

2017

NATIONAL REPORT ON
SCHOOLING IN AUSTRALIA | 2017



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National Report on Schooling in Australia 2017

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Executive summary

Introduction

The *National Report on Schooling in Australia 2017* is the annual report on Australia's school education sector. It has been produced by the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) on behalf of the Education Council.

The report highlights progress in 2017 towards the [*Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians*](#) agreed by Australian education ministers in 2008.

The *National Report on Schooling in Australia 2017* addresses the eight areas of commitment to action specified in the Melbourne Declaration. This written report describes the national policy and reporting context for school education in Australia and reports against the nationally agreed key performance measures (KPMs) for schooling, covering student participation, student achievement in national assessments and student transitions to further education and work. A selection of other statistical information on Australian schooling in 2017 and for the nine-year period 2009–2017 inclusive is included.

More extensive data sets are available through the [National Report on Schooling data portal](#), which is also a component of the *National Report on Schooling in Australia*. The data portal provides readers with interactive access to a wide range of data on schooling in Australia, including general statistics on enrolments and funding, and data on the agreed KPMs. In most cases, the portal allows readers to download data by state and territory, by school sector, by calendar year and by other breakdowns, such as gender and Indigenous status, as well as at the national level.

This is the ninth annual National Report on Schooling in Australia to address the Melbourne Declaration and the twenty-ninth annual report overall.

Editions of the report for the years 2009–2016 are available on the [ACARA website](#). Editions prior to 2009 are available on the [Education Council website](#).

Overview of the report

Part 1, 'Schools and schooling', provides information on the status of Australian schooling in 2017, including school, student and teacher numbers, school structures, and funds used for school education.

In Australia, responsibility for school education rests mainly with the six state and two territory governments.¹

All states and territories provide for 13 years of formal school education. Primary education, including a foundation year, lasts for either seven or eight years and is followed by secondary education of six or five years respectively.² Typically, schooling commences at age five, is compulsory from age six 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 part 1.4.

The majority – 70.3 per cent – of schools are government schools, established and administered by state and territory governments through their education departments or authorities. The remaining 29.7 per cent 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. School numbers are shown in part 1.1.

Around two-thirds (65.6 per cent) of school students³ are enrolled in government schools and approximately one-third (34.4 per cent) in non-government schools. Part 1.2 reports on numbers of students by school sector, state and territory, and Indigenous status.

Staff numbers closely reflect enrolments, with 64.1 per cent of school teachers⁴ employed by the government school sector and 35.9 per cent by non-government schools. Part 1.3 reports on staff numbers and student/teacher ratios.

School, student and teacher numbers in 2017 are shown for Australia, and by state and territory in figure 1.

Schools are funded through a combination of state/territory government funding, Australian government funding, fees and charges and other parental/private contributions. School funding arrangements and data are reported in part 1.5.

¹ New South Wales (NSW), Victoria (Vic.), Queensland (Qld), South Australia (SA), Western Australia (WA), Tasmania (Tas.), Northern Territory (NT) and Australian Capital Territory (ACT).

² SA is now the only jurisdiction to follow the eight-year/five-year pattern.

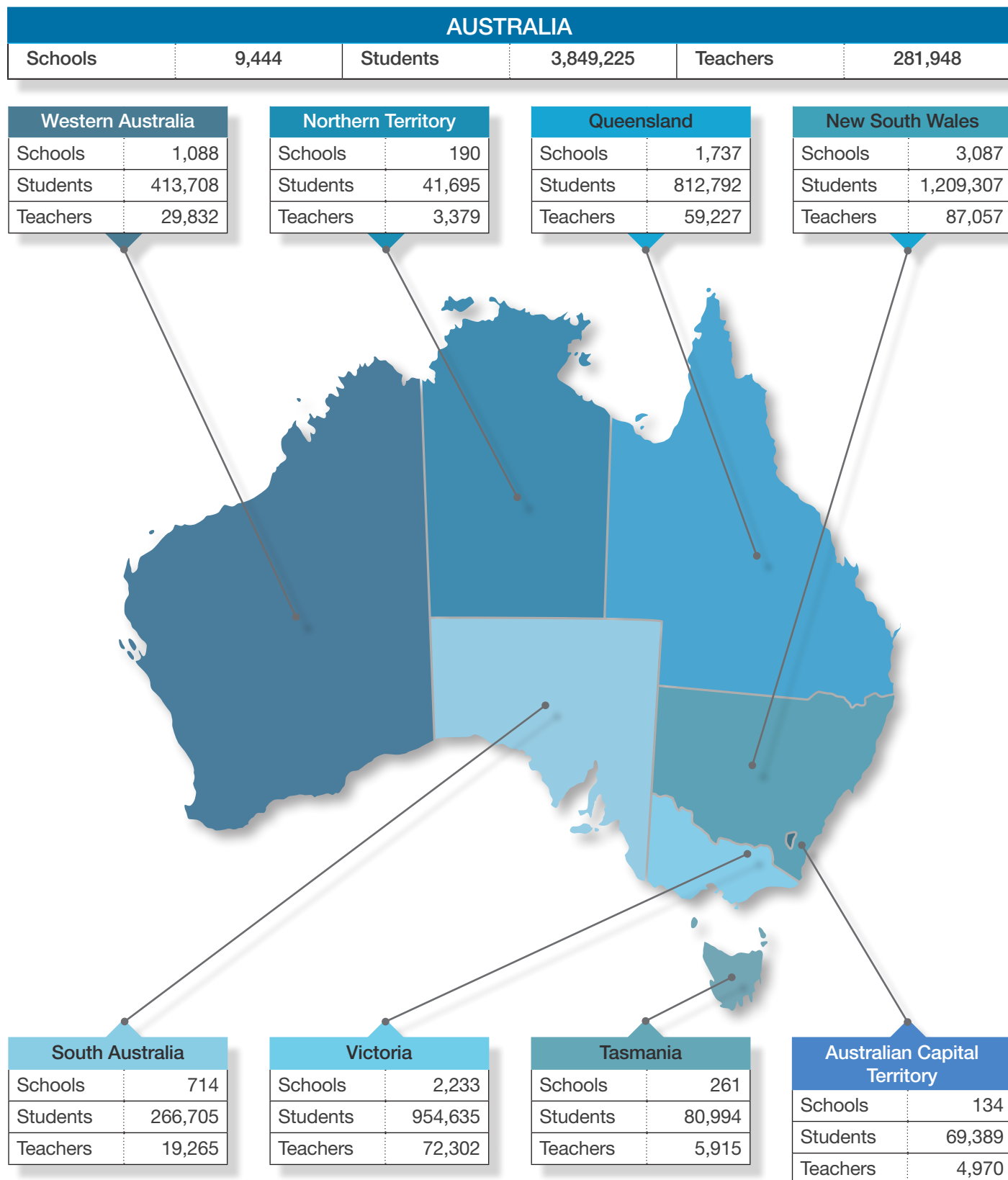
³ Count of full-time plus part-time students.

⁴ Full-time equivalent teaching staff.

National Report on Schooling in Australia 2017

Figure 1

Numbers of schools, students and teachers by state and territory, Australia, 2017



Notes

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

Source: ABS, Cat. No. 4221.0, *Schools, Australia*, 2017; See also National Report on Schooling data portal.

Part 2, 'Policies and priorities', outlines the national policy context for Australian schooling in 2017 and reports against the commitments to action agreed by Australian education ministers in the Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians.

Part 2.1 of this report summarises the national policy context for schooling including the roles of the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) and the Education Council in deciding agreed national policy and initiatives for education. It also provides examples of major national and state and territory policy initiatives for school education in 2017.

Part 2.2 outlines the goals and commitments contained in the Melbourne Declaration and the COAG targets for education.

Parts 2.3–2.10 report on national progress in implementing the Melbourne Declaration commitments to action with a focus on developments in 2017. They also list examples of state and territory initiatives relating to the commitments.

Progress towards the commitments to action reported for 2017 include:

- The Education Council established the Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) Partnerships Forum, bringing together leaders from industry and education to facilitate a strategic approach to school-industry partnerships in STEM.
- A number of states and territories implemented new and continuing initiatives for early childhood education, for the middle years of schooling and for senior secondary schooling.
- ACARA launched the new [Australian Curriculum](#) website.
- The tenth annual tests in literacy and numeracy for Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 were conducted through the National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN).
- Work was progressed on the transition of NAPLAN testing to an online assessment platform, as agreed by education ministers.
- The fifth three-yearly NAP sample assessment in information and communication technology (ICT) literacy for Years 6 and 10 students was conducted online.
- The Australian Government established the Independent Review into Regional, Rural and Remote Education.
- ACARA launched the [National Report on Schooling data portal](#).
- The eighth release of the [My School website](#) occurred.
- The Australian Government established the National School Resourcing Board to provide greater independent oversight over Commonwealth school funding.

Part 3, 'Measuring and reporting performance', reports on the performance of Australian schooling in 2017, using the nationally agreed key performance measures (KPMs) for schooling specified in the Measurement Framework for Schooling in Australia 2015.

Part 3 reports on 18 of the 26 agreed KPMs⁵ along with, in some cases, associated COAG targets. The measures are reported at the national level, and by various breakdowns, such as school sector, state and territory, school year and Indigenous status. For selected KPMs, time series for the previous eight years 2009–2016 since the Melbourne Declaration are also included. Where relevant breakdowns or time series are not reported in part 3, they are provided in the National Report on Schooling data portal, along with extensive statistical information on schooling in Australia.

Data reported for 2017 include that:

- The national school enrolment rate for the 6–15-year-old population was 100.0 per cent.
- The average national attendance rate for students in Years 1–10 was 92.4 per cent. Average attendance rates were lower for Years 8, 9 and 10 than for Years 1–7.
- At 83.2 per cent, the average attendance rate for Indigenous students was 9.8 percentage points lower than for non-Indigenous students (93.0 per cent). There was an increase in this gap of 0.1 percentage points in 2017.
- Based on data collected for 2017, which excluded NSW government school students, 77.1 per cent of all Australian students in Years 1–10 attended school for at least 90 per cent of school days. However, only 48.8 per cent of Indigenous students within this group met the 90 per cent benchmark.
- NAPLAN participation rates for reading, writing and numeracy were over 90 per cent for each of Years 3, 5, 7 and 9, but were lower in each domain for Year 9 than for Years 3, 5 and 7.
- The proportion of students achieving at or above the national minimum standard in NAPLAN tests was over 90 per cent for all year groups tested in reading, and for Years 3 and 5 in writing. In writing, the proportion of students achieving at or above the minimum standard was 87.9 per cent for Year 7 and 81.6 per cent for Year 9.
- The proportion of students achieving at or above the national minimum standard in NAPLAN numeracy tests was over 95 per cent for all year groups tested.
- At 53 per cent and 54 per cent, the proportions of Year 6 and Year 10 students achieving at or above the proficient standard in NAP ICT Literacy were statistically similar to when this sample assessment was last conducted in 2014.

⁵ The remaining eight KPMs, covering student achievement in the NAP international assessments and in NAP sample assessments in Civics and Citizenship and Science Literacy do not apply to the 2017 reporting year.

- The national apparent retention rate from Year 10 to Year 12 increased for the fifth year in a row: by 0.4 percentage points to 83.3 per cent. The apparent retention rate from Year 10 to Year 12 for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students increased by 2.1 percentage points to 63.0 per cent, with the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous rates narrowing by 1.8 percentage points to 21.3 percentage points.
- The proportion of 15–19-year-olds who were fully engaged in education, training or employment, as measured by the ABS Survey of Education and Work, increased from 88.4 per cent in 2016 to 89.0 per cent in 2017.
- The proportion of the 20–24-year-old population that has attained at least Year 12 or equivalent or AQF Certificate III or above, as measured by the ABS Survey of Education and Work, decreased significantly from 89.2 per cent in 2016 to 86.4 per cent in 2017.

Table 1 summarises the KPMs for 2017 in comparison with 2016 (or the most recent previous year for which comparable data exist).

Table 1

Key performance measures for schooling, Australia, 2016–2017

Key performance measures	2016 (or previous year)	2017	Comparison
1. Student participation			
(a) Enrolment Proportion of children aged 6–15 years who are enrolled in school (%)	100.1	100.0	N/A
(b) Attendance rate The number of actual full-time equivalent student-days attended by full-time students in Years 1–10 as a percentage of the total number of possible student-days attended over the period (%)	92.5	92.4	↔
(c) Attendance level⁶ 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 (%)	77.7	77.1	↔

⁶ KPM (c) for 2016 and 2017 excludes NSW government school students.

Key performance measures	2016 (or previous year)	2017	Comparison
(d) NAPLAN participation			
Proportion of students participating in NAPLAN for Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 for reading, writing and numeracy (%)			
Reading			
Year 3	95.0	94.8	↔
Year 5	95.4	95.4	↔
Year 7	94.5	94.5	↔
Year 9	91.2	91.3	↔
Writing			
Year 3	94.9	94.7	↔
Year 5	95.2	95.3	↔
Year 7	94.6	94.6	↔
Year 9	91.5	91.6	↔
Numeracy			
Year 3	94.7	94.6	↔
Year 5	95.0	95.0	↔
Year 7	94.1	94.0	↔
Year 9	90.7	90.7	↔
(e) Apparent retention rates from Year 10 to Year 12 (Indigenous school students of non-Indigenous school students) (%)			
Indigenous school students	60.9	63.0	↔
Non-Indigenous students	84.0	84.3	↔
All students	82.9	83.3	↔
(f) Participation of young people in VET including VET in Schools			
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 (%)	28.1	27.9	↔
(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 (%)			
	88.4	89.0	↔

Key performance measures	2016 (or previous year)	2017	Comparison
(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 (%)	76.1	75.0	↔
(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 (%)	75.5	74.7	↔
2. Student achievement: National Assessment Program – Literacy			
(a) Proportion of students achieving at or above the national minimum standard for reading (%)			
Year 3—Band 2	95.1	94.9	↔
Year 5—Band 4	93.0	93.9	↔
Year 7—Band 5	94.6	94.0	↔
Year 9—Band 6	92.8	91.7	↔
(b) NAPLAN mean scale scores for reading			
Year 3	425.6	431.3	↔
Year 5	501.5	505.7	↔
Year 7	540.8	544.7	↔
Year 9	580.8	580.9	↔
(c) Proportion of students achieving at or above the national minimum standard for writing (%)			
Year 3—Band 2	96.3	95.5	↔
Year 5—Band 4	93.2	91.7	↔
Year 7—Band 5	89.7	87.9	↔
Year 9—Band 6	82.9	81.6	↔
(d) NAPLAN mean scale scores for writing			
Year 3	420.7	413.6	↔
Year 5	475.6	472.5	↔
Year 7	515.0	512.9	↔
Year 9	549.1	552.0	↔

Key performance measures	2016 (or previous year)	2017	Comparison
3. Student achievement: National Assessment Program – Numeracy			
(a) Proportion of students achieving at or above the national minimum standard for numeracy (%)			
Year 3—Band 2	95.5	95.4	↔
Year 5—Band 4	94.3	95.4	↔
Year 7—Band 5	95.5	95.4	↔
Year 9—Band 6	95.2	95.8	↔
(b) NAPLAN mean scale scores for numeracy			
Year 3	402.0	409.4	↔
Year 5	493.1	493.8	↔
Year 7	549.7	553.9	↔
Year 9	588.9	591.9	↔
6. Student achievement: National Assessment Program – Information and Communication Technology Literacy			
Proportion of students achieving at or above the proficient standard in ICT Literacy (%)			
Year 6—Level 3	55 (2014)	53	↔
Year 10—Level 4	52 (2014)	54	↔
7. Student attainment			
(a) Proportion of the 20—24-year-old population having attained at least Year 12 or equivalent or AQF Certificate II or above (%)	90.2	87.1	↓
(b) Proportion of the 20—24-year-old population having attained at least Year 12 or equivalent or AQF Certificate III or above (%)	89.2	86.4	↓

Notes:

Comparisons in table 1 have been tested for statistical significance:

↑	means the increase in the measure was statistically significant
↓	means the decrease in the measure was statistically significant
↔	means that the change in the measure was not statistically significant
N/A	means not applicable. The methodology for the annual measure of KPM 1(a), which uses different data sources for the numerator and denominator, may allow the measure to exceed 100 per cent. Increases or decreases in this measure above 100 per cent are not represented as changes.

Where possible, measures are expressed to one decimal place. Measures for NAP sample assessments are expressed to the nearest whole number.

Part 1: Schools and schooling



Part 1 provides information on the status of Australian schooling in 2017, including school, student and teacher numbers, school structures, and funds used for school education.

1.1 School numbers

In 2017, there were 9,444 schools in Australia.⁷ This total included primary, secondary, combined (primary and secondary) and special schools, across government and non-government school sectors. (See Part 4: Glossary for definitions of school levels, school types and school sectors.)

Of the total number of schools, 70.3 per cent were administered by state and territory governments⁸, 18.5 per cent identified as having Catholic affiliation⁹, and 11.2 per cent were classified as independent. Most independent schools are affiliated with religious denominations or promote a particular educational philosophy.

The number and proportion of schools by school type and school sector in 2017 are shown in table 1.1. The proportion of schools by school sector in 2017 is illustrated in figure 1.1.

⁷ As at the National Schools Statistics Collection (NSSC) schools census, August 2017.

⁸ Independent public schools established in Western Australia and Queensland are counted as government schools in the NSSC and in this report.

⁹ Non-systemic Catholic schools are counted as Catholic.

Table 1.1

Number and proportion of schools by school type and school sector, Australia, 2017

	Government		Non-government				All schools	
	No.	%	Catholic	%	Independent	%	Total	%
Australia	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Primary	4,769	76.6	1,243	20.0	216	3.5	1,459	23.4
Secondary	1,036	73.6	321	22.8	51	3.6	372	26.4
Combined	502	37.6	141	10.6	693	51.9	834	62.4
Special	332	70.3	39	8.3	101	21.4	140	29.7
Total	6,639	70.3	1,744	18.5	1,061	11.2	2,805	29.7

Notes:

Primary education comprises a Foundation (pre-Year 1) grade followed by Years 1–6 in New South Wales (NSW), Victoria (Vic.), Queensland (Qld), Western Australia (WA), Tasmania (Tas.), Northern Territory (NT) and Australian Capital Territory (ACT). In South Australia (SA), primary education comprises a pre-Year 1 grade followed by Years 1–7. Secondary education consists of the first year of secondary school (Year 8 in SA; Year 7 in all other jurisdictions) to Year 12. In 2015, Year 7 in Qld and WA was moved from a primary school year to a secondary school year.

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

- primary – school delivers primary education
- secondary – school delivers secondary education
- combined – school delivers both primary and secondary education
- special – students may include primary students, secondary students, ungraded students or a combination of primary, secondary and ungraded students. Special schools cater for students with disabilities and/or social or emotional problems.

Percentage columns for each sector show the proportion of schools of each type in that sector. The total row shows the total number and overall proportion of all schools in each sector. The total percentage column shows the overall proportions of schools of each type. Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding.

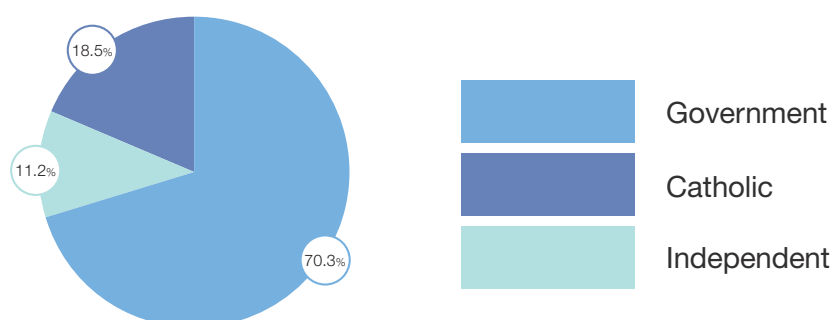
See part 1.4: School structures for an overview of school years and age requirements across jurisdictions.

See part 4: Glossary for definitions of school sector and special school.

Source: ABS, Cat. No. 4221.0, *Schools, Australia*, 2017. See also National Report on Schooling data portal.

Figure 1.1

Proportion of schools by school sector, Australia, 2017



Source: ABS, Cat. No. 4221.0, *Schools, Australia*, 2017. See also National Report on Schooling data portal.

The number and proportion of schools by state and territory in 2017 is shown in table 1.2.

Table 1.2

Number and proportion of schools by school type and state/territory, Australia, 2017

School type	State/territory								Australia
	NSW	Vic.	Qld	SA	WA	Tas.	NT	ACT	
Primary	2,102	1,553	1,134	453	669	157	77	83	6,228
Secondary	510	333	257	80	136	43	24	25	1,408
Combined	308	239	268	157	205	55	83	21	1,336
Special	167	108	78	24	78	6	6	5	472
Total	3,087	2,233	1,737	714	1,088	261	190	134	9,444
Proportion (%)	32.7	23.6	18.4	7.6	11.5	2.8	2.0	1.4	100.0

Source: ABS, Cat. No. 4221.0, *Schools, Australia*, 2017. See also National Report on Schooling data portal.

The number of schools in each state and territory is largely determined by the size and geographical distribution of the school-aged population in each jurisdiction. For a breakdown of schools by school sector, by school type in each state and territory in 2017, see the National Report on Schooling data portal.

The total number of schools in Australia rose from 9,414 in 2016 to 9,444 in 2017. There was a net fall of 85 (0.9 per cent) in the total number of schools over the period 2009–2017. The numbers and proportions of schools in the three school sectors over this period are shown in table 1.3.

Table 1.3

Number and proportion of schools by school sector, Australia, 2009–2017

	Government		Catholic		Independent		Total
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.
2009	6,802	71.4	1,705	17.9	1,022	10.7	9,529
2010	6,743	71.2	1,708	18.0	1,017	10.7	9,468
2011	6,705	71.1	1,710	18.1	1,020	10.8	9,435
2012	6,697	71.0	1,713	18.2	1,017	10.8	9,427
2013	6,661	70.9	1,717	18.3	1,015	10.8	9,393
2014	6,651	70.8	1,722	18.3	1,016	10.8	9,389
2015	6,639	70.6	1,737	18.5	1,028	10.9	9,404
2016	6,634	70.5	1,738	18.5	1,042	11.1	9,414
2017	6,639	70.3	1,744	18.5	1,061	11.2	9,444

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

Source: ABS Cat. No. 4221.0, *Schools, Australia*, 2017. See also National Report on Schooling data portal

Changes in school numbers from year to year may be due to administrative or structural changes in school systems or individual schools, as well as to changes in school populations. The decrease in total school numbers in the period 2009–2017 did not reflect a decrease in total student numbers.

1.2 Student numbers

Enrolments by school level and sector

In total, 3.85 million individual students were enrolled in Australian schools in 2017. Of these, 2.22 million (57.6 per cent) were primary school students, and 1.63 million (42.4 per cent) were secondary school students. This difference is mainly due to the structure of schooling, in which primary schooling comprises more year groups/cohorts than secondary schooling.¹⁰ Another contributing factor is that not all students complete Years 11 and 12, the last two years of secondary school. The numbers of students by school level and school sector in 2017 are summarised in table 1.4.

Table 1.4

Number and proportion of students (full-time plus part-time) enrolled in schools by school level and school sector, Australia, 2017

School level	School sector							
	Government		Catholic		Independent		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Primary	1,555,889	70.2	405,780	18.3	255,110	11.5	2,216,779	57.6
Junior secondary	667,072	59.6	248,420	22.2	203,904	18.2	1,119,396	29.1
Senior secondary	301,904	58.8	112,670	22.0	98,476	19.2	513,050	13.3
Total secondary	968,976	59.4	361,090	22.1	302,380	18.5	1,632,446	42.4
Total	2,524,865	65.6	766,870	19.9	557,490	14.5	3,849,225	100.0

Notes:

In tables and graphs using the category 'school level', primary education comprises a Foundation (pre-Year 1) grade, followed by Years 1–6 in NSW, Vic., Qld, WA, Tas., NT and ACT. In SA, primary education comprises a Foundation grade followed by Years 1–7.

Junior secondary comprises the years from commencement of secondary school to Year 10, including ungraded secondary.

Senior secondary comprises 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, students are allocated to primary or secondary school level according to the typical age level in each state or territory. See part 4: Glossary for definition of special school.

Percentage columns for each sector show the proportion of Australian school students at each level enrolled in that sector. The total row shows the number and proportion of school students enrolled in each sector. The total percentage column shows the proportions of school students enrolled at each level. Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding.

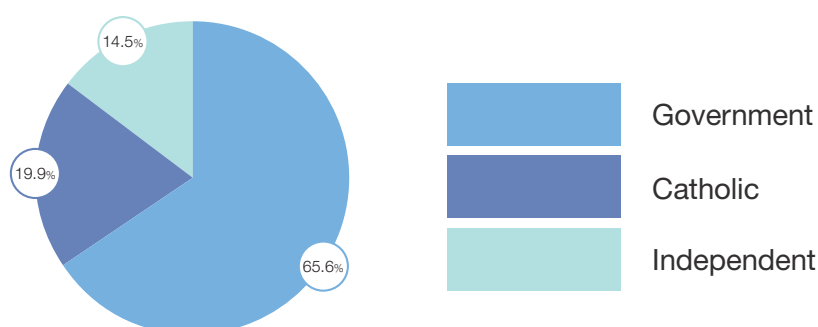
Source: ABS, Cat. No. 4221.0, *Schools, Australia*, 2017. See also National Report on Schooling data portal.

As shown in table 1.4 and figure 1.2, 65.6 per cent of Australian school students in 2017 were enrolled in government schools, 19.9 per cent of students were enrolled in Catholic schools and 14.5 per cent of students were enrolled in independent schools.

¹⁰ From 2015, there are seven primary school year levels and six secondary school year levels except in SA, where there are eight primary and five secondary year levels.

Figure 1.2

Proportion of students (full-time plus part-time) enrolled in schools by sector, Australia, 2017 (per cent)



Source: ABS, Cat. No. 4221.0, *Schools, Australia*, 2017. See also National Report on Schooling data portal.

The proportions of students enrolled in each school sector differed between levels of education, with government schools accounting for 70.2 per cent of primary students but less than 60 per cent (59.4 per cent) of secondary students.

This suggests a movement of students from government to non-government schools, particularly between primary and secondary school. However, as the movement of individual students between sectors and between states and territories is not tracked nationally, it is not currently possible to accurately measure the extent or timing of student movements between the three school sectors.

Part-time students accounted for only 0.4 per cent of total enrolments. They were concentrated in Years 11 and 12 (63.6 per cent), and in government schools (91.9 per cent).

Enrolments by school level, and state and territory

Total enrolments (full-time plus part-time) by state and territory in 2017 are shown in table 1.5.

Table 1.5

Number of students (full-time plus part-time) enrolled in schools by state/territory and school level, Australia, 2017

School type	State/territory								Australia
	NSW	Vic.	Qld	SA	WA	Tas.	NT	ACT	
Primary	693,569	541,715	468,957	164,936	237,847	45,665	25,205	38,885	2,216,779
Junior secondary	366,420	285,273	228,656	60,587	121,418	24,506	12,096	20,440	1,119,396
Senior secondary	149,318	127,647	115,179	41,182	54,443	10,823	4,394	10,064	513,050
Total secondary	515,738	412,920	343,835	101,769	175,861	35,329	16,490	30,504	1,632,446
Total	1,209,307	954,635	812,792	266,705	413,708	80,994	41,695	69,389	3,849,225
Proportion of Australian total (%)	31.4	24.8	21.1	6.9	10.7	2.1	1.1	1.8	100.0

Notes:

In tables and graphs using the category 'school level', primary education comprises a Foundation (pre-Year 1) grade, followed by Years 1–6 in NSW, Vic., Qld, WA, Tas., NT and ACT. In SA, primary education comprises a Foundation grade followed by Years 1–7.

Junior secondary comprises the years from commencement of secondary school to Year 10, including ungraded secondary.

Senior secondary comprises 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, students are allocated to primary or secondary school level according to the typical age level in each state or territory. See part 4: Glossary for definition of special school.

Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding.

Source: ABS, Cat. No. 4221.0, *Schools, Australia*, 2017. See also National Report on Schooling data portal.

Enrolments by state and territory and school level reflect the school-age population and its age distribution in each jurisdiction.

Growth in enrolments

The numbers of students enrolled in Australian schools grew by 50,999 (1.3 per cent) between 2016 and 2017 and by 364,421 (10.5 per cent) between 2009 and 2017. Enrolments in all three school sectors have risen over the past eight years, with the majority of total growth over the period (63.2 per cent) occurring in government schools.

From 2009 to 2013, growth was proportionately higher in non-government schools, producing small shifts in the proportions of total enrolments per school sector from the government to the non-government sectors. This continued a long-term trend that began in 1977.¹¹ However, since 2014, there may be a reversal of this trend, with the government sector share of enrolments rising from 65.1 per cent in 2014 to 65.6 per cent in 2017.

In 2017, the proportion of student enrolments at the national level in government schools increased from 65.4 per cent in 2016 to 65.6 per cent. The Catholic sector share of enrolments dropped to 19.9 per cent in 2017, down from 20.2 per cent in 2016. The independent sector enrolment share rose by 0.1 percentage points to 14.5 per cent. Table 1.6 and figure 1.3 summarise these data.

