup> It then rose by 0.1 percentage point in 2020 before falling by 0.5 percentage points in 2021, 2.6 percentage points in 2022 and 0.3 percentage points in 2023. In 2024, the apparent retention rate rose by 1.2 percentage points to 79.9%.

The [Key Performance Measures Dashboard](#) in the National Report on Schooling data portal reports a long-term flat/neutral trend in this measure of 0.02 percentage points per annum for the period 2010–2024.

<sup>42</sup> The increase between 2014 and 2017 was preceded by a 2.8 percentage point increase between 2012 and 2014, following the implementation of strengthened participation requirements for 15- and 16-year-olds in 2010. These included the mandatory requirement for all young people to participate in schooling until they complete Year 10, and the requirement to participate full time in schooling or other education, training or employment, or a combination of these activities, until the age of 17. These were implemented progressively in all states and territories between 2006 and 2010.

**Figure 4.3:** Apparent retention rates (uncapped), Year 10 to Year 12, by school sector, Australia, 2014–2024 (%)



Note: See notes for Table 4.7.

Source: ABS, *Schools*, 2024 and previous releases.

Between 2023 and 2024, apparent retention rates from Year 10 to Year 12 increased by 1.3 percentage points in the government sector, 1.0 percentage points in the Catholic sector and 0.6 percentage points in the independent sector.

The gap in apparent retention rates between the government and independent sectors narrowed from 17.4 percentage points in 2023 to 16.7 percentage points in 2024. However, over the ten-year period from 2014 to 2024 this gap has increased by 4.4 percentage points – from 12.3 percentage points in 2014 to 16.7 percentage points in 2024.

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 apparent retention rates from Year 10 to Year 12 by state and territory.<sup>43</sup>

<sup>43</sup> For a more detailed time series of apparent retention rates and trend analysis by state and territory, see the National Report on Schooling in Australia data portal.

**Table 4.8:** Apparent retention rates (uncapped), Year 10 to Year 12, by state and territory, Australia, 2014, 2023 and 2024 (%) and changes 2023–2024 and 2014–2024 (percentage points)

State/territory	NSW	Vic	Qld	SA	WA	Tas	NT	ACT	Australia
2014	77.5	84.1	85.9	89.9	85.9	69.4	68.1	92.4	82.5
2023	73.0	81.9	80.7	85.0	82.0	69.0	61.8	87.7	78.7
2024	73.8	84.0	81.2	85.3	83.7	69.7	63.9	87.6	79.9
Change 2023–2024	0.8	2.1	0.5	0.3	1.7	0.7	2.1	-0.1	1.2
Change 2014–2024	-3.7	-0.1	-4.7	-4.6	-2.2	0.3	-4.2	-4.8	-2.6

Note: See notes for Table 4.7.

Source: ABS, *Schools*, 2024 and previous releases.

In 2024, Year 10 to Year 12 apparent retention rates ranged from 63.9% in the Northern Territory to 87.6% in the ACT. Apparent retention rates were higher in 2024 than in 2023 in all states and territories except the ACT. However, in all states and territories but Tasmania, Year 10 to Year 12 apparent retention rates were lower in 2024 than in 2014.

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 2014–2024. When interpreting these results, it is important to note that changes in apparent retention rates among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students over time may be affected by changes in the number of students who identify (or are identified) as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander.

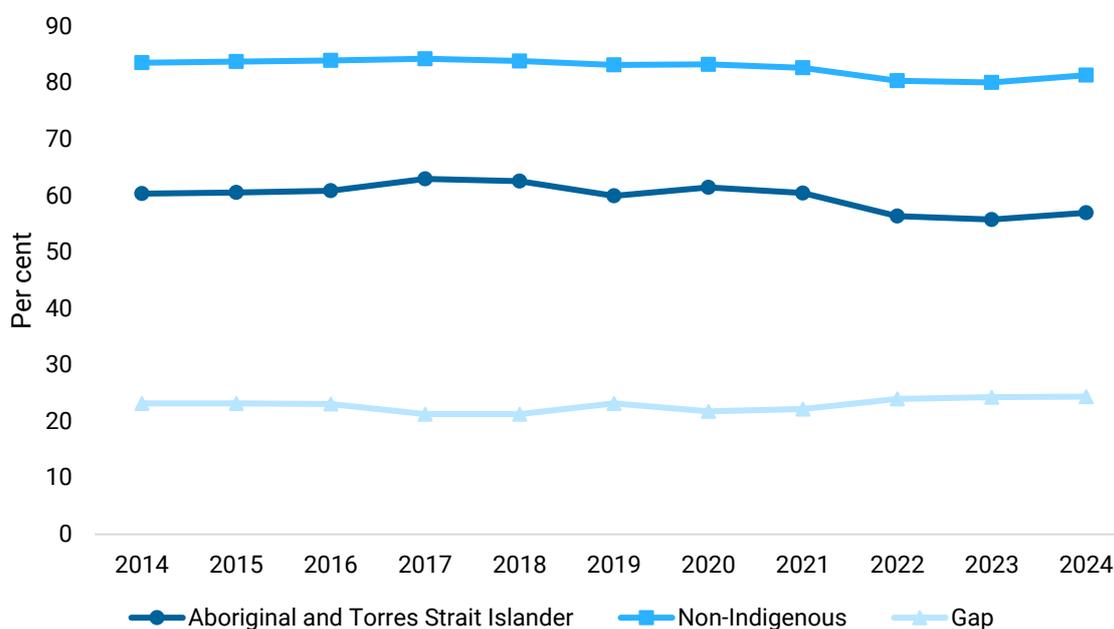
**Table 4.9:** Apparent retention rates (uncapped), Year 10 to Year 12, for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and non-Indigenous students (%) and gap between rates (percentage points) Australia, 2014–2024

School sector	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	Non-Indigenous	Gap
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
2024	57.0	81.4	24.4

Notes: See notes for Table 4.7.

Source: ABS, *Schools*, 2024 and previous releases.

**Figure 4.4:** Apparent retention rates (uncapped), Year 10 to Year 12, by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander status, Australia, 2014–2024 (%)



Source: ABS, *Schools*, 2024 and previous releases.

For Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, the Year 10 to Year 12 apparent retention rate increased from 55.8% in 2023 to 57.0% in 2024. This 1.2 percentage point increase followed a 5.7 percentage point decline between 2020 and 2023. Over the ten-year period from 2014 to 2024, there has been a 3.4 percentage point decline in Year 10 to Year 12 retention for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

For non-Indigenous students, Year 10 to Year 12 apparent retention rates decreased by 2.2 percentage points between 2014 and 2024, leading to a widening of the gap between apparent retention rates for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous students (by 1.2 percentage points) over this period, to 24.4 percentage points in 2024.

A lower percentage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students than non-Indigenous students proceed to Year 12. However, as noted above, retention rates for 'all students' are inflated by students entering the cohort since Year 10, both as permanent migrants and as temporary international students. This also applies to rates for non-Indigenous students, but not to rates for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students who, by definition, are Australian residents. The gap would therefore be smaller if recent immigrants and overseas students were excluded from the Year 12 count.<sup>44</sup>

Table 4.10 reports KPM 1(e) by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander status and state and territory for 2014, 2023 and 2024. The table displays variations between states and territories in apparent retention rates for both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and non-Indigenous students and in the percentage point gap between these rates.

**Table 4.10:** Apparent retention rates (uncapped), Year 10 to Year 12, for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and non-Indigenous students (%) and gap between rates (percentage points), by state and territory 2014, 2023 and 2024

State/territory	NSW	Vic	Qld	SA	WA	Tas	NT	ACT	Australia
<b>2014</b>									
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students	48.9	60.3	70.5	84.2	61.7	56.3	48.0	79.6	60.4
Non-Indigenous students	78.9	84.4	87.0	90.1	87.2	70.3	78.5	92.6	83.6
All students	77.5	84.1	85.9	89.9	85.9	69.4	68.1	92.4	82.5
Gap	30.0	24.1	16.5	5.9	25.5	14.0	30.5	13.0	23.2
<b>2023</b>									
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
<b>2024</b>									
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students	44.7	67.3	65.6	65.5	65.5	54.4	44.8	81.4	57.0
Non-Indigenous students	75.9	84.3	82.7	86.4	85.0	71.5	76.8	87.9	81.4
All students	73.8	84.0	81.2	85.3	83.7	69.7	63.9	87.6	79.9
Gap	31.2	17.0	17.1	20.9	19.5	17.1	32.0	6.5	24.4
Change in gap 2023–2024	0.7	2.5	-1.2	-0.4	-1.9	0.1	4.3	-5.7	0.1
Change in gap 2014–2024	1.2	-7.1	0.6	15.0	-6.0	3.1	1.5	-6.5	1.2

Note: See notes for Tables 4.7 and 4.9.

Source: ABS, *Schools*, 2024 and earlier releases.

<sup>44</sup> 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.

Between 2023 and 2024, the gap in Year 10 to Year 12 apparent retention between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and non-Indigenous students widened in NSW, Victoria, Tasmania and the Northern Territory and narrowed in Queensland, South Australia, Western Australia and the ACT. This resulted in a 0.1 percentage point widening of the gap at the national level.

Over the ten-year period from 2014 to 2024, the gap in apparent retention between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and non-Indigenous students has narrowed in Victoria (by 7.1 percentage points), Western Australia (by 6.0 percentage points) and the ACT (by 6.5 percentage points) and widened in all other states and territories (ranging from 0.6 percentage points in Queensland to 15 percentage points in South Australia). At a national level, the gap in Year 10 to Year 12 apparent retention rates widened by 1.2 percentage points during this ten-year period.

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.

For 2024, the student achievement measures include outcomes for NAP – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN reading, writing and numeracy outcomes) and NAP – Civics and Citizenship.

### 5.1 NAP – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN)

#### Key Facts

In 2024:

- NAPLAN participation rates for students in Years 3, 5 and 7 were over 96%. Year 9 students had lower levels of participation in NAPLAN, at 92.6%.
- Among Year 3 students:
  - The percentage with NAPLAN scores at or above the Strong proficiency level was 66.3% for reading, 76.8% for writing and 63.5% for numeracy.
  - The percentage with NAPLAN scores at or above the Exceeding proficiency level was 20.1% for reading, 8.3% for writing and 10.2% for numeracy.
- Among Year 5 students:
  - The percentage with NAPLAN scores at or above the Strong proficiency level was 71.4% for reading, 67.3% for writing and 67.8% for numeracy.
  - The percentage with NAPLAN scores at or above the Exceeding proficiency level was 21.5% for reading, 11.4% for writing and 12.5% for numeracy.
- Among Year 7 students:
  - The percentage with NAPLAN scores at or above the Strong proficiency level was 67.3% for reading, 65.3% for writing and 67.2% for numeracy.
  - The percentage with NAPLAN scores at or above the Exceeding proficiency level was 19.9% for reading, 17.7% for writing and 13.5% for numeracy.
- Among Year 9 students:
  - The percentage with NAPLAN scores at or above the Strong proficiency level was 63.0% for reading, 61.0% for writing and 63.4% for numeracy.
  - The percentage with NAPLAN scores at or above the Exceeding proficiency level was 18.0% for reading, 21.1% for writing and 8.9% for numeracy.

Nationally, for reading, writing and numeracy, across all year levels, there were no significant differences in mean scale scores or the percentage of students achieving at or above the Strong or Exceeding proficiency levels since 2023. This was to be expected, given that only one year has passed since the NAPLAN measurement scales were reset.

In 2024, the sixteenth 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.

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.<sup>45</sup>

NAPLAN participation rates, mean scale scores and proportions of students achieving scores at the Strong or Exceeding proficiency levels in reading, writing and numeracy are reported in this section. 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 from 2023 onwards.<sup>46</sup>

In the Measurement Framework for Schooling in Australia 2025, the Key Performance Measures (KPMs) related to NAPLAN achievement were updated to reflect the National proficiency standards introduced in 2023. While KPMs related to mean scale scores remain, mean scale scores from 2008 to 2022 cannot be compared to mean scale scores from 2023 onwards due to the re-setting of the NAPLAN measurement scale in 2023.

### 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 2024.

#### Key Performance Measure 1(d)

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

<sup>45</sup> In 2024, 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. For more detail about NAPLAN data collection, please refer to the [NAPLAN 2024 Technical Report](#).

<sup>46</sup> The 2024 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 MySchool 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, 2024 (%)

	Year 3	Year 5	Year 7	Year 9
Proportion of students participating in at least one NAPLAN test (%)	96.4	96.7	96.3	92.6

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. Students with significant intellectual disability and/or those with significant co-existing conditions which severely limit their capacity to participate in the tests may be exempted from NAPLAN. Students with a language background other than English who arrived from overseas and have been attending school in Australia for less than a year before the test may also be exempted. These students may be exempt from one test (e.g. reading) but still be able to participate in another test (e.g. numeracy).

Source: ACARA, National Report on Schooling data portal.

In 2024, participation rates for students in Years 3, 5 and 7 were over 96%. For Year 9 students, the participation rate was 92.6%. As with previous years, participation rates in NAPLAN in 2024 were lower for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students than for non-Indigenous students. Among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, participation rates were above 90% for Year 3 and Year 5 students, 89.6% for Year 7 students and 77.4% for Year 9 students.

Across all year levels that participated in NAPLAN, participation rates were slightly higher in 2024 than in 2023. However, these differences 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 2024, withdrawal rates ranged from 2.2% for Year 7 writing to 3.8% for Year 9 reading and numeracy.<sup>47</sup>

### NAPLAN achievement – Reading

The NAPLAN reading tests primarily assess the Literacy strand of the Australian Curriculum, with a lesser focus on the Language and Literature strands.

KPM 2(a) in the Measurement Framework for Schooling in Australia 2025 reflects the new Strong and Exceeding proficiency levels for reading, and KPM 2(b) measures the NAPLAN mean scale scores.

#### Key Performance Measure 2(a)

Proportion of students in Years 3, 5, 7, and 9 achieving:

- (i) at or above the national Strong proficiency level for reading
- (ii) at or above the national Exceeding proficiency level for reading

#### Key Performance Measure 2(b)

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

<sup>47</sup> 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.

Table 5.2 reports the mean scale scores and percentage of students with reading scores in each proficiency level for Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 in 2024 and the changes in the KPMs for reading since 2023.

**Table 5.2: NAPLAN mean scale scores for reading and proportion of students in each proficiency level, Years 3, 5, 7 and 9, 2024**

	Year 3	Year 5	Year 7	Year 9
Exempt (%)	1.9	1.7	1.5	1.8
Needs additional support (%)	11.3	8.7	10.2	11.1
Developing (%)	20.5	18.2	21.0	24.1
Strong (%)	46.2	49.8	47.4	45.0
Exceeding (%)	20.1	21.5	19.9	18.0
At or above the Strong proficiency level (%)	66.3	71.4	67.3	63.0
Mean scale score (Average NAPLAN score)	404.1	492.1	535.0	565.0
<b>2023–2024</b>				
Change in proportion of students at or above the Strong proficiency level (percentage points)	-0.5	-2.8	-1.1	0.2
	↔	↔	↔	↔
Change in proportion of students at or above the Exceeding proficiency level (percentage points)	1.8	0.2	0.7	1.1
	↔	↔	↔	↔
Change in mean scale scores (points)	-0.5	-3.8	-1.3	0.6
	↔	↔	↔	↔

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.

