



2019

NATIONAL REPORT ON
SCHOOLING IN AUSTRALIA | 2019

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Contact details

Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority

Level 13, Tower B, 280 Elizabeth Street Sydney NSW 2000

telephone: 1300 895 563

email: info@acara.edu.au

website: www.acara.edu.au

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Executive summary



Introduction

The *National Report on Schooling in Australia 2019* is the thirty-first national annual report on Australia's school education sector.¹ It has been produced by the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) on behalf of Australian education ministers, meeting as the COAG Education Council.

The report highlights progress in 2019 towards the [Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians](#) agreed by Australian education ministers in 2008, and is the eleventh report to address these nationally agreed goals and commitments. Future reports will address the Alice Springs (Mparntwe) Education Declaration, which commences from January, 2020.

The *National Report on Schooling in Australia 2019* consists of two parts: this written report and the online [National Report on Schooling data portal](#).

The written report addresses the eight areas of commitment to action specified in the Melbourne Declaration, describes the national policy and reporting context for school education in Australia and reports against the nationally agreed key performance measures (KPMs) for schooling, including providing data, analysis and commentary. It also includes other high-level statistical information on Australian schooling in 2019 and for the eleven-year period 2009–2019 inclusive.

The online National Report on Schooling data portal provides readers and researchers with interactive access to a wider range of nationally consistent data on schooling in Australia. These include data on enrolments, staffing, and school funding, and on the KPMs for student participation, achievement in the National Assessment Program, and attainment of Year 12 and post-school qualifications. The data portal allows readers to view data by state and territory as well as at the national level, by calendar year and by other breakdowns, such as school sector, gender and Indigenous status where possible and appropriate. Data sets are regularly updated as new data becomes available and may be downloaded from the portal.

Previous editions of the National Report on Schooling in Australia for the years 2009–2018 are available on the [ACARA website](#). Editions from 1989 to 2008 are archived on the Education Council's website.

¹ The first edition of the joint annual report on schooling across Australia was compiled at the direction of the then Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA) for 1989.

Overview of the report

Part 1, 'Schools and schooling', provides information on the status of Australian schooling in 2019, 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.²

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.³ 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 – 70.1 per cent – of schools are government schools, established and administered by state and territory governments through their education departments or authorities. The remaining 29.9 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 (65.7 per cent) of school students⁴ are enrolled in government schools and approximately one-third (34.3 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 63.5 per cent of school teachers⁵ employed by the government school sector and 36.5 per cent by non-government schools. Part 1.3 reports on teaching staff numbers and student/teacher ratios by school sector and state and territory.

School, student and teacher numbers in 2019 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.

In 2018–19, total recurrent government funding for schooling was \$65.6 billion. This was made up of \$45.7 billion (69.7 per cent) from state and territory budgets and \$19.9 (30.3 per cent) from the Australian Government (Commonwealth) budget.

Overall, 75.8 per cent of recurrent government funding was allocated to government schools and 24.2 per cent to non-government schools. The bulk (91.7 per cent) of state and territory funds was allocated to government schools; the majority (60.9 per cent) of Australian Government funds was allocated to non-government schools. School funding data and arrangements are reported in part 1.5.

² New South Wales (NSW), Victoria (Vic), Queensland (Qld), South Australia (SA), Western Australia (WA), Tasmania (Tas), Northern Territory (NT) and Australian Capital Territory (ACT).