Table 1.6

Number and proportion of students (full-time plus part-time) by school sector, Australia, 2009–2017

School sector							
	Government		Catholic		Independent		Total
Year	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.
2009	2,294,638	65.8	704,837	20.2	485,329	13.9	3,484,804
2010	2,304,259	65.6	713,911	20.3	492,705	14.0	3,510,875
2011	2,315,253	65.4	724,594	20.5	501,962	14.2	3,541,809
2012	2,342,379	65.2	736,595	20.5	511,012	14.2	3,589,986
2013	2,375,024	65.1	749,059	20.5	521,436	14.3	3,645,519
2014	2,406,495	65.1	757,749	20.5	529,857	14.3	3,694,101
2015	2,445,130	65.2	765,539	20.4	540,304	14.4	3,750,973
2016	2,483,802	65.4	767,050	20.2	547,374	14.4	3,798,226
2017	2,524,865	65.6	766,870	19.9	557,490	14.5	3,849,225

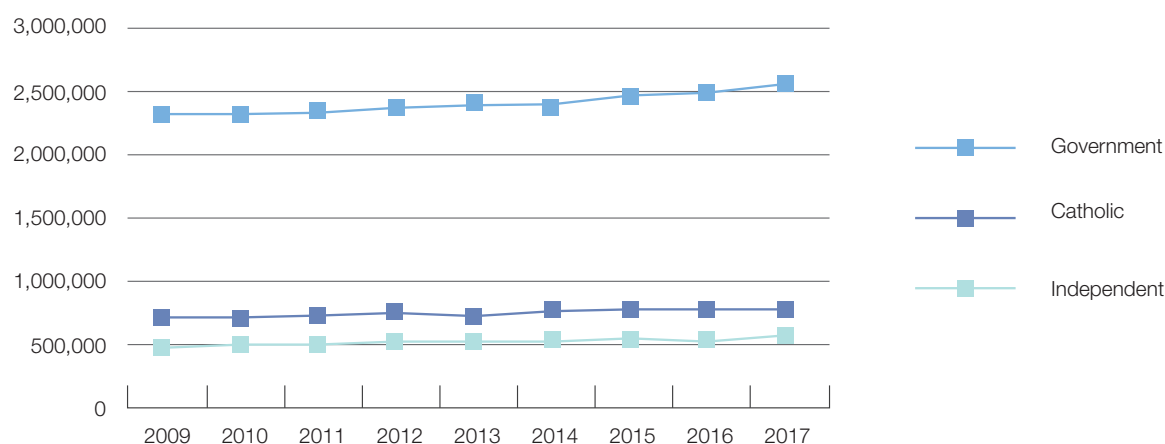
Notes: Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding.

Source: ABS Cat. No. 4221.0, *Schools, Australia*, 2017. See also National Report on Schooling data portal.

¹¹ ABS, *Schools Australia*, 2016, media release.

Figure 1.3

Number of students enrolled (full-time plus part-time) by school sector, Australia, 2009–2017



Source: ABS Cat. No. 4221.0, *Schools, Australia*, 2017. See also National Report on Schooling data portal.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students

In 2017, there were 215,453 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (Indigenous)¹² students enrolled in Australian schools, making up 5.6 per cent of the total school population. Table 1.7 shows the number and proportion of Indigenous students by school level and sector.

Table 1.7

Number and proportion of Indigenous students (full-time and part-time) enrolled in schools by school level and sector, Australia, 2017

School sector								
	Government		Catholic		Independent		Total	
School level	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Primary	114,392	87.3	11,747	9.0	4,965	3.8	131,104	60.9
Junior secondary	50,223	79.7	7,734	12.3	5,029	8.0	62,986	29.2
Senior secondary	16,256	76.1	2,922	13.7	2,185	10.2	21,363	9.9
Total secondary	66,479	78.8	10,656	12.6	7,214	8.6	84,349	39.1
Total	180,871	83.9	22,403	10.4	12,179	5.7	215,453	100.0

Notes:

In tables and graphs using the category 'school level', primary education comprises a Foundation (pre-Year 1) grade, followed by Years 1–6 in NSW, Vic., Qld, WA, Tas., NT and ACT. In SA, primary education comprises a Foundation grade followed by Years 1–7.

Junior secondary comprises the years from commencement of secondary school to Year 10, including ungraded secondary.

Senior secondary comprises Years 11 and 12.

¹² The Melbourne Declaration uses the term 'Indigenous' to refer to Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. This report uses both the terms 'Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander' and 'Indigenous' to describe students identifying as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander, with 'Indigenous' or 'Indigenous status' used in tables and graphs.

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, students are allocated to primary or secondary school level according to the typical age level in each state or territory. See part 4: Glossary for definition of special school.

Percentage columns for each sector show the proportion of Indigenous students at each level enrolled in that sector. The total row shows the number and proportion of all Indigenous students enrolled in each sector. The total percentage column shows the proportions of Indigenous students enrolled at each level. Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding.

Source: ABS, Cat. No. 4221.0, *Schools, Australia*, 2017. See also National Report on Schooling data portal.

Indigenous enrolments were more highly concentrated in government schools, with 83.9 per cent of Indigenous enrolments in government schools compared to 65.6 per cent of total enrolments (as shown in table 1.4).

Indigenous students were under-represented in senior secondary years: 4.2 per cent of senior secondary students were Indigenous, compared to 5.6 per cent of junior secondary students. These proportions reflect apparent rates of retention from Year 10 to Year 12 amongst Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, which are lower than in the overall school population, but which have risen in absolute and relative terms in recent years.¹³

Table 1.8

Number and proportion of Indigenous students (full-time plus part-time) enrolled in schools by school level and state/territory, Australia, 2017

School type	State/territory								Australia
	NSW	Vic.	Qld	SA	WA	Tas.	NT	ACT	
Primary	42,044	8,972	39,729	8,042	16,622	4,198	10,313	1184	131,104
Junior secondary	22,283	4,725	17,910	2,705	7,601	2,091	5,069	602	62,986
Senior secondary	5,983	1,553	7,260	1,739	2,463	739	1,381	245	21,363
Total secondary	28,266	6,278	25,170	4,444	10,064	2,830	6,450	847	84,349
Total	70,310	15,250	64,899	12,486	26,686	7,028	16,763	2,031	215,453
Proportion of total indigenous students per state (%)	32.6	7.1	30.1	5.8	12.4	3.3	7.8	0.9	100.0
Proportion of total enrolments within state/territory (%)	5.8	1.6	8.0	4.7	6.5	8.7	40.2	2.9	5.6

Source: ABS, Cat. No. 4221.0, *Schools, Australia*, 2017. See also National Report on Schooling data portal.

¹³ Apparent retention rates are discussed in part 3: Measuring and reporting performance.

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

With 70,310 Indigenous students in 2017, NSW had both the highest number of Indigenous enrolments and the highest proportion (32.6 per cent) of the national total. This represented 5.8 per cent of the state's students, slightly more than the national average, and was 1.2 percentage points more than the NSW share of total enrolments nationally.

Victoria, with 24.8 per cent of all school students, had 7.1 per cent of all Indigenous students, representing 1.6 per cent of students in that state. Western Australia, with 10.7 per cent of total enrolments Australia-wide, accounted for 12.4 per cent of Indigenous students.

The highest concentration of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students is in the Northern Territory, which accounted for only 1.1 per cent of total school enrolments in 2017, but for 7.8 per cent of Indigenous enrolments. The 16,763 Indigenous students enrolled in Northern Territory schools made up 40.2 per cent of the Territory's school population. Because of this, data on Indigenous students have a much greater impact on overall statistics (including performance measures) for the Northern Territory than for any other state or territory.

More detailed data on full-time, part-time and full-time equivalent (FTE) enrolments by state and territory, school sector and level, Indigenous status and sex, are available in the National Report on Schooling data portal.



1.3 Staff numbers

In 2017, there were 281,948 full-time equivalent (FTE)¹⁴ teaching staff across primary and secondary schooling in Australia. The number and proportion of FTE teaching staff by school sector, school level and sex in 2017 are shown in table 1.9.

Table 1.9

Full-time equivalent (FTE) of teaching staff by school sector, school level and sex, Australia, 2017

School sector	Primary				Secondary				Total			
	M	F	Total	%	M	F	Total	%	M	F	Total	%
Government	18,721	84,528	103,249	70.5	29,753	47,859	77,612	57.3	48,474	132,387	180,861	64.1
Catholic	4,060	20,861	24,921	17.0	11,578	17,341	28,918	21.3	15,638	38,201	53,839	19.1
Independent	4,057	14,195	18,252	12.5	12,547	16,448	28,996	21.4	16,605	30,643	47,248	16.8
Total non-government	8,118	35,055	43,173	29.5	24,125	33,789	57,914	42.7	32,243	68,844	101,087	35.9
All schools	26,838	119,584	146,422	51.9	53,878	81,648	135,526	48.1	80,717	201,231	281,948	100.0

Notes:

M = male, F = female

Staff employed in combined and special schools are allocated to either primary or secondary education on a pro-rata basis. Components may not add to totals due to rounding.

Source: ABS, Cat. No. 4221.0, *Schools, Australia*, 2017. See also National Report on Schooling data portal for data on teaching and non-teaching staff.

Australia's teaching workforce continued to be predominantly female, with women making up 71.4 per cent of FTE teachers, and men making up 28.6 per cent. This difference was more pronounced at the primary level (81.7 per cent female) than at secondary level (60.2 per cent female).

Across Australia, 64.1 per cent of FTE teachers were employed by the government school sector, 19.1 per cent by the Catholic school sector and 16.8 per cent by the independent sector. This is consistent overall with the distribution of students across school sectors (as reported in table 1.4).

The number of FTE teaching staff by state/territory in 2017 is shown in table 1.10. This distribution is also consistent with the broad distribution of students.

¹⁴ In the calculation of numbers of full-time equivalent (FTE) teaching staff, a part-time teacher is counted as a proportion of a full-time teacher according to the time employed compared to a full-time teacher in the same school system or school. (See part 4: Glossary for definitions of FTE and teaching staff.)

Table 1.10

Full-time equivalent (FTE) of teaching staff by state and school level, Australia, 2017

	State/territory								Australia
	NSW	Vic.	Qld	SA	WA	Tas.	NT	ACT	
Primary	43,966	37,091	31,458	10,992	15,408	3,065	1,973	2,470	146,422
Secondary	43,091	35,211	27,769	8,272	14,425	2,851	1,406	2,501	135,526
Total	87,057	72,302	59,227	19,265	29,832	5,915	3,379	4,970	281,948
Proportion (%)	30.9	25.6	21.0	6.8	10.6	2.1	1.2	1.8	100.0

Source: ABS, Cat. No. 4221.0, *Schools, Australia*, 2017. See also National Report on Schooling data portal.

In 2017, the number of FTE teaching staff increased by 5,618 (2.0 per cent), less than in 2016, but more than the growth in student enrolments between 2016 and 2017 (1.3 per cent). Growth was concentrated in the government sector, in which the number of FTE teaching staff increased by 2.3 per cent in 2017.

Between 2009 and 2017, the total number of FTE teaching staff grew by 32,752 (13.1 per cent). This was noticeably more than the growth in student enrolments (10.5 per cent) over the same period, largely due to the relatively high growth in FTE teacher numbers in the last three years.¹⁵

Table 1.11

Full-time equivalent (FTE) of teaching staff by school sector, Australia, 2009–2017

School sector	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Government	162,566	163,697	165,272	167,152	167,903	169,199	171,763	176,819	180,861
Catholic	46,807	47,391	48,393	49,427	50,527	50,936	52,160	53,154	53,839
Independent	39,823	40,333	41,445	42,407	43,154	43,930	45,277	46,357	47,248
Total non-government	86,630	87,724	89,838	91,834	93,682	94,866	97,437	99,511	101,087
All schools	249,196	251,422	255,110	258,986	261,585	264,065	269,200	276,330	281,948

Source: ABS, Cat. No. 4221.0, *Schools, Australia*, 2017. See also National Report on Schooling data portal.

Note: Components may not add to totals due to rounding.

¹⁵ The growth in FTE teaching staff in 2016 was concentrated in the government sector in Victoria, Queensland and Western Australia. Victoria has reported that the growth in that state resulted from a combination of enrolment growth and a significant increase in equity funding provided by the Victorian Government. This additional funding meant that around 1,600 teaching staff have been added to Victorian government schools since the start of 2016. In Western Australia, a growth in FTE teaching staff in 2015 was partly due to the departure of a 'half-cohort' (in Year 12 in 2014), which emanated from a change to the WA school starting age introduced in 2001. This meant an increase in total student numbers (of a 'half-cohort') and a consequent need to employ additional teachers.

In 2017, FTE teaching staff accounted for 69.7 per cent of the FTE of all school staff. In addition, 122,633 FTE staff were employed in administrative and clerical roles, as teacher aides and assistants, as specialist support staff or in building and maintenance.

Additional information on numbers of teaching and non-teaching school staff is available in the National Report on Schooling data portal.

Student–teacher ratios

The student–teacher ratio is calculated as the number of full-time equivalent (FTE) students per FTE teaching staff. Table 1.12 summarises average student–teacher ratios in Australia in 2017 across the three school sectors.

Table 1.12

Full-time equivalent (FTE) student–teacher ratios, by school sector and school level, Australia, 2017

School sector	Primary	Secondary	All schools
Government	15.0	12.4	13.9
Non-government	15.3	11.4	13.1
Catholic	16.3	12.5	14.2
Independent	14.0	10.4	11.8
All schools	15.1	12.0	13.6

Source: ABS, Cat. No. 4221.0, *Schools, Australia*, 2017. See also National Report on Schooling data portal.

For all Australian schools, the average FTE student–teacher ratio in 2017 was 13.6:1, a reduction from 13.7:1 in 2016. This resulted from the growth in the number of FTE teaching staff reported above.

The average ratio for government schools (13.9:1) was higher than for non-government schools overall (13.1:1), but lower than the average ratio for Catholic schools (14.2:1).

At the primary level, the average FTE student–teacher ratio was 15.1:1 compared to 12.0:1 at the secondary level. Table 1.13 shows average student–teacher ratios in 2017 by school level and state and territory.

Table 1.13

Full-time equivalent (FTE) student–teacher ratios, by state/territory and school level, Australia, 2017

	State/territory								Australia
	NSW	Vic.	Qld	SA	WA	Tas.	NT	ACT	
Primary	15.8	14.6	14.9	15.0	15.4	14.9	12.7	15.7	15.1
Secondary	11.9	11.7	12.3	12.2	12.1	12.3	11.6	12.2	12.0
Total	13.9	13.2	13.6	13.8	13.8	13.7	12.3	13.9	13.6

Source: ABS, Cat. No. 4221.0, *Schools, Australia*, 2017. See also National Report on Schooling data portal.

Student–teacher ratios are consistently lower for secondary education than for primary education in all school sectors and across all states and territories.

This reflects the different requirements of different age groups, and of different school subjects, especially in secondary schools. These may include smaller maximum class sizes for practical subjects, for senior secondary classes, and for special needs students.

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

Lower student–teacher ratios mean there is a smaller number of students per teacher and, potentially, smaller class sizes.

However, ratios by themselves are only approximate indicators of actual class size because they do not take into account the factors mentioned above.

The national average student–teacher ratio has consistently decreased this century: from 14.8:1 in 2001, to 13.9:1 in 2009, and to 13.6:1 in 2017. Time series data on student–teacher ratios by state and territory, school sector and school level are available in the National Report on Schooling data portal.

1.4 School structures

Differences between Australian states and territories in school structures and in age requirements for student enrolment have been substantially reduced in recent years, including by decisions in Queensland and Western Australia to move Year 7 from a primary school year to a secondary school year from 2015.

In 2017, primary education consisted of a Foundation year followed by Years 1–6 in all states and territories except South Australia. Secondary education consisted of Years 7–12.¹⁶ In South Australia, primary education consisted of a Foundation year followed by Years 1–7, and secondary education consisted of Years 8–12. The Foundation year / first year of full-time schooling has different names in the various jurisdictions.¹⁷

The age at which schooling becomes compulsory is six years in most states and territories.¹⁸ In Tasmania, it is five years, and in Queensland, six years and six months. In practice, most children start the Foundation year of primary school at between four and a half and five and a half years old.

All states and territories require young people to participate in schooling until they complete Year 10 and to participate full time in education, training or employment, or a combination of these activities, until at least the age of 17.¹⁹

Table 1.14 summarises school structures and requirements for school enrolment by state and territory.



¹⁶ In 2015, Year 7 became the first year of secondary school in Queensland and Western Australia.

¹⁷ The names of the Foundation year / first year of full-time schooling used in each jurisdiction are listed in table 1.14. The Australian Curriculum uses the name 'Foundation' for this year of schooling.

¹⁸ New South Wales, Victorian, South Australian, Northern Territory and Australian Capital Territory students must attend school from the age of six. In Western Australia, children must start school from the beginning of the year if they are to reach the age of five years and six months during the year.

¹⁹ Until 2010, the minimum school leaving age in most jurisdictions was 15 or 16. In 2010, the National Youth Participation Requirement, agreed by the Council of Australian Governments (COAG), came into effect across all states and territories, effectively lengthening the period of compulsory education. From 2014, the age requirement in Western Australia was lifted to the end of the year in which a student turns 17 years 6 months of age, they achieve the requirements for secondary graduation, or until they turn 18 years of age, whichever happens first.

Table 1.14

Primary and secondary school structures, minimum school starting age, compulsory school starting age, and minimum school leaving age, by state and territory, Australia, 2017

State/territory	Foundation (first year of full-time school)	Primary schooling	Secondary schooling	Minimum school starting age (Foundation) ^(a)	Compulsory school starting age	Minimum school leaving age ^(b)
New South Wales	Kindergarten	Kindergarten Years 1–6	Years 7–12	4 turning 5 by 31 July	6 years	17 years
Victoria	Preparatory	Preparatory Years 1–6	Years 7–12	4 turning 5 by 30 April	6 years	17 years
Queensland	Preparatory	Preparatory Years 1–6	Years 7–12	4 turning 5 by 30 June	6 years 6 months	17 years
South Australia	Reception	Reception Years 1–7	Years 8–12	4 turning 5 by 1 May	6 years	17 years
Western Australia	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 ^(c)
Tasmania	Preparatory	Preparatory Years 1–6	Years 7–12	5 by 1 January	5 years	17 years
Northern Territory	Transition	Transition Years 1–6	Years 7–12	4 turning 5 by 30 June	6 years	17 years
Australian Capital Territory	Kindergarten	Kindergarten Years 1–6	Years 7–12	4 turning 5 by 30 April	6 years	17 years

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

(b) All students are required to complete Year 10 or approved equivalent. After Year 10, students must be in school, in approved education or training, in full-time 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.

(c) In Western Australia (from 2014), 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, they achieve the requirements for secondary graduation, or until they turn 18 years of age, whichever happens first.

Sources: ABS, *Schools Australia*, 2017; state and territory education authorities.

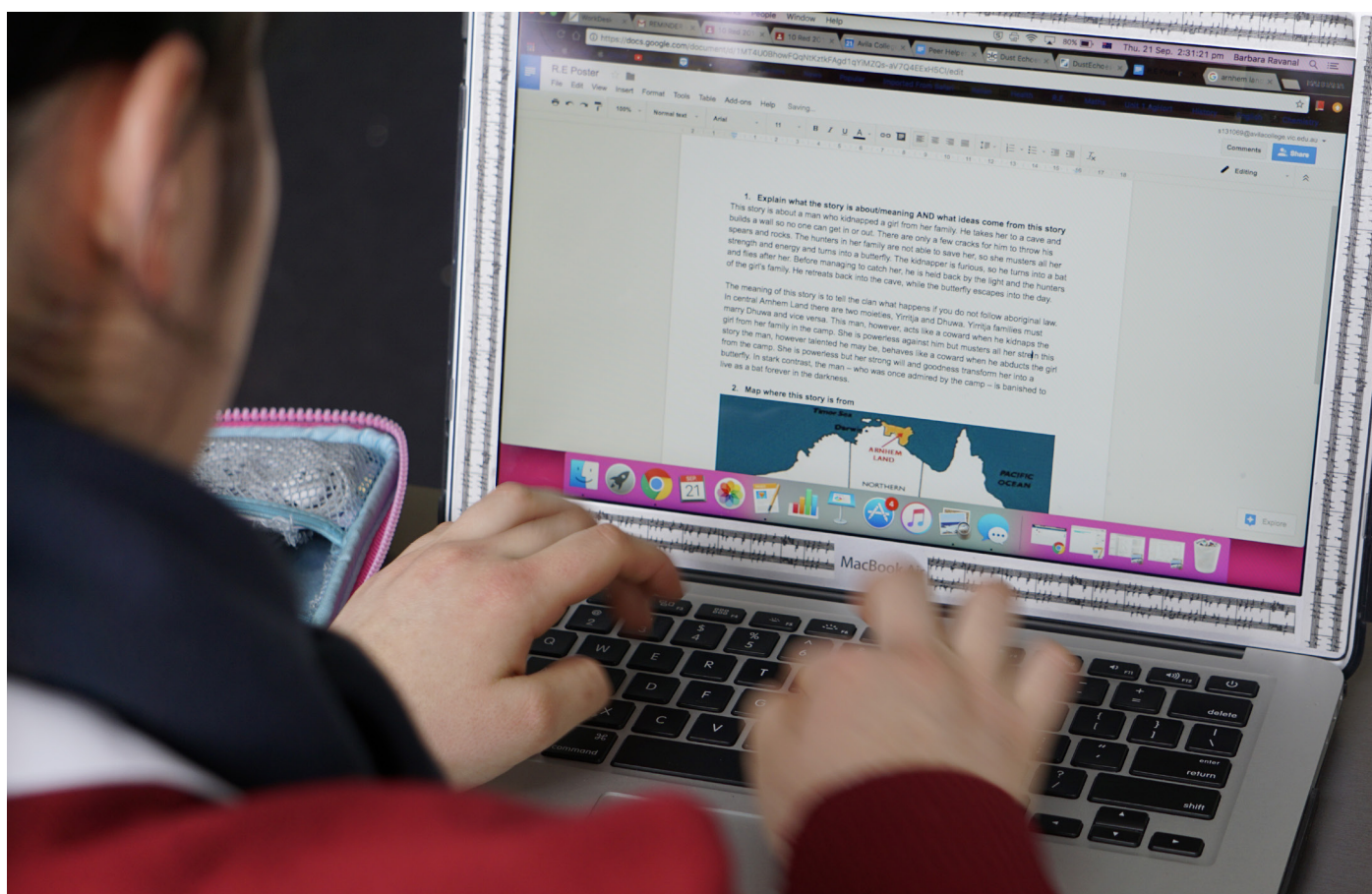
Within the overall structure of primary and secondary education, there is further variation. Individual schools may be primary only, secondary only or combined primary and secondary. Secondary schools may accommodate the full age range of secondary students or be divided into junior and senior campuses (sometimes known as ‘senior colleges’).

There are also both government and non-government special schools for students with disability and other special needs. In some states and territories, most students with special needs are integrated into mainstream schools. (See part 4: Glossary for definition of special school).

Students who are geographically isolated, or who are otherwise unable to attend a local school, may study through distance education schools or centres. Boarding facilities are available at some schools mainly in the non-government sectors.²⁰

Each state and territory also has an early childhood education sector that is separate from primary and secondary schooling²¹, although early childhood centres are often attached to, or accommodated in, primary schools. Statistical data on early childhood education are excluded from this report.

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



²⁰ Students of compulsory school age may also be home-schooled if they have met the criteria set down by the relevant state or territory education authority. Students undertaking home schooling are only included in the National Schools Statistics Collection (NSSC) if they are also formally enrolled and active in a course of study at school (including through distance education). No part of a student's home-schooling is included in the NSSC or in this report.

²¹ In some jurisdictions, part-time programs that precede the Foundation year and are conducted in primary schools (for example, Kindergarten in Western Australia) are considered to be a part of schooling. However, these programs are outside the scope of the National Schools Statistics Collection (NSSC); therefore, data on them are not included in this report. Statistical data on early childhood education are available in ABS, [Preschool Education, Australia](#), 2017 (cat. no. 4240.0).

1.5 School funding

Part 1.5 provides information on five main areas:

- 1.5.1 Overview of government funding for school education
- 1.5.2 Government funding arrangements for school education
- 1.5.3 Government funding for government schools
- 1.5.4 Government funding for non-government schools
- 1.5.5 Capital expenditure
- 1.5.6 *My School* financial information for the 2016 calendar year.

Parts 1.5.1–1.5.5 provide an outline of government (state/territory and Australian Government) funding arrangements for both government and non-government schools.

Part 1.5.6 provides high-level profiles of recurrent funding information for the 2016 calendar year published for individual schools on the *My School* website. This includes funding from both public and private sources. These data were released at the same time (March 2018) as *My School* non-finance data for the 2017 school year. Due to reporting timeframes, *My School* calendar year finance data will always lag by one year relative to most *My School* non-finance data.

In line with state and territory government budgets, government school funding is historically reported on a financial year basis. The financial year reported is the period of 1 July 2016 – 30 June 2017.

Non-government school funding is reported on a calendar year basis and reflects funding and expenditure for the 2016 calendar year except for data sourced from the *Report on Government Services* (ROGS), which are calculated for the 2016–17 financial year.²²

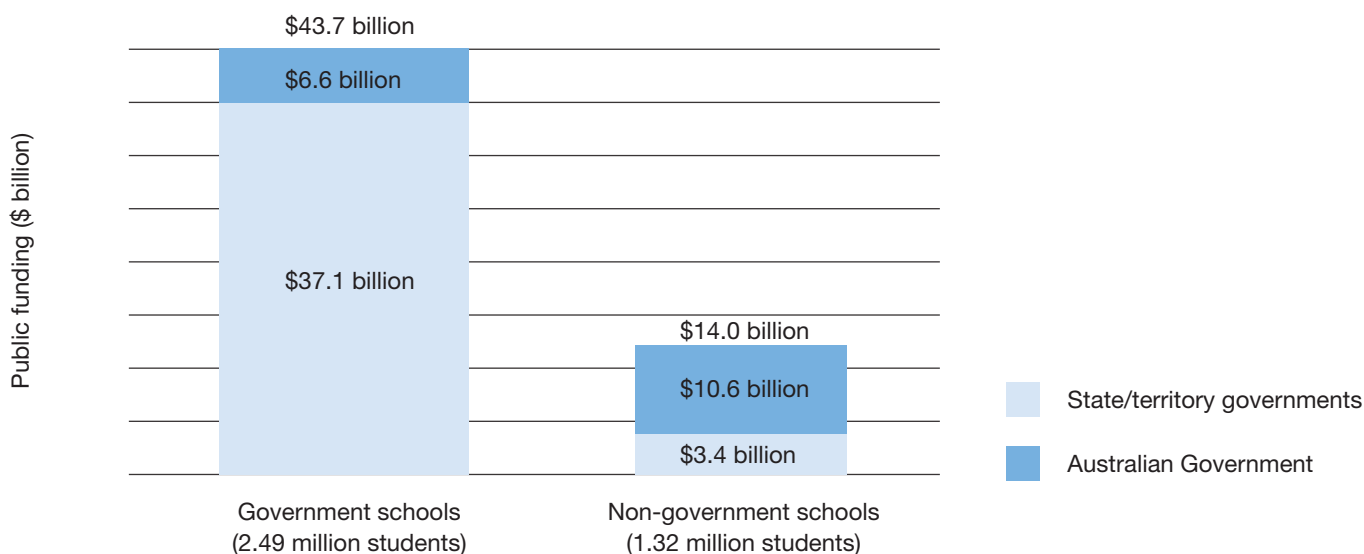
1.5.1 Overview of government funding for school education

Australian, and state and territory government recurrent expenditure on school education in Australia for 2016–2017 was \$57.8 billion. Of this amount, \$40.6 billion (70.2 per cent) was provided through state and territory budgets, and \$17.2 billion (29.8 per cent) was provided through the Australian Government budget. The majority of state and territory funds was applied to government schools; the majority of Australian Government funds was applied to non-government schools. This is illustrated in figure 1.4.

²² The cost per full-time equivalent student derived from these financial year figures uses the average of the full-time equivalent student numbers for the 2016 and 2017 calendar years.

Figure 1.4

Recurrent government funding for school education, Australia, 2016–17 (accrual basis).



Notes:

Depreciation and user cost of capital expenses relating to government schools have been attributed to states/territories, based on their ownership of the underlying assets. However, portion of these assets has been acquired through Australian Government capital contributions, with states and territories responsible for maintenance costs. Australian Government expenditure data in figure 1.4 include the Students First funding and a range of National Partnership (NP) payments. Other Australian Government funding for schools and students is not included.

Student numbers are 2016–17 average full-time equivalent (FTE) school student populations. As such, they differ from the number of individual (full-time plus part-time) students for 2017 reported in part 1.2.

Sources: Education Council, National Schools Statistics Collection (Finance), 2017; Steering Committee for the Review of Government Service Provision (SCRGSP), *Report on Government Services 2019*, Productivity Commission; ABS, Cat. No. 4221.0 *Schools, Australia*, 2017.

See also the National Report on Schooling data portal.