Mean scale scores do not increase consistently across year levels. For example, for reading, the difference in mean scale scores is 88.0 points between Year 3 and Year 5, and 30.0 points between Year 7 and Year 9.

↗ = the change was positive/upward, ↘ = the change was negative/downward, ↔ = no significant change

Source: ACARA, National Report on Schooling data portal.

At the national level, the proportion of students that achieved at or above the Strong proficiency level for reading ranged from 63.0% of Year 9 students to 71.3% of Year 5 students, and the proportion of students that achieved at or above the Exceeding proficiency level ranged from 18.0% of Year 9 students to 21.5% of Year 5 students.

Nationally, and across all states and territories, differences in mean scale scores for reading since 2023 were negligible. This was to be expected, given that only one year has passed since the NAPLAN measurement scales were reset.

## NAPLAN achievement – Writing

The NAPLAN writing test covers the key writing aspects of the Australian Curriculum: English, with a focus on accurate, fluent and purposeful writing of either a narrative or a persuasive text written in Standard Australian English. The genre assessed in NAPLAN 2024 was narrative writing.

KPM 2(c) in the Measurement Framework for Schooling in Australia 2025 reflects the new Strong and Exceeding proficiency levels for writing, and KPM 2(d) measures the NAPLAN mean scale scores.

<p><b>Key Performance Measure 2(c)</b></p> <p>Proportion of students in Years 3, 5, 7, and 9 achieving:</p> <p>(i) at or above the national Strong proficiency level for writing</p> <p>(ii) at or above the national Exceeding proficiency level for writing</p> <p><b>Key Performance Measure 2(d)</b></p> <p>NAPLAN mean scale scores for writing in Years 3, 5, 7, and 9</p>
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Table 5.3 reports the mean scale scores and percentage of students with writing scores in each proficiency level for Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 in 2024, and the changes in the KPMs for writing since 2023.

**Table 5.3:** NAPLAN mean scale scores for writing and proportion of students in each proficiency level, Years 3, 5, 7 and 9, 2024

	Year 3	Year 5	Year 7	Year 9
Exempt (%)	2.0	1.8	1.5	1.8
Needs additional support (%)	5.6	8.7	10.4	11.6
Developing (%)	15.6	22.2	22.7	25.7
Strong (%)	68.5	55.9	47.6	39.9
Exceeding (%)	8.3	11.4	17.7	21.1
At or above the Strong proficiency level (%)	76.8	67.3	65.3	61.0
Mean scale score (Average NAPLAN score)	415.9	484.8	540.2	573.9
<b>2023–2024</b>				
Change in proportion of students at or above the Strong proficiency level (percentage points)	0.8	1.1	2.8	3.0
	↔	↔	↔	↔
Change in proportion of students at or above the Exceeding proficiency level (percentage points)	-0.8	-0.1	2.9	3.5
	↔	↔	↔	↔
Change in mean scale scores (points)	-0.4	1.9	6.5	7.3
	↔	↔	↔	↔

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.

Mean scale scores do not increase consistently across year levels. For example, for writing, the difference in mean scale scores is 68.9 points between Year 3 and Year 5, and 33.7 points between Year 7 and Year 9.

↗ = the change was positive/upward, ↘ = the change was negative/downward, ↔ = no significant change

Source: ACARA, National Report on Schooling data portal.

At the national level, the proportion of students that achieved at or above the Strong proficiency level for writing ranged from 61.0% of Year 9 students to 76.8% of Year 3 students, and the proportion of students that achieved at or above the Exceeding level ranged from 8.3% of Year 3 students to 21.1% of Year 9 students.

Nationally, and across all states and territories, differences in mean scale scores for writing since 2023 were negligible. As was the case for reading, this was to be expected, given that only one year has passed since the NAPLAN measurement scales were reset.

### **NAPLAN achievement – Numeracy**

For the NAPLAN numeracy test, items are written to maintain a balance of items from each content strand in the Australian Curriculum (Number and algebra, Measurement and geometry, Statistics and probability) and maintain a balance of proficiencies (fluency, understanding, problem-solving, reasoning). Typically, the proportion of items assessing problem-solving and reasoning will be higher for the more complex test pathways than for the test as a whole, while the less complex test pathways will have higher proportions of items assessing fluency and understanding.

KPM 3(a) in the Measurement Framework for Schooling in Australia 2025 reflects the new Strong and Exceeding proficiency levels for numeracy, and KPM 3(b) measures the NAPLAN mean scale scores.

#### **Key Performance Measure 3(a)**

Proportion of students in Years 3, 5, 7, and 9 achieving:

- (i) at or above the national Strong proficiency level for numeracy
- (ii) at or above the national Exceeding proficiency level for numeracy

#### **Key Performance Measure 3(b)**

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

Table 5.4 reports the mean scale scores for numeracy and the percentage of students with scores at each proficiency level for Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 in 2024 and the changes in the KPMs for numeracy since 2023.

At the national level, the proportion of students that achieved at or above the Strong proficiency level for numeracy ranged from 63.4% of Year 9 students to 67.8% of Year 5 students, and the proportion of students that achieved at or above the Exceeding proficiency level ranged from 8.9% of Year 9 students to 13.5% of Year 7 students.

**Table 5.4:** NAPLAN mean scale scores for numeracy and proportion of students in each proficiency level, Years 3, 5, 7 and 9, 2024

	Year 3	Year 5	Year 7	Year 9
Exempt (%)	1.9	1.7	1.5	1.8
Needs additional support (%)	9.7	8.6	9.4	10.4
Developing (%)	25.0	21.9	21.9	24.4
Strong (%)	53.3	55.3	53.7	54.5
Exceeding (%)	10.2	12.5	13.5	8.9
At or above the Strong proficiency level (%)	63.5	67.8	67.2	63.4
Mean scale score (Average NAPLAN score)	403.8	489.1	539.8	565.3
<b>2023–2024</b>				
Change in proportion of students at or above the Strong proficiency level (percentage points)	-1.2	0.1	0.0	-0.5
	↔	↔	↔	↔
Change in proportion of students at or above the Exceeding proficiency level (percentage points)	-2.1	0.5	0.9	-1.0
	↔	↔	↔	↔
Change in mean scale scores (points)	-3.5	1.5	1.4	-2.4
	↔	↔	↔	↔

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.

Mean scale scores do not increase consistently across year levels. For example, for numeracy, the difference in mean scale scores is 85.3 points between Year 3 and Year 5, and 25.5 points between Year 7 and Year 9.

↗ = the change was positive/upward, ↘ = the change was negative/downward, ↔ = no significant change

Source: ACARA, National Report on Schooling data portal.

Nationally, and across all states and territories, differences in mean scale scores for numeracy since 2023 were negligible. As was the case for NAPLAN literacy outcomes, this was to be expected, given that only one year has passed since the NAPLAN measurement scales were reset.

## 5.2 NAP Sample Assessments – Civics and Citizenship

### Key Facts

In Australia in 2024:

- The proportion of participating Year 6 students achieving at or above the proficient standard for Civics and Citizenship was 43%. This was significantly lower than the proportion achieving at or above the proficient standard in 2019 (53%).
- The proportion of participating Year 10 students attaining the proficient standard for Civics and Citizenship was 28%. This was significantly lower than the proportion achieving at or above the proficient standard in 2019 (38%).

The National Assessment Program – Civics and Citizenship (NAP-CC) assessment measures the civics and citizenship knowledge and understanding and skills of Year 6 and Year 10 students across Australia. It is designed to measure students' cognitive competencies in civics and citizenship, including their knowledge of democratic principles, the Australian political system, and related historical contexts. The assessment also evaluates students' capacity to apply this knowledge to engage with and participate in civic processes.

The first NAP-CC assessment was conducted in 2004. Under the auspices of the Education Ministers Meeting, the assessment is to be conducted once every 3 years. However, there is a 5-year gap between the 2019 and 2024 cycles. The 2022 assessment was postponed because of the impact of COVID-19.

The NAP-CC 2024 assessment was conducted in May 2024, 5 months earlier than the previous cycle in 2019. It was administered online to representative samples of students in Year 6 and Year 10 in all states and territories across Australia. In total, 5,294 Year 6 students from 319 schools and 4,550 Year 10 students from 288 schools participated. Response rates were 87% for Year 6 and 78% for Year 10 students.<sup>48</sup>

The NAP-CC scale consists of 6 proficiency levels which are used to describe student achievement for both Year 6 and Year 10. For Year 6, the proficient standard is 405 scale points, which is the boundary between levels 1 and 2 on the NAP-CC scale. The proficient standard for Year 10 is 535 scale points, which is the boundary between levels 2 and 3 on the scale.

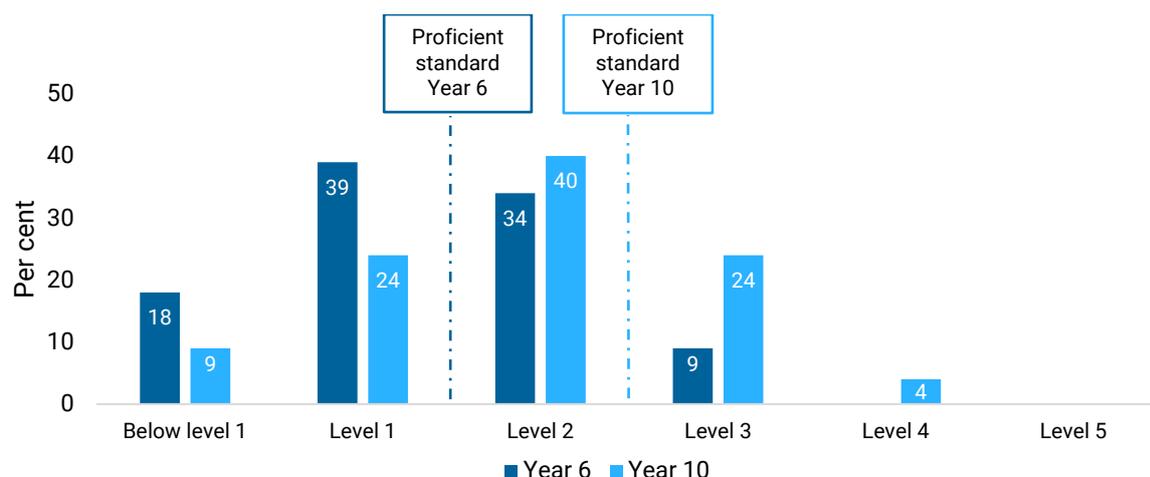
### Key Performance Measure 5(a)

Proportion of students achieving at or above the proficient standard in Civics and Citizenship:

Year 6 – Level 2  
Year 10 – Level 3

Figure 5.1 shows the percentage of Year 6 and Year 10 students across proficiency levels in 2024. In 2024, 43% of Year 6 students and 28% of Year 10 students met or exceeded the proficient standard for their year level.

<sup>48</sup> The assessment was administered online using the Locked Down Browser app via an assessment platform also used for NAPLAN. This ensured a consistent and familiar testing environment for students. While several key additions were made to the 2024 questionnaire to maintain relevance with contemporary issues, the majority of the content remained unchanged from previous cycles so that comparisons of students' engagement and attitudes over time could legitimately be made. Further details about the NAP-CC assessment are available in the [National Assessment Program - Civics and Citizenship Public Report](#).

**Figure 5.1:** Proportion of Year 6 and Year 10 students achieving each proficiency level in NAP–Civics and Citizenship, 2024 (%)

Source: ACARA, National Assessment Program – Civics and Citizenship Public Report 2024.

Average scale scores and the percentage of students attaining the proficient standard in Civics and Citizenship for Year 6 and Year 10 students from 2004 to 2024 are shown in Table 5.5.

With the exception of Year 6 in 2004, the percentage of students attaining the proficient standard was significantly lower in 2024 than in all previous cycles of NAP–CC. A drop of approximately 10 percentage points was observed from students from 2019 to the 2024 cycle for students at both year levels.

The average scale scores of Year 6 students declined by 23 scale points between 2019 and 2024; and for Year 10 students, average scale scores declined by 31 scale points during this period. Among Year 6 students, average scale scores in 2024 were their lowest since 2010, but not significantly lower than the 2007 or 2004 cycles. Average scale scores for Year 10 students in 2024 were significantly lower than those from all previous cycles.

**Table 5.5:** Average scale scores and percentages of Year 6 and Year 10 students attaining the proficient standard in NAP–Civics and Citizenship, 2004 to 2024

	2004	2007	2010	2013	2016	2019	2024
<b>Year 6</b>							
Students attaining the proficient standard (%)	50	53▲	52▲	52▲	55▲	53▲	43
CI ±	3.0	2.8	2.4	2.4	2.4	2.0	2.5
Average scale score	400	405	408	403	408	408	385
CI ±	6.7	5.5	6.7	6.1	7.6	5.4	6.4
<b>Year 10</b>							
Students attaining the proficient standard (%)	39▲	42▲	49▲	44▲	38▲	38▲	28
CI ±	2.8	2.6	3.7	2.6	2.7	2.6	2.2
Average scale score	496	502	519	511	491	488	457
CI ±	7.0	8.6	11.3	6.8	7.3	6.6	6.5

Note: ▲ if significantly higher than in 2024, ▼ if significantly lower than in 2024.

Source: ACARA, National Assessment Program – Civics and Citizenship Public Report 2024.

### 5.3 International Assessments

The National Assessment Program (NAP) also includes the delivery of international sample assessments which are overseen by international organisations:

- The Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) is conducted by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). This is administered to samples of 15-year-old school students every 4 years (previously every 3 years).
- The Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) is conducted by the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA). This tests a sample of students in Years 4 and 8 from each participating country every 4 years.
- The Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) is conducted every five years by the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA). This test is administered to a sample of students in their fourth year of schooling from each participating country, every 5 years.

As a result of the 4 and 5-year schedules of these assessments, no international assessments were conducted in 2024. Table 5.6 summarises the schedule for Key Performance Measures based on international assessments for 2023 to 2027, as outlined in the Measurement Framework for Schooling in Australia 2025.