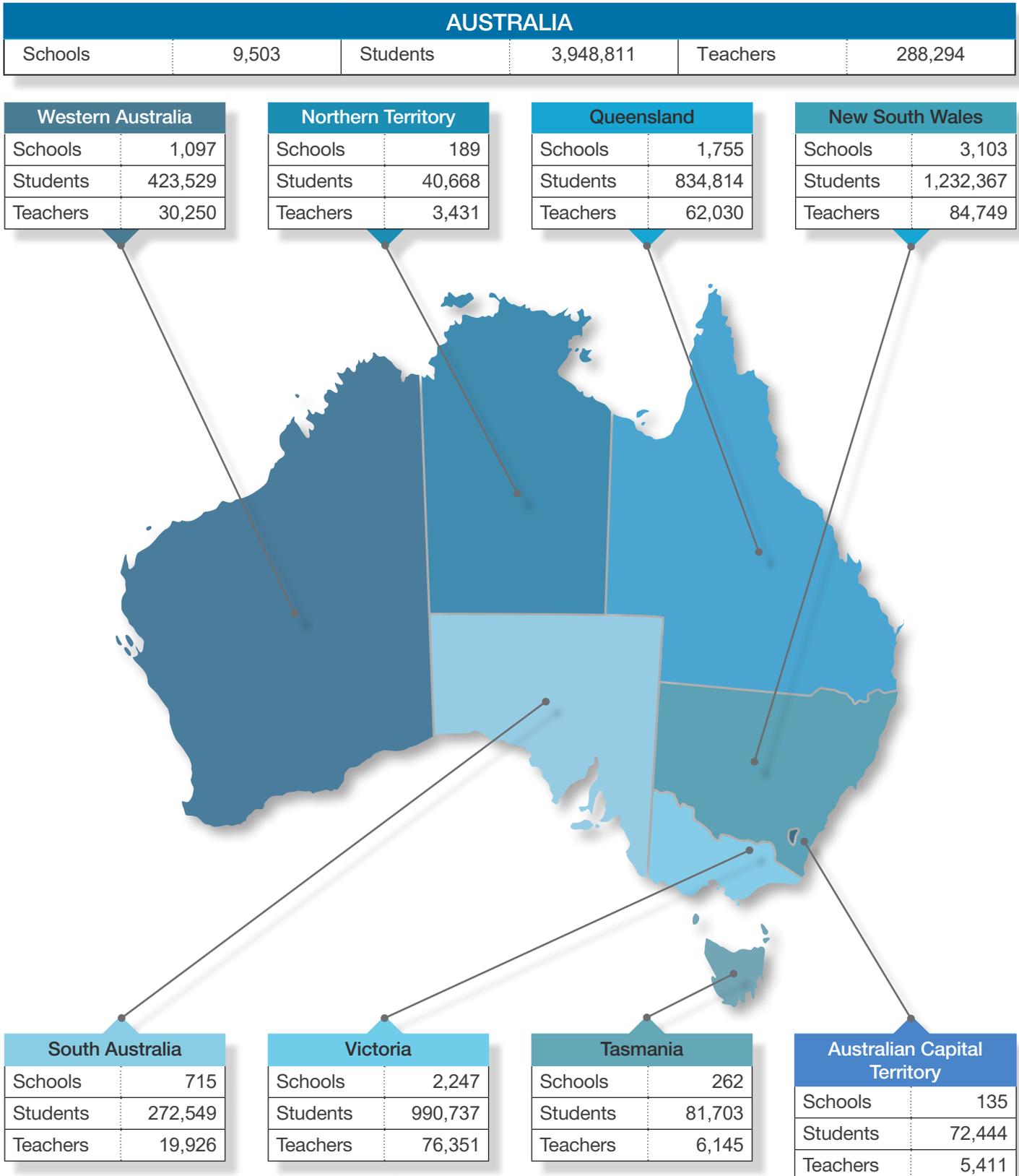
³ SA is now the only jurisdiction to follow the eight-year/five-year pattern (with a transition to a seven-year/six-year pattern in progress).

⁴ Count of full-time plus part-time students.

⁵ Full-time equivalent teaching staff.

Figure 1

Numbers of schools, students and teachers by state and territory, Australia, 2019



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*, 2019; See also National Report on Schooling data portal.

Part 2, 'Policies and priorities', outlines the national policy context for Australian schooling in 2019 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)⁶ and the COAG Education Council in deciding agreed national policy and initiatives for education.

Two major national policy developments in school education occurred in 2019:

- Education Council conducted a review of the Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians, including widespread consultation. In December 2019, education ministers released a new national goal declaration, the Alice Springs (Mparntwe) Education Declaration, to replace the Melbourne Declaration from January 2020.
- A new [National School Reform Agreement](#), agreed by the Australian and all state and territory governments, came into operation in January 2019.

Part 2.1 outlines the main features of these major policy developments.

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 2019. They also list examples of state and territory initiatives relating to the commitments.

Progress towards the commitments to action reported for 2019 includes:

- A formal partnership agreement between a coalition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peak organisations and all Australian governments was established to finalise a revised framework for Closing the Gap.
- States and territories implemented new and continuing partnerships with industry and the community to improve Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) education.
- States and territories implemented initiatives to improve and support school leadership, for early childhood education, and to support senior secondary schooling and youth transitions.
- In line with the National School Reform Agreement, work began to explore how learning progressions and formative assessment can enhance the capacity of teachers to make evidence-based decisions about their students' learning.
- Education Council agreed to bring forward a review of the Australian Curriculum for Foundation – Year 10 to ensure it is meeting the needs of students.

⁶ In 2020, the role of COAG was subsumed by the newly created National Cabinet.

- The twelfth annual tests in literacy and numeracy for Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 were conducted through the National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN). Nationally, around 50 per cent of students participating in NAPLAN undertook the tests online in 2019.
- The sixth NAP sample assessment in Civics and Citizenship for Year 6 and Year 10 students was conducted online, incorporating aspects of the Australian Curriculum: History for the first time.
- The *My School* website was updated in March and November/December 2019. Following the NAPLAN Reporting Review, ministers agreed that the focus of NAPLAN reporting on *My School* will move from school averages to progress made by students.
- The Measurement Framework for Schooling in Australia was reviewed and endorsed for the period 2019–2023, with the addition of proficiency standards for NAPLAN, subject to further approval by ministers. The *Measurement Framework for Schooling in Australia 2019* is used as the basis of KPMs in this report.
- As agreed in the National School Reform Agreement, Education Council committed to establish a new National Evidence Institute that will translate educational research to support classroom practice.