In overview, from 2015–16 to 2016–17, total (nominal) government recurrent expenditure on:

- ↑ **All schools** increased by 3.8 per cent, rising from \$55.7 billion in 2015–16 to \$57.8 billion in 2016–17, an increase of \$2.1 billion.
- ↑ **Government schools** increased by 3.2 per cent, rising from \$42.4 billion in 2015–16 to \$43.7 billion in 2016–17, an increase of \$1.4 billion.
- ↑ **Non-government schools** increased by 5.6 per cent, rising from \$13.3 billion in 2015–16 to \$14.0 billion in 2016–17, an increase of \$0.7 billion.
- The government school sector received 75.7 per cent of recurrent government funding, while the non-government sector received 24.3 per cent.
- Total recurrent school education funding, on a student per capita basis, was on average \$17,531 for the government sector and \$10,644 for the non-government sector.

Table 1.15 below shows the total recurrent government funding and student per capita funding from Australian and state/territory levels of government to the government and non-government sectors.

Table 1.15 below shows the total recurrent government funding and student per capita funding from Australian and state/territory levels of government to the government and non-government sectors.

Table 1.15

Recurrent government funding for school education, Australia, 2016–17 financial year (accrual basis)

2016–2017 government funding to schools	Government		Non-government		Total	
	(\$ billion)	\$ per FTE student	(\$ billion)	\$ per FTE student	(\$ billion)	\$ per FTE student
State and territory governments	37.134	14,886	3.416	2,591	40.551	10,634
Australian Government	6.597	2,645	10.621	8,053	17.218	4,515
Total Australian/state/territory government funding	43.732	17,531	14.037	10,644	57.769	15,149
Average FTE students (no.)	2,494,571		1,318,762		3,813,333	

Notes:

Average FTE students is the number of full-time equivalent (FTE) students, averaged over the 2016 and 2017 calendar years. See part 4: Glossary for definition of FTE.

Components may not add to totals due to rounding.

Sources: Education Council, National Schools Statistics Collection (Finance), 2017; Steering Committee for the Review of Government Service Provision (SCRGSP), *Report on Government Services 2019*, Productivity Commission; ABS, Cat. No. 4221.0 *Schools, Australia*, 2017.

See also National Report on Schooling data portal.

1.5.2 Government funding arrangements for school education

States and territory governments fund the bulk of government school costs for their jurisdictions under state and territory legislation.

Australian Government funding for government and non-government schools is determined by the *Australian Education Act 2013*. The Act sets out the funding arrangements, including recurrent funding for both government and non-government schools, capital funding for non-government schools, special circumstances funding and funding in prescribed circumstances. In 2016–2017, this funding was provided through the Students First funding arrangements.

In 2017, Australian Government recurrent funding for schools used the Schooling Resource Standard (SRS) funding arrangement levels. SRS funding is calculated with reference to a base-per-student amount plus additional loadings aimed at addressing disadvantage.

The total base amount for a school reflects:

- the number of students at the school
- the schooling resource standard (SRS) funding amount for a student at the school

- the capacity of the school's community to contribute financially to the school. A school's capacity to contribute is determined by their socio-economic score (SES) on a sliding scale, where a higher SES score is translated into a lower public funding proportion of the SRS. Government schools, special schools, special assistance schools, majority Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander schools and sole provider²³ schools have a zero capacity to contribute.

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

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

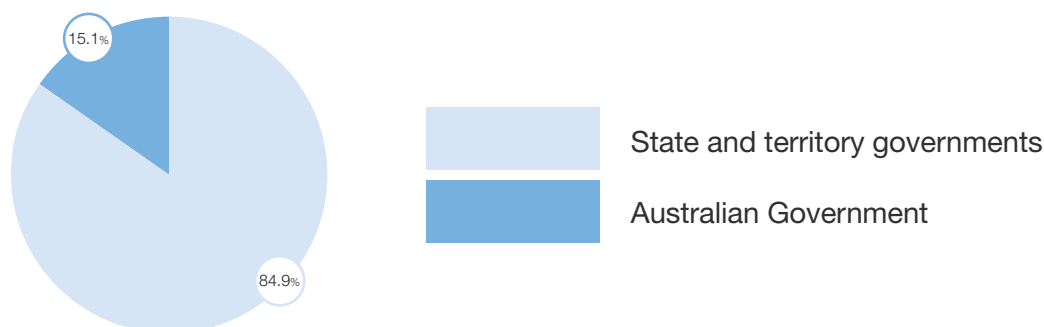
Australian Government recurrent funding is provided to approved authorities of government and non-government schools for the purpose of providing school education. Although calculated to reflect the need of each student and school, the approved authority for the school is not required to spend that funding on any particular student or group of students. Approved authorities have the flexibility to allocate the funding for the purpose of providing school education that best meets the needs of their students, taking into account other revenue sources and budgetary restrictions.

1.5.3 Government funding for government schools

State and territory governments are the major funders of government schools: in 2016–17, they contributed 84.9 per cent (\$37.1 billion) of total recurrent funding, with the Australian Government contributing the remaining 15.1 per cent (\$6.6 billion).

Figure 1.5

Total government recurrent expenditure per student, government schools, Australia, 2016–17 (per cent)



Sources: Education Council, National Schools Statistics Collection (NSSC) (Finance), 2017; ABS, Cat. No. 4221.0, *Schools, Australia*, 2017.

²³ A 'sole-provider' school is one that is remote from others delivering the same level of education.

Government school recurrent expenditure

Finance data for the National Schools Statistics Collection (NSSC) – Finance are provided by the various state, territories and federal education departments.

The NSSC – Finance is a financial year, annual collection of total government funded expenditure data (expenditure on salary and non-salary costs) on government schools only, published on the National Report on Schooling data portal.

The collection provides a true audited perspective of government systems and is used to inform education ministers about government expenditure on school education on a consistent and progressive basis.

Table 1.15 shows a national overview of expenditure levels by states in 2016–17 in key operational areas such as the relative levels of salary and non-salary costs. The user cost of capital refers to the notional cost of funds tied up in capital (such as government school land and buildings). It represents the opportunity cost of using these funds to provide education services, rather than for other purposes, or for retiring debt. The value of the user cost of capital is based on eight per cent of the written down value of capital assets.

- Excluding user cost of capital, teacher salaries expenditure accounted for 61.0 per cent of in-school expenditure.
- Excluding user cost of capital, in-school non-teacher salaries expenditure accounted for 15.0 per cent of in-school expenditure
- Excluding user cost of capital, in-school non-salary costs accounted for 24.1 per cent of in-school expenditure. These expenditures include school materials, maintenance, cleaning and student transport costs.
- Out-of-school expenditure for government systems includes state office, regional and local functions supporting schools.
- In-school expenditure includes teaching, learning, school administration, and library functions within schools.
- Excluding user cost of capital, expenditure on out-of-school support functions represented approximately 4.7 per cent of total government funding on state and territory government schools. By far the major component of funding, some 95.3 per cent, went to fund schools directly.

Table 1.16

Expenditure by government education systems, by level of education and area of expenditure by state and territory, 2016–17 (\$'000)

	NSW	Vic.	Qld	SA	WA	Tas.	NT	ACT	Australia
In-school primary education									
Salaries (teaching)	3,838,712	2,684,960	2,658,554	899,404	1,500,351	283,437	188,847	203,376	12,257,641
Salaries (non-teaching)	850,374	553,842	761,545	279,343	463,551	88,844	37,299	71,781	3,106,579
Redundancies	0	561	337	0	0	0	66	0	964
Non-salary costs	1,659,406	983,156	836,544	333,254	506,897	102,573	133,563	82,510	4,637,903
User cost of capital	1,028,494	936,143	826,245	206,763	482,562	45,395	54,753	73,701	3,654,056
Total excl. user cost of capital	6,348,492	4,222,519	4,256,980	1,512,001	2,470,799	474,854	359,775	357,667	20,003,087
Total incl. user cost of capital	7,376,986	5,158,662	5,083,225	1,718,764	2,953,361	520,249	414,528	431,368	23,657,143
In-school secondary education									
Salaries (teaching)	3,339,641	2,040,204	1,986,883	560,589	1,068,917	221,364	121,449	178,313	9,517,360
Salaries (non-teaching)	636,322	467,259	504,393	134,807	342,643	64,888	26,321	62,933	2,239,566
Redundancies	0	420	145	0	0	0	38	0	603
Non-salary costs	1,431,878	910,434	728,615	236,449	386,456	107,662	82,421	74,573	3,958,488
User cost of capital	728,059	683,100	527,992	112,354	353,225	46,433	31,259	69,115	2,551,537
Total excl. user cost of capital	5,407,841	3,418,317	3,220,036	931,845	1,798,016	393,914	230,229	315,819	15,716,017
Total incl. user cost of capital	6,135,900	4,101,417	3,748,028	1,044,199	2,151,241	440,347	261,488	384,934	18,267,554
Out-of-school									
Salaries (teaching)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Salaries (non-teaching)	216,103	126,883	311,381	130,806	128,018	27,127	50,727	25,925	1,016,970
Redundancies	3866	3,025	427	10,778	0	0	0	0	18,096
Non-salary costs	66,590	239,677	231,412	81,059	45,745	8,066	33,406	7,277	713,232
User cost of capital	19,209	12,236	2,654	6,113	15,626	788	0	1,962	58,588
Total excl. user cost of capital	286,559	369,585	543,220	222,643	173,763	35,193	84,133	33,202	1,748,298
Total incl. user cost of capital	305,768	381,821	545,874	228,756	189,389	35,981	84,133	35,164	1,806,886
Total - primary, secondary and out-of-school									
Total excl. user cost of capital	12,042,892	8,010,421	8,020,236	2,666,489	4,442,578	903,961	674,137	706,688	37,467,402
Total incl. user cost of capital	13,818,654	9,641,900	9,377,127	2,991,719	5,293,991	996,577	760,149	851,466	43,731,583

Notes:

Salary related expenses include notional payroll tax for WA, Tas., Qld and the ACT, as these jurisdictions are exempted from paying payroll tax.

Non-salary costs include other operating expenses, grants and subsidies and depreciation.

A notional user cost of capital based on 8 per cent of total written down value of capital assets as at 30 June 2017 is applied to all jurisdictions.

Users wishing to publish these data should provide suitable explanatory notes and be aware that the data do not represent total government expenditure on school education.

They specifically exclude items such as:

- Commonwealth direct payments to parents and/or students
- preschools and TAFE establishments
- sinking fund payments and interests on Commonwealth loans
- teacher housing and student hostel provisions
- funds raised by schools, school councils or community organisations.

Source: Education Council, National Schools Statistics Collection (NSSC) – Finance, 2017. See also National Report on Schooling data portal.

Government schools – in-school and out-of-school expenditure

Table 1.17 shows funding going to in-school and out-of-school activities for the past five years.

- Teaching salary costs represented 77.4 per cent of total salary costs in 2016–17 and 49.8 per cent of total expenditure.
- Teaching staff salaries changed marginally from 78.1 per cent of total salary costs in 2015–16 to 77.4 per cent of total salary costs in 2016–17.
- Non-teaching staff salaries changed marginally from 21.9 per cent of total salary costs in 2015–16 to 22.6 per cent of total salary costs in 2016–17.
- Non-salary costs changed marginally from 21.4 per cent of total government sector expenditure in 2015–16 to 21.3 per cent in 2016–17.

Table 1.17

Operating expenditure by government education systems, Australia, from 2011–12 to 2016–17 financial years (accrual basis) (nominal \$'000)

Area of expenditure	2011–12	2012–13	2013–14	2014–15	2015–16	2016–17
In-school expenditure						
Salaries (teaching)	18,178,507	18,260,491	19,255,424	19,952,537	21,161,119	21,775,001
Salaries (non-teaching)	3,906,268	4,065,443	4,316,830	4,666,906	4,974,562	5,346,145
Redundancies	18,327	39,721	11,240	20,721	12,167	1,567
Non-salary costs	6,996,004	7,145,009	7,547,257	7,982,909	8,408,634	8,596,391
User cost of capital	5,623,590	5,565,745	5,629,094	5,922,211	6,101,612	6,205,593
Subtotal incl. user cost of capital	34,722,696	35,076,409	36,759,845	38,545,284	40,658,094	41,924,697
Out-of-school expenditure						
Salaries (teaching)	1,099,922	1,021,658	982,240	957,663	970,581	1,016,970
Redundancies	17,692	50,933	31,650	13,184	27,586	18,096
Non-salary costs	664,627	669,869	664,298	669,146	677,086	713,232
User cost of capital	27,961	33,932	32,120	46,264	46,511	58,588
Subtotal incl. user cost of capital	1,810,202	1,776,393	1,710,308	1,686,257	1,721,764	1,806,886
Total	36,532,898	36,852,802	38,470,152	40,231,541	42,379,858	43,731,583

Notes:

Amounts include Australian Government non-capital-related and other grants made to states/territories. Depreciation and user cost of capital expenses included in the figures are based on assets owned by states/territories, some of which have been acquired with Australian Government capital grants.

Components may not add to totals due to rounding.

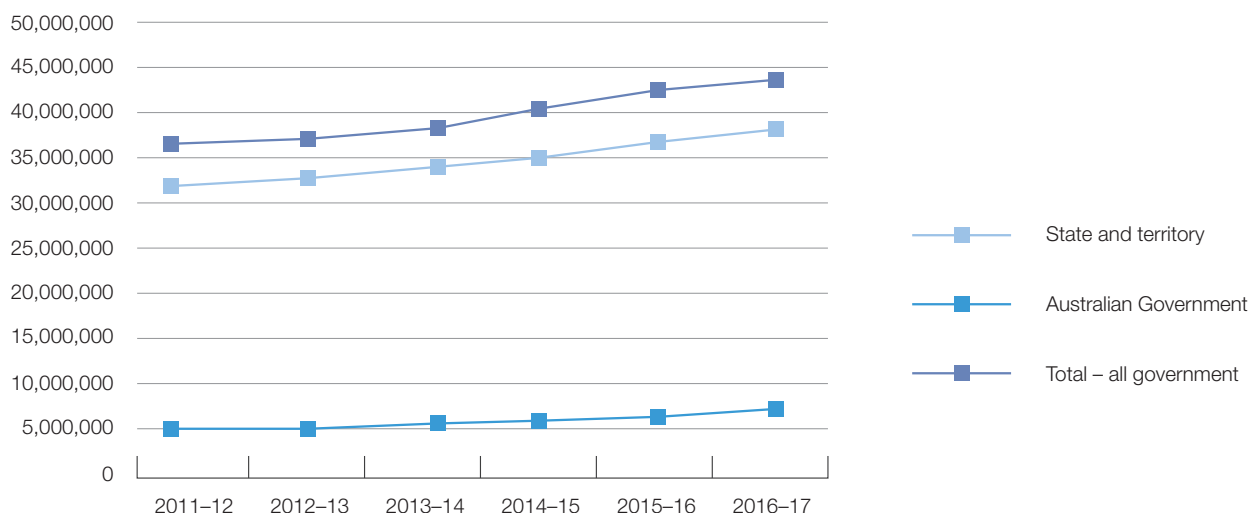
Sources: Education Council, National Schools Statistics Collection (NSSC) – Finance, 2017; *National Report on Schooling in Australia* (previous years).

See also National Report on Schooling data portal.

The total recurrent expenditure by government education systems over the past five years is provided at figure 1.6. It shows government school recurrent expenditure has increased from \$36.5 billion to \$43.7 billion from 2011–12 to 2016–17 an increase of 19.7 per cent.

Figure 1.6

Australian, state and territory government recurrent expenditure (nominal \$'000), government schools, from 2011–12 to 2016–17



School sector	2011–12	2012–13	2013–14	2014–15	2015–16	2016–17
State and territory	31,954,218	32,357,724	33,570,521	34,843,944	36,527,775	37,134,420
Australian government	4,578,680	4,495,078	4,899,631	5,387,597	5,852,083	6,597,163
Total – all government	36,532,898	36,852,802	38,470,152	40,231,541	42,379,858	43,731,583

Sources: Education Council, National Schools Statistics Collection (Finance), 2017; Steering Committee for the Review of Government Service Provision (SCRGSP), *Report on Government Services 2019*, Productivity Commission.

See also National Report on Schooling data portal.

Primary and secondary school recurrent per capita expenditure

The per capita expenditure information provided in table 1.18 gives a nationally consistent basis for comparison of the levels of expenditure across states in government schools in 2016–17.

Nominal per capita recurrent expenditure in government schools has steadily increased over the past decade, apart from a slight dip from 2011–12 to 2012–13 for secondary students.

Table 1.18

Per capita expenditure on government schools, by school level, by state and territory, 2016–17 financial year (\$ per student)

State/territory	Primary	Secondary	Total
New South Wales	15,697	20,579	17,585
Victoria	14,773	18,271	16,135
Queensland	16,344	19,130	17,414
South Australia	16,932	18,320	17,429
Western Australia	17,930	21,716	19,346
Tasmania	16,269	19,642	17,653
Northern Territory	24,182	27,746	25,433
Australian Capital Territory	18,641	23,799	20,750
Australia	16,117	19,800	17,531

Source: Education Council, National Schools Statistics Collection – Finance, 2017.

See also National Report on Schooling data portal.

Table 1.19 shows that nationally in 2016–17, this expenditure reached \$16,117 for primary students and \$19,800 for secondary students. This is 22.9 per cent more for a secondary student than for a primary student.

Table 1.19

Recurrent per capita expenditure on government schools, by school level, Australia, from 2010–11 to 2016–17 financial years (accrual basis) (nominal \$)

Financial year	Primary	Secondary	Total
2010–11	13,895	16,720	15,002
2011–12	14,515	17,746	15,768
2012–13	14,520	17,608	15,703
2013–14	14,860	18,313	16,167
2014–15	15,243	18,949	16,662
2015–16	15,964	19,350	17,275
2016–17	16,117	19,800	17,531

Note: Amounts include state/territory and Australian Government contributions.

Sources: Education Council, National Schools Statistics Collection (NSSC), 2017; *National Report on Schooling in Australia* (previous years).

See also National Report on Schooling data portal.

Table 1.19 also shows a growth of 1.5 per cent in total per capita funding over 2015–16 to 2016–17 from \$17,275 to \$17,531.

Nationally, recurrent per capita expenditure for government primary schools increased by 1.0 per cent from 2015–16 to 2016–17, while funding over the same period increased by 2.3 per cent for government secondary schools.

Secondary schools have a higher rate of per capita expenditure than primary schools, mainly because of the greater complexity and range of the curriculum and of services provided, and lower class sizes, especially in the last two years of schooling.

1.5.4 Government funding for non-government schools

Per capita income

Non-government schools derive their income from Australian Government and state/territory government grants, from school fees and charges and from fundraising, including donations.

The income shown in table 1.20 funds both recurrent and capital applications.

Table 1.20

Non-government school per capita incomes, by source, Australia, 2017 calendar year

Income source	Catholic schools		Independent schools	
	Per capita amount (\$)	% of total income	Per capita amount (\$)	% of total income
Australian Government grants	8,939	54.5	7,358	33.0
State/territory grants	2,748	16.7	2,390	10.7
Total government grants	11,687	71.2	9,748	43.7
Private income	4,727	28.8	12,539	56.3
Total	16,414	100	22,280	100

Notes:

Excludes amounts related to boarding facilities and direct payments by the Australian Government to students and/or parents.

Components may not add to totals due to rounding.

Source: Australian Government Department of Education and Training unpublished data.

See also National Report on Schooling data portal.

Per capita expenditure by non-government schools

Table 1.21 summarises per capita expenditure by non-government schools. The per capita figures reflect capital expenditure and recurrent expenditure (which is a mixture of cash- and accrual-based expenditure) including debt servicing of loans for capital and operating purposes.

Table 1.21

Non-government school per capita expenditure, by school sector and school type, Australia, 2017 calendar year

Affiliation	Per capita expenditure (\$)
Catholic	
Primary	13,246
Secondary	18,764
Combined	20,235
Independent	
Primary	17,701
Secondary	25,909
Combined	22,391

Notes:

Excludes amounts related to boarding facilities and direct payments by the Australian Government to students and/or parents. Includes debt-servicing of loans for capital and operating purposes.

Where applicable, expenditure of system offices is allocated across the schools in proportion to enrolments.

Where figures have been rounded, discrepancies may occur between the sums of component items and totals.

Source: Australian Government Department of Education and Training unpublished data.

See also National Report on Schooling data portal.

Government expenditure on non-government schools

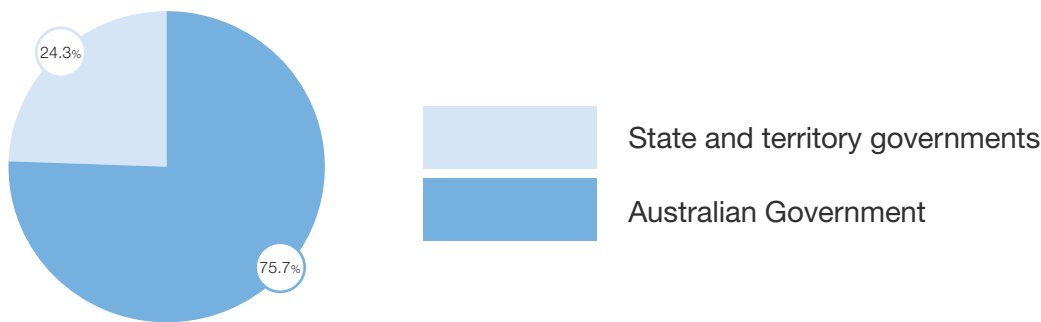
As well as providing recurrent grants to government schools, all states and territories contribute to funding for non-government schools. State/territory governments used a variety of mechanisms for allocating funding to non-government schools in 2017.

Total recurrent expenditure on non-government school education by the Australian Government, and state and territory governments in 2016–17 was approximately \$10,644 per student. Australian Government expenditure was \$8,053 per student, or 75.7 per cent of this total. State and territory recurrent expenditure was \$2,591 per student, or 24.3 per cent of the total.²⁴ This is depicted in figure 1.7.

²⁴ Government expenditure on non-government schools does not include user cost of capital.

Figure 1.7

Total government recurrent expenditure per student, non-government schools, Australia, 2016–17 (per cent)



Sources: Steering Committee for the Review of Government Service Provision (SCRGSP), *Report on Government Services 2019*, Productivity Commission.

See also National Report on Schooling data portal.

Table 1.22 shows total Australian, state and territory recurrent expenditure on non-government schools in 2016–17.

Total recurrent expenditure on non-government school education from the Australian Government, and state and territory governments in 2016–17 was approximately \$14.0 billion. Australian Government expenditure was \$10.6 billion, or 75.7 per cent of this total. State and territory recurrent expenditure was \$3.4 billion or 24.3 per cent of the total.

Table 1.22

Australian, state and territory government recurrent expenditure, non-government schools (\$'000), 2016–17

	Australia
Australian Government specific purpose payments (excluding capital grants)	10,620,536
State and territory government recurrent expenditure	3,416,388
Australian, state and territory government recurrent expenditure	14,036,924

Source: Steering Committee for the Review of Government Service Provision (SCRGSP), *Report on Government Services 2019*, Productivity Commission

See also National Report on Schooling data portal.

1.5.5 Capital expenditure

Government schools

State and territory governments provide the majority of funding for capital expenditure in government schools. States and territories may also use Commonwealth recurrent funding for capital purposes in government schools.

As shown in table 1.23, capital expenditure by state and territory governments in government schools was \$2.0 billion in 2017 (the 2016–17 financial year). This table combines funding provided from the Australian Government, and state and territory sourced funding.

The level of capital expenditure rose to unusually high levels in 2009–10 and 2010–11 due mainly to the injection of significant Australian Government funding under the former Building the Education Revolution (BER) program²⁵ and other capital expenditure associated with national partnerships. This has reverted to reflect longer term average capital expenditure more closely, following the completion of projects funded through these programs. The variations in capital expenditure reflect specific initiatives by various state and territory governments to invest in school infrastructure.

Capital funding and expenditure will, by their nature, reflect the need for capital infrastructure development and building programs associated with growth cycles in enrolments generally, and more specifically, in growth regions and corridors in a state or territory, as well as having regard to the age and condition of existing capital stock. By contrast, changes in recurrent expenditure will reflect the ongoing teaching and curriculum costs associated with schools and be relatively smoother in nature.

Table 1.23

Capital expenditure by state and territory governments in government schools, Australia, from 2009–10 to 2016–17 financial years (accrual basis) (\$'000)

Financial year	NSW	Vic.	Qld	SA	WA	Tas.	NT	ACT	Australia
2009–10	2,567,386	1,269,900	1,977,011	488,650	690,849	223,232	154,695	199,437	7,571,161
2010–11	1,799,683	1,835,015	1,437,641	440,642	820,969	200,907	106,052	198,547	6,839,455
2011–12	584,824	720,258	434,002	144,570	668,824	36,746	54,187	96,735	2,740,147
2012–13	426,911	444,307	345,810	106,720	465,354	8,356	19,416	74,055	1,890,928
2013–14	399,794	387,953	428,176	134,026	520,537	20,071	33,589	61,418	1,985,564
2014–15	345,547	300,479	313,414	84,209	404,317	15,530	20,465	69,922	1,553,883
2015–16	404,588	288,033	313,630	39,118	287,789	34,957	75,989	53,292	1,497,396
2016–17	492,162	586,901	457,810	48,749	322,696	34,957	72,476	28,953	2,044,704

Notes:

Amounts include components of Australian Government funding used for capital purposes.

Components may not add to totals due to rounding.

Sources: Education Council, National Schools Statistics Collection (Finance), 2017; *National Report on Schooling in Australia, 2011–2016*. See also National Report on Schooling data portal.

²⁵ The National Partnership Agreement on the Nation Building and Jobs Plan – Building the Education Revolution was implemented from 2008–09 to 2011–12.

Non-government schools

Commonwealth funding for non government school capital expenditure is provided by the Australian Government through the Capital Grants Program (CGP) for non-government schools. The CGP provides supplementary funding to assist non-government primary and secondary school communities to improve capital infrastructure where these schools otherwise may not have access to sufficient capital resources. Special schools, special assistance schools, majority Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander schools and sole provider schools may also use Commonwealth recurrent funding for capital purposes.

State and territory governments also contribute to non-government school capital projects in their jurisdictions.

Further information on Australian and state and territory government capital expenditure on schools is available from the [School income and capital expenditure for government and non-government schools \(calendar year\)](#) data set in the National Report on Schooling data portal.²⁶

1.5.6 My School financial information

Important note: *As indicated below, there are key differences between the [My School website](#) finance data and National Schools Statistics Collection (NSSC) (Finance) and other finance data reported in previous sections of this part. The income-based finance data from My School should not be compared to the expenditure-based finance data quoted in previous subsections.*

This part provides high-level profiles of recurrent funding information for the 2016 calendar year, aggregated from school financial details published on the *My School* website in March 2018.

The key financial measure reported on *My School* is school net recurrent income and net recurrent income per student (NRIPS). Government and non-government schools and systems that allocate some of their gross income to capital purposes have these amounts shown and deducted from their gross income. Gross income that is allocated to capital expenses in the reporting year is included in the school's capital expenditure report.

The methodology and other associated material related to *My School* finance data classification may be obtained from the [My School website](#).

My School finance data were developed to show the income available to a school over a calendar year (not financial year) to deliver education services to students. *My School* income data include private funding that supports a school but exclude user cost of capital (a notional opportunity cost), payroll tax and the cost of transporting students to and from school.

In addition, private funding, as reported on *My School* for the government sector, is excluded from the NSSC (Finance) collection, whereas payroll tax, student transport and user cost of capital are included in NSSC expenditure information. Also, the NSSC finance data are reported on a financial year basis. Therefore, recurrent income information contained within this section and recurrent expenditure in the preceding sections are not directly comparable.

²⁶ This data set is aggregated data drawn from the *My School* finance data collection.

For government and systemic schools, where a 'system' or 'managing organisation' (such as a district, region or state office) other than the school itself incurs expenditure and manages finances for the school, each school's income is composed of all such funds used for, and on behalf of, the school plus any cash income received at the school level, as if each school were accounted for as a stand-alone entity. This approach is consistent with the principles of Australian Accounting Standard AASB 1004 – Contributions.

It also is important to note that the definitions and counting rules for schools and enrolments used for the *My School* website differ, in some respects, to those of the National Schools Statistics Collection (Non-finance)²⁷ used for the reporting of school and student data elsewhere in this report.

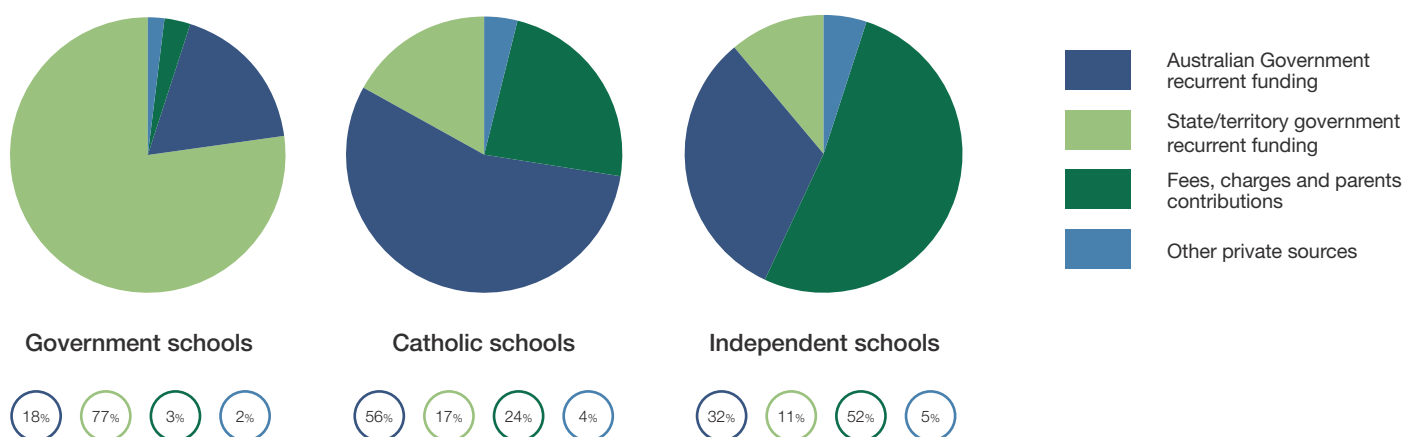
Recurrent income

For 2016, the Australian Government funding comprised 18 per cent of the total gross income for government schools with the majority, 77 per cent, being funded by state and territory governments.