**Table 5.6** Schedule of Key Performance Measures based on International Assessments, 2023–2027

Measure	Data Source	Frequency	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027
<b>Student achievement: NAP – Literacy</b>							
2(e) Proportion of participating 15-year-old students achieving at or above the proficient standard (Level 3) on the OECD PISA combined reading scale	PISA	Four yearly			✓		
2(f) Proportion of participating Year 4 students achieving at or above the proficient standard (Intermediate) in PIRLS	PIRLS	Five yearly				✓	
<b>Student achievement: NAP – Numeracy</b>							
3(c) Proportion of participating 15-year-old students achieving at or above the national proficient standard (Level 3) on the OECD PISA combined mathematics scale	PISA	Four yearly			✓		
3(d) Proportion of participating students in Years 4 and 8 achieving at or above the national proficient standard (Intermediate) on the TIMSS mathematics scales	TIMSS	Four yearly	✓				✓
<b>Student achievement: NAP – Science Literacy</b>							
4(b) Proportion of participating 15-year-old students achieving at or above the national proficient standard (Level 3) on the OECD PISA combined scientific literacy scale	PISA	Four yearly			✓		
4(c) Proportion of participating students in Years 4 and 8 achieving at or above the proficient standard (Intermediate) on the TIMSS science scales	TIMSS	Four yearly	✓				✓

Source: ACARA, Measurement Framework for Schooling in Australia, 2025.

## Chapter 6: Participation in Vocational Education and Training



This chapter reports on participation of young people aged 15–19 in Vocational Education and Training (VET).

### Key Facts

In Australia in 2024:

- 26.0% of 15–19-year-olds completed at least one unit of competency at AQF Certificate II or above, up from 25.5% in 2023.
- Almost half (49.1%) of qualifications gained by 15–19-year-olds were at AQF level II and one-third (33.3%) were at AQF level III.
- The long-term trend in the proportion of 15–19-year-olds participating in VET was downward, from 28.5% in 2015 to 26.0% in 2024.
- The number of 15–19-year-olds undertaking a school-based apprenticeship or traineeship increased by 11.1% from 2023 and the number of 15–19-year-olds undertaking other VET courses at school increased by 5.2%.

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.<sup>49</sup> 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’.

The Australian Government Department of Employment and Workplace Relations plays a national role in the governance, financing, and overarching policy development for the Australian VET system, working cooperatively with state and territory skills departments. State and territory training authorities are responsible for the operation of the VET system within their state or territory. Each training authority participates in the formulation of national policy, planning and objectives, and promotes and implements agreed policies and priorities within the state or territory, supported by statutory advisory and regulatory bodies.<sup>50</sup>

The national VET in Schools data collection is compiled by the National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER) from data provided by states and territories. From January 2014, all registered training organisations (RTOs), including private providers, were required to collect and report full [Australian Vocational Education and Training Management Information Statistical Standard \(AVETMISS\)](#) data on all nationally accredited training.

Since January 2015, VET students have been allocated a Unique Student Identifier (USI) and from 2015 onwards, NCVER has applied a de-duplication process using the USI to better estimate the counts of students participating in VET activity. This change constitutes a break in the time series between 2014 and 2015. For this reason, only data from 2015 onwards is presented in this chapter.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> Nationally recognised VET qualifications are detailed on a register at [training.gov.au](http://training.gov.au). The requirements for each level of VET qualification are set out in the [Australian Qualifications Framework \(AQF\)](#), which also provides guidelines for Senior Secondary Certificate of Education (Year 12) qualifications and qualifications in the higher education sector.

<sup>50</sup> For example, the VCE Vocational Major (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.

<sup>51</sup> Data from 2015 is consistent year-on-year. For further information, please refer to [Counting Students in Total VET students and courses](#).

## 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.<sup>52</sup>

### Key Performance Measure 1(f)

#### Participation of young people, including secondary students, in VET

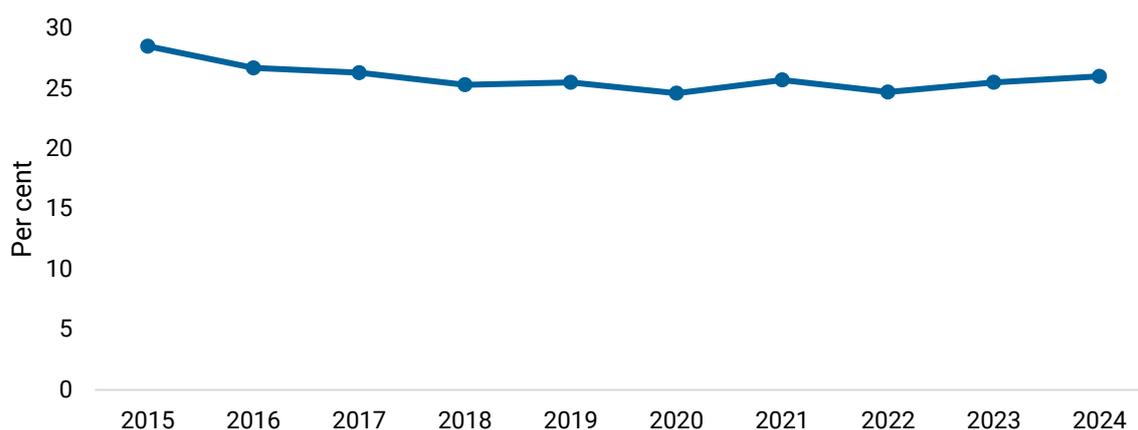
Proportion of the population aged 15–19 years who in the calendar year successfully completed at least one unit of competency as part of a VET qualification at AQF Certificate II or above

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.<sup>53</sup>

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 2024, 26.0% of 15–19-year-olds completed at least one unit of competency at AQF Certificate II or above, up from 25.5% in 2023. Figure 6.1 shows national data for this KPM for the period 2015–2024.

**Figure 6.1:** Proportion of 15–19-year-olds successfully completing at least one unit of competency at AQF Certificate II or above (%), Australia, 2015–2024 (%)



Note: ‘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.

Sources: NCVET, unpublished data; ABS, *National, state and territory population December 2024* (release date 19/06/2025).

<sup>52</sup> Data for this KPM is revised annually. The latest year is always a preliminary estimate. The number of program completions over the years 2015 to 2023 was previously overstated and has now been revised. As such, figures for Victoria, and therefore figures at the national level, differ from those published previously. For further information, please refer to NCVET (2025), [Total VET students and courses 2024: explanatory notes](#).

<sup>53</sup> AQF Certificate II is regarded as entry-level training for employment.

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 part of a VET qualification at AQF Certificate II or above. There is a long-term downward trend of 0.2 percentage points per annum from 2015 to 2024.

**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, 2015–2024

	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 (%)
2015	418.7	1469.9	28.5
2016	393.8	1475.2	26.7
2017	390.0	1481.5	26.3
2018	377.2	1488.3	25.3
2019	381.9	1494.8	25.5
2020	366.3	1486.4	24.6
2021	380.4	1479.2	25.7
2022	379.5	1533.9	24.7
2023	409.8	1608.8	25.5
2024	432.8	1662.9	26.0

Note: See notes for Figure 6.1.

Sources: NCVET, unpublished data; ABS, *National, state and territory population December 2024* (release date 19/06/2025).

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. The VET program measures are used to monitor and report on the performance of the VET sector in Australia.

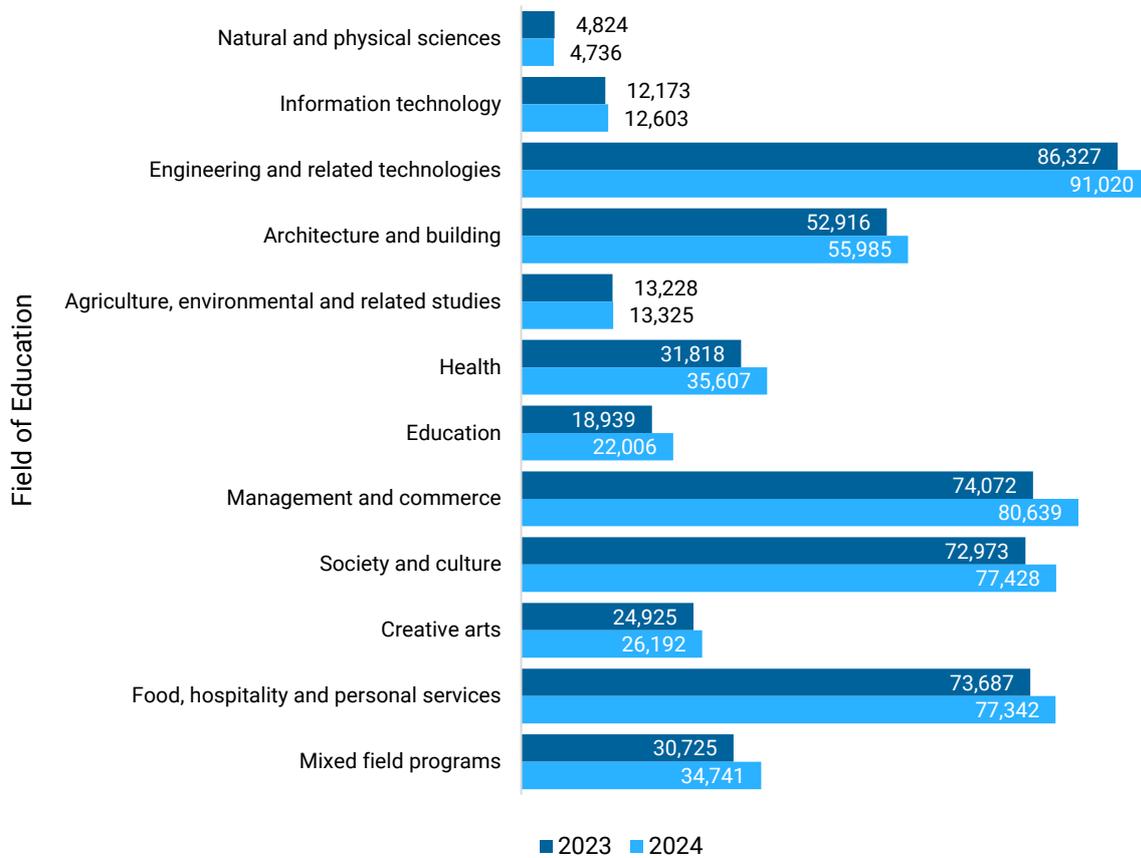
#### VET Program Measure 1

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 (the number of 15–19-year-olds who have completed a unit of competency at AQF Certificate II or higher by field of education) for 2023 and 2024 using the Australian standard classifications for field of education as a proxy for occupation and industry profile.<sup>54</sup>

<sup>54</sup> 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. However, these estimates should be interpreted with caution due to the high proportion of unknown values for sex, language background, Indigenous status and geolocation.

**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, 2023 and 2024



Notes: The number of students by field of education is greater than the unique count of students (432,844), 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 at AQF certificate II or above. Field of education is categorised according to ABS 1272.0 – Australian Standard Classification of Education (ASCED), 2001.

Source: NCVET, National VET Provider Collection 2023 and 2024.

In 2024, Engineering and related technologies had the highest number of 15–19-year-olds who had completed at least one unit of competency (91,020), followed by Management and commerce (80,639), Society and culture (77,428) and Food, hospitality and personal services (77,342). These were also the fields with the highest number of completions in 2023.

Between 2023 and 2024, the number of 15–19-year-olds who had completed at least one unit of competency increased in all fields except Natural and physical sciences, where there was a 1.8% decline. The fields with the largest increases in completions were Education (16.2%), Mixed field programs (13.1%) and Health (11.9%).

### 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, by the AQF qualification level. In 2024, 243,285 VET qualifications were completed by 15–19-year-olds, up 8.3% from 224,716 in 2023. Of the VET qualifications gained by 15–19-year-olds in 2024, almost half (49.1%) were at AQF level II and one third (33.3%) were at AQF level III.

**Table 6.2:** VET qualifications completed by 15–19-year-olds, by qualification level of major course, Australia, 2024

Qualification level	Number	%
Certificate I	16,381	6.7
Certificate II	119,436	49.1
Certificate III	81,117	33.3
Certificate IV	14,326	5.9
Diploma or higher	12,025	4.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>243,285</b>	<b>100.0</b>

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

Source: NCVET, National VET Provider Collection 2024.

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.<sup>55</sup>

<sup>55</sup> 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 VET delivered to secondary students

Secondary school students in all states and territories can undertake nationally recognised VET as part of their school program, usually in the senior years of schooling. 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 interests and career 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. Some, but not all, VET courses completed by secondary students provide credit towards their Senior Secondary Certificate of Education and/or Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR) scores.<sup>56</sup>

KPM 1(f) and the VET program measures include all 15–19-year-old students undertaking VET. The data in this section refers to VET delivered to 15–19-year-old secondary school students. For the purposes of the national VET in Schools data collection<sup>57</sup>, these are students who are undertaking accredited VET as a part of an SSCE.<sup>58</sup> This data is not restricted to Certificate II or above, or to students who have successfully completed at least one unit of competency.<sup>59</sup>

In 2024, there were 263,785 students aged 15–19 years enrolled in VET in Schools/VET delivered to secondary students – an increase of 5.6%, from 249,695 in 2023 and the highest number of students since the data collection began in 2006. Based on this data, it is estimated that nearly half of senior secondary students (48.0%) undertook one or more VET courses in 2024 as part of their SSCE.<sup>60</sup>

Among 15–19-year-old students undertaking VET in 2024, 21,385 (8.1%) were undertaking school-based apprenticeships or traineeships (SBAT). The majority of students undertaking school-based apprenticeships or traineeships were enrolled in Certificate III qualifications (85.1%). A further 11.8% were undertaking Certificate II qualifications. Of those 15–19-year-old students enrolled in other (non-SBAT) qualifications, the most common qualifications undertaken were Certificate II (51.5%) and Certificate III (38.9%).

In 2024, most 15–19-year-olds undertaking VET delivered to secondary students were enrolled in 'training package' qualifications. Training packages specify the knowledge and skills required by individuals to perform effectively in the workplace, expressed in units of competency, and detail how units of competency can be packaged into nationally recognised and portable qualifications that comply with the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF).

<sup>56</sup> The term 'VET delivered to secondary students' has generally replaced the term 'VET in Schools (VETiS)' historically used for these programs.

<sup>57</sup> The national VET in Schools data collection is compiled by NCVET from data provided by states and territories. Numbers are rounded to the nearest 5.

<sup>58</sup> 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.