Part 3, ‘Measuring and reporting performance’, reports on the performance of Australian schooling in 2019, using the nationally agreed key performance measures (KPMs) for schooling specified in the *Measurement Framework for Schooling in Australia 2019*.

Part 3 reports on 19 of the 32 agreed KPMs⁷ along with, in some cases, associated COAG targets. The measures are reported at the national level, and by various breakdowns, such as state and territory, school sector, school year and Indigenous status. For relevant KPMs, time series for the previous ten years 2009–2018 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 2019 includes that:

- The average national attendance rate for students in Years 1–10 was 91.4 per cent. Average attendance rates were higher for Years 1–6 than for Years 7–10.
- At 81.5 per cent, the average attendance rate for Indigenous students was 10.5 percentage points lower than for non-Indigenous students (92.0 per cent). There was an increase in this gap of 0.3 percentage points in 2019.
- Nearly three quarters (73.1 per cent) of all Australian students in Years 1–10 attended school for at least 90 per cent of school days. However, less than half (46.9 per cent) of Indigenous students within this group met the 90 per cent benchmark.

⁷ The remaining 13 KPMs, covering student enrolment rates, student achievement in the NAP international assessments PISA and PIRLS, NAP sample assessments Science Literacy and Information and Communication Technology Literacy and proficient standards in NAPLAN do not apply to the 2019 reporting year.

- NAPLAN participation rates were over 95 per cent for each of Years 3, 5 and 7. At 92.6 per cent, the Year 9 participation rate was lower than for other years.
- 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. The proportion of students achieving at or above the national minimum standard in NAPLAN numeracy tests was over 94 per cent for all year groups tested.
- At 52.8 per cent, the proportion of Year 6 students achieving at or above the national proficient standard in NAP – Civics and Citizenship was statistically similar to when this sample assessment was last conducted in 2016. Only 38.4 per cent of Year 10 students achieved the proficient standard. This was also statistically similar to the result for the 2016 cohort.
- Samples of Year 4 and Year 8 students took part in the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) 2019. There was a significant increase in the proportion of Year 8 students achieving the national proficient standard in science since this assessment was last conducted in 2015.
- The national apparent retention rate from Year 10 to Year 12 decreased by 0.8 percentage points to 82.0 per cent. The apparent retention rate from Year 10 to Year 12 for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students decreased by 2.6 percentage points to 60.0 per cent, with the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous rates rising to 23.2 percentage points. These changes were not statistically significant. However, the long-term trends since 2010 in apparent retention rates from Year 10 to Year 12 are upward for all students and for Indigenous students.
- 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, decreased significantly from 88.6 per cent in 2018 to 87.0 per cent in 2019. However, with an average annual increase of 0.3 percentage points since 2008, the long-term trend in this measure is upward.
- 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 (but not significantly) from 88.8 per cent in 2018 to 88.2 per cent in 2019. The long-term trend in this measure (of 0.5 percentage points per annum since 2008) is upward.

Table 1 summarises the KPMs for 2019 in comparison with 2018 (or the most recent previous year for which comparable data exists). This is expressed as the short-term change to each KPM.

For the first time in the national report, table 1 also summarises longer-term trends in the movement of KPMs. This data demonstrates that while small changes in KPMs from year to year are rarely statistically significant, successive increments over time may result in measurable long-term trends.

Table 1

Key performance measures for schooling, Australia, 2018–19 and long-term trends

Key performance measures	Short-term change			Long-term trend		
	2018*	2019	Change	Trend period	Average annual change (points)	Trend
1. Student participation						
1(a) Enrolment: Proportion of children aged 6–15 years who are enrolled in school (National Schools Statistics Collection) (%)	99.7	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
1(b) Attendance rate: The number of actual full-time equivalent student-days attended by full-time students in Years 1–10 in Semester 1 as a percentage of the total number of possible student-days attended in Semester 1 (%)	91.9	91.4	↔	2014–19	-0.2	↓
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 (%)	75.2	73.1	↔	N/A	N/A	N/A
1(d) NAPLAN participation: Proportion of students participating in NAPLAN in Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 (%)						
Year 3	95.8	96.1	↔	2008–19	-0.1	↓
Year 5	96.3	96.5	↔	2008–19	-0.1	↓
Year 7	95.7	96.0	↔	2008–19	-0.2	↓
Year 9	92.8	92.9	↔	2008–19	-0.3	↓
1(e) Apparent retention rate from Year 10 to Year 12 (%)	82.8	82.0	↔	2010–19	0.5	↑
1(f) Participation of young people, including secondary students, in VET: Proportion of the population aged 15 to 19 years who in the calendar year successfully completed at least one unit of competency as part of a VET qualification at AQF Certificate II or above (%)	27.0	27.3	↔	2015–19	-0.6	↓
1(g) Proportion of 15–19-year-olds in full-time education or training, in full-time work, or both in part-time work and part-time education or training (ABS Survey of Education and Work) (%)	88.6	87.0	↓	2008–19	0.3	↑
1(h) Proportion of 20–24-year-olds in full-time education or training, in full-time work, or both in part-time work and part-time education or training (ABS Survey of Education and Work) (%)	74.6	75.5	↔	2008–19	-0.4	↓
1(i) Proportion of 17–24-year-olds who have left school that are in full-time education or training, in full-time work, or both in part-time work and part-time education or training (ABS Survey of Education and Work) (%)	74.3	74.0	↔	2008–19	-0.2	↔