For non-government schools, the Australian Government contributed 56 per cent of Catholic sector gross income and 32 per cent of independent sector gross income. Income from fees, charges and parent contributions contributed 52 per cent of independent sector income and 24 per cent of Catholic sector income.

Figure 1.8

Proportion of students (full-time plus part-time) enrolled in schools by sector, Australia, 2017 (per cent)



Source: ACARA, National Report on Schooling data portal, *My School* finance data

See also National Report on Schooling data portal.

²⁷ The National Schools Statistics Collection (NSSC) (Non-finance) is the source of school number and student enrolment data reported elsewhere in this report. Data included in this section on a per-school, per-student or per-school sector basis cannot be directly compared to data reported elsewhere in this report. In particular, in the NSSC, Catholic non-systemic schools are classified as Catholic schools. In the *My School* data collection, a number of Catholic non-systemic schools in NSW, SA and WA are currently classified as independent schools. This affects comparisons between school sectors for those states and nationally. Further information on the NSSC (Non-finance) is included in part 4: Glossary.

Table 1.24 shows the movements in recurrent income between 2015 and 2016 by funding source.

Table 1.24

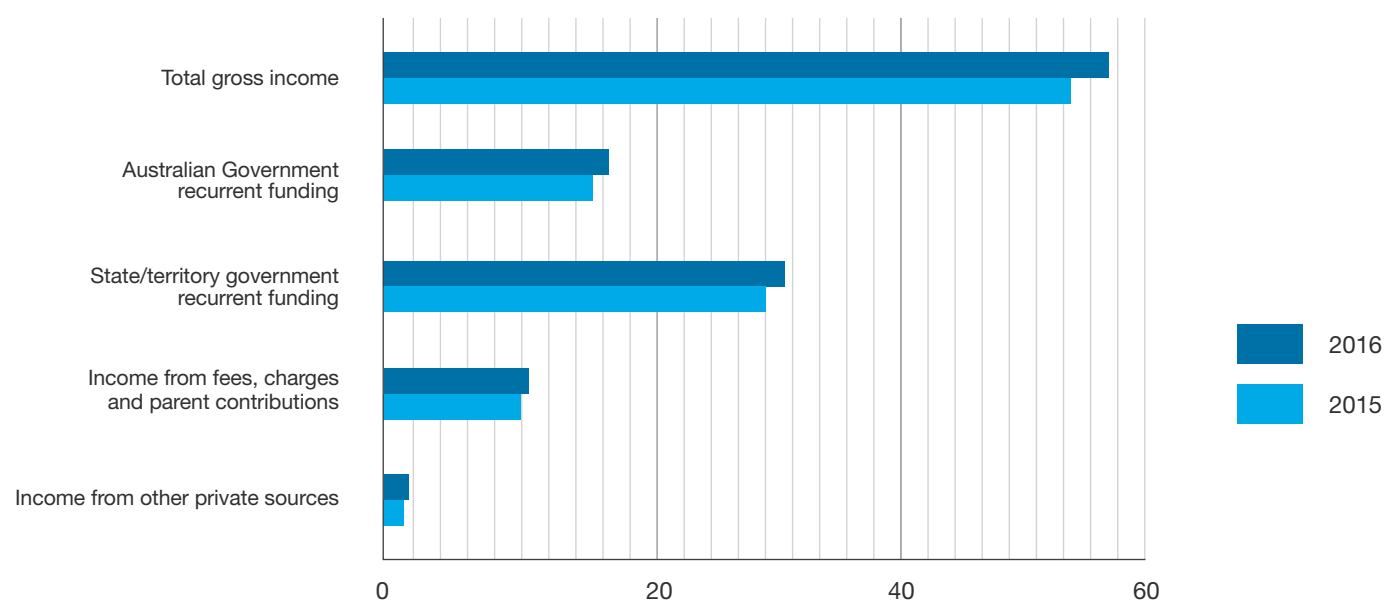
Movements in recurrent income between 2015 and 2016

Source of income	2015 (\$ billion)	2016 (\$ billion)	Change (\$ billion)	Movement
Australian Government	15.178	16.272	1.094	↑
State/territory government	27.947	29.457	1.510	↑
Fees, charges and parental contributions	9.888	10.125	0.237	↑
Other private sources	1.623	1.802	0.179	↑
Total gross income	54.635	57.656	3.021	↑
Deductions (from recurrent to capital services)	1.942	1.967	0.025	↑
Total net recurrent income	52.693	55.689	2.996	↑

These data are depicted graphically in figure 1.9.

Figure 1.9

Total gross income between 2015 and 2016, by funding source (\$ billion)



Source: ACARA, *My School* finance data collection, National Report on Schooling Data Portal.

Net recurrent income per student (NRIPS)

As the number of students varies across years, showing income per student allows for a more informative comparison, particularly between sectors. Table 1.25 depicts income per student.

In 2016, the net recurrent income per student (NRIPS) was \$14,622. This is an increase of 4.20 per cent over 2015.

Between 2015 and 2016, there was 4.19 per cent increase for the government sector (to \$13,719), a 4.90 per cent increase for the Catholic sector (to \$14,075), and a 3.35 per cent increase for the independent sector (to \$19,062).

Table 1.25

Movements in income per student between 2015 and 2016 (\$)

Source of income	2015	2016	Change %	Movement
Australian Government	4,042	4,273	5.70	↑
State/territory government	7,443	7,734	3.91	↑
Fees, charges and parental contributions	2,633	2,658	0.96	↑
Other private sources	432	473	9.51	↑
Total gross income	14,550	15,138	4.04	↑
Deductions ²⁸	517	516	-0.12	↓
Total NRIPS²⁹	14,033	14,622	4.20	↑
NRIPS (government)	13,167	13,719	4.19	↑
NRIPS (Catholic)	13,417	14,075	4.90	↑
NRIPS (independent)	18,445	19,062	3.35	↑
FTE student numbers (no.)	3,754,875	3,808,610	1.43	↑

Source: ACARA, *My School* finance data collection, National Report on Schooling Data Portal.

See also National Report on Schooling data portal.

28 Deductions from recurrent to capital services.

29 NRIPS (net recurrent income per student (\$)) = total gross income per student (\$) minus deductions per student (\$).

Part 2: Policies and priorities



Part 2 outlines the national policy context for Australian schooling in 2017 and reports against the commitments to action agreed by Australian education ministers in the *Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians*.

2.1 National policy context

Within Australia's federal system of government, constitutional responsibility for school education rests mainly with the Australian states and territories. The six state and two territory governments and the Australian Government have cooperated to work towards agreed goals and commitments expressed in the [*Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians*](#).

In Australia, joint decisions on agreed national policy and shared priorities are made through intergovernmental policy councils. For education and training in 2017, these councils are the Council of Australian Governments (COAG), the COAG Education Council, and the COAG Industry and Skills Council.

COAG

COAG is the peak inter-governmental forum in Australia. Its members are the Prime Minister, state and territory first ministers and the president of the Australian Local Government Association.

COAG Education Council



The COAG Education Council is the national ministerial council with responsibility for schooling. Membership of the Education Council consists of state, territory, Australian Government and New Zealand ministers with responsibility for the portfolios of school education, higher education and/or early childhood education.

The Education Council's scope of responsibility covers:

- early childhood education and care
- primary and secondary education, including vocational education and training in schools
- higher education
- international education.

The Education Council provides a forum through which strategic policy on education can be coordinated at the national level. By connecting early childhood, school education and higher education, the Council aims to ensure that integrated Australian education systems promote high achievement for all students regardless of circumstances.

The Council's priority actions include³⁰:

1. implementation of priority reform activities for early childhood
2. Australian curriculum and national assessment
3. teacher quality and school leadership
4. Indigenous education
5. school funding
6. reducing regulatory burden.

COAG Industry and Skills Council



The COAG Industry and Skills Council has responsibility for skills development and national training arrangements including national collaboration in vocational education and training (VET).

³⁰ [COAG Education Council 2014 Terms of Reference.](#)

National policy initiatives

In 2017, the Education Council established the STEM Partnerships Forum, bringing together leaders from industry and education to facilitate a more strategic approach to school-based partnerships with businesses and industry across Australia. This was in order to develop the engagement, aspiration, capability and attainment of students in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM). The forum will report to Education Council in 2018.

In 2017, the Australian Government progressed a number of initiatives under the Quality Schools, Quality Outcomes agenda to improve learning outcomes for all students, including focusing on quality teaching, school leadership, parent engagement and supporting delivery of the Australian Curriculum.

The Australian Government commissioned two reviews into aspects of school education policy:

- The Review to Achieve Educational Excellence in Australian Schools was established to provide advice on how Commonwealth education funding should be used by Australian schools and school systems to improve school performance and student achievement.
- The Independent Review into Regional, Rural and Remote Education was established as part of an Australian Government commitment to improve the educational outcomes of students living in these areas.

Both review panels will report to the Australian Government in 2018.

In November 2017, the Australian Government also established the National School Resourcing Board to provide greater independent oversight over Commonwealth school funding. The Board's first priority was to review the funding arrangements for determining the capacity of non-government school communities to contribute to the operational costs of their school.



State and territory policy initiatives³¹

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 2017, major state and territory policy initiatives included:

- School Infrastructure NSW was established to build and upgrade the schools NSW needs for the future. In 2017, the NSW Government committed \$4.2 billion for new and upgraded schools over the next four years.
- In Victoria, as part of the digital education initiative, \$16.4 million was provided to increase bandwidth and digital connectivity for small rural schools. The objective is to bring small regional and rural government primary and secondary schools to the same standard of provision as metropolitan schools.
- Queensland continued to implement a state-wide School Improvement Model (SIM), promoting the use of common language and processes for improving teaching and learning across schools.
- Machinery of government changes from July 2017 expanded the operations of Western Australia's department of education to include support for the state's curriculum, assessment and certification authority and regulation services.

³¹ Information on state and territory initiatives reported in part 2 is drawn from contributions received from state and territory education authorities.

2.2 Educational goals

The *Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians*³² sets the directions for Australian schooling for the decade from 2009, as agreed to by all Australian education ministers.

The Melbourne Declaration has two overarching educational goals³³ for young Australians:

Goal 1: Australian schooling promotes equity and excellence.

Goal 2: All young Australians become successful learners, confident and creative individuals, and active and informed citizens.

Commitment to action

The Melbourne Declaration includes a Commitment to action in eight interrelated areas in order to support the achievement of the educational goals:

- developing stronger partnerships
- supporting quality teaching and school leadership
- strengthening early childhood education
- enhancing middle years development
- supporting senior years of schooling and youth transitions
- promoting world-class curriculum and assessment
- improving educational outcomes for Indigenous youth and disadvantaged young Australians, especially those from low socio-economic backgrounds
- strengthening accountability and transparency.

Progress in 2017 in addressing the areas for action is outlined in the following sections.

³² The *Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians* (2008) replaced the *National Goals for Schooling in the Twenty-First Century* (the Adelaide Declaration, agreed in 1999), which itself superseded the original *National Goals for Schooling in Australia* (Hobart Declaration, agreed in 1989).

³³ For a full explanation of the goals, see the Melbourne Declaration, pp. 6–9.

COAG targets

COAG has set targets to lift educational attainment overall and to close the gap between the educational outcomes of Indigenous and non-Indigenous students. These are to:

- lift the Year 12 or equivalent or Certificate III attainment rate to 90 per cent by 2020
- halve the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students in reading, writing and numeracy by 2018
- at least halve the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students' Year 12 or equivalent attainment rates by 2020
- close the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students in school attendance by the end of 2018

Progress against COAG targets for school education is reported in part 3: Measuring and reporting performance.

COAG has also agreed to a target of 95 per cent of all Indigenous four-year-olds enrolled in early childhood education by 2025.³⁴



³⁴ Reporting on this early childhood education target is outside the scope of this report.

2.3 Developing stronger partnerships

Following the commitment to develop stronger partnerships made in the Melbourne Declaration, the Australian Government, and state and territory governments entered into a set of formal national partnership agreements in education through COAG.

From 2009 to 2013, national partnership agreements were implemented in the following areas: improving teacher quality; education in low socio-economic status schools; literacy and numeracy; school construction; information and communication technology (ICT) in secondary schools; and youth attainment and transitions.

Information on these national partnerships is included in previous editions of this report.³⁵

STEM partnerships forum

The STEM Partnerships Forum is a collaborative action under the [*National STEM School Education Strategy 2016–2026*](#), endorsed by all Australian education ministers in December 2015. Members of the forum, chaired by Australia's Chief Scientist, include representatives from some of Australia's largest companies, as well as senior representatives from across the education sector. In 2017, the forum met to map out opportunities to facilitate efficient and effective partnerships between industry and Australian schools to improve Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) education. It will report to ministers in 2018.

Pathways in Technology

The Australian Government has committed \$5.1 million to pilot the Pathways in Technology (P-TECH) model of education–industry collaboration at 14 sites as part of a broader strategy to improve Australia's Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) capability.

P-TECH involves the establishment of long-term partnerships between industry, schools and tertiary education providers, which enable businesses to play an active role in supporting young people to develop the skills they need for the jobs of the future. Local education and industry partners involved in the pilot are working together to design and deliver P-TECH learning programs suited to local circumstances.

State and territory initiatives

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

³⁵ Ongoing national partnerships in the early childhood education sector, are reported in part 2.5: Strengthening early childhood.

In 2017, examples of these partnerships included:

- The Victorian Government committed \$50 million to the Shared Facilities Fund to create community hubs in growth areas designed to enable greater use of school assets such as sports facilities, early learning hubs, libraries and performing arts centres.
- Queensland's School Improvement Model supports schools to plan school improvement in partnership with families, local community groups, Indigenous communities and between schools.
- Queensland has also implemented Pathways for Early Learning and Development, a multi-generational approach to reach some of the state's most vulnerable. By integrating an early childhood teacher with targeted family support services, this approach allows educators to focus on children's learning and development, while family support workers address broader family needs.



2.4 Supporting quality teaching and school leadership

Australian governments are committed to working with all school sectors to attract, develop, support and retain a high-quality teaching and school leadership workforce in Australian schools ([Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians](#) 2008).

Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership



The [Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership \(AITSL\)](#) is a company owned and funded by the Australian Government. AITSL has responsibility for supporting the implementation of the [Australian Professional Standards for Teachers](#) and the [Australian Professional Standard for Principals](#). In 2017, AITSL continued to work closely with the states and territories, the non-government sector, universities and other key stakeholders in the implementation of the standards and to support and strengthen the teaching profession.

AITSL has developed resources to support teachers, principals and school leaders in their preparation, professional learning and leadership development. In particular, resources to support [Graduate to Proficient: Australian guidelines for teacher induction into the profession](#), were developed.

Support for principals and school leaders in 2017 included a school leadership round table, which brought together key academics and researchers, school principals and leaders of national principal associations to explore future directions in school leadership.

AITSL continued to drive improvements in initial teacher education, supporting states and territories to accredit initial teacher education programs against strengthened accreditation standards, establishing expert advisory panels and delivering training to accreditation panels.

States and territories continued to implement the standards for teachers and principals and accreditation of teacher education programs within each jurisdiction.

Other state and territory initiatives to support quality teaching and school leadership in 2017 included:

- the release of the NSW School Leadership Strategy to provide more support for school leaders so they can focus on leading teaching and learning. The strategy will provide quality leadership preparation and development, strengthen collegial support for school leaders and improve services and support to NSW public schools.
- Northern Territory initiatives to increase leadership capacity resulting in 95 aspiring and new school leaders engaging in mentoring and coaching programs
- Improved support for early career teachers in the Northern Territory through new online mentoring resources and guidelines for leading teachers, and induction materials for assistant teachers, teachers and principals to provide support for new staff.

Further information on the work AITSL is undertaking to support the teaching profession is available on the [AITSL website](#).

2.5 Strengthening early childhood education³⁶

Australian governments have committed to supporting the development and strengthening of early childhood education, to provide every child with the opportunity for the best start in life ([Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians](#) 2008).

National Partnership Agreements on Early Childhood Education

The Australian Government committed \$840 million under the National Partnership Agreement on Universal Access to Early Childhood Education – 2016 and 2017 to support universal access to quality early childhood education programs. This included \$422.9 million in 2017 to ensure that every child has access to a quality preschool education for 600 hours (15 hours a week) in the year before they start school.

[The National Partnership on the National Quality Agenda for Early Childhood Education and Care 2015–16 to 2017–18](#) supports the National Quality Framework (NQF), which drives continuous improvement in the quality of early childhood and child care services and national consistency in service quality. The NQF applies to most long-day care, family day care, kindergarten/preschool and outside school-hours care services in Australia.

The [Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority \(ACECQA\)](#) is the national body that supports regulatory authorities in states and territories in implementing the NQF.

The Australian Government supported targeted early learning initiatives aligned to the Early Years Learning Framework. The Early Learning Languages Australia (ELLA) was made nationally available in 2017. This digital, play-based program makes language learning engaging to children in preschool through a series of interactive apps.

Building on the success of ELLA, the Early Learning STEM Australia (ELSA) pilot aims to enable preschool students to develop STEM³⁷ concepts at an early age through play-based apps. Under the Inspiring STEM Literacy measure of the National Innovation and Science Agenda, the Australian Government is investing \$14 million over four years for initiatives that promote positive STEM learning experiences for children aged three to five years.

The Australian Government has also committed \$5.9 million from 2017–18 to 2020–21 to trial a series of applications to be used in preschool to improve English literacy outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children for whom English is a second language.

³⁶ Early childhood education refers to programs that children may undertake in the years before they commence full-time schooling. Statistical information on early childhood education is outside the scope of this report.

³⁷ Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics.

State and territory initiatives

The NSW Government rolled out the Start Strong funding reforms from January 2017 to help services reduce preschool fees, especially for Aboriginal children and those from low income backgrounds. In 2017, the investment in Start Strong was extended to 2021, with an additional \$217 million committed over four years to further support access to 600 hours of early childhood education.

The Victorian Government released the Education State Early Childhood Reform Plan: Ready for kinder, ready for school, ready for life. The plan sets out a \$202.1 million investment for early childhood, intended to build a high-quality, equitable and inclusive early childhood system. This is a 10-year plan that sets out significant reforms for kindergarten³⁸, the Maternal and Child Health Service and parenting supports.

Queensland has invested \$4 million over four years (2017–2020) through the Step up into Education initiative. This aims to encourage parents to become involved in their child's education and to support children to transition positively to school. Twenty-one Queensland government schools in areas of disadvantage are participating in the Step up into Education initiative.

Queensland government school teachers have access to Early Start, a suite of literacy and numeracy materials developed to support teachers to monitor student progress across the early years of schooling, Prep to Year 2.³⁹

The Tasmanian Strategy for Children and It's A Great Start website were released in 2017. The website enables parents and carers to access information about early years programs such as Child and Family Centres, Launching into Learning, Kindergarten, and Learning in Families Together.

In the Northern Territory, Families as First Teachers, an early learning and family support program for remote Indigenous families, continued to expand across remote communities.

The Northern Territory preschool curriculum was developed as a guide for early childhood educators to implement the outcomes of the Early Years Learning Framework for children aged three to five years. It is informed by understandings of what children are capable of doing and how they develop through play-based learning and intentional/explicit teaching.

The Australian Capital Territory Government established the Early Childhood Advisory Council to develop strong partnerships between government and non-government parts of the early childhood education and care sector. The ACT Government is also developing an Early Childhood Strategy to improve equitable access to quality early childhood education and care across the ACT.

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

³⁸ In Victoria, Kindergarten is the name used for preschool early childhood education.

³⁹ Prep is the name used in Queensland for the Foundation year (first year of full-time schooling)

2.6 Enhancing middle years development

Australian governments commit to working with all school sectors to ensure that schools provide programs that are responsive to students' developmental and learning needs in the middle years, and which are challenging, engaging and rewarding ([*Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians*](#) 2008).

The Australian Government delivers a range of programs that support teaching and learning across various learning areas. For example, under the Embracing the Digital Age measure of the National Innovation and Science Agenda, the government has allocated over \$50 million for initiatives that seek to improve the teaching and learning of STEM in schools and support implementation of the Australian Curriculum: Digital Technologies.

State and territory initiatives

States and territories continue to progress work in this area on an individual basis:

In Victoria, funding of \$50.7 million was committed over four years to improve principal and teacher capability in almost 350 Victorian government schools facing complex challenges. The support will be tailored to the needs of individual schools and will include mobile turnaround teams, deployment of an executive principal, school improvement partnerships, and specialist teaching teams aimed at building capability and lifting performance.

Queensland government school teachers have access to the P–10 Literacy continuum, a set of benchmarks to support teachers to monitor students' literacy development in the curriculum and differentiate to meet individual student's needs.

In South Australia, the survey of wellbeing and student engagement collected information from students in Years 4–7 about their social and emotional development, social support and learning and engagement.

Catholic schools in Western Australia commenced the roll-out of LEADing Lights, a new digital transformation network designed to increase collaboration and enhance outcomes for its schools and students.

In Western Australia, the Aboriginal Cultural Standards Framework continued to drive work in providing more practical, coordinated and focused support for government school leaders and staff to strengthen Aboriginal student engagement and achievement.

The Tasmanian Middle Years Literacy Project aims to improve instructional leadership and literacy teaching practices in Years 4–8, with a particular focus on transition from Years 6–7, in order to improve student literacy outcomes in these critical years of schooling.

The Northern Territory's Work Like the Best: Middle Years Teaching and Learning Strategy 2016–2018 continued implementation in 2017 with a focus on classroom approaches, strengthening literacy and numeracy skills and implementing an explicit teaching model.

The Territory's Social Emotional Learning Curriculum is contextualised for Northern Territory students, and provides activities to develop students' social and emotional learning to equip them with the skills to be healthy and resilient. The Literacy and Numeracy Essentials program is a consistent, explicit teaching model for literacy and numeracy in remote schools, developed specifically for NT students.

In the ACT, the Pathways website was developed to support young people aged 10–17 years to develop skills and knowledge to enable them to develop a plan for the future. The secure website provides structured career development and transition activities with links to a range of quality career and transition resources.



2.7 Supporting senior years of schooling and youth transitions

Australian governments are committed to working with all school sectors to support the senior years of schooling and provision of high-quality pathways to facilitate effective transitions between further study, training and employment ([Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians](#) 2008).

COAG has established targets to lift the Year 12 or equivalent or AQF Certificate III attainment rate to 90 per cent by 2020, and to at least halve the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students' Year 12 or equivalent attainment rates by 2020.

Preparing Secondary Students for Work

The Education Council's [Preparing Secondary Students for Work framework](#), as well as an online career education self-assessment tool for schools and other resources are published as a section of the Australian Government's *My Skills* website⁴⁰. The framework clarifies the distinction between vocational learning (career education and general work-related curriculum such as Work Studies) and vocational education and training (VET) (nationally recognised training described within an industry-developed training package or an accredited course). It emphasises that VET delivered to secondary students is the same as all other VET, and that the same quality standards apply.

VET delivered to secondary students

Programs for the delivery of VET to secondary students⁴¹, 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 Australian Qualifications Framework⁴² (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 of school-aged students including secondary students in VET in 2017 is reported in part 3: Measuring and reporting performance and 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](#).

The Australian Government invests in a range of policies and programs that specifically target the transition from senior secondary schooling to life beyond school. These include the National Career Education Strategy and the Pathways in Technology (P-TECH) pilot.

⁴⁰ The [My Skills website](#) is Australia's training directory, which allows users to explore VET courses and qualifications by industry and state and territory.

⁴¹ The [Preparing Secondary Students for Work framework](#) uses the term 'VET delivered to secondary students' to describe accredited VET undertaken by school students. However, the term 'VET in Schools' (VETiS) continues to be used in the VET sector to identify VET delivered to senior secondary students/as part of a Senior Secondary Certificate of Education, including for data collection and reporting purposes under the Australian Vocational Educational and Training Management Information Statistical Standard (AVETMISS).

⁴² The AQF is the national framework of qualifications in the school, vocational education and training (VET), and higher education sectors in Australia. The Senior Secondary Certificate of Education, Certificate II and Certificate III are qualifications within the AQF.

State and territory initiatives

In 2017, the NSW Government began work on the Pathways for the Future reform project. This cross-agency project will link together NSW schooling, vocational education and training, and higher education data for the first time. The project seeks to understand the educational pathways young people take into meaningful work and what factors contribute to students disengaging from education.

Victoria established the LOOKOUT Education Support Centres, to build the capacity of schools, child protection and carers to improve educational outcomes for children and young people living in out-of-home care. The Navigator pilot program, which supports disengaged learners back into education, was extended, as was the Student Mentoring program, which supports students to build social and emotional skills.

Victoria undertook a review of career education in Victorian government schools to identify best practice and opportunities to support the delivery of high quality career education, to ensure students have the skills and knowledge to navigate multiple and complex careers.

In 2017, Queensland achieved state-specific targets for Year 12 student certification, including for closing the gap for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

Queensland is preparing to implement a new senior assessment and tertiary entrance system, commencing with students who enter Year 11 in 2019. This system will feature internal and external assessment and the introduction of the Australian Tertiary Admissions Rank (ATAR).

In 2017, as the result of a state inquiry, residential colleges for secondary regional school students were brought under the responsibility of Western Australia's department of education. This change provided college staff with access to additional resources and expertise focused on the needs of students and established better systems for dealing with child protection, complaints, staff oversight and accountability.

The Tasmanian Government's policy to extend all high schools to Years 11 and 12, while maintaining the existing senior secondary college system, has resulted in increased choice for students.

The Northern Territory Employment Pathways Curriculum Framework was designed as a consistent model for delivering secondary education to remote Indigenous students. It includes vocational education, employability and life skills, wellbeing, communication and, wherever possible, accredited VET. The framework supports local adjustments to programs to meet students' needs, interests and potential employment opportunities in their community.

The Northern Territory Transition Support Unit assists students, parents and schools to maximise opportunities as students move from home communities to a boarding school or residential facility in the Territory or interstate to continue their secondary education.

Transition and careers officers within ACT Government senior colleges, develop a Careers and Transitions Services Plan to support all students transitioning from high schools to college and beyond. The plan strengthens the transparency and accountability of transitions pathways. Vocational learning options are offered in ACT high schools and senior colleges.

2.8 Promoting world-class curriculum and assessment

The *Melbourne Declaration on Education Goals for Young Australians* includes a commitment for Australian governments to work together to ensure world-class curriculum and assessment, as part of a quality schooling system for all young Australians.

The Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority

acara

AUSTRALIAN CURRICULUM,
ASSESSMENT AND
REPORTING AUTHORITY

The [Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority \(ACARA\)](#) is an independent statutory authority responsible to the Education Council. In terms of curriculum and assessment, the functions of ACARA⁴³ are to:

- develop and administer a national school curriculum, including content of the curriculum and achievement standards, for school subjects specified in the Charter⁴⁴
- develop and administer national assessments
- provide school curriculum resource services
- provide information, resources, support and guidance to the teaching profession.

2.8.1 The Australian Curriculum



The Australian Curriculum, has been developed, endorsed and refined over the last eight years. There are eight learning areas in the curriculum, corresponding to those listed by education ministers in the Melbourne Declaration⁴⁵:

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

The Australian Curriculum incorporates seven general capabilities: literacy, numeracy, information and communication technology capability, critical and creative thinking, personal and social capability, ethical understanding, and intercultural understanding. There are also three cross-curriculum priorities: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures; Asia and Australia's Engagement with Asia; and Sustainability.

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

⁴³ *Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority Act (2008)*, Section 6. (ACARA's functions in data collection and reporting are outlined in Part 2.10: Policies and priorities – strengthening accountability and transparency.)

⁴⁴ The Education Council determines the ACARA Charter. The current charter took effect from November 2016.

⁴⁵ Schedule 1 of the ACARA charter specifies subjects in each of these learning areas for Foundation to Year 10 and for the areas of English, Mathematics, Science, and Humanities and Social Sciences for Years 11 and 12.

The ACARA Charter specifies the following priorities for curriculum:

- monitor and enhance the accessibility, balance and manageability of the national curriculum
- collect curriculum implementation information to assist with development of the next generation of curriculum
- scope options for further development of senior secondary curriculum in partnership with interested jurisdictions.

In 2017, ACARA continued its focus on the collection and review of evidence to inform the next generation of the Australian Curriculum. This drew on feedback from jurisdictions and other stakeholders through ACARA's curriculum monitoring program as well as surveying research and international developments in curriculum design.

In February 2017, ACARA published *Monitoring the effectiveness of the Foundation – Year 10 Australian Curriculum 2016*, which focused on feedback and commentary on the Australian Curriculum's achievement standards and general capabilities. Stakeholder responses indicated broad satisfaction with the Australian Curriculum.