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

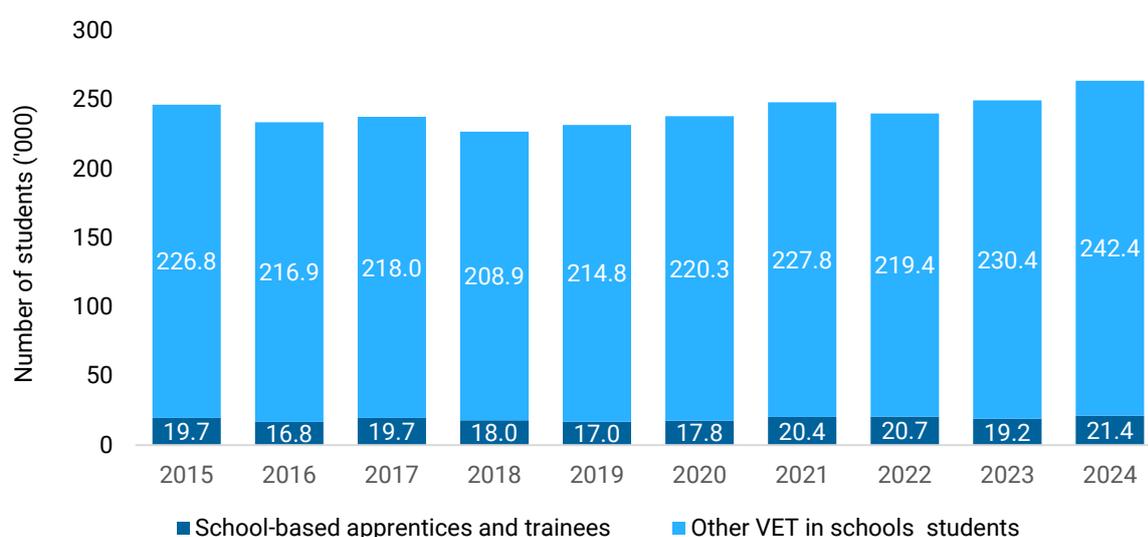
<sup>60</sup> This estimate is calculated as the number of VET in Schools students as a proportion of the number of senior secondary students (full-time plus part-time) as reported in Chapter 2 (Table 2.6) of this report. It is an estimate only, as there are some disparities between the counting of VET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

Students undertaking training package qualifications as part of a school-based apprenticeship were predominantly enrolled in Business services (16.2%), Community services (12.0%), Tourism, Travel and Hospitality (11.1%), Retail Services (10.0%) and the Construction, Plumbing and Services Integrated Framework Package (9.2%).

Among 15–19-year-olds undertaking non-SBAT training package qualifications, the most common training packages were Sport, Fitness and Recreation (15.9%); Tourism, Travel and Hospitality (14.2%); Business Services (13.8%); Creative Arts and Culture (7.8%) and Community Services (6.6%).

Figure 6.3 shows the number of 15–19-year-old students undertaking VET delivered to secondary students each year in the period 2015–2024 with school-based apprentices and trainees disaggregated.

**Figure 6.3:** Number of 15–19-year-old students undertaking VET in Schools, Australia, 2015–2024 ('000)



Note: 'School-based apprentices and trainees' numbers are calculated from students enrolled in an apprenticeship or traineeship at any point during the calendar year

Sources: NCVER, National VET in Schools Collection, 2024; NCVER [VET in Schools 2024](#); NCVER, [DataBuilder](#).

After a 14.8% increase in the number of 15–19-year-old students undertaking school-based apprenticeships and traineeships between 2020 and 2022, driven largely by growth in Queensland, the number declined by 7.2% between 2022 and 2023.<sup>61</sup> In 2024, there were 21,385 15–19-year-olds undertaking a school-based apprenticeship or traineeship, representing 8.1% of all 15–19-year-old secondary students undertaking VET. This was an increase of 2,135 students (11.1%) compared with 2023.

Between 2018 and 2021, the number of 15–19-year-old students undertaking non-SBAT VET courses increased by 9.0%, before a 3.7% decline in 2022. From 2022 to 2023, the number of 15–19-year-old students undertaking non-SBAT VET courses rose by 5.0% and from 2023 to 2024 there was a further 5.2% increase.

Further detailed information, including data disaggregated by state and territory, data definitions and data quality issues, is available in NCVER [VET in Schools 2024](#) and NCVER, [DataBuilder](#).

<sup>61</sup> The increase in VET in Schools students over the past several years in Queensland 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 (ABS) Survey of Education and Work (SEW).

### Key Facts

In Australia in 2024:

- The proportion of 15–19-year-olds who were fully engaged in education, training or work was 86.6% – down from 87.3% in 2023 and 90.3% in 2021. This rate is slightly lower than the 2019 (pre-pandemic) rate of 87.0%.
- The proportion of 20–24-year-olds who were fully engaged in education, training or work in 2024 was 75.1%, down from 77.4% in 2023, which was the highest rate recorded since 2008.
- The proportion of 17–24-year-olds who had left school and were fully engaged in education, training or work was 73.1%, down from 75.4% in 2023.

### 7.1 Participation in education, training and employment

Key Performance Measures (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 Survey of Education and Work (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 2014–2024 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 2014–2024.

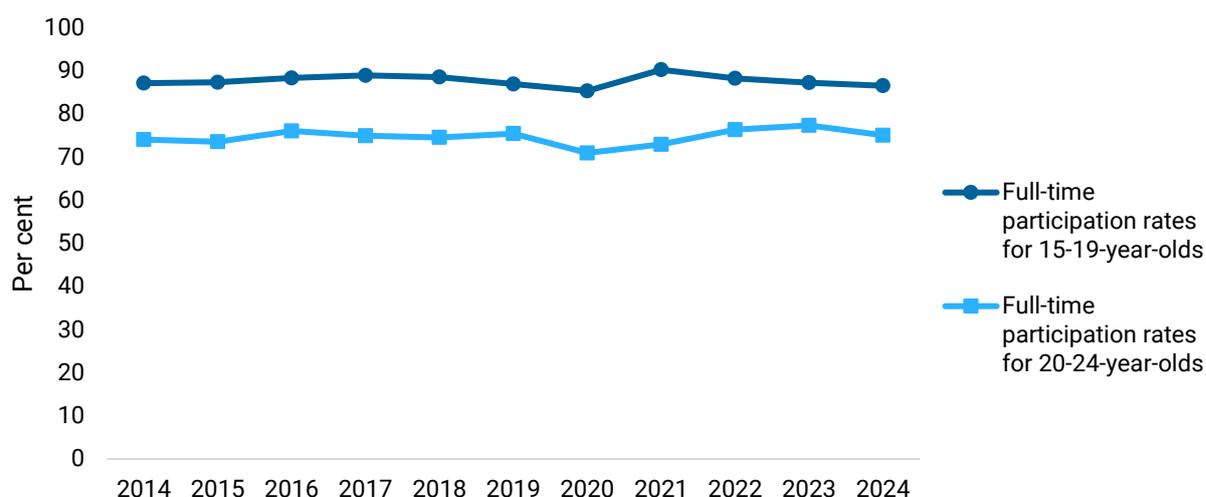
**Table 7.1:** Proportions of 15–19-year-olds and 20–24-year-olds in full-time education, in full-time work, or both in part-time work and part-time education, Australia, 2014–2024 (%)

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)
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	
2024	86.6	1.0		75.1	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  $\pm 2$  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 2024; 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, 2014–2024(%)



Source: ABS, Education and Work, Australia, 2024.

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.

For 15–19-year-olds, full-time participation rates increased 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.<sup>62</sup> Full-time participation rates for 15-19-year-olds have declined to 86.6% in 2024, slightly lower than the pre-pandemic rate of 87.0%.

For 20–24-year-olds, full-time participation rates increased by 6.4 percentage points between 2020 and 2023. This increase represented a full recovery to pre-COVID levels and in 2023, full-time participation rates for 20–24-year-olds were at their highest recorded level since 2008, when they were 80.1%. Between 2023 and 2024, full-time participation rates declined by 2.3 percentage points to 75.1%.<sup>63</sup>

Trend data for the annual SEW measures of these KPMs for the period 2004–2024 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 0.1 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 2014–2024 in Table 7.2, along with Census data for the years 2016 and 2021.

<sup>62</sup> 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.

<sup>63</sup> The ABS (2024) notes that between 2023 and 2024 there was a decline in the proportion of 15–24-year-olds who were fully engaged primarily through full-time work (from 28% in 2023 to 25% in 2024) and an increase in the proportion of 15–24-year-olds who were fully engaged primarily through full-time study (from 49% in 2023 to 51% in 2024).

**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, 2014–2024 (%)

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)
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	
2024	73.1	1.6	

Note: See notes for Table 7.1.

Sources: ABS, Education and Work, Australia, 2024; ABS, Census of Population and Housing, 2016, 2021.

There was little change in KPM 1(i) between 2014 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.

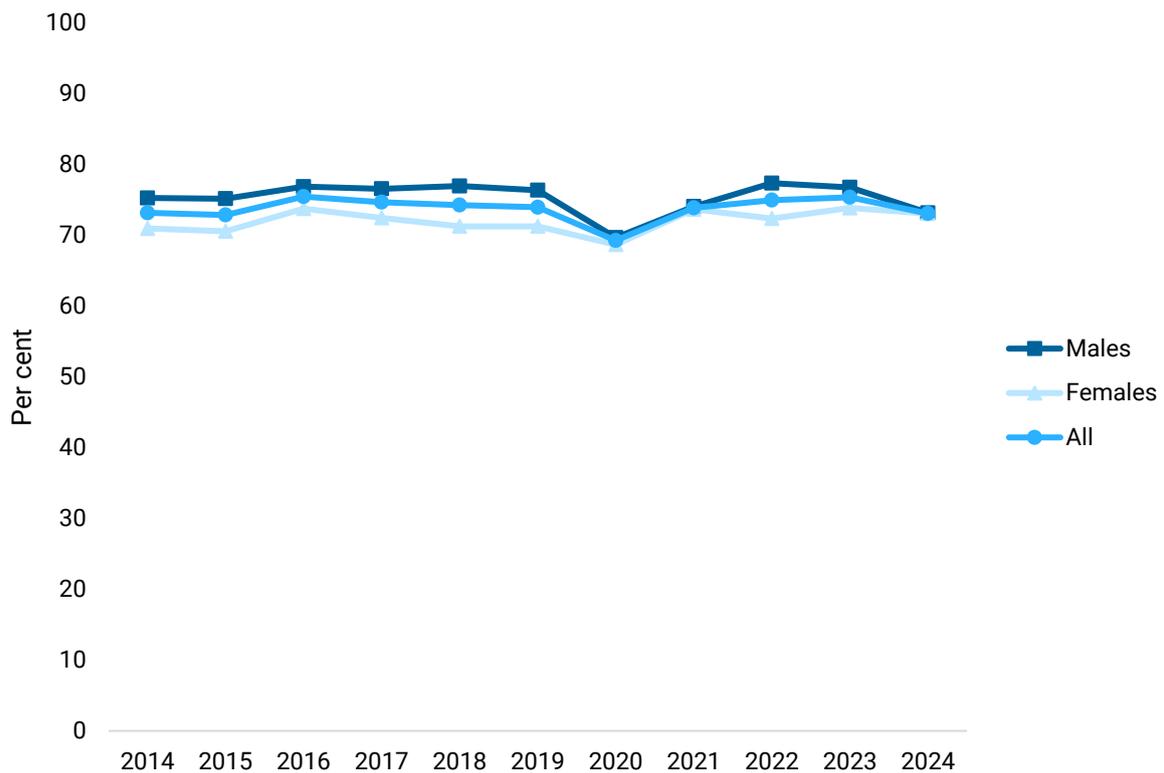
The increase in full-time participation rates for 17–24-year-olds to 75.0% in 2022 represented a return to pre-pandemic levels. However, the decline from 75.4% in 2023 to 73.1% in 2024 meant that rates were slightly lower in 2024 than in 2019.<sup>64</sup> Longer-term trend data indicates that there is a significant long-term downward trend of 0.2 percentage points per annum between 2004 and 2024.

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 specific 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.

<sup>64</sup> This decline is likely to be at least partly due to changes in economic conditions during this period. Among 15–20-year-olds who had finished Year 12 in 2023, 65% were employed in 2024, compared to 76% in 2023. Unemployment rates for 15–24-year-olds increased from 7.5% in May 2023 (8.6% for males and 6.4% for females) to 9.5% in May 2024 (10.6% for males and 8.3% for females) (ABS, *Labour Force, Australia*, September 2024).

SEW data for KPM 1(i), by gender, for the period 2014–2024 is presented in Figure 7.2. In 2024, full-time participation rates for 17–24-year-olds who had left school were similar for males (73.2%) and females (73.1%). After falling to 69.7% and 68.7% respectively in 2020, rates in 2023 were above their pre-pandemic levels for both males and females. However, between 2023 and 2024, full-time participation rates for 17–24-year-olds declined by 3.6 percentage points for males and 0.8 percentage points for females. Over the five-year period from 2019 to 2024, this has resulted in a net increase of 1.8 percentage points for females and a net decrease of 3.2 percentage points for males.

**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, 2014–2024 (%)



Source: ABS, Education and Work, Australia, 2024.

## 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.<sup>65</sup>

There is a commitment from Australian governments to raise the minimum level of education of young people. The National School Reform Agreement (NSRA), which was in place until December 2024, had a target to lift the Year 12 (or equivalent) or Certificate III attainment rate to 90%.<sup>66</sup>

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

### 8.1 Year 12 certification rates

Year 12 certification rates are estimated by calculating the number of students who meet the requirements of a Senior Certificate of Education (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.<sup>67</sup>

At the time of publication, data on Year 12 Certification rates for 2024 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.

<sup>65</sup> Australian Government Australia's Welfare School Retention and Completion, 2017.

<sup>66</sup> Certificate III is recognised as the international standard of equivalence of upper secondary education.

<sup>67</sup> 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 2024:

- the proportion who had attained at least Year 12 or AQF Certificate II or above was 90.5% (93.4% of women and 88.1% of men)
- the proportion who had attained at least Year 12 or AQF Certificate III or above was 90.0%

Since 2014:

- the proportion of 20–24-year-olds who had attained at least Year 12 or AQF Certificate II or above has risen 4.4 percentage points from 86.1% to 90.5%
- the proportion of 20–24-year-olds who had attained at least Year 12 or AQF Certificate III or above has risen 5.1 percentage points from 84.9% to 90.0%.

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 II or above between 2006 and 2021.

The Key Performance Measures (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 Council of Australian Governments (COAG) and in the current National School Reform Agreement. 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.<sup>68</sup>

#### 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 Survey of Education and Work (SEW), which is conducted in May each year, and on the 5-yearly Census of Population and Housing.

<sup>68</sup> 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 2014–2024. 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) Vocational Education and Training (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.<sup>69</sup>

**Table 8.1:** Educational attainment of the 20–24-year-old population, Australia, 2014–2024 (%)

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
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	
2024	90.5	1.4		90.0	1.4		86.2	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  $\pm 2$  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 2024; ABS, Census of Population and Housing, 2016, 2021.

<sup>69</sup> 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.