Key performance measures	Short-term change			Long-term trend		
	2018*	2019	Change	Trend period	Average annual change (points)	Trend
2. Student achievement: National Assessment Program – Literacy						
2(a) Proportion of students achieving at or above the national minimum standard for reading (%)						
Year 3 – Band 2	95.6	95.9	↔	2008–19	0.3	↑
Year 5 – Band 4	94.9	94.7	↔	2008–19	0.3	↑
Year 7 – Band 5	94.1	94.5	↔	2008–19	0.0	↔
Year 9 – Band 6	93.4	91.8	↔	2008–19	0.0	↔
2(b) NAPLAN mean scale scores for reading (NAPLAN scale points)						
Year 3	433.8	432.2	↔	2008–19	2.6	↑
Year 5	509.3	506.1	↔	2008–19	2.0	↑
Year 7	542.2	546.3	↔	2008–19	0.5	↔
Year 9	584.1	581.3	↔	2008–19	0.5	↔
2(c) Proportion of students achieving at or above the national minimum standard for writing (%)						
Year 3 – Band 2	94.4	96.3	↑	2011–19	0.1	↔
Year 5 – Band 4	89.8	92.8	↑	2011–19	0.0	↔
Year 7 – Band 5	86.9	89.4	↔	2011–19	-0.3	↔
Year 9 – Band 6	79.5	82.4	↔	2011–19	-0.3	↔
2(d) NAPLAN mean scale scores for writing (NAPLAN scale points)						
Year 3	407.1	422.5	↑	2011–19	0.2	↔
Year 5	464.7	474.1	↔	2011–19	-1.2	↔
Year 7	505.3	513.2	↔	2011–19	-1.8	↓
Year 9	542.4	548.8	↔	2011–19	-1.8	↓

Key performance measures	Short-term change			Long-term trend		
	2018*	2019	Change	Trend period	Average annual change (points)	Trend
3. Student achievement: National Assessment Program – Numeracy						
3(a) Proportion of students achieving at or above the national minimum standard for numeracy (%)						
Year 3 – Band 2	95.8	95.5	↔	2008–19	0.1	↔
Year 5 – Band 4	95.7	95.4	↔	2008–19	0.2	↑
Year 7 – Band 5	95.6	94.3	↔	2008–19	0.0	↔
Year 9 – Band 6	95.5	96.0	↔	2008–19	0.2	↔
3(b) NAPLAN mean scale scores for numeracy (NAPLAN scale points)						
Year 3	407.7	408.1	↔	2008–19	1.3	↑
Year 5	494.0	495.9	↔	2008–19	1.3	↑
Year 7	548.4	554.4	↔	2008–19	0.8	↔
Year 9	595.7	592.1	↔	2008–19	0.9	↔
3(d) Proportion of participating students achieving at or above the national proficient standard (Intermediate) on the TIMSS mathematics scales (%)*						
	2015*					
Year 4	70.2	69.6	↔	N/A	N/A	N/A
Year 8	64.4	68.0	↔	N/A	N/A	N/A
4. Student achievement: National Assessment Program – Science Literacy						
4(c) Proportion of participating students achieving at or above the national proficient standard (Intermediate) on the TIMSS science scales (%)*						
	2015*					
Year 4	75.4	78.3	↔	N/A	N/A	N/A
Year 8	68.8	74.2	↑	N/A	N/A	N/A
5. Student achievement: National Assessment Program – Civics and Citizenship						
5 Proportion of participating students achieving at or above the national proficient standard in Civics and Citizenship (%)*						
	2016*					
Year 6 – Level 2	55.0	52.8	↔	2004–19	0.2	↔
Year 10 – Level 3	38.0	38.4	↔	2004–19	-0.2	↔

Key performance measures	Short-term change			Long-term trend		
	2018*	2019	Change	Trend period	Average annual change (points)	Trend
7. Student attainment						
7(a) Proportion of the 20–24-year-old population having attained at least Year 12 or equivalent or AQF Certificate II or above (ABS Survey of Education and Work) (%)	90.0	89.3	↔	2008–19	0.5	↑
7(b) Proportion of the 20–24-year-old population having attained at least Year 12 or equivalent or AQF Certificate III or above (ABS Survey of Education and Work) (%)	88.8	88.2	↔	2008–19	0.5	↑

Notes:

Measures of short-term change in table 1 have been tested for statistical significance:

- ↑ means the increase in the measure in 2019 was statistically significant / the long-term trend was positive / upward
- ↓ means the decrease in the measure in 2019 was statistically significant / the long-term trend was negative / downward
- ↔ means the change in the measure in 2019 was not statistically significant / a long-term trend was not evident.