A literature review, completed in March 2017, underpins a program of research, which will comprise an annual report on developments in school curriculum design, up to eight international comparison studies with high-performing countries and systems, and a range of other data collection strategies and consultative forums. The first international comparison study, focusing on British Columbia's new curriculum, was completed in June 2017.

In July 2017, the new [Australian Curriculum](#) website was launched. This includes the enhanced presentation of the Foundation–Year 10 and the senior secondary curriculum and access to resources to support the Australian Curriculum.

Material available on the website includes work samples in learning areas, videos showing students' achievements in the use of the mathematics proficiencies and in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) projects, and publications such as *Primary Matters*. Demonstrations of cross-curriculum connections include outdoor learning, food and wellbeing, and consumer and financial literacy.

In January 2017, ACARA published new illustrations of practice that demonstrate the use of general capabilities to support the learning of students with disability. A comprehensive list of resources aimed at improving accessibility for students with disability was also published in March 2017.

Curriculum projects

In 2017, ACARA continued to manage the Digital Technologies in Focus project, with Australian Government funding of \$7.9 million over four years. Approximately 160 schools in urban, rural and remote locations across all states and territories are participating in the project. Curriculum specialist support is provided for each of the schools. ACARA has also developed professional learning modules in the Digital Technologies curriculum and computational thinking.

National Literacy and Numeracy Learning Progressions were approved for school trialling in 2017. The learning progressions describe common pathways or developmental sequences for the acquisition of aspects of literacy and numeracy from early learning years through to high school. More than 600 teachers from 137 schools across Australia participated in the trial between March and May 2017. A final version of the progressions was approved in late 2017.

2.8.2 The National Assessment Program



The National Assessment Program consists of:

- The annual national literacy and numeracy tests (NAPLAN)
- Three-yearly sample assessments in science literacy, civics and citizenship, and information and communication technology (ICT) literacy
- Australia's participation in international assessments

The ACARA Charter specifies the following priorities for assessment

- ensure ACARA's resources and attention are focused on its assessment function, in particular ACARA's responsibilities for the successful transition to NAPLAN online
- ensure that the suite of online assessments are directly linked to the national curriculum, to improve the understanding of educational outcomes for Australian students.

National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN)

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

ACARA has been responsible for the development and oversight of the delivery of the NAPLAN tests since 2010. Since 2016, NAPLAN tests have been aligned to the Australian Curriculum: English F–10 and the Australian Curriculum: Mathematics F–10.

The tenth annual NAPLAN assessments were conducted in 2017. For national reporting purposes, key performance measures (KPMs) have been approved by ministers for reading, writing, numeracy and participation. These KPMs are reported for NAPLAN 2017 in Part 3: Measuring performance and in the National Report on Schooling data portal.

NAPLAN result data are also available in interactive form on the results page of the ACARA [National Assessment Program website](#). The results page and the 2017 NAPLAN National Report provide nationally comparable data on the results for each test domain. Comparisons of performance are available by state/territory, by student characteristics such as gender, Indigeneity, and parental education and by school characteristics such as location.

The *2017 NAPLAN National Report* and test incidents report were both published in December 2017. Consultation on draft proficiency standards for NAPLAN tests for each domain and year level, aligned with the Australian Curriculum and international benchmarks, continued in 2017.

NAPLAN online

The national platform for online assessment was funded by the Australian Government and built by Education Services Australia (ESA). ACARA continued to assist ESA in its work to ensure the online assessment platform successfully delivers NAPLAN online, and to work with state and territory governments in building confidence in the platform.

The platform was tested during 2017 to ensure it was ready for NAPLAN online in 2018. This included the school readiness test (SRT) in which over 3,700 schools participated across the country and a platform readiness test to ensure the assessment platform was fully operational.

Work was also done on accessibility adjustment options for NAPLAN online for students with disability. This will assist students with disability in participating in NAPLAN online in 2018 and provide evidence for further developments in accessibility for future years.

The National Assessment Program – sample assessments

The national sample assessments test students' skills and understanding in science literacy (Year 6), civics and citizenship literacy (Years 6 and 10) and information and communication technology (ICT) literacy (Years 6 and 10). Sample groups of students participate in these assessments, which are held on a rolling three-yearly basis. Sample assessments began in 2003.

NAP – Science Literacy

A new NAP – Science Literacy framework was developed in 2017 to extend the assessment to Year 10 students from 2018, as agreed by Education Council. Trials were conducted to ensure valid development of vertical linking between the Year 6 assessment and the proposed Year 10 assessment. The success of the trials means that the assessment framework can be used for a valid assessment of the progression of knowledge and skills from Year 6 to Year 10.

NAP – Civics and Citizenship

The *NAP – Civics and Citizenship report 2016* was approved by the Education Council in November 2017 and published on ACARA's NAP website in December 2017 together with the *NAP-Civics and Citizenship 2017 Technical Report* and demonstration tests for Years 6 and 10.

NAP – ICT Literacy

In October and November 2017 the fifth assessment cycle of NAP-ICT Literacy was successfully conducted online across Australia in all jurisdictions and territories. For the Year 6 assessment there were 330 participating schools and 310 schools for the Year 10 assessment (approximately 5,440 Year 6 and 4,890 Year 10 students).

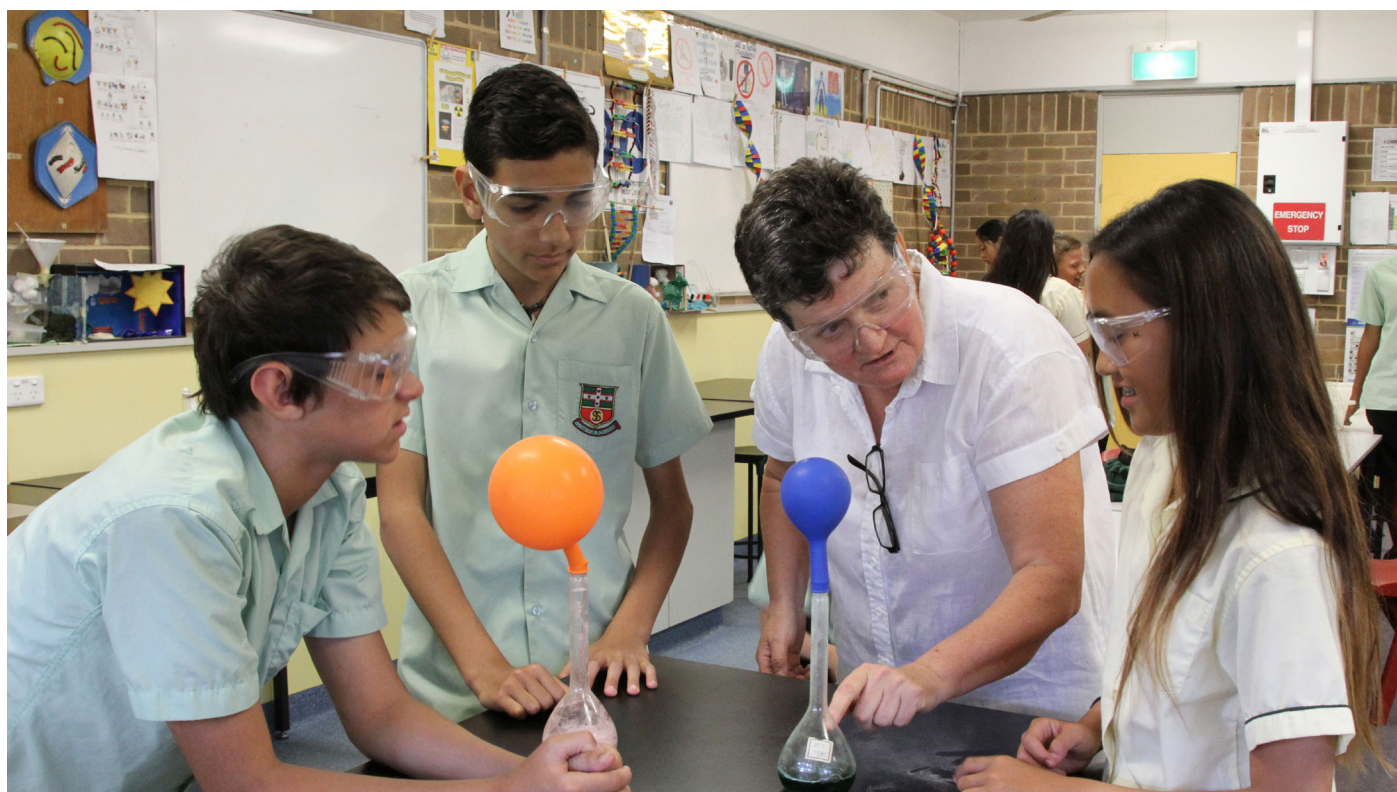
NAP – ICT Literacy school summary reports were available to all participating schools in December 2017 via an online reporting tool. The KPMs for NAP ICT are reported in Part 3: Measuring and reporting performance and in the National Report on Schooling data portal.

National Assessment Program – international assessments

Three international National Assessment Program (NAP) international sample assessments are used as a basis for KPMs for schooling. No international assessments took place in 2017.

The assessments are:

- Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA). PISA takes place every three years and assesses 15-year-olds in reading, mathematical and scientific literacy. PISA is developed and administered internationally by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). The most recent cycle of PISA was in 2015, with the next assessment scheduled for 2018.
- Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS). TIMSS takes place every four 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 next cycle of TIMSS (TIMSS 2019) will take place in Australia in late 2018.
- Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS). PIRLS is a five-yearly assessment of reading literacy for Year 4 students. The IEA is also responsible for PIRLS. Results for the most recent cycle of PIRLS (2016) were released in December 2017.



2.9 Improving educational outcomes for Indigenous youth and disadvantaged young Australians, especially those from low socio-economic backgrounds

The first goal of the [*Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians*](#) is that Australian schooling promotes equity and excellence.

The declaration includes a commitment for governments to:

- close the gap for young Indigenous Australians
- provide targeted support to disadvantaged students
- focus on school improvement in low socio-economic communities.

Needs-based school funding

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

For most non-government schools⁴⁶, 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 from low socio-economic backgrounds, students with low English proficiency, location of the school (remoteness), and size of the school.

In June 2017, the *Australian Education Act 2013* was amended to give effect to the Australian Government's Quality Schools package from 2018. This is planned to replace the existing Commonwealth funding arrangements but will retain the principle of needs-based funding using the same categories for loadings.

The Australian Government also invested in a range of targeted initiatives and programs aimed at supporting Indigenous youth and disadvantaged young Australians, especially those from low socio-economic backgrounds including:

- \$48 million to expand The Smith Family's Learning for Life program to provide practical assistance to parents and carers to help disadvantaged children and young people with their education.
- Support for the Duke of Edinburgh International Award to facilitate access to its award by disadvantaged young people and young people with disability through the disadvantaged youth program. The Award encourages young people, aged 14-24, to volunteer; participate in sport and recreational activities; and develop their interests and social skills.
- Activities to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander secondary student transitions such as the development of a series of good practice video and written case studies, which support vocational learning and VET transition programs for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. These resources will be published on the Preparing Secondary Students for Work website in 2018.

⁴⁶ Except for special schools, special assistance schools, remote sole provider schools and majority Indigenous schools

Review into Regional, Rural and Remote Education

In 2017, the Australian Government commissioned an Independent Review into Regional, Rural and Remote Education. The review will consider the key challenges and barriers that impact on the learning outcomes of regional, rural and remote students and provide recommendations to Government on innovative approaches to support improved access and achievement of these students in school and their transition to further study.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures

In 2016 the Australian Government commissioned ACARA to develop illustrations of practice for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures cross-curriculum priority as a way of improving teaching and learning of this priority from Foundation to Year 10. ACARA has developed the illustrations of practice as a series of videos in consultation with representatives from Indigenous advisory groups. These videos published on the [Australian Curriculum website](#) showcase effective implementation of the cross-curriculum priority across a range of teaching and school settings.

Remote School Attendance Strategy

The Remote School Attendance Strategy (RSAS) was developed in partnership with communities to lift school attendance levels in remote communities, where attendance rates are often very low. RSAS employs local Indigenous people to develop culturally appropriate strategies to support families in ensuring that children go to school. It currently supports approximately 14,500 students in 78 schools across remote Northern Territory, New South Wales, Queensland, South Australia and Western Australia. Since the introduction of RSAS in 2014, attendance rates have improved in 48 per cent of RSAS schools.⁴⁷

More information on initiatives for Indigenous youth is available on the Australian Government's [Indigenous website](#), and in the annual [Closing the Gap Prime Minister's reports](#).



⁴⁷ Closing the Gap Prime Minister's report 2018, p. 56

2.10 Strengthening accountability and transparency

The [Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians](#) emphasises transparency in reporting educational information to the community and accountability for the use of public resources for education.

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

The Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority

In terms of data collection and reporting, the functions of ACARA⁴⁸ are to:

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

The ACARA Charter⁴⁹ specifies the following priorities for data and reporting priorities:

- assess data needs to review, and if necessary introduce, new performance indicators in the measurement framework⁵⁰
- 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 National Assessment Program reporting)
- produce a revitalised, timely and accessible national report on schooling, which meets the goals for national performance reporting.

National Report on Schooling in Australia

In 2017, ACARA published the *National Report on Schooling in Australia 2014* and prepared the *National Report on Schooling in Australia 2015* in consultation with representatives of state and territory education authorities, other government agencies, and non-government school sectors.

The 2014 report was the first to adopt the new interactive format, including the [National Report on Schooling data portal](#), in addition to a written report.

⁴⁸ *Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority Act 2008*, Section 6 (ACARA's functions in curriculum and assessment are outlined in Part 2.8: Policies and priorities –promoting world-class curriculum and assessment)

⁴⁹ The Education Council determines the ACARA Charter. The current charter took effect from November 2016.

⁵⁰ The *Measurement Framework for Schooling in Australia* will be reviewed in 2018.

National Report on Schooling data portal

The National Report on Schooling data portal, first published in May 2017, provides public access, on a single website, to a much wider range of national, state and territory data on schooling in Australia than previously possible or available elsewhere.

It includes general statistics on school numbers, enrolments and funding, and data on the agreed KPMs, including attendance, retention, assessment and Year 12 or equivalent attainment. In most cases, the portal allows readers to download data at the national level, but also to disaggregate data by state and territory, by school sector, by calendar year and by available breakdowns of equity groups such as sex and Indigenous status.

ACARA further developed the data portal during 2017, with updated data and new data sets added in December 2017.

My School

ACARA is responsible for the national data collection on individual schools housed on the [My School website](#). *My School* includes a description of each school, information on school type and sector, data on enrolments, staffing, attendance, funding and the performance of the school's students in NAPLAN assessments.

The Australian Government is committed to the *My School* website as it promotes accountability in education for parents, schools and communities by providing them with high quality, nationally comparable data on the performance and progress of students in Australian schools.

My School was updated in March 2017, with 2016 school profile and population data, NAPLAN results and student attendance data, providing up to nine years of school status and performance data.

The 2017 update of *My School* highlighted schools in each state and territory that achieved above average gain in NAPLAN performance since 2015.

Australian Schools List

The [Australian Schools List \(ASL\)](#) is a database of all schools and school campuses in Australia including school location, school type and school sector attributes, published by ACARA. Users can search for a particular school or browse the full list of schools for a state or territory or throughout Australia. The ASL includes links to the *My School* website so that users can readily obtain more detailed information on individual schools.

During 2017 all school registration authorities in states and territories provided ACARA with a list of currently active and proposed schools to ensure accuracy in reflecting a list of Australian schools. The ASL is now based on a quarterly collection of information on schools registered by the state and territory registration boards, as agreed by jurisdictions.

Teacher workforce data

During 2017, the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) commenced work on the establishment of the Australian Teacher Workforce Data Strategy, approved by Education Council in December 2016.

When implemented from 2018, this national data set is expected to assist with workforce planning, and with evaluating the outcomes of initial teacher education and other aspects of teaching and school leadership. AITSL also produces an annual data report on initial teacher education.

The National Report on Schooling data portal includes a teacher education data set. This data set, showing current and time series data on enrolments and qualifications in teacher education courses, is drawn from Australian Higher Education Statistics and provides information on the numbers of potential future teachers. The data includes enrolments and qualifications for potential teachers in the early childhood, VET and higher education sectors as well as for potential primary and secondary school teachers.

Nationally Consistent Collection of Data on School Students with Disability

Since 2015, all schools have participated in a Nationally Consistent Collection of Data for School Students with Disability (NCCD). These data are released by Education Council annually, with selected statistics from the NCCD published on the National Report on Schooling data portal.

From 2018, the NCCD will be used to calculate the Commonwealth school funding loading for students with disability.

National Schools Resourcing Board

In 2017 the Australian Government established a [National School Resourcing Board](#) to provide greater independent oversight over Commonwealth school funding. The Board will undertake reviews of different parts of the funding model under the *Australian Education Act, 2013*. These reviews will seek to promote public confidence in the funding model and ensure that governments and other approved authorities comply with their obligations under the Act.

Part 3: Measuring and reporting performance



Part 3 reports on the performance of Australian schooling in 2017, using the nationally agreed key performance measures (KPMs) for schooling specified in the *Measurement Framework for Schooling in Australia 2015*.

3.1 Measurement Framework for Schooling in Australia

The *Measurement Framework for Schooling in Australia 2015* provides the basis for national reporting on the performance of schooling in 2017, as agreed by education ministers, and is the main focus of the statistical data included in this report.

The measurement framework defines 26 national key performance measures (KPMs) for schooling, specifies the data sources for these KPMs and outlines the reporting cycle for the period 2014–2018.⁵¹

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

- strategic measures that provide nationally comparable data on aspects of performance critical to monitoring progress against the Melbourne Declaration
- focused on student participation, achievement, attainment and equity
- based on sound and reliable assessment practice
- supportive of open and transparent reporting

⁵¹ Most KPMs are reported annually, but some are collected and reported on a cyclical basis of three, four or five years. Eighteen KPMs are reported for 2017.

- 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: Indigenous status, sex, geolocation, socio-economic status and language background, where it is possible and appropriate to do so.⁵²



⁵² With the exception of retention to Year 12 by Indigenous students, which relates to a COAG target for Closing the Gap, equity measures are not listed separately in the schedule of KPMs contained in the measurement framework.

3.2 Student participation

Part 3.2 reports on KPMs for student enrolment and attendance specified in the *Measurement Framework for Schooling in Australia 2015*. It also reports on apparent retention from Year 10 to Year 12, including the KPM for retention to Year 12 for Indigenous students.

3.2.1 Enrolment rate

Part 1.2 of this report provides data on the number of students enrolled by school sector, by school level, by state and territory, and over time. Part 1.4 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.

This section reports on the number of students enrolled, as a proportion of the Australian population in the corresponding age group. This is a KPM for schooling.

Key Performance Measure 1(a)

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

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 per cent.

The numerator for the annual measure of this KPM is school enrolment data drawn from the National Schools Statistics Collection (NSSC). The denominator for the 6–15-year-old population is drawn from the Estimated Residential Population (ERP) for this age group, which is estimated by projection by the Australian Bureau of Statistics from the five-yearly Australian Census of Population and Housing. KPM 1(a) is reported by state and territory for 2017 in table 3.1.

Table 3.1

Number and proportion of the population aged 6–15 years enrolled in school, by state and territory, 2017

Financial year	NSW	Vic.	Qld	SA	WA	Tas.	NT	ACT	Australia
Number of children aged 6–15 years enrolled in school ^(a)	954,014	742,109	649,287	202,862	323,942	63,873	33,276	53,542	3,022,905
6–15-year-old population ^(b)	958,291	748,256	644,486	201,976	324,633	63,695	33,855	48,621	3,024,364
Proportion of 6–15-year-olds enrolled in school (%) ^(c)	99.6	99.2	100.7	100.4	99.8	100.3	98.3	110.1	100.0

(a) Enrolment data are administrative data from the National Schools Statistics Collection (NSSC) published in ABS, Cat. No. 4221 *Schools Australia*. Includes students enrolled full-time or part-time. Jervis Bay enrolments are included with ACT; Norfolk Island enrolments are included with NSW. 'Other territory' enrolments are excluded. Data include students who cross state and territory boundaries to attend school with students counted in the state/territory in which they attend school. In the case of the ACT, this causes the proportion to significantly exceed 100 per cent.

(b) Estimates for the total population are at 30 June each year and are sourced from ABS, Cat. No. 3101.0, *Australian Demographic Statistics*. Individuals are counted in the state in which they usually reside. As estimates, ERP figures are subject to error and to periodic revision. The Australian totals include 'other territories' including Jervis Bay and Norfolk Island. However, Jervis Bay and Norfolk Island are excluded from ACT and NSW totals. Therefore, state and territory Estimated Resident Population numbers will not add to Australian totals.

(c) When calculating an indicator using data from different sources, data comparability issues can emerge, which will affect the accuracy of the indicator. These differences can have unexpected effects such as producing an estimate greater than 100 per cent of the population. Differences in the annual measure of this KPM should therefore be interpreted with care.

Sources: ABS, Cat. No. 4221.0, *Schools, Australia*, 2017; ABS, Cat. No. 3101.0, *Australian Demographic Statistics, Australian States and Territories, June 2017* (release date 14/12/2017 based on the 2016 Australian Census of Population and Housing), ACARA, National Report on Schooling data portal.

Every five years, data on the proportion of 6–15-year-olds identified as attending primary and secondary schools are also available from the Australian Census, and this source is specified in the measurement framework as a supplementary data source for reporting this KPM for census years. Administrative data for KPM 1(a) for the period 2009–2017 are reported in table 3.2, along with census data for this measure for the years 2011 and 2016.

Table 3.2

Number and proportion of the population aged 6–15 years enrolled in school, Australia, 2009–2017

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Number of children aged 6–15 years enrolled in school ^(a)	2,748,736	2,755,893	2,768,177	2,801,751	2,844,983	2,889,292	2,930,612	2,974,656	3,022,905
Population, Australia (aged 6–15 years) ^(b)	2,746,766	2,755,102	2,769,311	2,799,226	2,833,866	2,875,596	2,919,394	2,970,505	3,024,364
Proportion of 6–15-year-olds enrolled in school, Australia (%) ^(c)	100.1	100.0	100.0	100.1	100.4	100.5	100.4	100.1	100.0
Proportion of 6–15-year-olds enrolled in school, Australia (%) (supplementary Census measure) ^(d)			99.3					99.4	

Note:

- (a) Enrolment data are administrative data drawn from the National Schools Statistics Collection (NSSC) collected through the annual schools census in August each year. Includes students enrolled full time or part time. Jervis Bay enrolments and Norfolk Island enrolments are included. 'Other territory' enrolments are excluded.
- (b) Estimates of the resident population (ERP) for this age group are as of 30 June each year sourced from ABS, Cat. No. 3101.0, *Australian Demographic Statistics*. These are estimated by projection from the five-yearly Australian Census of Population and Housing. As estimates, ERP figures are subject to error and to periodic revision. ERP data may differ from data in previous editions of this report and in other publications. The Australian total includes 'other territories' including Jervis Bay and Norfolk Island.
- (c) When calculating an indicator using data from different sources, data comparability issues can emerge that will affect the accuracy of the indicator. These differences can have unexpected effects such as producing an estimate greater than 100 per cent of the population. Changes to the annual measure of this KPM should therefore be interpreted with care.
- (d) The supplementary, five-yearly measure for this KPM is drawn from data collected in the Australian Census of Population and Housing, 2011 and 2016. Individuals are counted in their place of usual residence (rather than where they attend school) and identified as attending a primary or secondary school. Because of this, and other differences between Census and NSSC and ERP data, the two measures are not fully comparable.

Sources: ABS, Cat. No. 4221.0, *Schools, Australia, 2017*; ABS, Cat. No. 3101.0, *Australian Demographic Statistics, Australian States and Territories, June 2017* (release date 14/12/2017, based on the 2016 Australian Census of Population and Housing); ACARA, National Report on Schooling data portal; ABS, Australian Census of Population and Housing, 2011 and 2016.

Using data on school enrolments (NSSC) and estimated resident population (ERP)⁵³ to calculate KPM 1(a), the rate of enrolment in schooling of 6–15-year-olds in 2017 was very close to 100 per cent nationally, and in all jurisdictions except the ACT, where it was 110 per cent.

Variations in enrolment rates between jurisdictions in 2017 (and previous years), most notably for the ACT, are largely explained by ‘cross-border enrolments’. Enrolment rates for states and territories are affected by the inclusion of students who cross state and territory boundaries to attend school. These students are counted in the school population of one state but in the residential population of another.

This occurs in many areas close to state and territory boundaries but, in most cases, movement either occurs in both directions or is too small to noticeably influence the overall rate for a state. However, in the case of the ACT, the number of students from interstate (and children of embassy staff) attending ACT schools⁵⁴, and the relatively small ACT population, cause the proportion of 6–15-year-olds enrolled in school to significantly exceed 100 per cent of the ACT resident population for this age group.

Other factors that may influence the annual measure of this KPM include:

- The numerator and denominator for KPM 1(a) are drawn from different data sources. This can give rise to data comparability issues that may affect the accuracy of the indicator. These differences can have unexpected effects such as producing an estimate greater than 100 per cent of the population, particularly where a cohort is small or where the rate being measured is close to 100 per cent of the population.
- Although NSSC counting rules seek to prevent this, it is possible that some students who move between schools during the year are counted at more than one school. This is more likely in remote and very remote areas where the population is highly mobile. This may partly account for some enrolment rates exceeding 100 per cent.
- As estimates, ERP figures are subject to error, especially between census collections, and to periodic revision. Periodic revisions to ERP data are reflected in revisions of time series for this KPM in different editions of this report.

Because of these factors, jurisdictions have agreed that KPM 1(a) be reported at state and national levels only.

As shown in table 3.2, KPM 1(a), data drawn from the Census of Population and Housing 2011 and 2016 confirm that close to 100 per cent of the 6–15-year-old population of Australia, and of each state and territory, is enrolled in school. Because the numerator and denominator are both drawn from the census, this measure avoids the problem of comparing student counts to population estimates and cannot exceed 100 per cent. However, because of exclusions in the data (for example, transient population, item non-responses), the census results understate both the actual number of school students and the target population.⁵⁵

⁵³ ERP data in tables 3.1 and 3.2 have been re-based to the 2016 Census of Population and Housing.

⁵⁴ ‘Interstate’ enrolments are mainly from surrounding areas of NSW. Children of embassy staff attending Canberra schools are counted in ACT school enrolments but are not included in ERP.

⁵⁵ For these reasons, table 3.2 reports the ratios for KPM 1(a) derived from the Census of Population and Housing but does not report numerators or denominators for the measure.

By counting students in the state/territory in which they normally reside, the census may provide a more realistic indicator of the school participation rate of resident 6–15-year-olds per jurisdiction. However, by counting students in the state or territory in which they are enrolled, NSSC data better reflect educational activity/investment per jurisdiction.

At approaching 100 per cent, both measures of KPM1(a) provide evidence that long-standing policies for universal access to schooling, and for compulsory education for this age group are implemented in practice. This reflects the national policy objective, included in the Melbourne Declaration, that all students, in all states and territories, are provided with access to high-quality school education (at least until they have completed Year 10). It also highlights Australia's provision of universal school education, at least up to Year 10, to international audiences.

Further data on enrolment rates, including time series by state and territory, are available in the National Report on Schooling data portal.

Part 3.2.3 Apparent retention and Part 3.4 Senior schooling and youth transitions report on young people's participation in schooling, other forms of education, and work, after Year 10.

3.2.2 Attendance

As for enrolment, the national KPMs for attendance in the [Measurement Framework for Schooling in Australia 2015](#) relate to students in the compulsory years of schooling, but 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 as a percentage of the total number of possible student-days attended in Semester 1.

Key Performance Measure 1(c)

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

All school sectors in all states and territories use a common reference period – Semester 1 in each school year – for the collection of attendance data for national reporting.

This is consistent with the [National Standards for Student Attendance Data Reporting](#)⁵⁶, which came into operation for the 2014 data collection period and onwards. Data are reported from 2014 for the attendance rate and from 2015 for the attendance level.

⁵⁶ The standards were revised in 2015 to incorporate KPM 1(c), which is reported from 2015. The standards include full definitions and counting rules for the collection and reporting of attendance data. In interpreting data, note that attendance rates and levels take into account explained absences, such as for illness, as well as unexplained absences/absenteeism.

In 2017, nationally comparable student attendance data were collected, as set out in the national standards, for non-government schools in all jurisdictions, and for government schools in all jurisdictions except NSW. NSW government schools are working towards implementing the standards.

Attendance rates

Table 3.3 reports KPM 1(b) by state and territory for 2017.

Table 3.3

Student attendance rates, Years 1–10, by state and territory Australia, 2017 (per cent)

School sector	NSW	Vic.	Qld	SA	WA	Tas.	NT	ACT	Australia
Government	92.4	92.5	91.6	90.9	91.3	91.1	80.2	91.6	91.8
Catholic	93.5	93.6	94.0	92.8	93.2	93.2	80.7	93.0	93.4
Independent	93.6	94.1	93.8	93.8	93.9	93.7	86.4	93.3	93.7
All sectors	92.8	92.9	92.4	91.7	92.0	91.8	81.2	92.2	92.4

Notes:

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

In 2014–2017, NSW government school data were not collected on a comparable basis with other states and territories. Therefore, comparisons with other jurisdictions should be made with caution. NSW government schools are working towards implementing the standards.