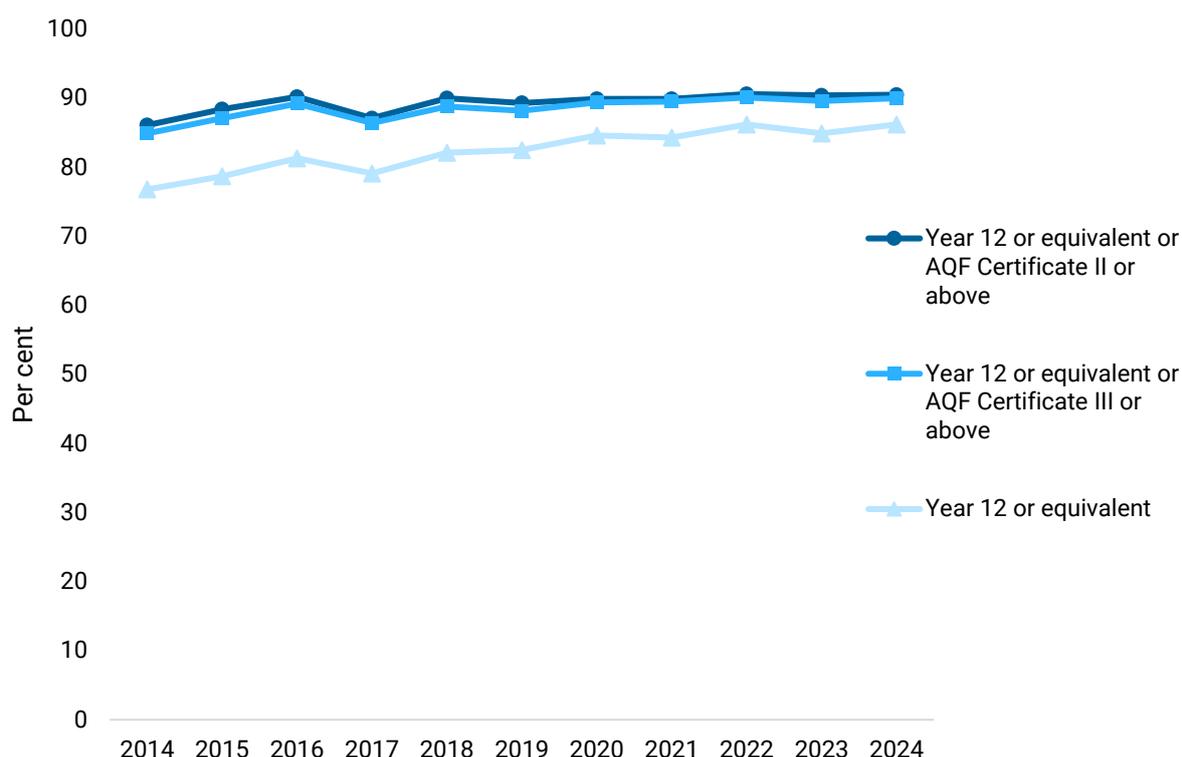
Between 2023 and 2024, attainment across both KPM 7(a) and 7(b), as measured by the SEW, increased slightly. The proportion of 20–24-year-olds who had attained at least Year 12 or equivalent, or AQF Certificate II or above was 90.5%, compared to 90.4% in 2023. The proportion of 20–24-year-olds who had attained at least Year 12 or equivalent, or AQF Certificate III or above was 90.0%, compared to 89.6% in 2023.

Over the longer term, attainment across both KPM 7(a) and 7(b), as measured by the 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 4.4 percentage points from 86.1% in 2014 to 90.5% in 2024. The proportion of 20–24-year-olds who had attained at least Year 12 or equivalent, or AQF Certificate III or above has risen 5.1 percentage points from 84.9% in 2014 to 90.0% in 2024.

Trend data for the annual measures of these KPMs for the period 2004–2024 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 2014 to 2024, 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, 2014–2024 (%)



Source: ABS, Education and Work, Australia, 2024.

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 six-year period from 2019 to 2024.

The 2 attainment KPMs have generally moved in parallel between 2014 and 2024. There has been little difference between the 2 measures, with an average difference of 0.8 percentage points over this period and a difference of 0.5 percentage points in 2024.

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.<sup>70</sup> 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 2024, 86.2% of 20–24-year-olds had attained at least Year 12 or equivalent. This was an increase of 1.3 percentage points from 2023, with a net rise of 9.4 percentage points from 2014 to 2024. The proportion of 20–24-year-olds with equivalent VET qualifications, but who had not completed Year 12, has declined from 9.3% in 2014 to 4.3% in 2024.

In 2024, 93.0% of females aged 20–24 years held qualifications at Year 12 or Certificate III level or above, compared to 87.4% of males. Between 2014 and 2024, these rates increased by 6.0 percentage points for males and 4.7 percentage points for females, resulting in a 1.3 percentage point reduction in the gender gap over this period.

The percentage of 20–24-year-old women with at least a Year 12 or equivalent qualification was 90.6% in 2024, an increase of 9.3 percentage points since 2014. For males, the percentage of 20–24-year-olds with at least a Year 12 or equivalent qualification increased by 10.0 percentage points, from 72.3% in 2014 to 82.3% in 2024.

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.

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<sup>70</sup> 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 schools, 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 Australian Government Department of Education (AGDE) for non-government schools.<sup>71</sup>

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.

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<sup>71</sup> Please note that, due to rounding, percentages in this chapter may not total exactly 100%, and component figures may not sum precisely to their stated totals.

In this chapter, time-series figures have been adjusted for inflation to 2024 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.<sup>72</sup> 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.

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<sup>72</sup> 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 funding for school education

### Key Facts

In the 2023/24 financial year:

- Total recurrent government funding for schooling was \$91.04 billion. This was made up of \$61.88 billion (68.0%) from state and territory budgets and \$29.16 billion (32.0%) from the Australian Government (Commonwealth) budget.
- Overall, 75.0% (\$68.27 billion) of total recurrent government funding was allocated to government schools and 25.0% (\$22.77 billion) to non-government schools.
- Total recurrent government funding was \$26,140 per student in government schools and \$15,262 per student for non-government schools.
- The bulk of state and territory funding (92.3%) was allocated to government schools, while 61.7% of Australian Government funding was allocated to non-government schools.

Under funding arrangements set out in the *Australian Education Act 2013* (the Act), the *Australian Education Regulations 2023*, and agreements between the Australian Government and state and territory governments, every school that operates on a not-for-profit bases receives funding from the Australian Government and its state or territory government.<sup>73</sup> 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*. 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.<sup>74</sup>

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.

<sup>73</sup> To be eligible to receive government funding, schools must operate on a not-for-profit basis. Almost all primary and secondary schools in Australia are not-for-profit. However, there are a very small number of exceptions where a school is legally operated as a profit-making business and does not receive government funding.

<sup>74</sup> 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.

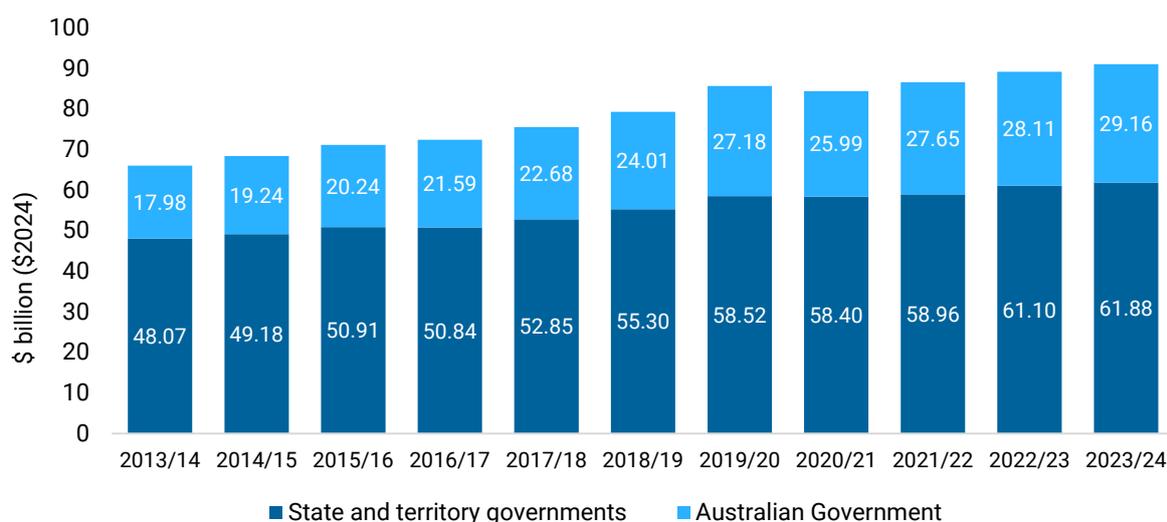
The Act requires these models to address specific educational needs using a base and loadings structure which is similar to the SRS. For most non-government schools, the SRS base amount is reduced by the school's Capacity to Contribute (CTC) – a measure of the capacity of the parents and guardians of students at the school to contribute financially to operating costs, relative to the capacity at other non-government schools.<sup>75</sup> However, SRS loadings are not affected by capacity to contribute.

## Government recurrent funding in the 2023/24 financial year

In the 2023/24 financial year, total government recurrent funding of \$91.04 billion was provided for school education, with total government expenditure on primary and secondary education making up 2.8% of Australia's gross domestic product (GDP). This funding included \$61.88 billion (68.0%) through state and territory budgets and \$29.16 billion (32.0%) through the Australian Government budget.<sup>76</sup>

After adjusting for inflation, this represents an increase of 2.1% from the previous financial year, made up of a 3.7% increase in funding from the Australian Government and a 1.3% 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 2023/24 (\$billion, \$2024)



### Notes:

Amounts are adjusted for inflation to 2024 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 2024*, 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.

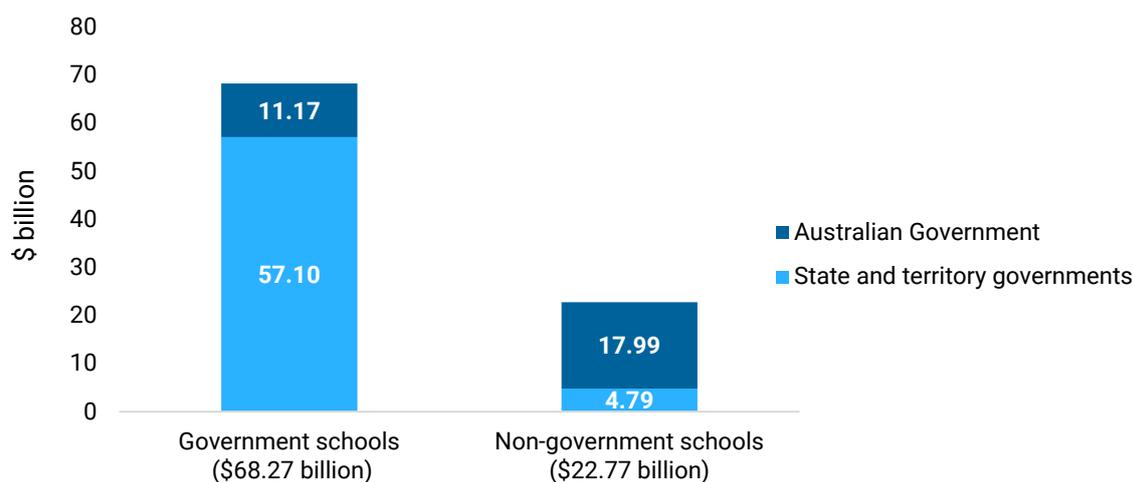
<sup>75</sup> The CTC for most non-government schools is calculated using a Direct Measure of Income (DMI) based on the actual income of parents and guardians of students at each school using taxation and other data held by the Australian Government. The CTC does not apply to government schools, or non-government 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.

<sup>76</sup> 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 2023/24, the government school sector received 75.0% (\$68.27 billion) and the non-government school sector received 25.0% (\$22.77 billion). This breakdown is shown in Figure 9.2. The bulk of state and territory funding (92.3%) was allocated to government schools, while 61.7% of Australian Government funding was allocated to non-government schools.

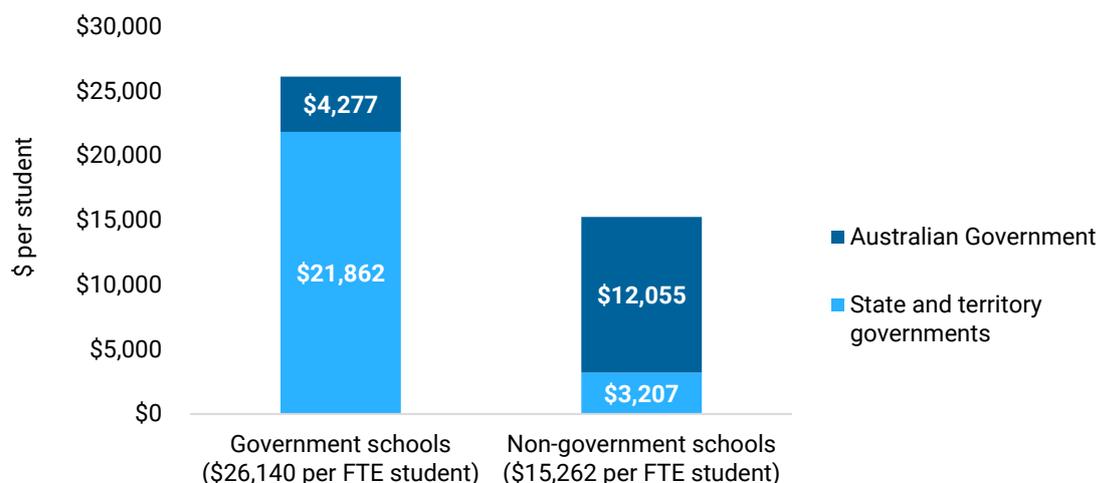
**Figure 9.2:** Total government recurrent funding for school education, by funding source and school sector, Australia, 2023/24 (\$ billion)



Sources: Government Schools Finance Statistics Group, NSSC – Finance 2024, 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 2023/24, total government recurrent funding was \$26,140 per student in government schools and \$15,262 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, 2023/24, (\$ per student)



Note: Student numbers are the average full-time equivalent (FTE) student populations for the years being reported.

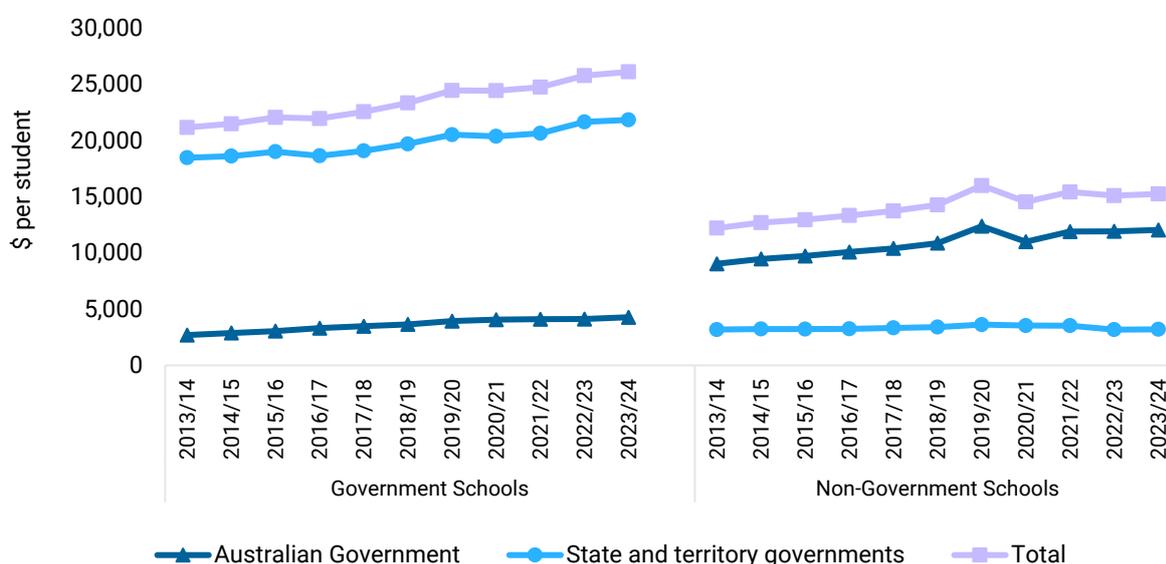
Sources: Government Schools Finance Statistics Group, NSSC – Finance 2024, unpublished; the Australian Government Department of Education (unpublished); Steering Committee for the Review of Government Service Provision (SCRGSP), *Report on Government Services 2025*, Productivity Commission.