N/A means not applicable:

KPM 1(a). From 2019, the annual measure of the enrolment rate drawn from the NSSC is not reported as a measure of KPM 1(a) Enrolment. KPM 1(a) will continue to be reported for census years using data drawn from the Census of Population and Housing.

KPM 1(c). 2018 was the first year for which data on student attendance levels could be collected for NSW government schools. This causes a break in series for the national measure of KPM 1(c) between 2017 and 2018. The two years of data available since this break is insufficient to provide trend data for this KPM at the national level.

KPMs 3(d) and 4(c). Trend data is not available for TIMSS

* 2018 or the most recent previous year for which comparable data is available. For TIMSS this is 2015. For NAP– Civics and Citizenship this is 2016.

With the exception of mean scale scores for NAPLAN, all KPMs are expressed as percentages. NAPLAN mean scale scores are expressed as points on the NAPLAN scale.

Where possible, measures are expressed to one decimal place.

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

For NAPLAN measures, this differs from the comparisons between calendar years published in the *2019 NAPLAN National Report* and on the NAPLAN results page of the ACARA NAP website, which are comparisons between two points in time rather than trends over time.

With the exception of mean scale scores for NAPLAN, the average annual change over the trend period is expressed as percentage points. For NAPLAN mean scale scores, the average annual change over the trend period is expressed as points on the NAPLAN scale.

Trend data by state and territory, and by other disaggregations where possible and appropriate, is provided in the Key Performance Measures data set in the National Report on Schooling data portal.

Part 1: Schools and schooling



Part 1 provides information on the status of Australian schooling in 2019, including school, student and teacher numbers, school structures, and funds used for school education.

1.1 School numbers

In 2019 there were 9,503 schools in Australia.⁸ 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, 70.1 per cent were administered by state and territory governments⁹, 18.5 per cent identified as having Catholic affiliation¹⁰, and 11.4 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 2019 are shown in table 1.1. The proportion of schools by school sector in 2019 is illustrated in figure 1.1.

⁸ As at the National Schools Statistics Collection (NSSC) Schools Census, August 2019.

⁹ Independent public schools established in Western Australia and Queensland are counted as government schools in the NSSC and in this report.

¹⁰ Systemic and non-systemic Catholic schools are counted as Catholic schools in the NSSC and in this report.

Table 1.1

Number and proportion of schools by school type and school sector, Australia, 2019

School type	Government		Non-government				All schools			
			Catholic	Independent		Total		Total		
Australia	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	% by school type
Primary	4,786	76.6	1,248	20.0	211	3.4	1,459	23.4	6,245	65.7
Secondary	1,043	73.7	319	22.5	54	3.8	373	26.3	1,416	14.9
Combined	497	36.6	149	11.0	713	52.5	862	63.4	1,359	14.3
Special	333	68.9	40	8.3	110	22.8	150	31.1	483	5.1
Total	6,659	70.1	1,756	18.5	1,088	11.4	2,844	29.9	9,503	100.0

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 SA in 2019, Year 7 was counted as a secondary school year for some non-government schools, with government schools to adopt this structure from 2022.

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.

See Part 4: Glossary for definition of special school.

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. Systemic and non-systemic Catholic schools are counted as Catholic schools in the NSSC and in this report.

See Part 4: Glossary for definition of school sector.

Percentage columns for each school sector show the proportion of all 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.

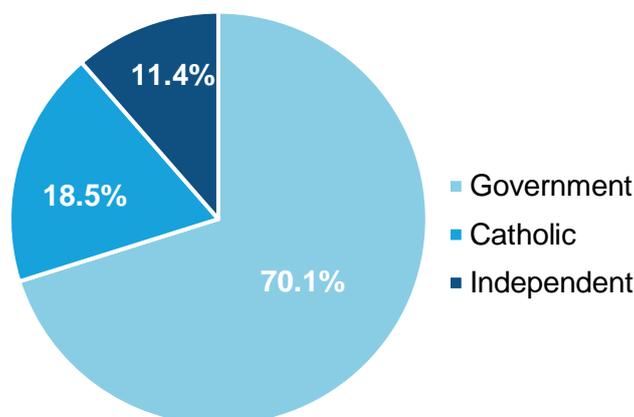
See Part 1.4: School structures for an overview of school years and age requirements across jurisdictions.

Source: ABS, Cat. No. 4221.0, *Schools, Australia*, 2019.