Source: ACARA, National Student Attendance Data Collection, National Report on Schooling data portal.

Table 3.4 reports this KPM nationally, by school sector, for 2014–2017.

Table 3.4

Student attendance rates, Years 1–10, by school sector, Australia, 2014–2017 (per cent)

School sector	2014	2015	2016	2017
Government	91.9	92.0	91.9	91.8
Catholic	93.9	93.6	93.6	93.4
Independent	94.3	93.9	93.8	93.7
All sectors	92.7	92.6	92.5	92.4

Notes:

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

Source: ACARA National Student Attendance Data Collection, National Report on Schooling data portal.

The average school attendance rate for Years 1–10 across Australia in 2017 was 92.4 per cent. This was similar to average rates in the previous three years and the decrease from 92.5 per cent in 2016 to 92.4 per cent in 2017 was not significant.

The average attendance rate for Years 1–10 in 2017 exceeded 90 per cent in all states and territories except the Northern Territory, where a much lower average attendance rate (66.2 per cent) for the high proportion⁵⁷ of Indigenous students led to an average rate for all students of 81.2 per cent.

The national average attendance rate for the government school sector in 2017 was 1.6 percentage points lower than for the Catholic sector, and 1.9 percentage points lower than for the independent sector, but with average percentage rates for all sectors in the low–mid 90s in each of the years 2014–2017.

A common characteristic across all states and territories has been lower average attendance rates in Years 8, 9 and 10 than in earlier years of schooling. At the national level in 2017, the average attendance rate for Years 1–6 was 93.4 per cent compared to 91.0 per cent for Years 7–10.⁵⁸

There was little difference in the 2017 national average attendance rate for girls (92.5 per cent) and boys (92.3 per cent).⁵⁹

Average attendance rates were higher in major cities than in remote areas, and lowest in very remote areas. However, this was much more marked for Indigenous students than for non-Indigenous students. For non-Indigenous students, the average attendance rate in schools in major cities was 93.3 per cent, in remote schools 91.6 per cent and in very remote schools 90.9 per cent. But for Indigenous students, these rates were 86.2 per cent (major cities), 75.4 per cent (remote) and 64.6 per cent (very remote), a difference of 21.6 percentage points between Indigenous students in major cities and in very remote schools, and a gap of 26.3 percentage points between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students in schools in very remote areas.⁶⁰

Table 3.5 shows comparative attendance rates for Indigenous and non-Indigenous students in Years 1–10 by state and territory and the gaps between them in 2014 and 2017.



⁵⁷ As at August 2017, 41.5 per cent of full-time students in Years 1–10 in the Northern Territory were identified as Indigenous, compared to 5.7 per cent of full-time students in Years 1–10 across Australia. (ABS, *Schools Australia*, 2017)

⁵⁸ National Report on Schooling data portal, Student attendance data set

⁵⁹ National Report on Schooling data portal, Student attendance data set

⁶⁰ National Report on Schooling data portal, Student attendance data set

Table 3.5

Student attendance rates, Years 1–10, by state and territory and Indigenous status, Australia, 2014 and 2017 (per cent)

State/territory	NSW	Vic.	Qld	SA	WA	Tas.	NT	ACT	Australia
2014									
Indigenous	87.5	86.8	85.2	81.1	77.4	88.5	70.2	85.2	83.5
Non-Indigenous	93.9	93.1	92.8	92.6	92.7	92.4	90.9	92.5	93.2
Gap (percentage points)	6.4	6.3	7.6	11.5	15.3	3.9	20.7	7.3	9.7
2017									
Indigenous	86.9	86.7	85.4	80.5	76.9	88.3	66.2	85.4	83.2
Non-Indigenous	93.2	93.0	93.0	92.2	93.1	92.2	91.8	92.4	93.0
Gap (percentage points)	6.3	6.3	7.6	11.7	16.2	3.9	25.6	7.0	9.8
Change in gap 2014–17 (percentage points)	-0.1	0.0	0.0	0.2	0.9	0.0	4.9	-0.3	0.1

Notes

Excludes part-time students. For data definitions, see the [National Standards for Student Attendance Data Reporting](#).

NSW government school data were not collected on a comparable basis with other states and territories. Therefore, comparisons with other jurisdictions should be made with caution. NSW government schools are working towards implementing the standards.

Source: ACARA National Student Attendance Data Collection, National Report on Schooling data portal.

There was a small decrease in the average Indigenous school attendance rate from 2014 (83.5 per cent) to 2017 (83.2 per cent).

In 2017, at the national level, there was a 9.8 percentage point gap between the average attendance rates for Indigenous and non-Indigenous students. In Western Australia, the gap rose by 0.9 percentage points between 2014 and 2017, and in the Northern Territory by 4.9 percentage points. Above average gaps in attendance rates were again recorded in the Northern Territory, Western Australia and South Australia, particularly in very remote areas.

The average attendance rate for Indigenous students was lower for older year groups: 86.0 per cent for Years 1–6 but 78.3 per cent for Years 7–10. Attendance rates for Indigenous students in remote and very remote areas fell off more sharply for older students than in other groups, with an average national attendance rate of only 48.6 per cent for Year 10 Indigenous students in very remote areas. As a result, the attendance gap is larger at higher year levels in these areas.⁶¹

The Council of Australian Governments (COAG) has agreed to a target to close the gap in school attendance between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students by the end of 2018. The base year for this target is 2014. Based on 2014–2017 data, meeting this target is unlikely.

⁶¹ National Report on Schooling data portal, Student attendance data set

Further data on student attendance rates, including disaggregation by jurisdiction, school sector, sex, Indigenous status, school year level and geolocation, are available in the National Report on Schooling data portal.

Attendance levels

By measuring 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, KPM 1(c) aims to identify populations or groups for whom attendance is generally satisfactory. Conversely, it identifies groups whose lower levels of attendance may put them at a disadvantage in terms of learning outcomes and educational achievement overall.

Table 3.6 shows KPM 1(c) by state and territory, by school sector, for 2017.

Table 3.6

Student attendance levels: proportion of students in Years 1–10 whose attendance rate is equal to or greater than 90 per cent, by state and territory and school sector, Australia, 2017 (per cent)

State/territory	NSW ^(a)	Vic.	Qld	SA	WA	Tas.	NT	ACT	Australia
Sector	(non-gov.)								
Government	-	76.6	73.1	71.7	73.7	73.7	49.7	72.9	73.9
Catholic	80.0	81.3	83.2	77.3	81.2	79.2	54.3	77.8	80.7
Independent	81.5	83.5	82.5	81.4	83.4	80.9	65.5	79.7	82.1
Total non-government	80.7	82.1	82.9	79.5	82.3	79.9	60.5	78.7	81.3
All	80.7	78.5	76.2	74.3	76.5	75.6	52.6	75.3	77.1

Note:

- (a) Data on student attendance levels for 2015–2017 could not be collected for NSW government schools. As a result, the level of attendance (KPM 1(c)) reported for NSW is for non-government school students only. Because government school students account for 65.3 per cent of the target population for this KPM in NSW, this does not truly reflect the attendance level for that state overall, and should not be compared with measures for other states and territories. The omission of NSW government school data also affects the national KPM for all schools and for the government sector.

Sources: National Report on Schooling data portal, Student attendance, ACARA National Student Attendance Data Collection; ABS, *Schools Australia*, 2017.

Based on data collected for 2017, 77.1 per cent of Australian students in Years 1–10 attended school for at least 90 per cent of school days. However, the data do not include NSW government school students⁶², who made up the largest single group by state and school sector, representing 20.5 per cent of full-time students in Years 1–10 across Australia, and 65.3 per cent of these students in NSW.⁶³ As a result, the measure for NSW reflects a minority of the target population (34.7 per cent) and is not comparable to the measures shown for other jurisdictions. National measures of the KPM for the government sector and for all schools are also affected.

⁶² Data on student attendance levels (KPM 1c) for 2015–17 could not be collected for NSW government schools. NSW government schools are working towards collecting nationally consistent data for this KPM.

⁶³ As at August 2017 (ABS, *Schools Australia*, 2017).

The proportion of students whose attendance rate was at least 90 per cent was between 74.3 and 78.5 per cent in the states and territories for which full data were available, except for the Northern Territory, where it was 52.6 per cent. As with KPM 1(b), this result is due to significantly lower levels of attendance by Indigenous students in remote and very remote areas of the Territory. The proportions in states and territories were consistently higher for non-government than for government school students.

This KPM is intended to monitor progress in COAG's priority to close the gaps in educational outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people. The measure for 2017 confirms that a much higher proportion of Indigenous than non-Indigenous students were present at school for less than 90 per cent of the expected number of days. Table 3.7 shows KPM 1(c) by state and territory, by Indigenous status, for 2017 and the gap in this measure for Indigenous and non-Indigenous students.

Table 3.7

Student attendance levels: proportion of students in Years 1–10 whose attendance rate is equal to, or greater than, 90 per cent, by state and territory and Indigenous status, Australia, 2017 (per cent)

State/territory	NSW ^(a)	Vic.	Qld	SA	WA	Tas.	NT	ACT	Australia
2017	(non-gov.)								
Indigenous	63.3	57.6	54.1	43.0	39.6	64.7	24.8	52.5	48.8
Non-Indigenous	81.2	78.9	78.2	75.9	79.2	76.7	72.3	76.0	78.6
All students	80.7	78.5	76.2	74.3	76.5	75.6	52.6	75.3	77.1
Gap Indigenous/ non-Indigenous (percentage points)	-	21.3	24.1	32.9	39.6	12.0	47.5	23.5	29.8

Note

(a) Data on student attendance levels for 2015–2017 could not be collected for NSW government schools. As a result, the level of attendance (KPM 1 (c)) by Indigenous status is reported for NSW non-government school students only. The 'percentage point gap' for NSW is not reported in table 3.7, as the available data exclude 83.9 per cent of Indigenous full-time students in Years 1–10 in NSW. The omission of NSW government school data also affects the national KPM by Indigenous status for all schools and the national gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students.

Sources: National Report on Schooling data portal, Student attendance, ACARA National Student Attendance Data Collection; ABS, *Schools Australia*, 2017.

Based on the data collected for 2017 (excluding NSW government schools), less than half of Australia's Indigenous students attended school for 90 or more per cent of the time, with a gap of 29.8 percentage points between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students. The gaps in the Northern Territory, Western Australia and South Australia were above the national average, particularly in remote and very remote areas.

Further data on student attendance levels, including disaggregation by jurisdiction, school sector, sex, Indigenous status, school year level and geolocation, are available in the National Report on Schooling data portal.

3.2.3 Apparent retention

Apparent retention rates estimate the progression of students through several grades / year levels over several years.

This section reports on the apparent retention of students from Year 10 to Year 12, with a focus on comparative rates for Indigenous and non-Indigenous students.

Retention rates are designated as 'apparent' because they are based on aggregate enrolment data and do not record the progression of individual students.⁶⁴ Apparent 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 do not measure the proportion of individuals who were part of a base year cohort (in a state or in a school sector) and have remained in that cohort in the reporting year, but the net change in the size of a cohort as students leave or join it. This makes them imperfect as a 'tracking mechanism'. However, as an overall measure of retention in schooling, apparent retention has advantages over measures focused on the retention of individuals, as it includes students who have moved between schools, sectors or states but who have remained in the school system.

Table 3.8 and figure 3.1 show national apparent retention rates from Year 10 to Year 12 for full-time students by school sector over the period 2009–2017.

Table 3.8

Apparent retention rates (uncapped)⁶⁵, Year 10 to Year 12, by school sector, Australia, 2009–2017 (per cent)

School sector	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Government	71.4	74.1	75.0	74.8	76.7	78.6	79.2	79.5	79.8
Catholic	80.5	81.8	83.9	84.2	85.4	86.8	86.3	86.4	86.5
Independent	91.0	89.8	90.1	89.0	88.9	90.9	90.0	89.7	90.9
All sectors	76.7	78.5	79.5	79.3	80.7	82.5	82.7	82.9	83.3

Notes:

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

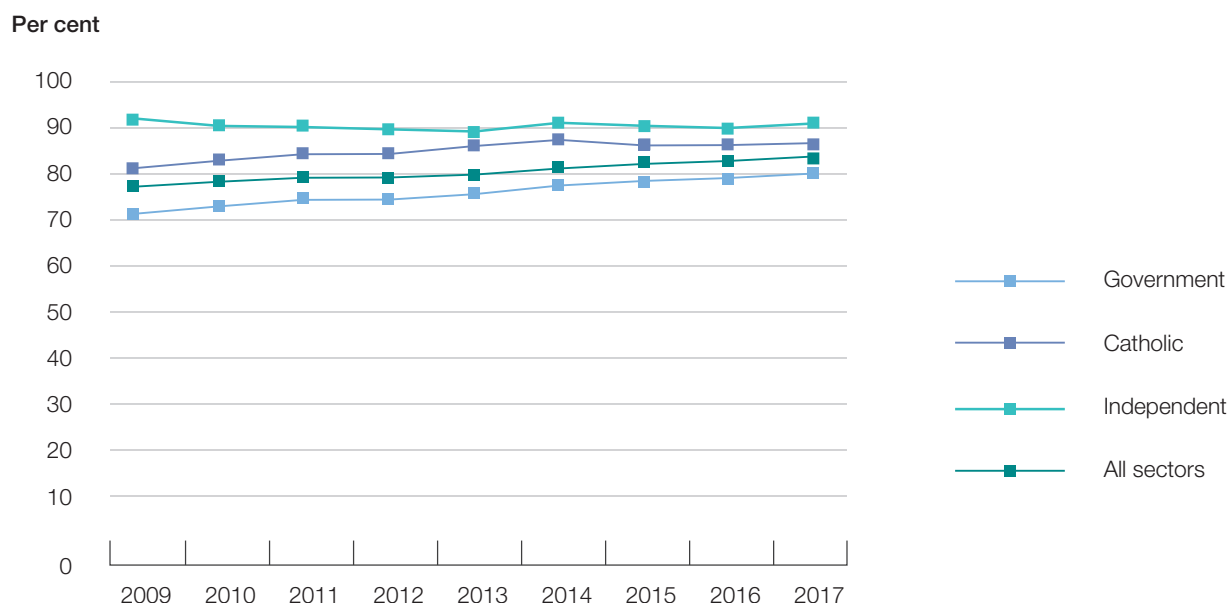
Source: ABS, Cat. No. 4221.0, *Schools, Australia*, 2017.

⁶⁴ Unit record enrolment data by student are not currently collected at the national level, so measures that rely on tracking of individual students cannot currently be derived nationally.

⁶⁵ The ABS publishes both capped apparent retention rates, which are capped at 100 per cent, and uncapped apparent retention rates. This report publishes uncapped rates because, due to student movements, it is quite possible for a school, state or school sector to have higher enrolments in Year 12 than in Year 10 two years previously, resulting in apparent in apparent retention rates above 100 per cent.

Figure 3.1

Apparent retention rates, Year 10 to Year 12 by school sector, Australia, 2009–2016



Source: ABS, Cat. No. 4221.0, *Schools, Australia*, 2017.

The national apparent retention rate from Year 10 to Year 12 increased for the fifth successive year between 2016 and 2017. The 0.4 percentage point rise in 2017 contributed to a net rise of 6.6 percentage points from 76.7 per cent in 2009 to 83.3 per cent in 2016. This is a substantial rise in this measure.

As noted in previous reports, this series records upward movements in apparent retention from Year 10 to Year 12, following the implementation of strengthened education participation requirements for 15- and 16-year-olds.⁶⁶

Apparent retention rates from Year 10 to Year 12 rose by 8.4 percentage points for the government school sector and by 6.0 percentage points for the Catholic sector in the period 2009–2017. The gap between apparent retention from Year 10 to Year 12 for government and independent schools narrowed from 19.6 percentage points in 2009 to 11.1 percentage points in 2017.

The convergence of apparent retention rates between school sectors over the eight-year period implies there have been rises in the proportions of government and Catholic school students continuing to Year 12, and/or a reduction in students transferring from government and Catholic to independent schools for Years 11 and 12. However, this cannot be confirmed numerically, because, as individual students are not tracked, the rates do not distinguish between progression of students within a sector, students moving between sectors and entry of students from overseas. Sector-specific retention rates should therefore be interpreted with caution.

⁶⁶ The National Youth Participation Requirement includes the mandatory requirement for all young people to participate in schooling until they complete Year 10, and the requirement to participate full time in education, training or employment, or a combination of these activities, until the age of 17. These were implemented in Queensland, South Australia, Western Australia and Tasmania between 2006 and 2008; and in New South Wales, Victoria, the Northern Territory and the Australian Capital Territory in 2010. From 2014, the age requirement in Western Australia was lifted to 'until the end of the year in which the child reaches the age of 17 years and 6 months or the child reaches the age of 18, whichever happens first'.

When apparent retention rates are disaggregated by state and territory, they are also less transparent, as they do not record movements of students between jurisdictions, net migration for the age cohort or numbers of overseas students enrolling in senior secondary schooling.

Table 3.9 shows apparent retention rates from Year 10 to Year 12 for full-time students by state and territory.

Table 3.9

Apparent retention rates (uncapped), Year 10 to Year 12 by state and territory, Australia, 2010, 2016 and 2017 (per cent) and changes 2010–2017 and 2016–2017 (percentage points)

Calendar year	NSW	Vic.	Qld	SA	WA	Tas.	NT	ACT	Australia
2010	74.5	82.1	81.0	80.6	76.5	70.7	61.4	91.8	78.5
2016	77.2	85.0	87.3	94.5	80.5	70.8	64.2	92.2	82.9
2017	77.5	85.3	87.8	91.7	83.1	71.5	70.2	92.1	83.3
Change 2010–2017	3.0	3.2	6.8	11.1	6.6	0.8	8.8	0.3	4.8
Change 2016–2017	0.3	0.3	0.5	-2.8	2.6	0.7	6.0	-0.1	0.4

Notes:

The apparent retention rate measures the number of full-time school students in a designated level/year of schooling as a percentage of their respective cohort group in a base year. The base year for apparent retention rates Year 10 to Year 12 in 2017 is Year 10 in 2015. Counts of students 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.

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

Source: ABS, Cat. No. 4221.0, *Schools, Australia*, 2017.

All states and territories have recorded rises in this rate over the period 2010–2016 with the largest increase, of 11.1 percentage points, in South Australia. Six jurisdictions recorded increases in the rate in 2017, including an increase of 6 percentage points in the Northern Territory, compared to a total increase of 2.8 percentage points over the previous six years.

A number of factors may contribute to differences between states and territories in apparent retention rates from Year 10 to Year 12:

- 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 in calculating rates.
- Differential rates of international immigration, including the temporary entry of overseas students for Years 11 and 12, inflate apparent retention rates in those 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 (or in alternative participation pathways) in order to meet participation requirements. This varies between states and territories because of historical difference in enrolment requirements and practices. States and territories with younger year cohorts tend to have higher Year 10 to Year 12 apparent retention rates, as a higher proportion of their student population is required to remain at school until the second half of Year 12.⁶⁷
- 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.

The overall increase in retention from Year 10 to Year 12 over the last eight years is in line with the policy intent of governments in strengthening requirements for 15- and 16-year-olds to participate full time in education and/or training and/or employment.

However, retention to Year 12 is not, by itself, a KPM for schooling for the full student population, because progressing to Year 12 is one of several acceptable means by which students can meet participation requirements.

KPM 1(e) in the *Measurement Framework for Schooling in Australia 2015* measures retention to Year 12, but its target population is Indigenous students (compared with non-Indigenous students). This KPM reflects concern by all governments at the significantly lower rates of school retention and completion for Aboriginal and Torres Islander students than for other groups and reflects the Melbourne Declaration objective to ensure that the learning outcomes of Indigenous students improve to match those of other students.

Key Performance Measure 1(e)
Apparent retention rates from Year 10 to Year 12
(Indigenous school students cf. non-Indigenous school students)

This KPM also relates to the COAG target to at least halve the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous 20–24-year-olds in Year 12 or equivalent attainment rates by 2020, but it is not a direct measure of progress towards this target.⁶⁸

⁶⁷ These students are included in the annual schools census conducted in August and therefore in the numerator of the apparent Year 10 to Year 12 retention rate. The higher age participation requirement in Western Australia also tends to raise the apparent Year 10 to Year 12 retention rate in that state.

⁶⁸ Measures for Year 12 or equivalent attainment for 20–24-year-olds are reported in part 3.4: Senior schooling and youth transitions.

Table 3.10 and figure 3.2 report this KPM for the period 2009–2017.

Table 3.10

Apparent retention rates (uncapped), Year 10 to Year 12, by Indigenous status (per cent) and gap Indigenous/non-Indigenous (percentage points), Australia, 2009–2017

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Indigenous	50.1	52.5	53.5	53.3	55.8	60.4	60.6	60.9	63.0
Non-Indigenous	77.7	79.5	80.6	80.4	81.9	83.6	83.8	84.0	84.3
Gap (Indigenous/non-Indigenous)	27.6	27.0	27.1	27.1	26.1	23.2	23.2	23.1	21.3

Notes:

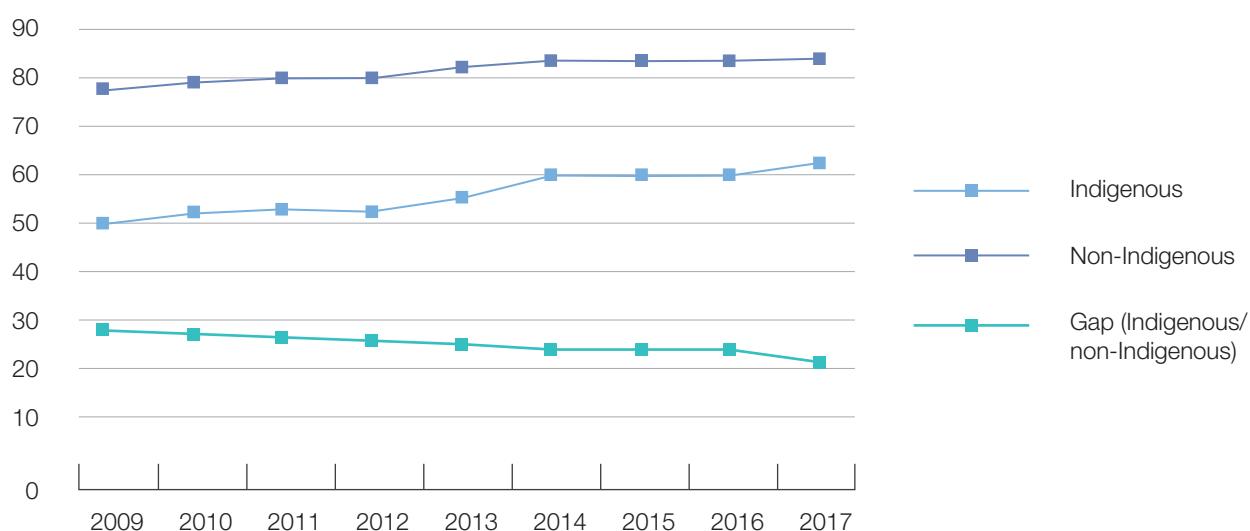
The apparent retention rate measures the number of full-time school students in a designated level/year of schooling as a percentage of their respective cohort group in a base year. The base year for apparent retention rates Year 10 to Year 12 in 2017 is Year 10 in 2015. Counts of students are as at the annual schools census in the first week of August each year. Part-time students are not included. Ungraded students are not included.

Apparent retention rates for Indigenous students can be affected by changes over time in whether individuals identify (or are identified) as Indigenous.

Source: ABS, Cat. No. 4221.0, *Schools, Australia*, 2017.

Figure 3.2

Apparent retention rates (uncapped), Year 10 to Year 12, by Indigenous status, Australia, 2009–2017 (per cent)



Apparent retention from Year 10 to Year 12 for Indigenous students has increased substantially – by 12.9 percentage points since 2009 – from 50.1 per cent in 2009 to 63.0 per cent in 2017. This is nearly double the rise for non-Indigenous students of 6.6 percentage points over this period, leading to a narrowing of the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students by 6.3 percentage points. There was a 1.8 percentage point decrease in the gap in 2017. However, at 21.3 percentage points, the gap remains considerable, with Indigenous students still significantly less likely to proceed to Year 12 than other students.

Table 3.11 reports KPM 1 (e) by state and territory for 2010, 2016 and 2017. The table displays variations between states and territories, both in apparent retention rates for Indigenous students and in the percentage point gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous rates.

Table 3.11

Apparent retention rates (uncapped), Year 10 to Year 12, by Indigenous status, by state and territory (per cent), and gap Indigenous/non-Indigenous (percentage points) 2010, 2016 and 2017

2010	NSW	Vic.	Qld	SA	WA	Tas.	NT	ACT	Australia
Indigenous	45.3	51.2	64.0	64.9	45.4	41.9	41.4	75.0	52.5
Non-Indigenous	75.5	82.3	82.0	81.1	78.4	72.9	71.9	92.1	79.5
Gap (Indigenous/ non-Indigenous)	30.2	31.1	18.0	16.2	33.0	31.0	30.5	17.1	27.0
2016	NSW	Vic.	Qld	SA	WA	Tas.	NT	ACT	Australia
Indigenous	50.7	68.6	72.0	92.6	51.4	52.1	45.0	93.2	60.9
Non-Indigenous	78.6	85.2	88.4	94.6	82.3	72.4	75.6	92.2	84.0
Gap (Indigenous/ non-Indigenous)	27.9	16.6	16.4	2.0	30.9	20.3	30.6	-1.0	23.1
2017	NSW	Vic.	Qld	SA	WA	Tas.	NT	ACT	Australia
Indigenous	52.4	68.2	73.1	91.1	57.5	54.5	49.6	84.6	63.0
Non-Indigenous	78.9	85.6	88.9	91.7	84.6	73.0	82.8	92.3	84.3
Gap (Indigenous/ non-Indigenous)	26.5	17.4	15.8	0.6	27.1	18.5	33.2	7.7	21.3
Change in gap 2010–2017	-3.7	-13.7	-2.2	-15.6	-5.9	-12.5	2.7	-9.4	-5.7
Change in gap 2016–2017	-1.4	0.8	-0.6	-1.4	-3.8	-1.8	2.6	8.7	-1.8

Note

The apparent retention rate measures the number of full-time school students in a designated level/year of schooling as a percentage of their respective cohort group in a base year. The base year for apparent retention rates Year 10 to Year 12 in 2017 is Year 10 in 2015. Counts of students 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.

Apparent retention rates for Indigenous students can be affected by changes over time in whether individuals identify (or are identified) as Indigenous.

Small numbers of Indigenous students can affect results at the state and territory level.

For longer time series of comparative apparent retention rates by state and territory, see the National Report on Schooling data portal.

Source: ABS, Cat. No. 4221.0, *Schools, Australia*, 2017.

In most jurisdictions, the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students continued to narrow in 2017, including a 3.8 percentage point fall in the gap for Western Australia. In Victoria and the ACT, apparent retention from Year 10 to Year 12 for Indigenous students decreased, and the gap with apparent retention rates for non-Indigenous students widened by 0.8 and 8.7 percentage points respectively. In South Australia, there was a decrease in the Indigenous rate but a narrowing of the gap; and in the Northern Territory, the gap increased by 2.6 percentage points, despite an increase of 4.6 percentage points in apparent retention for Indigenous students.

Along with factors affecting the state-by-state comparison of apparent retention rates for all students, noted above, a number of factors may contribute to these variations. These include:

- the number and proportion of Indigenous students within each population
- changes over time in whether individuals identify (or are identified) as Indigenous
- movement of Indigenous students between states and territories (for example, through scholarship programs for senior schooling)
- the age profile of the Indigenous student population in relation to age participation requirements
- the extent of training and employment programs that provide alternative options to senior schooling
- different rates between states of (non-Indigenous) international immigration including overseas students
- the geographic distribution of the Indigenous population, in particular its concentration in rural and remote communities.

In all states and territories, apparent retention from Year 10 to Year 12 in 2017 was higher for Indigenous girls than for boys.⁶⁹

A number of other major reports provide information on Indigenous disadvantage and gaps in outcomes between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders and non-Indigenous Australians, including reporting progress towards COAG Closing the Gap targets for education. These include:

- [*Closing the Gap – Prime Minister’s Report 2018*](#)
- [*Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage: Key Indicators 2016*](#)

Additional data on apparent retention, including for other year groups, are available on the National Report on Schooling data portal.



⁶⁹ National Report on Schooling data portal, apparent retention data set.

3.3 Student achievement – National Assessment Program

Part 3.3 reports on the KPMs for student achievement in the National Assessment Program (NAP) specified in the [Measurement Framework for Schooling in Australia 2015](#).

For 2017, this includes KPMs for NAP – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) and NAP sample assessment – ICT Literacy. International assessments included in the NAP were not conducted in 2017.

3.3.1 NAP – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN)

In 2017, the tenth year of national literacy and numeracy testing, Year 3, 5, 7 and 9 students in Australia were assessed on reading, writing, language conventions (spelling, grammar and punctuation) and numeracy.

The [2017 NAPLAN National Report](#) and the [NAPLAN results page of the NAP website](#) provide nationally comparable information on the 2017 national and state/territory results for each test domain. They also provide comparisons of performance by student characteristics such as gender, Indigeneity, language background other than English, parental occupation, parental education and school characteristics such as location.