Between the 2022/23 and 2023/24 financial years, after adjusting for inflation:

- Across all schools, total government recurrent funding per student increased by \$207 (0.9%) per student, with increases of \$181 (2.6%) in Australian Government funding and \$26 (0.2%) in state/territory funding.
- In government schools, total government recurrent funding per student increased by \$331 (1.3%), with increases of \$151 (3.7%) in Australian Government funding and \$180 (0.8%) in state/territory funding.
- In non-government schools, total government recurrent funding per student increased by \$146 (1.0%), with increases of \$117 (1.0%) in Australian Government funding and \$29 (0.9%) in state/territory funding.

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, 2023/24, (\$ per student, \$2024)



Notes: Student numbers are the average full-time equivalent (FTE) student populations for the years being reported.

Amounts are adjusted for inflation to 2024 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 2024, 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 period from 2013/14 to 2023/24, after adjusting for inflation:

- Across all schools, total government recurrent funding per student increased by \$4,128 (22.9%), with increases of \$2,190 (44.6%) in Australian government funding and \$1,937 (14.7%) in state/territory funding.
- In government schools, total government recurrent funding per student increased by \$4,950 (23.4%), with increases of \$1,578 (58.5%) in Australian government funding and \$3,371 (18.2%) in state/territory funding.
- In non-government schools, total government recurrent funding per student increased by \$3,037 (24.8%), with increases of \$3,014 (33.3%) in Australian government funding and \$23 (0.7%) 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 2024:

- In government schools:
  - Average school income per student was \$20,368.
  - State and territory governments provided 75.0% of total gross income, Australian Government funding accounted for 21.0%, and the remaining 4.0% came from fees, charges, parent contributions and other private sources.
- In Catholic schools:
  - Average school income per student was \$22,067.
  - The Australian Government contributed 60.4% of total gross income, and state and territory governments provided 14.8%. Fees, charges, parent contributions and other private sources made up the remaining 24.8% of Catholic sector income.
- In independent schools:
  - Average school income per student was \$28,642.
  - Income from fees, charges and parent contributions made up 46.6% of total gross income, with income from other private sources contributing an additional 5.2%. Australian Government funding accounted for 38.4% of total gross income, and state and territory governments provided 9.8%.

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.<sup>77</sup>

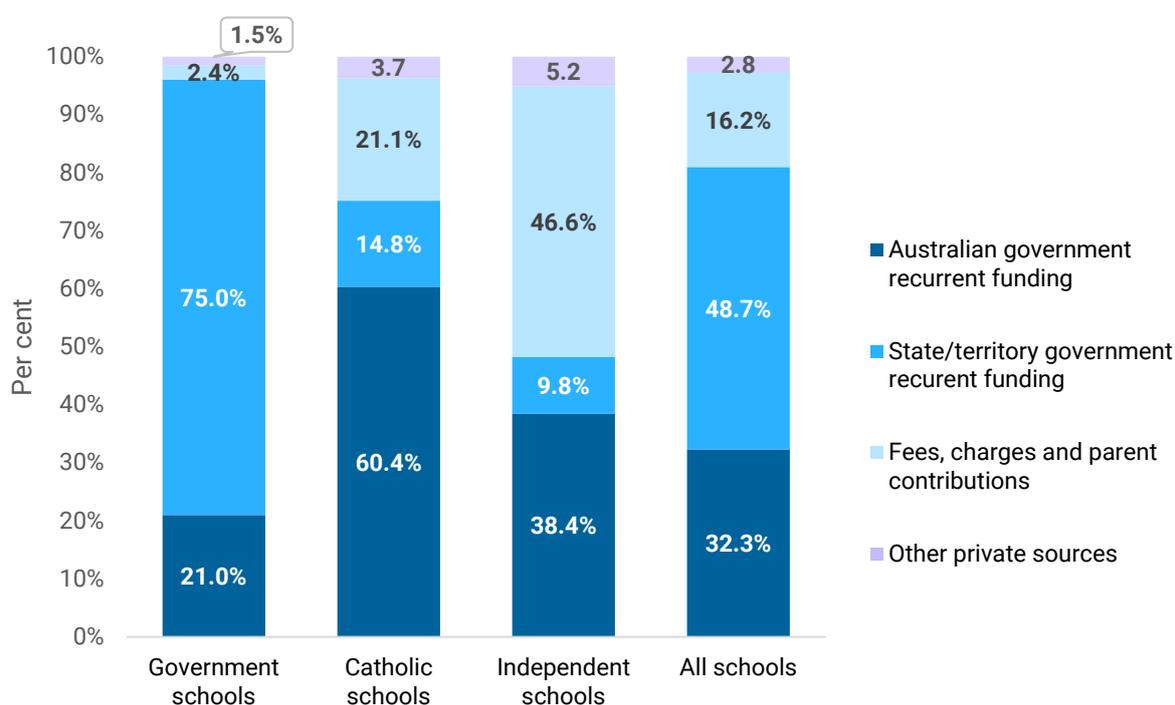
<sup>77</sup> As these items are included in the NSSC finance data, school funding amounts reported in Section 9.1 are considerably higher than school income from government funding based on the *My School* data, particularly for state/territory government funding for government schools.

## Recurrent income for schools

In 2024, total gross recurrent income for all schools in Australia was \$92.24 billion, made up of \$29.82 billion (32.3%) from Australian Government recurrent funding, \$44.87 billion (48.7%) from state/territory government recurrent funding, \$14.97 billion (16.2%) from fees, charges and parent contributions, and \$2.57 billion (2.8%) from other private contributions.

Australian Government recurrent funding accounted for 21.0% of the total gross income for government schools in 2024, with state and territory governments providing 75.0% of funds. For non-government schools, the Australian Government contributed 60.4% of Catholic sector gross income and 38.4% of independent sector gross income.<sup>78</sup> Income from fees, charges and parent contributions made up 2.4% of recurrent income for government schools, 21.1% for Catholic schools and 46.6% for independent schools. These contributions are shown in Figure 9.5.

**Figure 9.5:** Gross recurrent school income, by funding source and school sector, Australia, 2024 (%)



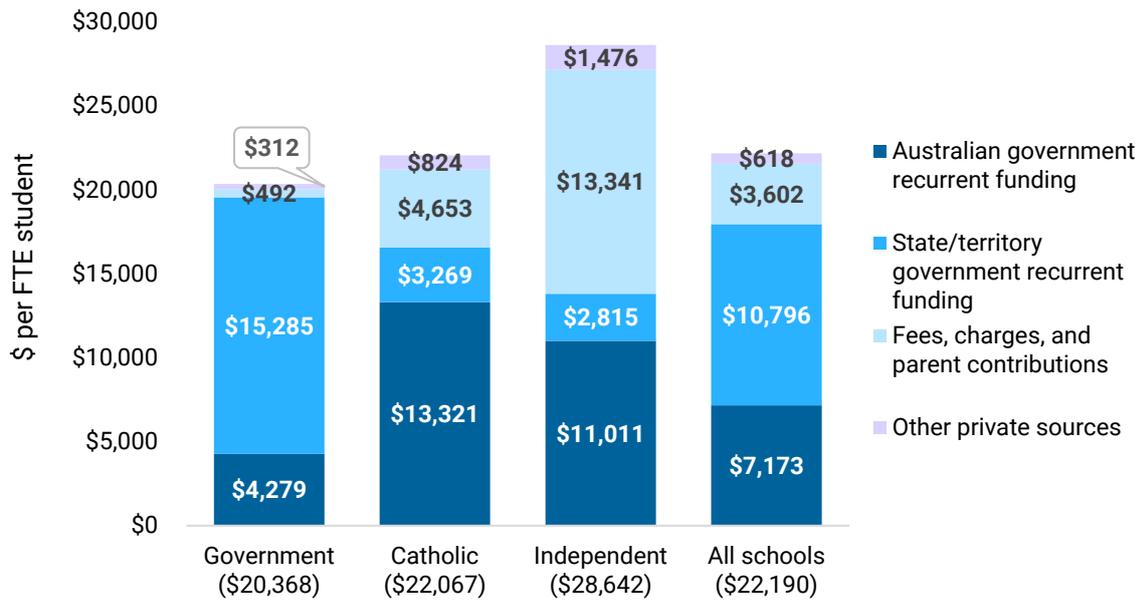
Source: ACARA, *My School* finance data collection.

In 2024, average gross recurrent income per student, across all Australian schools, was \$22,190. It was higher for independent schools (\$28,642) than for Catholic schools (\$22,067) and government schools (\$20,368). Figure 9.6 provides a breakdown by source of income and school sector.

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 2024, average NRIPS across all schools was \$21,476. It was higher for independent schools (\$26,313) than for government schools (\$20,356) and Catholic schools (\$20,541).

<sup>78</sup> 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.

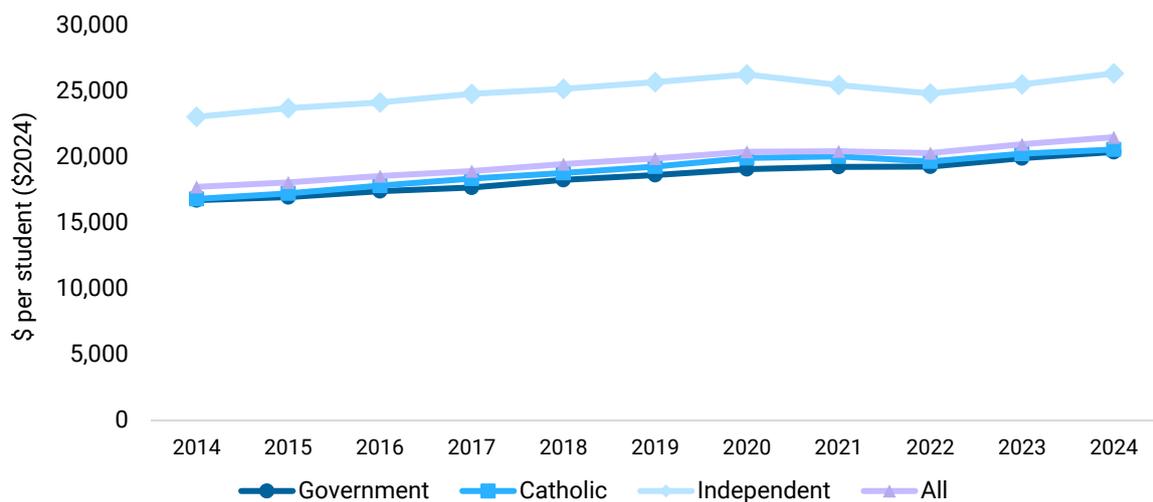
**Figure 9.6:** Gross recurrent school income, by funding source and school sector, 2024 (\$ per FTE student)



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

In real terms (after adjusting for inflation), between 2023 and 2024, NRIPS increased by \$469 (2.4%) in government schools, \$319 (1.6%) in Catholic schools and \$838 (3.3%) in independent schools. Across all sectors, NRIPS was \$536 (2.6%) higher in 2024 than in 2023. Figure 9.7 shows NRIPS, adjusted for inflation, for the period 2014 to 2024.

**Figure 9.7:** Net recurrent income per student (NRIPS), by school sector, Australia, 2014–2024 (\$ per student, \$2024)



Note: Amounts are adjusted for inflation to 2024 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*, 2024; ABS, Consumer Price Index, Australia, 2025.

After adjusting for inflation, average NRIPS across all schools was \$3,766 (21.3%) higher in 2024 compared to 2014, with increases of \$3,651 (21.9%) in government schools, \$3,746 (22.3%) in Catholic schools and \$3,296 (14.3%) in independent schools.

## 9.3 School Expenditure

### Key Facts

- In government schools, in the 2023/24 financial year, average total recurrent expenditure (money spent for all school operations) was \$26,140 per student.
- In non-government schools, in the 2024 calendar year, average total recurrent expenditure was \$22,534 per student.
- In the 2024 calendar year, capital expenditure (money spent to buy or improve long-term fixed assets, such as renovating classrooms, or constructing a new library) was \$5.28 billion in government schools, \$2.15 billion in Catholic schools, and \$3.90 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.<sup>79</sup> 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.<sup>80</sup>

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.<sup>81</sup>

<sup>79</sup> 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.

<sup>80</sup> 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.

<sup>81</sup> In this data collection, compiled by the Australian Government, non-systemic Catholic schools are counted as Catholic.

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.

The classification of recurrent expenditure also differs between government and non-government schools. For government schools, the salaries component includes costs such as superannuation, payroll tax, workers' compensation, annual leave and long service leave. For non-government schools, these costs are reported under 'other staff-related expenditure'.

### Recurrent expenditure in government schools

Total recurrent expenditure on government schools in the 2023/24 financial year was \$68.27 billion (\$26,140 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, 2023/24 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	31,447,043	0	31,447,043	12,041
Salaries - Non-teaching staff	9,116,386	2,185,506	11,301,892	4,328
Redundancies	1,322	17,937	19,259	7
Non-salary costs	12,162,161	1,348,714	13,510,875	5,173
<b>Total recurrent expenditure (excluding user cost of capital)</b>	<b>52,726,912</b>	<b>3,552,157</b>	<b>56,279,069</b>	<b>21,550</b>
User cost of capital	11,887,011	100,290	11,987,301	4,590
<b>Total recurrent expenditure (including user cost of capital)</b>	<b>64,613,923</b>	<b>3,652,447</b>	<b>68,266,370</b>	<b>26,140</b>

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, annual leave and long service leave. Redundancy payments have been excluded from salaries (teaching and non-teaching).