See also [National Report on Schooling data portal](#).

Figure 1.1

Proportion of schools by school sector, Australia, 2019 (per cent)



Source: ABS, Cat. No. 4221.0, *Schools, Australia*, 2019.

See also National Report on Schooling data portal.

The number and proportion of schools by state and territory in 2019 are shown in table 1.2. Proportions shown are substantially unchanged from 2018.

Table 1.2

Number and proportion of schools by school type and state/territory, Australia, 2019

School type	State/territory								Australia
	NSW	Vic	Qld	SA	WA	Tas	NT	ACT	
Primary	2,105	1,556	1,138	451	680	156	75	84	6,245
Secondary	511	340	260	78	137	43	22	25	1,416
Combined	316	243	275	161	201	56	86	21	1,359
Special	171	108	82	25	79	7	6	5	483
Total	3,103	2,247	1,755	715	1,097	262	189	135	9,503
Proportion (%)	32.7	23.6	18.5	7.5	11.5	2.8	2.0	1.4	100.0

Source: ABS Cat. No. 4221.0, *Schools, Australia*, 2019.

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-age population, but changes in school numbers from year to year may be due to administrative or structural changes in schooling as well as to changes in student populations.

There was a net fall of 26 (0.3 per cent) in the total number of schools over the period 2009–2019, but this did not reflect a decrease in total student numbers. The numbers and proportions of schools in the three school sectors over this period are shown in table 1.3, with 117 more non-government schools in 2019 than in 2009, and a net fall in the number of government schools of 143. The total number of schools in Australia rose by 26 from 9,477 in 2018 to 9,503 in 2019.

Table 1.3

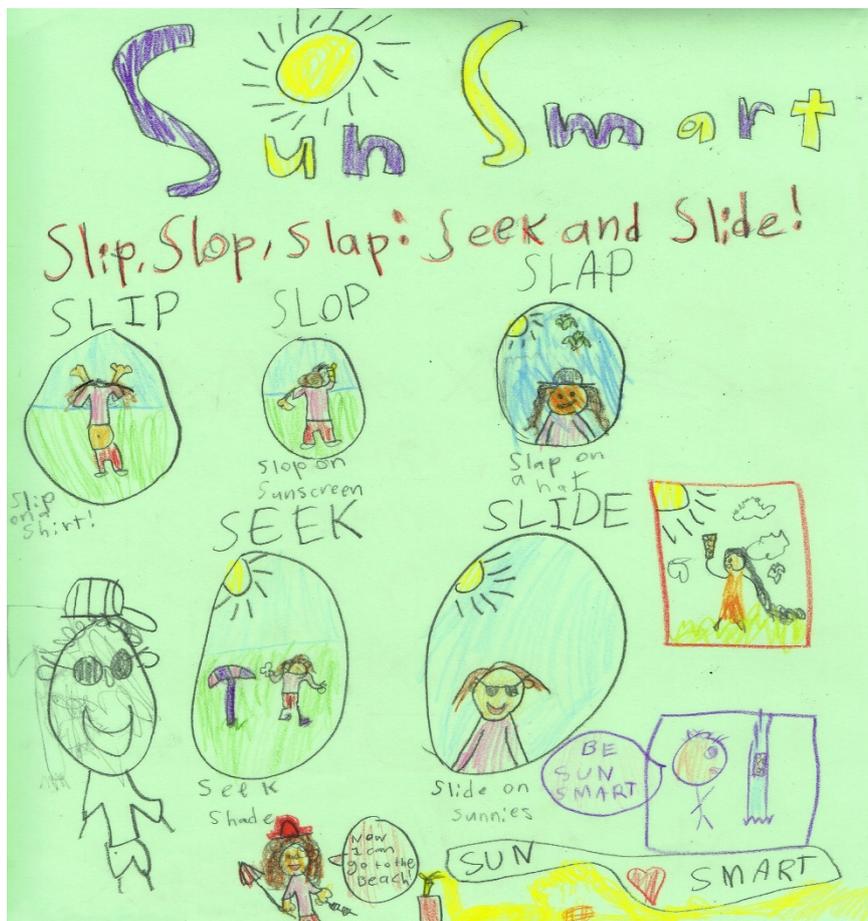
Number and proportion of schools by school sector, Australia, 2009–2019

Year	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
2018	6,646	70.1	1,753	18.5	1,078	11.4	9,477
2019	6,659	70.1	1,756	18.5	1,088	11.4	9,503

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

Source: ABS Cat. No. 4221.0, *Schools, Australia*, 2019 and previous releases.

See also National Report on Schooling data portal.