Information about how to interpret scales and standards is also available on the [NAP website](#).

NAPLAN participation rates, mean scale scores and proportions of students achieving at or above the national minimum standard in reading, writing and numeracy at each year level are specified as key performance measures (KPMs) in the [Measurement Framework for Schooling in Australia 2015](#). These are reported for 2017 in the tables below.

Key Performance Measure 1(d)

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

Table 3.12 reports KPM 1(d) for 2017.

Table 3.12

Proportion of students participating in NAPLAN for Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 for reading, writing and numeracy, 2017 (per cent)

	Year 3	Year 5	Year 7	Year 9
Proportion of students participating in reading tests	94.8	95.4	94.5	91.3
Proportion of students participating in writing tests	94.7	95.3	94.6	91.6
Proportion of students participating in numeracy tests	94.6	95.0	94.0	90.7

Notes:

Participation rates are calculated as all assessed and exempt students as a percentage of the total number of students in the year level, as reported by schools, which includes those absent and withdrawn.

Exempt students were not assessed and are deemed not to have met the national minimum standard.

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

Sources: ACARA, *National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy, Achievement in Reading, Writing, Language Conventions and Numeracy, National Report for 2017*.

In summary:

- In 2017, as in previous years, NAPLAN participation rates exceeded 90 per cent for all years for all domains.
- In 2017, NAPLAN participation rates were similar across Years 3, 5 and 7, but lower for Year 9 by 3–4 percentage points. In all year levels, participation rates in reading were slightly higher than in numeracy.
- For Year 9, compared to other year levels, absence is a substantial contribution to non-participation, with absence rates at 6.0 per cent in reading and 6.6 per cent in numeracy.
- As with previous years, participation rates in NAPLAN in 2017 were lower for Indigenous students than for non-Indigenous students across all cohorts and key domains.
- Nationally, there has been a small but steady decrease in participation rates in NAPLAN over the period from 2008 to 2017, with an average decrease across the four year levels in reading and numeracy of approximately 0.2 percentage points per year.
- Since 2012, there has been a general increase in the withdrawn rate. However, the large percentage (more than 90 per cent) of students participating each year in all domains ensures that results are reliable and valid at all levels.

Reading

Key Performance Measure 2(a)

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

Key Performance Measure 2(b)

NAPLAN mean scale scores for reading

Table 3.13 reports KPMs 2(a) and 2(b) for Years 3, 5, 7 and 9, 2017.

Table 3.13

Summary for reading for Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 for Australia (proportion at or above national minimum standards (per cent); mean scale scores), 2017

	Year 3	Year 5	Year 7	Year 9
Percentage of students at or above national minimum standard	94.9	93.9	94.0	91.7
CI \pm	0.2	0.2	0.3	0.4
Mean scale score	431.3	505.7	544.7	580.9
(standard deviation)	(86.9)	(77.0)	(69.4)	(66.0)

Notes:

Exempt students were not assessed and are deemed not to have met the national minimum standard.

CI = confidence interval. Confidence intervals reflect the level of uncertainty associated with the measurement of achievement. They define a range of values within which the true level of achievement is likely to lie. This table shows 95 per cent confidence intervals for percentages of students at or above the national minimum standard. This means, for example, that where the percentage shown is 90% \pm 0.5 it can be said with 95 per cent confidence the true value lies between 89.5 per cent and 90.5 per cent.

Confidence intervals cited should be used to compare data within 2017 only.

Sources: ACARA, *National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy, Achievement in Reading, Persuasive Writing, Language Conventions and Numeracy, National Report for 2017*; ACARA (unpublished data).

Summary of trends in reading:

- At the national level, between 2016 and 2017, there was no statistically significant change in the proportion of students achieving at or above the national minimum standard for reading across all year levels. There was also no statistically significant change in the NAPLAN mean scale scores for reading for any year level.
- Nationally, there have been significant improvements in Year 3 reading from 2008 to 2017 in both the national mean and in the proportion of Year 3 students attaining the national minimum standard.

- Among Indigenous students in Year 3 and 5, there was a significant increase in the proportion of students attaining the national minimum standard between 2008 and 2017.
- For Year 5, nationally there were significant improvements in the mean reading achievement scores between 2008 and 2017. Improvements were evident in mean reading scores in Victoria, Queensland, Western Australia, South Australia, the Australian Capital Territory and Tasmania. There was also an increase between 2008 and 2017 in the proportion of Year 5 Queensland students achieving the national minimum standard, from 86.9 to 94.3 per cent.
- There was no overall improvement in national mean scale scores or in the proportion of students at or above the national minimum standard for reading for Year 7 from 2008 to 2017 or from 2016 to 2017.
- At Year 9, reading achievement was stable from 2008 to 2017 in the mean scale score and the proportion of students achieving the national minimum standard.

Writing

Key Performance Measure 2(c)

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

Key Performance Measure 2(d)

NAPLAN mean scale scores for writing

Table 3.14 reports on KPM 2(c) and 2(d) for Years 3, 5, 7 and 9, 2017

Table 3.14

Summary for persuasive writing for Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 for Australia: proportion of students achieving at or above the national minimum standard (per cent); mean scale scores, 2017

	Year 3	Year 5	Year 7	Year 9
Percentage of students at or above national minimum standard (%)	95.5	91.7	87.9	81.6
CI \pm	0.2	0.3	0.5	0.7
Mean scale score	413.6	472.5	512.9	552.0
(standard deviation)	(65.7)	(64.4)	(76.0)	(86.2)

Notes:

Exempt students were not assessed and were deemed not to have met the national minimum standard.

CI = confidence interval. Confidence intervals reflect the level of uncertainty associated with the measurement of achievement. They define a range of values within which the true level of achievement is likely to lie. This table shows 95 per cent confidence intervals for percentages of students at or above the national minimum standard. This means, for example, that where the percentage shown is 90% \pm 0.5, it can be said with 95 per cent confidence the true value lies between 89.5 per cent and 90.5 per cent.

Confidence intervals cited should be used to compare data within 2017 only.

Results for the persuasive writing task are reported on a separate persuasive writing scale that is not comparable with the original narrative writing scale. Student performances in writing 2011–2017 should not be compared with those from 2008–2010.

Sources: ACARA, *National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy, Achievement in Reading, Persuasive Writing, Language Conventions and Numeracy, National Report for 2017*; ACARA (unpublished data).

The writing genre assessed in NAPLAN 2017 was persuasive writing. Students and teachers were not advised in advance whether the genre would be narrative or persuasive writing. As in 2016, there were two writing prompts: one for Years 3 and 5; and one for Years 7 and 9.

Summary of trends in writing:

- At the national level, between 2016 and 2017, there was no statistically significant change in the proportion of students achieving at or above the national minimum standard for writing across all year levels, 3, 5, 7 and 9. There was also no statistically significant change in the NAPLAN mean scale scores for writing.
- Between 2011 and 2017, there was a significant decrease in persuasive writing mean achievement and in the proportion of students achieving at or above the national minimum standard for Year 7 students overall.

Numeracy

Key Performance Measure 3(a)

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

Key Performance Measure 3(b)

NAPLAN mean scale scores for numeracy

Table 3.15 reports KPMs 3(a) and 3(b) for Years 3, 5, 7 and 9, 2017.

Table 3.15

Summary for numeracy for Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 for Australia: proportion of students at or above national minimum standard (per cent); mean scale scores, 2017

	Year 3	Year 5	Year 7	Year 9
Percentage of students at or above national minimum standard (%)	95.4	95.4	95.4	95.8
CI \pm	0.2	0.2	0.3	0.3
Mean scale score	409.4	493.8	553.9	591.9
(standard deviation)	(73.9)	(65.5)	(71.1)	(63.5)

Notes:

Exempt students were not assessed and are deemed not to have met the national minimum standard.

CI = confidence interval. Confidence intervals reflect the level of uncertainty associated with the measurement of achievement. They define a range of values within which the true level of achievement is likely to lie. This table shows 95 per cent confidence intervals for percentages of students at or above the national minimum standard. This means, for example, that where the percentage shown is 90% \pm 0.5 it can be said with 95 per cent confidence the true value lies between 89.5 per cent and 90.5 per cent.

Confidence intervals cited should be used to compare data within 2017 only.

Sources: ACARA, *National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy, Achievement in Reading, Persuasive Writing, Language Conventions and Numeracy, National Report for 2017*; ACARA (unpublished data).

Summary of trends in numeracy:

- Numeracy achievement at the national level for Years 3 and Year 7 has remained largely unchanged from 2016 to 2017 and from 2008 to 2017.
- Queensland and Western Australia recorded increases in mean scale scores for numeracy for Year 3 between 2008 and 2017.
- There was an improvement in mean numeracy achievement and in the proportion of students at or above the national minimum standard for Year 5 across four jurisdictions – Queensland, Western Australia, Tasmania and South Australia – between 2008 and 2017, with Queensland achieving substantial improvements in both measures.
- Between 2008 and 2017, there were improvements in performance in some jurisdictions at other year levels. In Queensland, there were statistically significant improvements in numeracy and in the proportion of students achieving at or above the national minimum standard for Year 3 and Year 9. In New South Wales, there was a significant increase in the proportion of students at or above the national minimum standard for Year 9 students. In Western Australia, there was a significant increase in numeracy mean achievement for Year 7 students, and there were statistically significant improvements in numeracy for Year 9 for both mean scale scores and in the proportion of students achieving the national minimum standard.

Detailed data on NAPLAN 2017 are available in the [2017 NAPLAN National Report](#), and in interactive form and for previous years on the 'Results' page of the NAP website.

NAPLAN results are also reported at the school level on the *My School* website, and parents receive an individual report on their child's achievement in the NAPLAN tests. A student report shows student performance against the national average and relative to the achievement band scale.

Closing the gap in literacy and numeracy

COAG Closing the Gap targets include the following target for literacy and numeracy.

Closing the Gap target

Halve the gap in reading, writing and numeracy achievement between Indigenous students and non-Indigenous students by 2018

The gap for this target is measured as the difference between the proportion of Indigenous and non-Indigenous students at or above the national minimum standard in reading and numeracy at Years 3, 5, 7 and 9. (Writing results from 2011 onwards cannot be directly compared to the writing results from previous years so are not used to measure progress towards this target.)

The [Closing the Gap Prime Minister's Report 2018](#) notes that in 2017, only one of the eight areas (Year 9 numeracy) was consistent with the required trajectory point (on track) at the national level. Results in the other seven areas were below the required trajectory points, meaning that progress needs to accelerate for this target to be met.

However, while progress in closing the gap is slow, there have been some statistically significant improvements in the proportion of Indigenous students at or above the national minimum standard in reading and numeracy since 2008: in Year 3 and Year 5 reading, and Year 5 and Year 9 numeracy. These four areas have shown the largest reduction in the gap from 2008 to 2017 (approximately 10 percentage points).

In 2017, as in previous years:

- Female Indigenous students performed better than males in reading.
- NAPLAN results for Indigenous students varied considerably according to geolocation/ remoteness, with students in urban and regional schools performing significantly better than those in remote and very remote schools. Further information on Closing the Gap targets is included in the [Closing the Gap Prime Minister's Report 2018](#).

NAPLAN results disaggregated by Indigenous status are provided on the [NAPLAN results](#) page of the ACARA website and in the NAPLAN national report.



3.3.2 NAP Sample – Information and Communication Technology Literacy

The National Sample Assessment for Information and Communication Technology Literacy (NAP–ICTL) commenced in 2005. Every three years, as part of a rotating assessment cycle, samples of Year 6 and Year 10 students from across Australia are tested on their ability to use ICT to appropriately access, manage, integrate and evaluate information, develop new understandings and communicate with others in order to participate effectively in society.

In 2017, NAP–ICTL was delivered to students online to representative, random samples of Year 6 and Year 10 students. The NAP–ICTL sample assessment was administered to over 10,000 students from 600 government, Catholic and independent schools between 16 October and 3 November 2017 in all states and territories.

The next NAP – ICT Literacy assessment is scheduled for 2020.

The proportion of students achieving at or above each proficient standard (Level 3 for Year 6 and Level 4 for Year 10) is the KPM for ICT literacy at each year level.

Key performance measure 6

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

Year 6 – Level 3

Year 10 – Level 4

Table 3.16

Proportion of students achieving at or above the proficient standards (Level 3 in Year 6; Level 4 in Year 10) in ICT literacy, 2017 (per cent)

	At or above the proficient standard
Year 6	
Australia (%)	53
CI±	2.4
Year 10	
Australia (%)	54
CI±	3.0

Notes:

CI = confidence interval

Source: ACARA, *National Assessment Program – ICT Literacy Report 2017*

See also National Report on Schooling data portal

CI = confidence interval. Confidence intervals reflect the level of uncertainty associated with the measurement of achievement. They define a range of values within which the true level of achievement is likely to lie. This table shows 95 per cent confidence intervals for percentages of students at or above the national minimum standard. This means, for example, that where the percentage shown is 90% ± 0.5 it can be said with 95 per cent confidence the true value lies between 89.5 per cent and 90.5 per cent.

In summary:

The test results from NAP-ICTL 2017 were not statistically different from those achieved at the national level in 2014.

- Nationally in 2017, 53 per cent of Year 6 students achieved at or above the proficient standard compared to 55 per cent in 2014. However, this was significantly lower than in 2011 (62 per cent).
- Nationally in 2017, 54 per cent of Year 10 students achieved at or above the proficient standard compared to 52 per cent in 2014. However, this was significantly lower than in 2008 (66 per cent) and 2011 (65 per cent).

Data on KPM 6 by state and territory are provided on the National Report on Schooling data portal.

The detailed National Assessment Program – ICT Literacy Years 6 & 10 Report 2017 is available on the [National Assessment Program website](#). A technical report on NAP – ICT Literacy 2017 is also available on this site.



3.4 Senior schooling and youth transitions

Part 3.4 reports on key performance measures (KPMs) for schooling for:

- the participation of young people, including secondary students, in vocational education and training (VET), and in education, training and work
- the attainment of young people in senior schooling and/or post-school education and training.

These measures reflect the intent of the Melbourne Declaration to define educational goals, not only for school students, but for all young Australians, and the role of the *National Report on Schooling in Australia* to report on the outcomes of schooling.

They also reflect the Melbourne Declaration commitment to “support the senior years of schooling and the provision of high-quality pathways to facilitate effective transitions between further study, training and employment”. As such, these are indicators of the success of schooling in preparing students for further education and work.

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

The Australian vocational education and training (VET) sector provides nationally recognised training and qualifications for those entering or already engaged in the workforce. Competency standards (units of competency) for VET qualifications in different industries and occupations are included in national training packages, which also define qualifications in each industry. Nationally recognised VET qualifications are detailed on a national register/database, training.gov.au, which is managed by the Australian Government on behalf of states and territories.

The requirements for each level of VET qualification are set out in the [Australian Qualifications Framework \(AQF\)](#)⁷⁰, which also provides guidelines for senior secondary certificates of education (Year 12 qualifications) and qualifications in the higher education sector.

Secondary school students in all states and territories can undertake nationally recognised VET courses (also known as VET in Schools⁷¹ courses) as part of their school program, usually in the senior years of schooling as a part of the Senior Secondary Certificate of Education (SSCE) in each jurisdiction.

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 into 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.

⁷⁰ The AQF is the national framework of qualifications in the school, vocational education and training (VET), and higher education sectors in Australia. The Senior Secondary Certificate of Education, Certificates II, III and IV, Diploma and Bachelor Degree are examples of qualifications within the AQF.

⁷¹ [Preparing Secondary Students for Work – A framework for vocational learning and VET delivered to secondary students](#) released by the Education Council (December 2014) adopts the term ‘VET (delivered to secondary students)’ to replace the term VET in Schools (VETiS) historically used for these programs. However, in 2017, the term ‘VET in Schools’ (VETiS) continued to be used in the VET sector to identify VET delivered to secondary students and for data collection and reporting purposes. ‘VET in Schools’ continues to be the term used within the Australian Vocational Educational and Training Management Information Statistical Standard (AVETMISS).

Enrolments in VET and school-based apprenticeships and traineeships, and VET qualifications issued to secondary students are reported at the school level on the [My School website](#) for schools with senior secondary enrolments.

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

The KPM for participation in VET includes all 15–19-year-old VET students (whether or not 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 in a VET qualification at AQF Certificate II or above.⁷²

Key performance measure 1(f) Participation in VET including VET in Schools

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



⁷² The specification of the successful completion of a unit of competency in the KPM is a marker for genuine participation in a VET course (as opposed to an initial enrolment, which may not be followed through). It is not intended that the KPM be regarded as a measure of attainment. AQF Certificate II is regarded as entry level training for employment.

Table 3.17 and figure 3.3 show national data for this KPM for the period 2009–2017. There is a break in the series between 2013 and 2014, when reporting requirements for VET providers were extended to include privately funded accredited VET training. This change contributes to the higher numbers and proportions of 15–19-year-olds reported as participating in VET in 2014 than in previous years.

There is a further break in the series between 2014 and 2015, following the introduction of a national unique student identifier (USI) (student number) for VET students.

The USI enables all training activity undertaken by a student to be electronically linked, irrespective of where the training took place. The National Centre for Vocational Education and Research (NCVER) has revised numerator data for KPM 1(f) to remove duplicate student entries for 2015–17. This has resulted in reductions in the KPM as previously reported for 2015 and 2016 and a break from data reported for 2014.

Table 3.17

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, 2009–2017

Australia	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Number of 15–19-year-olds successfully completing at least one unit of competency at AQF II or above ('000)	359.1	374.1	399.2	418.5	395.5	494.8	438.1	414.7	413.3
15–19-year-old population ('000)	1,462.4	1,460.1	1,453.5	1,459.7	1,466.7	1,474.7	1,469.9	1,475.2	1,482.6
Proportion of 15–19-year-olds successfully completing at least one unit of competency at AQF II or above (per cent)	24.6	25.6	27.5	28.7	27.0	33.6	29.8	28.1	27.9

Notes:

A successfully completed unit of competency/module includes competencies with an outcome of competency achieved/pass/recognition of prior learning granted.

The KPM is derived by calculating student numbers in the 15–19-year age group as a percentage of the estimated residential population in the corresponding group.

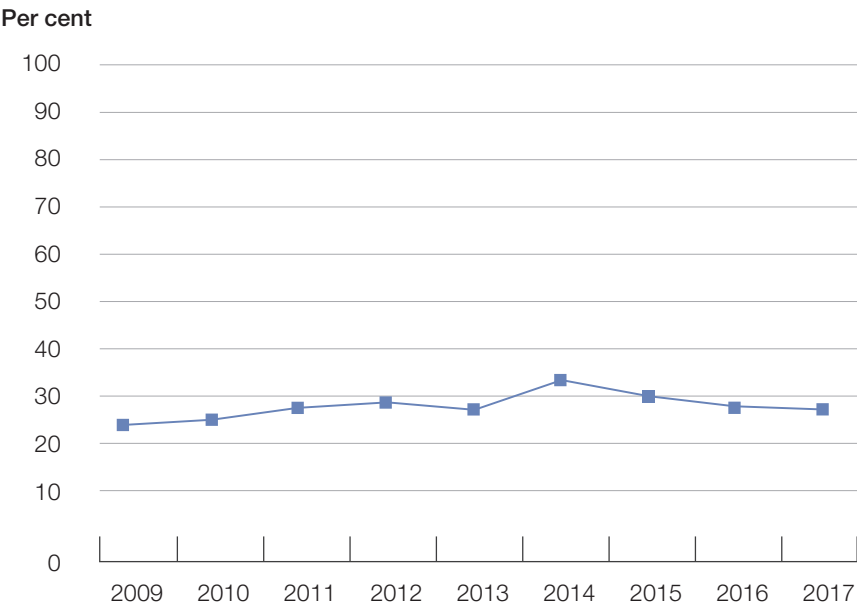
From January 2014, all registered training organisations (RTOs), including private providers, were required to collect and report full AVETMISS⁷³ data on all nationally accredited training. This represents a break in the series.

From January 2015, VET students have been allocated a unique student identifier (USI). Data for the numerator of this KPM in 2015 and 2016 have been revised downwards from that published in the National Report on Schooling in Australia, 2016 to de-duplicate enrolment data, using the USI. Data for the denominator of this KPM in 2015 and 2016 have also been revised to reflect population estimates rebased to the 2016 Census of Population and Housing. This represents a further break in the series. Data up to and including 2014 have not been revised.

Sources: NCVER, National VET in Schools Collection 2009–17; NCVER, National VET Provider Collection 2009–17; ABS, Cat. No. 3101.0, *Australian demographic statistics*, December 2017 (release date 21/6/2018).

⁷³ Australian Vocational Education and Training Information Management Statistical Standard

Figure 3.3
Proportion of 15–19-year-olds successfully completing at least one unit of competency at AQF II or above (per cent), Australia, 2009–2017



Data for KPM 1(f) by state and territory are provided in the National Report on Schooling data portal.

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

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

Table 3.18 reports VET program measure 1 for 2017 using the Australian standard classifications for field of education as a proxy for occupation/industry profile. Other disaggregations, by skills service organisation and by occupational category, are provided in the National Report on Schooling data portal along with state and territory data.

Table 3.18

Number of 15–19-year-olds participating in VET at AQF Certificate II or above, by field of education of major course, Australia, 2017

Field of education	Number of students
01 – Natural and physical sciences	2,131
02 – Information technology	15,779
03 – Engineering and related technologies	62,190
04 – Architecture and building	43,224
05 – Agriculture, environmental and related studies	13,480
06 – Health	19,474
07 – Education	5,545
08 – Management and commerce	72,830
09 – Society and culture	70,961
10 – Creative arts	28,251
11 – Food, hospitality and personal services	62,869
12 – Mixed field programmes	16,580
Total	413,314

Notes:

Field of education is according to ABS 1272.0 – *Australian Standard Classification of Education (ASCED)*, 2001.

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

Sources: NCVER, National VET in Schools Collection 2017; NCVER, National VET Provider Collection 2017.

VET program measure 2

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

Table 3.19 reports on the number VET qualifications completed by 15–19-year-olds in 2017, by the AQF level of qualifications.

Table 3.19

VET qualifications completed by 15–19-year-olds, by qualification level of major course, Australia, 2017

Qualification level	Number
Certificate I	27,155
Certificate II	106,132
Certificate III	61,255
Certificate IV	11,028
Diploma or higher	12,133
Non-AQF	336
Total	218,039

Notes:

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

Numbers of enrolments and numbers of qualifications should not be compared. Enrolments include students in their first, second or third year of a VET course and from multiple cohorts, whereas qualifications completed by secondary students are more likely to be issued in the final year of school. In addition, a secondary student may intend to complete only a partial qualification while at school. Students may also commence training between the ages of 15 and 19 and complete the qualification when they are no longer in this age group.

Sources: NCVER, National VET in Schools Collection 2017; NCVER, National VET Provider Collection 2017.

Numbers of qualifications and enrolments should not be compared, as enrolments 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 necessarily 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.

State and territory data for VET qualifications completed by 15–19-year-olds are provided in the National Report on Schooling data portal.

KPM 1(f) and the VET program measures include all 15–19-year-old students undertaking VET. The data below refer to VET delivered to 15–19-year-old secondary school students. For the purposes of the national VET in Schools data collection⁷⁴, these are students who are undertaking accredited VET as a part of a Senior Secondary Certificate of Education.⁷⁵ These data are not restricted to Certificate II or above, or to students who have successfully completed at least one unit of competency.

Table 3.20 shows the number of 15–19-year-old students undertaking VET in Schools programs each year 2009–2017 with school-based apprentices and trainees disaggregated.

⁷⁴ 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.

⁷⁵ In some jurisdictions, students who have left school (i.e. 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.

Table 3.20

Number of 15–19-year-old students undertaking VET in Schools programs, Australia, 2009–2017

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
School-based apprentices and trainees (a) ('000)	20.9	17.3	18.1	22.5	21.7	20.5	19.7	16.9	19.9
Other VET in Schools program students ('000)	195.8	203.6	218.3	219.8	218.1	216.1	226.8	216.8	217.8
Total VET in Schools students ('000)	216.7	220.9	236.4	242.3	239.7	236.6	246.5	233.7	237.7

Notes:

(a) School-based apprentices and trainees include students who undertook at least one module/unit of competency in a school-based apprenticeship or traineeship.

Sources: NCVER, National VET in Schools Collection, 2017; NCVER, VET in Schools 2017; NCVER, [VET in Schools 2017 data slicer](#).

In the 2017 calendar year, there were 237,745 students aged 15–19 years enrolled in VET in Schools programs. Of these students:

- 53.9 per cent were male and 46.0 per cent were female.
- 14,310 (6.0 per cent) identified as Indigenous.
- The majority (55.7 per cent) were enrolled in Certificate II qualifications and a further 33.4 per cent were enrolled in Certificate III qualifications.
- 8.4 per cent were undertaking a school-based apprenticeship or traineeship.
- 68.6 per cent were from government schools, 18.7 per cent from Catholic schools and 10.4 per cent from independent schools. (This compares to the shares of school enrolments in Years 11 and 12 of 58.8 per cent, 22.0 per cent and 19.2 per cent respectively.)

Based on these data, it is estimated that approximately 45 per cent of senior secondary students undertook one or more VET courses in 2017 as part of their Senior Secondary Certificate.⁷⁶

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

⁷⁶ This is an estimate only, as there are some disparities between the counting of VET in Schools students and of Year 11 and 12 enrolments in the NSSC. For example, VET courses undertaken by Year 10 (or Year 9) students in some jurisdictions may be credited towards the SSCE and thus included in the VET in Schools data collection but these students are not included in the count of senior secondary students; Year 11 and Year 12 enrolments include small numbers of students aged 20 and above who are not counted in the number of 15–19-year-old secondary students undertaking VET.

Between 2016 and 2017, the number of VET in Schools students aged 15–19 years increased by 1.6 per cent. There was a resurgence of enrolments in school-based apprenticeships and traineeships following a falling off of in these of programs in 2016.

Further detailed information, including data disaggregated by state and territory, data definitions and data quality issues, are provided in the annual NCVER publication *Australian vocational education and training statistics: Young people in education and training* and in VET in Schools 2017.

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](#).

3.4.2 Participation in education and work

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

- 15–19-year-olds, including both school students and those who have left school and have moved into tertiary study or the workforce
- 20–24-year-olds, who may be undertaking vocational education and training (VET) or university study, working, or a combination of these activities.

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 measures are based on the ABS [Survey of Education and Work](#) (SEW), which is conducted in May each year.

The *Measurement Framework for Schooling in Australia 2015*, specifies that data drawn from the Census of Population and Housing⁷⁷, will also be reported for census years.

Key performance measure 1(g)

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

KPMs 1(g) and 1(h) are shown for the period 2009–2017 and for census years 2011 and 2016 in table 3.21. Figure 3.4 illustrates KPMs 1(g) and 1(h), as measured by SEW, over the period 2009–2017.

⁷⁷ The Census of Population and Housing is Australia's largest statistical collection undertaken by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS). The census is conducted every five years.

Table 3.21

Proportions of 15–19-year-olds and 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, Australia, 2009–2017 (per cent)

Calendar year	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Full-time participation rates for 15–19-year-olds	84.1	84.8	85.3	86.5	86.3	87.2	87.4	88.4	89.0
CI±	1.4	1.5	1.4	1.0	1.2	1.1	0.3	1.3	1.0
Full-time participation rates for 15–19-year-olds (supplementary census measure)			86.0					86.4	
Full-time participation rates for 20–24-year-olds	77.1	77.2	77.0	76.6	73.8	74.1	73.6	76.1	75.0
CI±	2.0	1.6	1.5	1.7	1.1	1.6	1.7	1.5	1.5
Full-time participation rates for 20–24-year-olds (supplementary census measure)			74.7					72.2	

Notes:

CI = confidence interval

The percentages reported for Survey Education and Work (SEW) data in this table include 95 per cent 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 per cent confidence interval of ± 2 means that if the total population was surveyed rather than a sample, there is a 95 per cent chance that the result would lie between 78 and 82.

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.

From 2012, participation data published by ABS to report the results of the SEW have been limited to study for a qualification only, instead of all study.

The sample in the SEW was expanded in 2013 to include people who were permanently unable to work. This may result in slightly lower participation rates than would otherwise be the case.

SEW includes people in very remote areas but excludes people in Indigenous communities in very remote areas. This exclusion has only a minor impact on national estimates or estimates by state/territory except for the Northern Territory where people in these communities account for about 15 per cent of the population.

The increase in the SEW participation measures for 15–19-year-olds from 2016 to 2017 is not statistically significant. The decrease in the SEW participation measure for 20–24-year-olds from 2016 to 2017 is not statistically significant.

Data reported from the Census of Population and Housing exclude respondents who provided incomplete or insufficient information on their participation in education and work. As such, the data do not encompass the full census counts of 15–19 and 20–24-year-olds. Changes in census measures from 2011 to 2016 are not statistically significant.

Sources: ABS, Cat. No. 6227.0, *Education and Work*, May 2017; ABS, Census of Population and Housing, 2011, 2016, National Report on Schooling data portal.