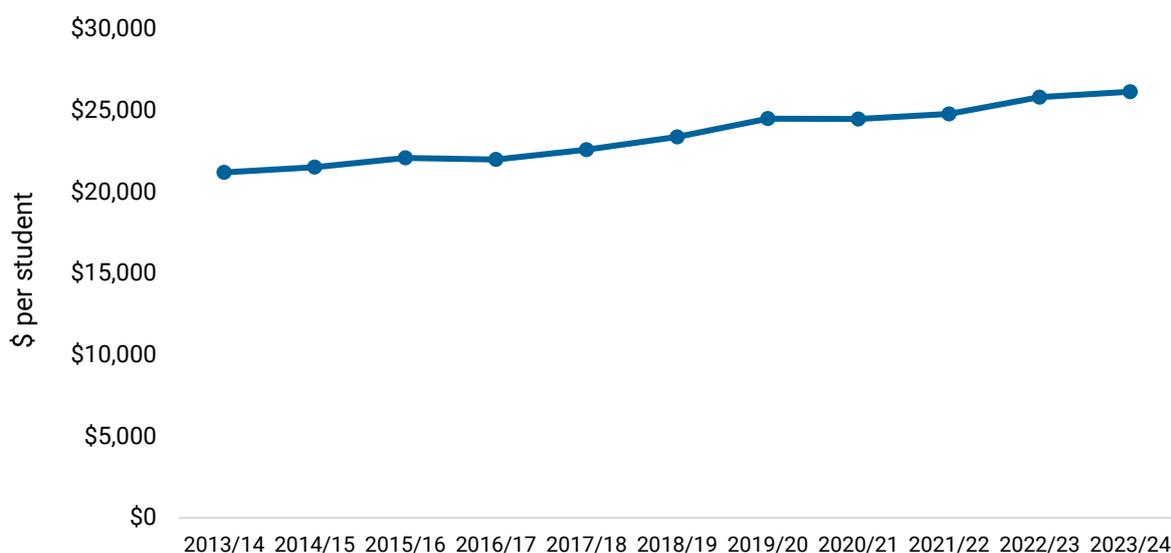
In the government budget context, the user cost of capital is usually defined as the opportunity cost of funds tied up in capital assets used to deliver government services. Capital charging is the actual procedure used for applying this cost of capital to the asset management process. As such, it is a means of representing the cost of capital used in the provision of government budgetary outputs.

Source: National Schools Statistics Collection (NSSC) (Finance), unpublished, 2024.

Salaries are by far the largest component of expenditure in schools, with teacher salaries comprising the majority of this expenditure. Teaching salary costs (average \$12,041 per student) represented 73.6% of total salary costs in 2023/24 and 46.1% of total recurrent expenditure inclusive of user cost of capital, up from 45.8% in 2022/23. In 2023/24, non-salary costs including user cost of capital made up 37.3% of total operating expenditure (inclusive of user cost of capital).<sup>82</sup>

After adjusting for inflation, average total recurrent expenditure per student in government schools increased by \$334 (1.3%) between the 2022/23 and 2023/24 financial years. Figure 9.8 shows average total recurrent expenditure per student in government schools, adjusted for inflation, for the period 2013/14 to 2023/24. During this period, average total recurrent expenditure per student increased by \$4,950 (23.4%) in real terms.

**Figure 9.8:** Total recurrent expenditure per student (including user cost of capital), government schools, Australia, 2013/14 to 2023/24 (\$ per student, \$2024)



Note: Amounts are adjusted for inflation to 2024 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, 2024; ABS, Consumer Price Index, Australia, 2025.

<sup>82</sup> 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.

## Recurrent expenditure in non-government schools

In 2024, total recurrent expenditure in non-government schools was \$35.4 billion (\$22,534 per student). Table 9.2 shows total recurrent expenditure per student for non-government schools in the 2024 calendar year.

**Table 9.2:** Recurrent expenditure in non-government schools, by function, Australia, 2024 calendar year (\$'000 and \$ per student)

	Total recurrent expenditure (\$'000)	Total recurrent expenditure per student (\$)
Salaries - Teaching staff	15,626,502	9,936
Salaries - Non-teaching staff	6,336,101	4,029
Other staff-related expenditure	4,203,412	2,673
Debt servicing	550,657	350
Other operating expenditure	8,723,733	5,547
<b>Total recurrent expenditure</b>	<b>35,440,405</b>	<b>22,534</b>

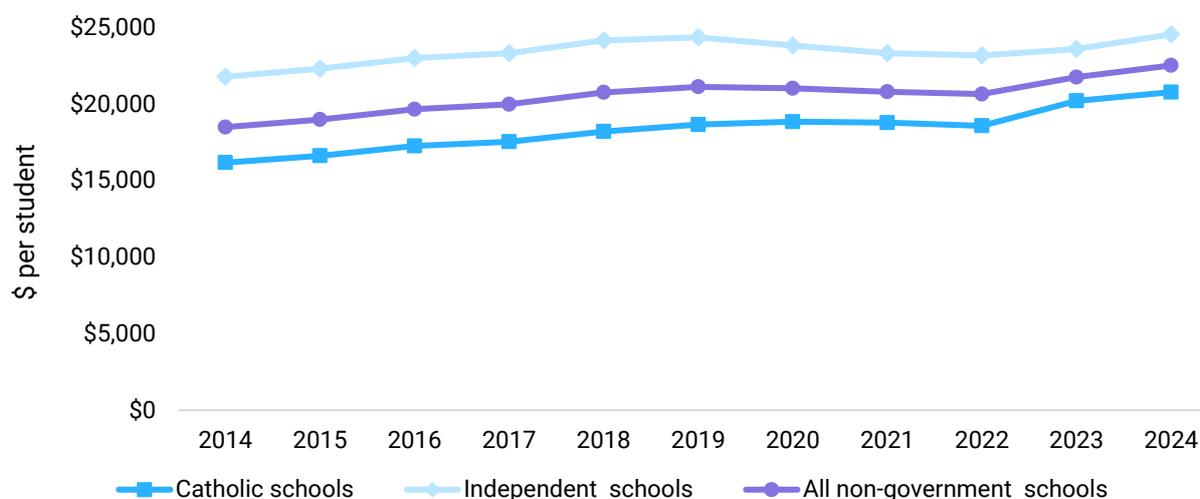
Notes: Expenditure per student for the components of recurrent expenditure is derived based on the percentage of total recurrent expenditure (including user cost of capital) of each component. Costs such as superannuation, payroll tax, workers compensation, annual leave and long service leave are included under 'other staff-related expenditure'.

Source: Australian Government Department of Education, unpublished data.

As was the case for government schools, salaries were the largest component of expenditure in non-government schools, with teacher salaries comprising the majority of this expenditure. In 2024, teaching salary costs (average \$9,936 per student) represented 71.2% of total salary costs and 44.1% of total recurrent expenditure. Non-staff related expenditure (debt servicing and other operating expenditure) made up 26.2% of total recurrent expenditure in non-government schools in 2024.

In 2024, total recurrent expenditure per student was higher for independent schools (\$24,562 per student) than in Catholic schools (\$20,788 per student). Average total recurrent expenditure per student for the period from 2014 to 2024, adjusted for inflation, is shown in Figure 9.9.

**Figure 9.9:** Total recurrent expenditure per student, non-government schools, Australia, by sector, 2014–2024 (\$ per student, \$2024)



Note: Amounts are adjusted for inflation to 2024 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 \$767 (3.5%) between 2023 and 2024, with increases of \$567 (2.8%) for Catholic schools and \$956 (4.0%) for independent schools.

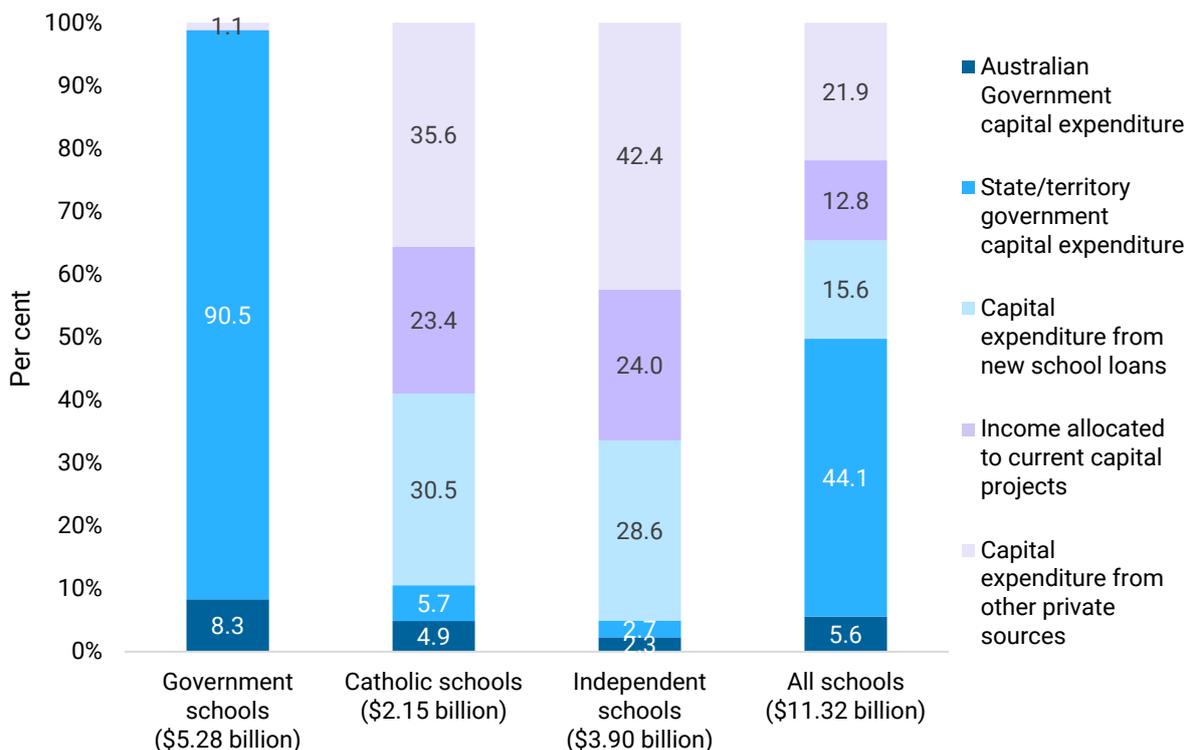
Average total recurrent expenditure per student in non-government schools, after adjusting for inflation, increased by 21.8% (\$4,030 in 2024 dollars) over the period from 2014 to 2024, with increases of 28.5% (\$4,605) for Catholic schools and 12.7% (\$2,768) for independent schools.

## Capital expenditure in government and non-government schools

*My School* allows for comparable reporting of capital expenditure by all schools.<sup>83</sup> In 2024, capital expenditure was \$5.28 billion across 6,727 government schools, \$2.15 billion across 1,759 Catholic schools, and \$3.90 billion across 1,167 independent schools.

In government schools, capital expenditure was mainly sourced from state/territory funding (90.5%), with an additional 8.3% from Australian Government funding, and 1.1% from other private sources, as shown in Figure 9.10.

**Figure 9.10:** Capital expenditure in government and non-government schools, Australia, by sector, 2024 (%)



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.

<sup>83</sup> 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.

A relatively small proportion of capital expenditure in non-government schools was sourced from state/territory government capital funding (5.7% for Catholic schools and 2.7% for independent schools) or Australian Government funding (4.9% for Catholic schools and 2.3% for independent schools).

In Catholic schools, 35.6% of capital expenditure was sourced from private income sources, as was 42.4% of capital expenditure in independent schools. Capital expenditure from income allocated to current capital projects made up 23.4% of total capital expenditure for Catholic schools and 24.0% of total capital expenditure for independent schools, while capital expenditure from new school loans made up 30.5% of total capital expenditure for Catholic schools and 28.6% of total capital expenditure for independent schools.

**Table 9.3:** An overview of the key features and differences between the 4 school funding data collections

	Government expenditure on government schools	Non-government schools' income and expenditure	School income and capital expenditure for government and non-government schools	Government recurrent expenditure on government and non-government schools
<b>Reporting period</b>	Financial year 2023/24 (ending in reporting year)	Calendar year 2024 (same as reporting year)	Calendar year 2024 (same as reporting year)	Financial year 2023/24 (ending in reporting year)
<b>Scope of reporting</b>	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
<b>What is reported</b>	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
<b>Income or expenditure based</b>	Expenditure based (based on payment of expenses)	Income and expenditure based	Income and capital expenditure based	Expenditure based (based on payment of expenses)
<b>Treatment of private funding</b>	Not reported	Private income reported	Private income reported	Not reported
<b>Inclusions</b>	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
<b>Exclusions</b>	Funds raised by schools, school councils or community organisations, amounts related to boarding facilities	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
<b>Agency responsible for collecting data</b>	State and territory governments	Australian Government Department of Education (AGDE)	AGDE (non-government schools) State/territory governments (government schools)	Productivity Commission
<b>Source</b>	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



### Terms used in this report

#### Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (Indigenous) status

A student is classified as being of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander origin, based on information provided by the student, or their parent or guardian, on the school enrolment form.

#### Accrual accounting

A recording method in which revenues, expenses, lending and borrowing are recorded as they are earned, accrued or incurred regardless of when payment is made or received.

#### Apparent retention rate

An indicative measure of student progression through secondary school. It is a measure of the proportion of full-time school students who have stayed at school from one year to another. The rate is calculated by dividing the number of students in a year group (cohort) in one calendar year by the number of students in the same cohort in a previous calendar year. For example, an apparent retention rate from Year 10 to 12 in 2021 measures the percentage of Year 10 students in 2019 that continued to Year 12 in 2021.

From 2015 onwards, the ABS has released rates tables in 2 formats: one with rates exceeding 100% capped to a maximum value of 100.0 (capped), and one where rates exceeding 100% continue to be reported as the raw calculated value (uncapped). This report continues to report uncapped rates for apparent retention.

See [Schools Methodology](#) for further information.

**Attendance**

The National Student Attendance Data Collection is conducted by ACARA for Semester 1 of each school year. Data is collected for full-time students in Years 1–10 (including ungraded secondary). Data is provided to ACARA by state and territory education departments for government schools and by the Australian Government Department of Education, Skills and Employment for non-government schools.

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

The attendance level is defined as the proportion of full-time students in Years 1–10 whose attendance rate in Semester 1 is equal to or greater than 90%.

Specifications for the collection are provided in the [National Standards for Student Attendance Data Reporting](#).

**Capital expenditure**

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

**Census of Population and Housing**

Australia's largest statistical collection, undertaken by the ABS. The Census of Population and Housing is conducted every 5 years. The aim of the census is to accurately collect data on the key characteristics of people in Australia on census night, and the dwellings in which they live. In 2021 the census counted 10.9 million dwellings and approximately 25.4 million people.

**Estimated resident population**

The estimated resident population (ERP) is used as a denominator to calculate students as a proportion of the population. The ERP is an estimate of the population of Australia, based on data from the Census of Population and Housing, updated quarterly using information on births, deaths, and overseas and interstate migration. For further details see ABS, [National, state and territory population](#).

**Full-time equivalent students**

The FTE value of students is a measure used for funding purposes. It is calculated by adding the number of full-time students and the FTE value of part-time students.