1.2 Student numbers

Enrolments by school level and sector

In total, 3.95 million individual students were enrolled in Australian schools in 2019, a rise of 1.4 per cent from 2018. Of these, 2.26 million (57.3 per cent) were primary school students, and 1.68 million (42.7 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.¹¹ 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 2019 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, 2019

School level	School sector							
	Government		Catholic		Independent		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	% by level
Primary	1,595,161	70.5	404,318	17.9	264,405	11.7	2,263,884	57.3
Junior secondary	718,060	59.9	259,016	21.6	222,405	18.5	1,199,481	30.4
Senior secondary	281,609	58.0	106,385	21.9	97,452	20.1	485,446	12.3
Total secondary	999,669	59.3	365,401	21.7	319,857	19.0	1,684,927	42.7
Total	2,594,830	65.7	769,719	19.5	584,262	14.8	3,948,811	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. In SA in 2019, Year 7 students in some non-government schools were counted as secondary students, with government schools to adopt this structure from 2022. This affects the number and proportion of primary and secondary students in SA in 2019.

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*, 2019.

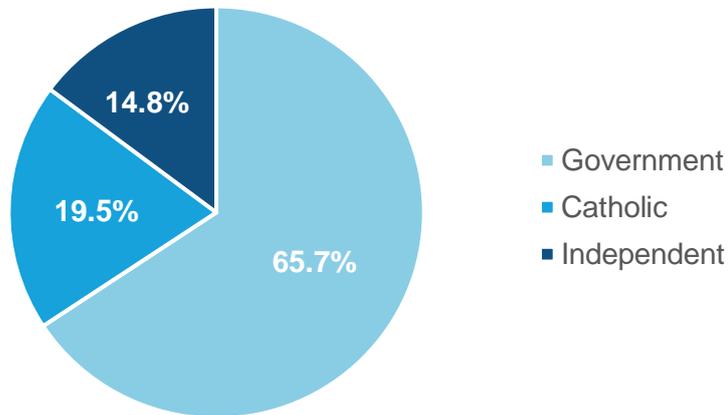
See also National Report on Schooling data portal.

¹¹ 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. From 2019, Year 7 in SA will be moved progressively from a primary school year to a secondary school year (from 2022 for government schools).

As shown in table 1.4 and figure 1.2, 65.7 per cent of Australian school students in 2019 were enrolled in government schools, 19.5 per cent of students were enrolled in Catholic schools and 14.8 per cent of students were enrolled in independent schools.

Figure 1.2

Proportion of students (full-time plus part-time) enrolled in schools by sector, Australia, 2019 (per cent)



Source: ABS, Cat. No. 4221.0, *Schools, Australia, 2019*

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 70.5 per cent of primary students but less than 60 per cent (59.3 per cent) of secondary students.

This suggests a movement of students from government to non-government schools, particularly between primary and secondary schooling. However, this cannot be confirmed by available data.

Part-time students accounted for only 0.3 per cent of total enrolments. They were concentrated in Years 11 and 12 (75.8 per cent), and in government schools (87.5 per cent).

Enrolments by school level, and state and territory

Total enrolments (full-time plus part-time) by state and territory in 2019 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, 2019

School level	State/territory								Australia
	NSW	Vic	Qld	SA	WA	Tas	NT	ACT	
Primary	706,159	562,559	477,149	164,477	242,182	45,886	24,556	40,916	2,263,884
Junior secondary	380,982	301,815	262,568	67,868	127,449	25,264	11,753	21,782	1,199,481
Senior secondary	145,226	126,363	95,097	40,204	53,898	10,553	4,359	9,746	485,446
Total secondary	526,208	428,178	357,665	108,072	181,347	35,817	16,112	31,528	1,684,927
Total (No.)	1,232,367	990,737	834,814	272,549	423,529	81,703	40,668	72,444	3,948,811
Proportion of Australian total (%)	31.2	25.1	21.1	6.9	10.7	2.1	1.0	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. In SA in 2019, Year 7 students in some non-government schools were counted as secondary students, with government schools to adopt this structure from 2022. This affects the number and proportion of primary and secondary students in SA in 2019.

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 per cent due to rounding.

Source: ABS, Cat. No. 4221.0, *Schools, Australia*, 2019.

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. More than three-quarters of students (77.4 per cent) are enrolled in the three most populous states of New South Wales, Victoria and Queensland.

Growth in enrolments

The numbers of students enrolled in Australian schools grew by 54,977 (1.4 per cent) between 2018 and 2019 with growth in absolute numbers in all three school sectors.

Total enrolments grew by 464,007 (13.3 per cent) between 2009 and 2019, largely reflecting the growth in the school-age population.¹² Enrolments in both government and non-government schools have risen over the past ten years, with the bulk of total growth over the period (64.7 per cent) occurring in government schools. Table 1.6 summarises this data.

Table 1.6

Number and proportion of students (full-time plus part-time) by school sector, Australia, 2009–2019

Year	School sector						Total No.
	Government		Catholic		Independent		
	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
2018	2,558,169	65.7	765,735	19.7	569,930	14.6	3,893,834
2019	2,594,830	65.7	769,719	19.5	584,262	14.8	3,948,811

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

Source: ABS, Cat. No. 4221.0, *Schools, Australia*, 2019.