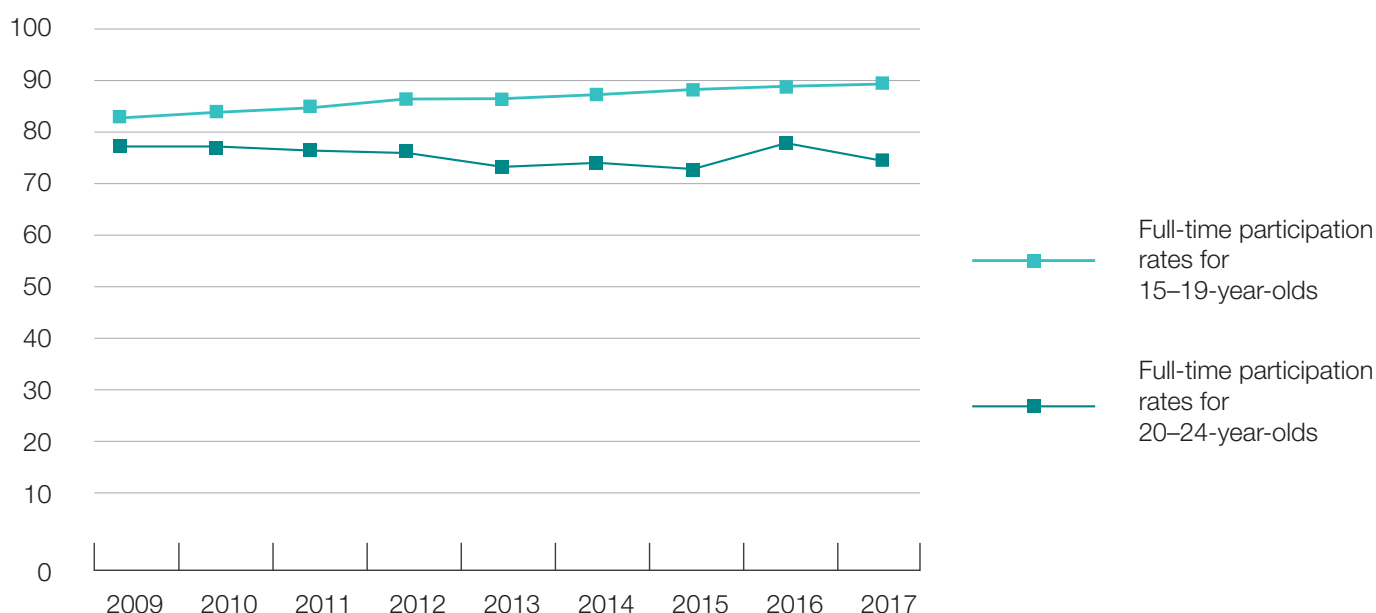
As shown in table 3.21, full-time participation rates for young people in their mid-late teens were consistently higher than for those in their early to mid-20s. This is to be expected, as the 15–19-year age group includes a high proportion of secondary school students for whom full-time participation in education, training or work is compulsory, at least until age 17.⁷⁸

Since 2009, there has been an increase in full-time participation for 15–19-year-olds from 84.1 per cent to 89.00 per cent, but a net fall in the participation rate for 20–24-year-olds from 77.1 per cent to 75.0, despite a rise over this period in participation in full-time education and training by this age group.⁷⁹

Table 3.4

Proportions of 15–19-year-olds and 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, Australia, 2009–2017 (per cent)

Per cent



Note: Refer to Table 3.21 for confidence intervals

Source: ABS, Cat. No. 6227.0, Education and Work, May 2017.

KPM 1(i) measures the participation in post-school education and training and/or work of 17–24-year-olds who are not at school. This measure is informative as an indicator of the transition of young people from school to further education and/or work. It excludes people who were still at school from both the numerator and the denominator.

⁷⁸ Based on SEW data, 83.8 per cent of 15–19-year-olds in 2017 were engaged in formal study

⁷⁹ This fall is partly due to the expansion of the sample population of the Survey of Education and Work from 2013 to include people who were permanently unable to work.

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

Data for this KPM are reported for the period 2009–2017 in table 3.22 and figure 3.5.

Table 3.22

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, Australia, 2009–2017 (per cent)

Calendar year	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Full-time participation rates for 17–24-year-olds who have left school	74.6	75.0	75.1	75.5	72.7	73.2	72.9	75.5	74.7
CI±	1.7	1.5	1.4	1.3	1.1	1.4	1.4	1.2	1.3
Full-time participation rates for 17–24-year-olds who have left school (supplementary census measure)			73.0					71.0	

Notes:

CI = confidence interval

The percentages for Survey Education and Work (SEW) data reported in this table include 95 per cent 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 per cent confidence interval of ± 2 means that if the total population was surveyed rather than a sample, there is a 95 per cent chance that the result would lie between 78 and 82.

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.

From 2012, participation data published by ABS to report the results of the Survey of Education and Work have been limited to study for a qualification only, instead of all study.

The sample in the SEW was expanded in 2013 to include people who were permanently unable to work. This may result in slightly lower participation rates from 2013 than would otherwise be the case.

SEW includes people in very remote areas but excludes people in Indigenous communities in very remote areas. This exclusion has only a minor impact on national estimates or estimates by state/territory except for the Northern Territory where people in these communities account for about 15 per cent of the population.

The change in the SEW measure from 2016 to 2017 is not statistically significant.

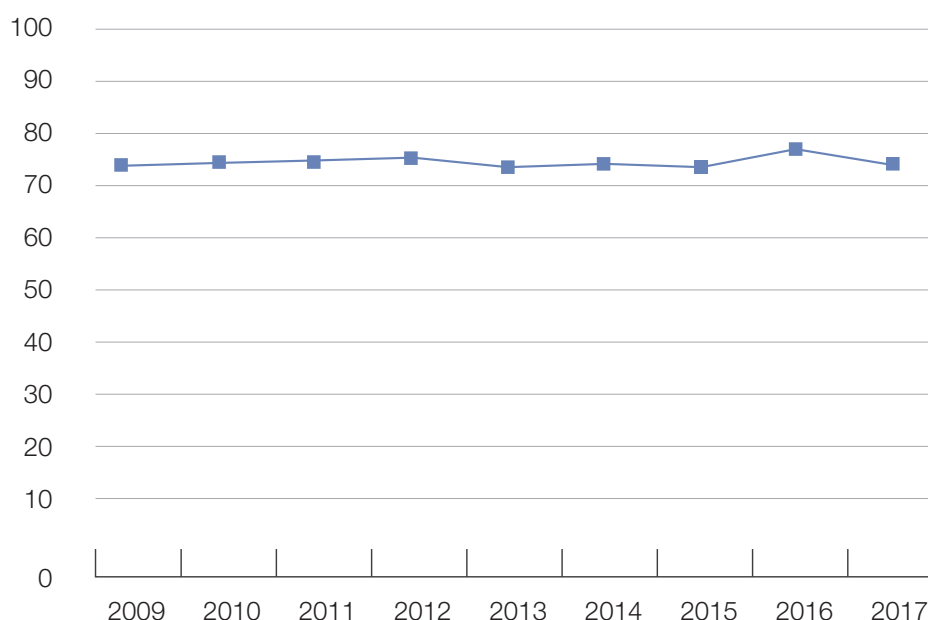
Data reported from the Census of Population and Housing exclude respondents who provided incomplete or insufficient information on their participation in education and work. As such, the data do not encompass the full census count of 17–24-year-olds.

The change in the census measure from 2011 to 2016 is not statistically significant.

Sources: ABS, Cat. No. 6227.0, *Education and Work*, May 2017; ABS, Census of Population and Housing, 2011, 2016, National Report on Schooling data portal.

Figure 3.5

Proportion of 17–24-year-olds who have left school in full-time education or training, in full-time work, or both in part-time work and part-time education or training, Australia, 2009–2017 (per cent)



Note: Refer to table 3.22 for confidence intervals

Source: ABS, Cat. No. 6227.0, *Education and Work*, May 2017.

Data on KPMs 1(g), 1(h) and 1(i) by state and territory are provided on the National Report on Schooling data portal. However, because of sample size and other factors, SEW data for particular age groups are less reliable when disaggregated by state and territory, especially for smaller jurisdictions.

Because the survey is not conducted in Indigenous communities in very remote areas, and because of sample size, SEW data cannot be disaggregated by Indigenous status. Census data provide more robust measures by state and territory, and can be disaggregated by Indigenous status, but is only available for census years. Census data for these KPMs by state and territory and Indigenous status are reported in the National Report on Schooling data portal.

The data portal also displays SEW and census data on participation in education and training by various age groups.

3.4.3 Student attainment

The attainment key performance measures (KPMs) specified in the [Measurement Framework for Schooling in Australia 2015](#) measure the level of educational attainment achieved by young Australians by the time they have reached their early–mid-twenties. These measures reflect the COAG targets for youth attainment in education and training:

Key Performance Measure 7(a)

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

Key Performance Measure 7(b)

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

The measures are based on the ABS [Survey of Education and Work](#) (SEW), which is conducted in May each year.

The *Measurement Framework for Schooling in Australia 2015*, specifies that data drawn from the Census of Population and Housing⁸⁰, will also be reported for census years.

Table 3.23 reports KPMs 7(a) and 7(b) at the national level for the period 2009–2017. The table also includes these proportions as measured by the 2011 and 2016 census.

While the attainment KPMs 7(a) and 7(b) refer to the completion of Year 12 or equivalent or an AQF VET Certificate, this does not imply equivalence between the award of a Senior Secondary Certificate of Education on the completion of Year 12 and either AQF Certificate II or AQF Certificate III. Senior Secondary Certificate of Education qualifications are not located at a particular level in the Australian Qualifications Framework.⁸¹

For comparison purposes, the table 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).

⁸⁰ The census of Population and Housing is Australia's largest statistical collection undertaken by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS). The census is conducted every five years.

⁸¹ 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 (AQF Second edition p. 14). In some instances, senior secondary students undertaking VET have the opportunity to complete several Certificate II qualifications as a part of a Senior Secondary Certificate of Education.

Table 3.23

Proportion of the 20–24-year-old population that has attained at least Year 12 or equivalent or AQF Certificate II or above; 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; Australia, 2009–2017 (per cent)

Year	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Proportion of the 20–24-year-old population that has attained at least Year 12 or equivalent, or AQF Certificate II or above	84.5	85.6	84.1	85.9	86.7	86.1	88.4	90.2	87.1
CI±	1.6	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.5	1.5	1.1	1.6	1.2
Proportion of the 20–24-year-old population that has attained at least Year 12 or equivalent, or AQF Certificate II or above (supplementary census measure)			85.3					88.6	
Proportion of the 20–24-year-old population that has attained at least Year 12 or equivalent, or AQF Certificate III or above	83.5	84.5	82.7	84.6	85.7	84.9	87.1	89.2	86.4
CI±	1.7	1.5	1.3	1.3	1.5	1.5	1.1	1.6	1.2
Proportion of the 20–24-year-old population that has attained at least Year 12 or equivalent, or AQF Certificate III or above (supplementary census measure)			84.6					87.9	
Proportion of the 20–24-year-old population that has attained at least Year 12 or equivalent	77.1	78.0	74.9	76.3	77.2	76.8	78.7	81.3	79.1
CI±	1.7	1.7	1.7	1.6	1.6	1.8	1.6	1.9	1.4
Proportion of the 20–24-year-old population that has attained at least Year 12 or equivalent (supplementary census measure)			75.3					79.5	

Notes:

CI = confidence interval

The percentages reported for SEW data in this table include 95 per cent 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 per cent confidence interval of ±2 means that if the total population were surveyed rather than a sample, there is a 95 per cent chance that the result would lie between 78 and 82.

The sample population in the Survey of Education and Work was expanded in 2013 to include people who were permanently unable to work. This may result in slightly lower attainment rates from 2013 than would otherwise be the case.

SEW includes people in very remote areas but excludes people in Indigenous communities in very remote areas. This exclusion has only a minor impact on national estimates or estimates by state/territory except for the Northern Territory where people in these communities account for about 15 per cent of the population.

The decreases in the SEW measures of KPM 7(a) and KPM (b) from 2016 to 2017 are statistically significant.

Data reported from the Census of Population and Housing exclude respondents who provided incomplete or insufficient information on their attainment in education and work. As such, the data do not encompass the full Census counts of 15–19 and 20–24-year-olds.

Year 12 or equivalent includes AQF senior secondary certificates of education issued by Australian state and territory accreditation authorities and equivalent qualifications such as the International Baccalaureate, matriculation certificates and school leaving qualifications obtained outside Australia. It also includes respondents who indicated that their highest level of education is Year 12.

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

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

Sources: ABS, Cat. No. 6227.0, *Education and Work*, May 2017. ABS, Census of Population and Housing, 2011, 2016; See also National Report on Schooling data portal.

As measured by SEW, the proportion of 20–24-year-olds who had attained Year 12 or equivalent or AQF Certificate II or above – KPM 7(a) – rose from 84.5 per cent in 2009 to 90.2 per cent in 2016 but fell back to 87.1 per cent in 2017. The COAG target for this measure (90 per cent by 2015) was not met until 2016 and the measure suffered a significant decline in 2017.⁸²

As measured by SEW, the proportion of 20–24-year-olds, who had attained Year 12 or equivalent, or AQF Certificate III or above – KPM 7(b) – rose from 83.5 per cent to 89.2 per cent between 2009 and 2016, but decreased significantly to 86.4 per cent in 2017.

The COAG target for this measure is 90 per cent by 2020. Increased retention to Year 12 since 2013⁸³, and increased participation in education and training by 15–19-year-olds since 2011⁸⁴ may lead to higher levels of attainment for these students as 20–24-year-olds in 2020.

Figure 3.6 depicts the annual movement in the two attainment measures from 2009 to 2017, as drawn from SEW, along with the proportion of 20–24-year-olds having attained at least Year 12 or equivalent.

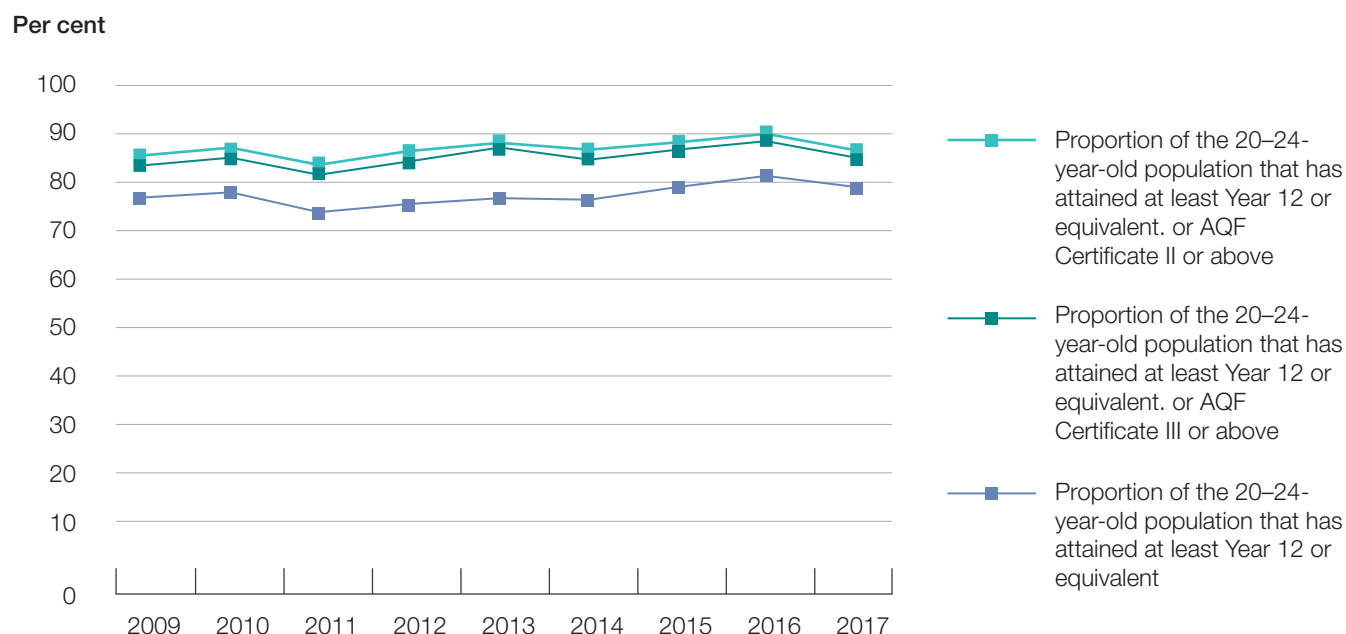
⁸² The COAG target for the completion of Year 12 or equivalent or Certificate II for the overall population has expired, but it remains a target for attainment by Indigenous young people.

⁸³ As reported in part 3.2.3: Student participation – retention.

⁸⁴ As reported in the National Report on Schooling data portal – participation and attainment in education and work data set.

Figure 3.6

Proportions of 20–24-year-olds having attained at least Year 12 or equivalent, or AQF Certificate II or above; 20–24-year-olds having attained at least Year 12 or equivalent, or AQF Certificate III or above; and proportion of the 20–24-year-olds having attained at least Year 12 or equivalent; Australia, 2009–2017 (per cent)



Note:

Refer to table 3.24 for confidence intervals.

Source: ABS, Cat. No. 6227.0, *Education and Work*, May 2017. See also National Report on Schooling data portal.

In each of the years 2009–2017, there was little difference between the two attainment KPMs (a maximum difference of 1.4 percentage points occurred in 2011, with a difference of only 0.7 percentage points in 2017), and, as shown figure 3.6, there is parallel movement of the KPMs over the period. Both KPMs closely parallel movements in the proportion of 20–24-year-olds that has attained at least Year 12 or equivalent. In 2017, 79.1 per cent of 20–24-year-olds had attained at least Year 12 or equivalent. A further 7.3 per cent, who had not attained Year 12, had attained Certificate III or above, and a further 0.7 per cent had attained Certificate II, but not Year 12 or Certificate III.

The proportion of young people completing Year 12 or equivalent is not itself a KPM for schooling, as pursuing a VET qualification post-Year 10 is a legitimate alternative to Years 11 and 12 as a pathway to further education and work.

However, as shown in figure 3.6, it is the main component of KPMs 7(a) and 7(b), with variations in the two KPMs closely following variations in Year 12 or equivalent attainment.

This has implications for predicting and influencing the COAG measures, as the rate of Year 12 completion for current secondary students can be used as an indicator for the future attainment rates for Year 12 or Certificate II/Certificate III or above among 20–24-year-olds.

SEW data for KPMs 7(a) and 7(b) by state and territory are provided on the National Report on Schooling data portal. However, because of sample size and other factors, SEW data for particular age groups (such as 20–24-year-olds) are less reliable when disaggregated by state and territory, especially for smaller jurisdictions.

Census of Population and Housing data for the years 2006, 2011 and 2016 are also published on the data portal and may provide more robust measures for disaggregation by jurisdiction.

However, in measuring attainment for 20–24-year-olds, neither the SEW nor the census measures take into account the interstate and international migration of young people for employment or higher education after leaving school. As a measure of the effectiveness of schooling, this understates the success of schooling in some states and territories and overstates its success in others.

Because the Survey of Education and Work is not conducted in Indigenous communities in very remote areas, and because of sample size for sub-groups, SEW data cannot be disaggregated by Indigenous status. Therefore, it cannot, on its own, be used to report on the COAG target to at least halve the gap in Year 12 or equivalent⁸⁵ attainment between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous 20–24-year-olds by 2020. The main data source used to assess progress against this target is the ABS Census of Population and Housing.

Using data from the 2016 Census of Population and Housing, the [*Closing the Gap – Prime Minister's Report 2018*](#) reports that this target was on track in 2016:

The target to halve the gap in Year 12 attainment by 2020 is on track, and the gap has narrowed by 12.6 percentage points over the past decade (from 36.4 percentage points in 2006 to 23.8 percentage points in 2016).

Nationally, the proportion of Indigenous 20–24-year-olds who had achieved Year 12 or equivalent has increased from 47.4 per cent in 2006 to 65.3 per cent in 2016.

(*Closing the Gap – Prime Minister's Report 2018*, p. 64)

⁸² The measure used for Year 12 or equivalent for this target is the attainment of Year 12 or AQF Certificate II or above. In non-census years SEW data are used to measure non-Indigenous attainment with Indigenous attainment derived from other data sources.

Part 4: Glossary



Note on data sources and terms

A main source of data reported in the *National Report on Schooling in Australia 2017* and through the National Report on Schooling data portal is the National Schools Statistics Collection (NSSC) (non-finance). The NSSC includes statistics on students, schools, and staff involved in the provision or administration of primary and secondary education, in government and non-government schools, for all Australian states and territories. The school census date for the collection, for all states and territories and all school sectors (affiliations), is the first Friday in August each year.

The NSSC is a joint undertaking of the Australian state and territory departments of education, the Australian Government Department of Education and Training, the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) and the COAG Education Council.

The methodologies used in compiling government school sector data vary between the different state and territory departments of education. Data may be accessed from central administrative records or collected directly from schools. Data are provided to the ABS, generally in aggregated form, for the compilation of statistics.

The Australian Government Department of Education and Training collects data for schools in the non-government sector for all states and territories for administrative purposes. The non-government sector statistics in the NSSC are a summary of results from that collection. Data from the collection are published by the ABS in [Schools, Australia](#) (cat. no. 4221.0). Definitions of terms in this glossary are, for the most part, quoted or adapted from the *Schools, Australia* glossary and explanatory notes.

Other major data sources for the 2017 report and the National Report on Schooling data portal include the National Student Attendance Data collection (ACARA), the Survey of Education and Work (ABS), Australian Demographic Statistics (ABS), Census of Population and Housing (ABS), the NSSC (finance) collection (states and territories), National Assessment Program (NAP) national reports (ACARA) and National VET Provider and National VET in Schools collections (National Centre for Vocational Education Research – NCVER).

Apparent retention rates

Apparent retention rates are indicative measures of student progression through secondary school. To calculate actual rates for all students in a given population, information on the status of every student between years would be needed to determine whether they progressed as expected, repeated a school year, transferred to another school in a different school sector or state, or left school entirely. At present, linking individual student enrolment information between different years and across states and territories is not possible. Apparent measures, based on aggregate student data, have been developed to provide indicative measurements of student progress through secondary education.

An apparent retention rate is an indicative measure of the number of full-time school students who have stayed at school, as at a designated year level and calendar year. It is calculated by dividing the number of students in a cohort in a specific calendar year by the number of students in the same cohort in a previous reference year and is expressed as a percentage. For example, an apparent retention rate for Year 10 to Year 12 in 2017 measures the proportion of Year 10 students in 2015 that continued to Year 12 in 2017. See [Schools, Australia](#) explanatory notes for further information.

Schools, Australia also publishes data on apparent progression rates, apparent continuation rates and school participation rates. From 2015 onwards, the ABS has released rates tables in two formats, one with rates exceeding 100 per cent capped to a maximum value of 100.0 (capped), and one where rates exceeding 100 per cent continue to be reported as the raw calculated value (uncapped). This report continues to report uncapped rates for apparent retention.

Census of Population and Housing

The Census of Population and Housing is Australia's largest statistical collection undertaken by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS). The census is conducted every five 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 2016, the census counted 9.9 million dwellings and approximately 23.5 million people. *The Measurement Framework for Schooling in Australia 2015* specifies the use of census data to report on a number of key performance measures for census years.

Estimated resident population

The Estimated Resident Population (ERP) series 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 quinquennial ABS Census of Population and Housing, and is updated quarterly using information on births, deaths, and overseas and interstate migration provided by state, territory and Australian government departments. For further details see ABS, Cat. No. 3101.0, [Australian Demographic Statistics, June 2017](#).

Full-time equivalent student

A full-time student is one who undertakes a workload equivalent to, or greater than, what is prescribed for a full-time student of that year level. This may vary between states and territories and from year to year. The prescribed minimum workload for a full-time student would ensure that a student could complete a given year level in a calendar year.

A part-time student is one who undertakes a workload less than that specified as full-time. The full-time equivalent (FTE) value of a part-time student is calculated by dividing a student's workload into what is prescribed by the state or territory to be the minimum full workload for a full-time student. 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 a student is capped at 1. The FTE of students is calculated by adding the number of full-time students and the FTE value of part-time students.

Full-time equivalent student teacher ratios

Full-time equivalent (FTE) student/teacher ratios are calculated by dividing the FTE student figure by the FTE teaching staff figure. Student/teacher ratios are an indicator of the level of staffing resources used and should not be used as a measure of class size. They do not take account of teacher aides and other non-teaching staff who may also assist in the delivery of school education or of non-teaching duties of teaching staff.

Full-time equivalent teaching staff

The full-time equivalent (FTE) value of 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.

Indigenous status

For the purposes of the NSSC, a student is classified as being of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander origin, based on information provided by the student, or their parent/guardian, on the school enrolment form. The Melbourne Declaration uses the term 'Indigenous' to refer to Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. This report uses both the terms 'Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander', and 'Indigenous' to describe students identifying as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander, with 'Indigenous' or 'Indigenous status' used in tables and graphs.

The Measurement Framework for Schooling in Australia

The [*Measurement Framework for Schooling in Australia 2015*](#), as agreed by education ministers, provides the basis for national reporting on the performance of schooling in 2017, 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 2014–2018.

The framework is maintained by the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) on behalf of the Education Council and is published on the ACARA website. It is periodically revised by ACARA in consultation with jurisdictions and sectors.

National Assessment Program (NAP)

The NAP, as specified in the *Measurement Framework for Schooling in Australia 2015*, encompasses all assessments endorsed by education ministers for participation by students nationally:

- National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (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 science literacy (Years 6 and 10), information and communication technology literacy (Years 6 and 10) and civics and citizenship (Years 6 and 10)
- Australia's participation in international sample student population assessments: the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA); the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS); and the 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 the Education Council. PISA is conducted by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (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 National Schools Statistics Collection (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 Technical and Further Education (TAFE) establishments, 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 two sections of the NSSC are:

- non-finance statistics (numbers of schools, students and staff) collected for both government and non-government schools and published by the Australian Bureau of Statistics in its annual *Schools, Australia* (Cat. No. 4221.0) publication
- finance statistics (expenditure on salaries and non-salary costs collected for government schools) and published by ACARA in this report and through the National Report on Schooling data portal.

Primary education

See *School level and school year*.

School

A school is an education establishment that satisfies all of 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 four continuous weeks, excluding breaks for school vacations.

The term 'school' in this publication includes schools in institutions and hospitals, mission schools and similar establishments.

The term 'school' in this publication excludes preschools, kindergarten centres, pre-primary schools or pre-primary classes in, or attached to, non-special schools, 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 five, is compulsory from age six until at least the completion of Year 10, and is completed at age 17 or 18. Primary education, including a pre-Year1 / foundation year⁸⁶, lasts for either seven or eight years and is followed by secondary education of six or five years respectively.

For national reporting purposes, primary education comprises a pre-Year1 / foundation year followed by Years 1–6 in New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland, Western Australia, Tasmania, the Northern Territory and the Australian Capital Territory. Primary education comprises a pre-Year 1 year followed by Years 1–7 in South Australia.⁸⁷

⁸⁶ The pre-Year1 / foundation year (first year of full-time schooling) is known as Preparatory in Victoria, Queensland and Tasmania, Kindergarten in New South Wales and the Australian Capital Territory, 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.

⁸⁷ Year 7 became part of secondary education in Queensland and Western Australia from 2015. This change affects some comparisons with previous years of student and staff data by school level.

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 the 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.

See also *Special School*.

Schools, Australia uses the term 'grade' to denote school year. Ungraded students (ungraded primary and ungraded secondary) are those who have not been placed in a specific year level.

See also *School type*.

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, Australia uses the term 'affiliation' rather than the term '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, Australia* and in this report, Catholic non-systemic schools are counted as Catholic rather than as independent.

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

School type

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

- 'primary' – school delivers primary education
- 'secondary' – school delivers secondary education
- 'combined' – school delivers both 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*.

Special school

A special school satisfies the definition of a school and requires one or more of the following characteristics to be exhibited by the 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, and
- 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 staff 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 staff who perform functions to support students or teaching staff. While these staff may spend the majority of their time in contact with students, they are not employed or engaged to impart the school curriculum.
- (c) Administrative and clerical staff are staff whose main duties are generally of a clerical/administrative nature. 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 staff 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 [Schools, Australia 2017, Glossary](#).

States and territories

Australia has a federal system of government comprising the national government, and the governments of the six states and two 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, Australia*.

Student

A student is a person who, on the school 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.

Persons 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 Vocational Education and Training (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/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 full-time equivalent for part-time students.

Student attendance

The National Student Attendance Data Collection is undertaken by ACARA in collaboration with state and territory education departments (which collect and collate attendance data from government schools in each jurisdiction), the non-government school sectors and the Australian Department of Education (which collects and collates attendance data from non-government schools). The collection is conducted for students in Years 1–10 over the Semester 1 period in each school year.

There are two agreed national key performance measures (KPMs) in 2017 for student attendance:

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

ACARA has developed the [National Standards for Student Attendance Data Reporting](#) to establish a nationally consistent set of parameters for the collection and reporting of student attendance data across jurisdictions and school sectors. The national standards have been endorsed by all states and territories and are published on the ACARA website. The standards came into effect formally from the 2014 reporting year.

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 are used to report participation and attainment data, including key performance measures for schooling, in this report.

See [ABS, Category 6227.0, Education and Work, May 2017](#), explanatory notes for further information.

Teaching staff

Teaching staff are staff 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. 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 were derived from the National VET in Schools Collection and the National VET Provider Collection, compiled by the National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER) under the Australian Vocational Education and Training Management Information Statistical Standard (AVETMISS), release 7.0.