A full-time student is one who undertakes the prescribed minimum workload required to complete a given year level in a calendar year. This may vary between states and territories and from year to year. A part-time student is one who undertakes a workload less than that prescribed as full-time. Methods for estimating the FTE value of part-time students vary between states and territories due to different policy and administrative arrangements. The recorded FTE value for each student is capped at 1.0.

**Full-time equivalent teaching staff**

The FTE value of teaching staff is a measure of the level of staffing resources. Staff who are employed full time and engaged solely on activities that fall within the scope of the NSSC have an FTE value of 1.0. All FTE values are rounded to one decimal place.

For staff not employed on a full-time basis, and/or engaged in a combination of in-scope and out-of-scope activities, the FTE value is calculated on the basis of the proportion of time spent on in-scope activities compared with staff who would be considered full time.

The FTE value of teaching staff is calculated by adding the number of full-time teaching staff and the FTE value of part-time teaching staff.

### Full-time equivalent student-teacher ratios

Student-teacher ratios are calculated by dividing the FTE student number by the FTE teaching staff number. They are an indicator of the level of staffing resources used and should not be used as a measure of class size. They do not include teacher aides and other non-teaching staff who may also assist in the delivery of school education.

### Location

School locations are classified based on the Australian Statistical Geography Standard remoteness indicator. The five Remoteness Areas for Australia are:

- major cities
- inner regional
- outer regional
- remote
- very remote.

A map, showing the location of these areas, is available on the [ABS website](#).

### Measurement Framework for Schooling in Australia

The *Measurement Framework for Schooling in Australia 2025*, as agreed by education ministers, provides the basis for national reporting on the performance of schooling, and is the main focus of the statistical data included in this report.

The measurement framework defines national Key Performance Measures (KPMs) for schooling, specifies the data sources for these KPMs and outlines the reporting cycle for the period 2023–2027.

The framework is maintained by ACARA on behalf of education ministers and is published on the ACARA website. It is periodically revised by ACARA in consultation with jurisdictions and sectors.

### National Assessment Program

The National Assessment Program (NAP), as specified in the *Measurement Framework for Schooling in Australia*, encompasses all assessments endorsed by education ministers for participation by students nationally:

- NAPLAN – annual, full student cohort literacy and numeracy assessments in Years 3, 5, 7 and 9
- NAP sample assessments – triennial domestic sample student population assessments in Years 6 and 10 in Science Literacy, ICT Literacy and Civics and Citizenship
- Australia’s participation in international sample student population assessments: Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) and Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS).

ACARA is delegated to manage the development and oversee the delivery of assessments and reporting for NAPLAN, and for domestic NAP sample assessments, as directed by education ministers. PISA is conducted by the OECD. TIMSS and PIRLS are conducted by the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA).

## National Schools Statistics Collection

The scope of the NSSC consists of all 'establishments' that have as their major activity the administration or provision of full-time day primary, secondary and/or special education, or primary or secondary education by distance education. The statistics in the NSSC do not include students engaged in school-level education conducted by other institutions; in particular, TAFE, except where this is part of a school program, such as VET delivered to secondary students.

The NSSC consists of government and non-government statistics. Government statistics comprise all establishments (as defined) administered by departments of education under directors-general of education (or equivalent) in each state or territory. Non-government statistics comprise all such establishments not administered by departments of education.

The 2 sections of the NSSC are:

- non-finance statistics (numbers of schools, students and staff) collected for government and non-government schools and published by the ABS in its annual *Schools* publication
- finance statistics (expenditure on salaries and non-salary costs) collected for government school systems only; and published in this report and in the National Report on Schooling data portal.

## Primary education

See *School level and school year*.

## Recurrent funding

Annual funding provided to schools/school systems for expenditure relating to ongoing operating costs of the school (for example, teaching and non-teaching staff salaries, school operating costs).

## Remoteness

See *Location*.

## School

A school is an education establishment that satisfies all the following criteria:

- Its major activity is the provision of full-time day primary or secondary education or the provision of primary or secondary distance education.
- It is headed by a principal (or equivalent) responsible for its internal operation.
- It is possible for students to enrol and be active in a course of study for a minimum of 4 continuous weeks, excluding breaks for school vacations.

The term 'school' in this publication includes schools in institutions and hospitals, mission schools and similar establishments. It 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 year followed by Years 1–6.<sup>84</sup> 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.

*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 *Schools* and in this report, Catholic systemic and non-systemic schools are counted as ‘Catholic’.

**Exception:** For the purposes of financial reporting in Part 4.2, based on data drawn from the *My School* data collection, a number of Catholic non-systemic schools, mainly in New South Wales, are counted as ‘independent’. Government funding for these schools is distributed directly to the schools rather than through Catholic school system authorities. This affects comparisons between school sectors in some states and nationally. Financial data reported in Part 4.2 should not be compared with financial data included elsewhere in this report.

Categories used in tables and graphs showing ‘school sector’ are ‘government’, ‘Catholic’ and ‘independent’. In some tables, the category ‘total non-government’ (total of Catholic and independent data) is also used.

<sup>84</sup> The Foundation Year (first year of full-time schooling) is known as Preparatory in Victoria, Queensland and Tasmania, Kindergarten in NSW and the ACT, Reception in South Australia, Pre-primary in Western Australia and Transition in the Northern Territory. In some jurisdictions, part-time programs that precede the Foundation Year are conducted in primary schools (for example, Kindergarten in Western Australia). However, these programs are outside the scope of the NSSC and of data sets included in this report.

Year 7 became part of secondary education in Queensland and Western Australia from 2015 and in South Australia from 2022. This change affects some comparisons with previous years of student and staff data by school level.

## School type

Categories used in tables and graphs showing 'school type' are:

- 'primary' – school delivers primary education
- 'secondary' – school delivers secondary education
- 'combined' – school delivers primary and secondary education
- 'special' – students may include primary students, secondary students, ungraded students or a combination of primary, secondary and ungraded students.

See also *Special school*.

## Secondary education

See *School level and school year*.

## Senior secondary certificate of education

Senior secondary certificates of education (SSCEs) are Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) qualifications issued by the curriculum, assessment and certification authority in each state and territory to students meeting the requirements for successful completion of secondary schooling. These have different titles in each jurisdiction:

State/territory	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) ([www.acaca.edu.au](http://www.acaca.edu.au)), states and territories.

## Special school

A special school satisfies the definition of a school (see *School*), and requires one or more of the following characteristics to be exhibited by a student before enrolment is allowed:

- mental or physical disability or impairment
- slow learning ability
- social or emotional problems
- in custody, on remand or in hospital.

Special schools include special assistance schools, as defined under the *Australian Education Act 2013*. These are non-government schools that are:

- likely to be recognised by the state minister as a special assistance school
- primarily established to cater for students with social, emotional or behavioural difficulties.

**Staff**

Staff are people engaged in the administration and/or provision of day primary, secondary or special school education, or primary or secondary education by distance education at in-scope education establishments.

The functional categories for school staff are as follows:

- (a) Teaching staff are employees who spend the majority of their time in contact with students. They support students either by direct class contact or on an individual basis and are engaged to impart school curriculum. For the purposes of this report, teaching staff includes principals, deputy principals, campus principals and senior teachers mainly involved in administration.
- (b) Specialist support staff are employees who perform functions to support students or teaching staff. While these staff may spend most of their time in contact with students, they are not employed or engaged to impart the school curriculum.
- (c) Administrative and clerical staff are employees whose main duties are generally clerical or administrative. Teacher aides and assistants are included in this category, as they are seen to provide services to teaching staff rather than directly to students.
- (d) Building operations, general maintenance and other staff are employees involved in the maintenance of buildings and grounds. Also included are staff providing associated technical services, other janitorial staff and staff who service equipment. School cleaners, whether salaried or employed on contract, are excluded.

For further details on the definition of staff, see ABS [Schools glossary](#).

**States and territories**

Australia has a federal system of government comprising the national government, and the governments of the 6 states and 2 territories. In this report, the national government is generally referred to as 'the Australian Government'.

In tables and graphs in this report and the National Report on Schooling data portal, states and territories are listed in the order of New South Wales (NSW), Victoria (Vic), Queensland (Qld), South Australia (SA), Western Australia (WA), Tasmania (Tas), the Northern Territory (NT) and the Australian Capital Territory (ACT). This is the order used in ABS publications, including *Schools*.

**Student**

A student is a person who, on the NSSC census date, is formally enrolled at a school and is active in a primary, secondary and/or special education program at that school. Students may be enrolled at more than one school; however, jurisdictions employ strategies that ensure that, as far as possible, students are reported only once in this collection. Students who were not present at a school on the NSSC census date are included as students if they were expected to be absent for less than four continuous weeks (excluding school vacations).

School students undertaking VET (including through TAFE), school-based apprenticeships or traineeships, work placements or tertiary extension studies as a part of the student's school enrolment are in scope for the NSSC. The workload of these subjects or programs (which may take place outside the school premises) is included in a student's aggregate workload to determine whether a student is classified as full-time or part-time, and in calculating the FTE for part-time students.

**Student attendance**

See *Attendance*.

## **Survey of Education and Work**

The Survey of Education and Work (SEW), conducted annually by the ABS, provides selected information on participation in education, highest educational attainment, transition from education to work, and current labour force and demographic characteristics for the population aged 15–74 years. Data from Education and Work is used to report participation and attainment data, including KPMs for schooling, in this report.

See [ABS, Education and Work, Australia methodology](#) for more information.

## **Teaching staff**

Teaching staff are staff who spend most of their time in contact with students. They support students either by direct class contact or on an individual basis and are engaged to impart school curriculum.

For the purposes of this report, teaching staff includes principals, deputy principals, campus principals and senior teachers mainly involved in administration. Teacher aides and assistants, and specialist support staff are excluded, except assistant teachers working in homeland learning centres and community schools in the Northern Territory.

## **User cost of capital**

In the government budget context, the user cost of capital is usually defined as the opportunity cost of funds tied up in capital assets used to deliver government services.

Capital charging is the actual procedure used for applying this cost of capital to the asset management process. As such, it is a means of representing the cost of capital used in the provision of government budgetary outputs.

## **VET for secondary students, VET in Schools**

Data on vocational education and training delivered to secondary students / VET in Schools was derived from the National VET in Schools Collection and the National VET Provider Collection, compiled by NCVET under the Australian Vocational Education and Training Management Information Statistical Standard (AVETMISS) release 8.0.

## List of shortened forms

ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
ACACA	Australasian Curriculum, Assessment and Certification Authorities
ACARA	Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority
ACECQA	Australian Children’s Education and Care Quality Authority
ACT	Australian Capital Territory
ACTSSC	Australian Capital Territory Senior Secondary Certificate of Education
ADaPS	Assessment Design and Performance Standards
AERO	Australian Education Research Organisation
AGDE	Australian Government Department of Education
AIP	Annual Implementation Plan
AISSA	Association of Independent Schools of South Australia
AITSL	Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership
ALF	Approved Learning Framework
AQF	Australian Qualifications Framework
AI	Artificial Intelligence
ASCED	Australian Standard Classification of Education
ASIP	Annual School Improvement Plan
ATAR	Australian Tertiary Admission Rank
ATWD	Australian Teacher Workforce Data
AVETMISS	Australian Vocational Education and Training Management Information Statistical Standard
BFSA	Better and Fairer Schools Agreement
CBDC	Centre-Based Day Care
CEPP	Career Education Pathways Program
CCE	Civics and Citizenship Education
CCS	Child Care Subsidy
CET	Catholic Education Tasmania
CEWA	Catholic Education Western Australia
COAG	Council of Australian Governments
CPI	Consumer Price Index
CTC	Capacity to Contribute
DECYP	Department for Education, Children and Young People
DMI	Direct Measure of Income
ECCDPP	Early Childhood Care and Development Policy Partnership
ECEC	Early Childhood Education and Care
EL3	Early Learning for Three-Year-Olds
EMM	Education Minister’s Meeting
ERP	Estimated Resident Population
EYLF	Early Years Learning Framework

FaFT	Families as First Teachers
FFPOS	Full Fee-paying Overseas Students
FTE	Full-Time Equivalent
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GGFCE	General Government Final Consumption Expenditure
HALT	Highly Accomplished and Lead Teacher
HASS	Humanities and Social Sciences
HSC	Higher School Certificate (NSW Senior Secondary Certificate of Education)
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
ILP	Individual Learning Plan
ITE	Initial Teacher Education
ISA	Independent Schools Australia
ISV	Independent Schools Victoria
KPM	Key Performance Measure
LANTITE	Literacy and Numeracy Test for Initial Teacher Education
MYLNS	Middle Years Literacy and Numeracy Support
MTSS	Multi-Tiered System of Supports
NAP	National Assessment Program
NAP-CC	National Assessment Program–Civics and Citizenship
NAP-ICTL	National Assessment Program–Information and Communication Technology Literacy
NAPLAN	National Assessment Program–Literacy and Numeracy
NAP-SL	National Assessment Program–Science Literacy
NATSIEC	National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Council
NCCD	Nationally Consistent Collection of Data on School Students with Disability
NCEC	National Catholic Education Commission
NCVER	National Centre for Vocational Education Research
NQF	National Quality Framework
NQS	National Quality Standard
NRIPS	Net recurrent income per student
NSRA	National School Reform Agreement
NSSC	National Schools Statistics Collection
NSW	New South Wales
NT	Northern Territory
NTCET	Northern Territory Certificate of Education and Training
NTWAP	National Teacher Workforce Action Plan
OCLM	On Country Learning Measure
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

PACER	Parliament and Civics Education Rebate
PIRLS	Progress in International Reading Literacy Study
PISA	Programme for International Student Assessment
PMSS	Primary Mathematics and Science Specialists
PRA	Preschool Reform Agreement
QCAA	Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority
QCE	Queensland Certificate of Education
QDTP	Quality Differentiated Teaching Practice
Qld	Queensland
RAB	Refined Area Based (methodology)
RAP	Reconciliation Action Plan
RoGS	Report on Government Services
RTO	Registered Training Organisation
SA	South Australia
SBAT	School Based Apprenticeships and Traineeships
SACE	South Australian Certificate of Education
SCRGSP	Steering Committee for the Review of Government Service Provision
SNAICC	Secretariat of National Aboriginal and Islander Child Care
SEW	Survey of Education and Work
SLI	School Leadership Institute
STS	Student Tracking System
SRS	Schooling Resource Standard
SSCE	Senior Secondary Certificates of Education
SWD	Students with Disability
SWMC	Skills and Workforce Ministerial Council
TAFE	Technical and Further Education
Tas	Tasmania
TCE	Tasmanian Certificate of Education
TEEP	Teacher Education Expert Panel
TIMSS	Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study
USI	Unique Student Identifier
VCAL	Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning
VCE	Victorian Certificate of Education
VCE VM	Victorian Certificate of Education Vocational Major
VET	Vocational Education and Training
VETiS	VET in Schools
Vic	Victoria
VHAP	Victorian High-Ability Program
WA	Western Australia
WACE	Western Australian Certificate of Education
WPI	Wage Price Index