See also National Report on Schooling data portal.

In proportional terms, growth from 2009 to 2014 was higher in non-government schools, producing small shifts in the 'share' of total enrolments from the government to the non-government school sectors. This continued a long-term trend that began in 1977.¹³

However, since 2014, this trend has reversed, with the government sector proportion of enrolments rising from 65.1 per cent in 2014 to 65.7 per cent in 2019.

The proportional decrease in non-government school enrolments since 2014 has occurred in the Catholic school sector, with a fall from 20.5 per cent of students in 2014 to 19.5 per cent in 2019. In 2017 and 2018 there were small reductions in the absolute number of students enrolled in Catholic schools, but there was an absolute increase in this number in 2019.

Incremental proportional growth of independent school sector enrolments continued over 2014–2019.

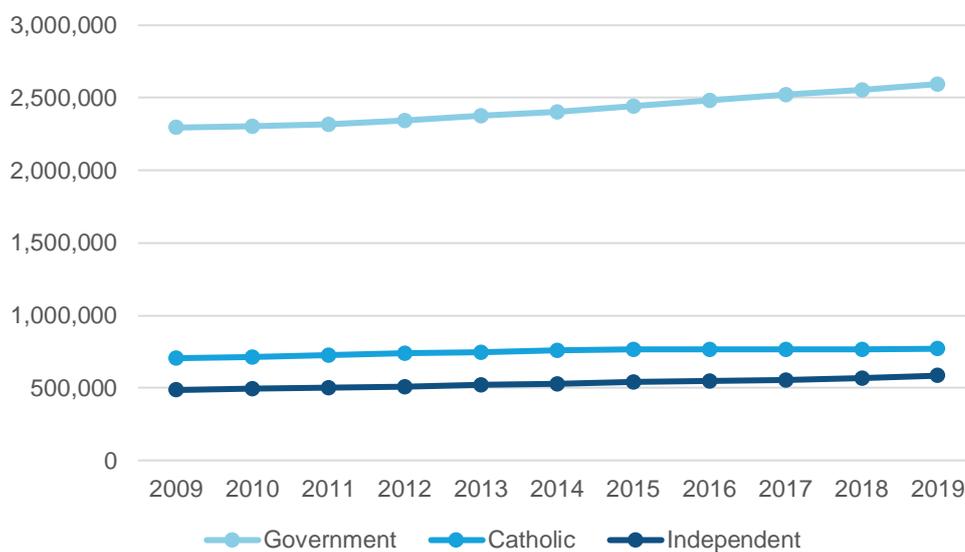
¹² The proportion of children aged 6–15 years who are enrolled in school is consistently close to 100 per cent. This is a key performance measure for schooling (KPM 1a) and is reported for Census years in the National Report in Schooling data portal. Growth in senior secondary enrolments may be influenced by factors in addition to population growth.

¹³ [ABS, *Schools Australia, 2016, media release.*](#)

Figure 1.3 shows the time series for student enrolments 2009–2019 by school sector.

Figure 1.3

Number of students enrolled (full-time plus part-time) by school sector, Australia, 2009–2019



Source: ABS, Cat. No. 4221.0, *Schools, Australia*, 2019.

See also National Report on Schooling data portal.

For time series of enrolments by state and territory, and for full-time equivalent enrolments, see the [National Report on Schooling data portal](#).

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students

In 2019 there were 230,677 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (Indigenous)¹⁴ students enrolled in Australian schools, making up 5.8 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, 2019

School level	School sector						Total	% by level
	Government		Catholic		Independent			
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	
Primary	120,771	86.7	12,803	9.2	5,646	4.1	139,220	60.4
Junior secondary	56,583	80.1	8,507	12.0	5,579	7.9	70,669	30.6
Senior secondary	15,726	75.6	2,791	13.4	2,271	10.9	20,788	9.0
Total secondary	72,309	79.1	11,298	12.4	7,850	8.6	91,457	39.6
Total	193,080	83.7	24,101	10.4	13,496	5.9	230,677	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. In SA in 2019, Year 7 students in some non-government schools were counted as secondary students, with government schools to adopt this structure from 2022.

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 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*, 2019. See also National Report on Schooling data portal.

Indigenous enrolments were more highly concentrated in government schools, with 83.7 per cent of Indigenous enrolments in government schools compared with 65.7 per cent of enrolments for all students (as shown in table 1.4).

Indigenous students were under-represented in senior secondary years: 4.3 per cent of senior secondary students were Indigenous, compared with 5.9 per cent of junior secondary students. These proportions reflect Year 10 to Year 12 apparent retention rates amongst Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, which are lower than for the overall school population. Apparent retention rates for Indigenous students rose in absolute terms, and relative to rates for non-Indigenous students, between 2012 and 2017, but fell in 2018 and 2019.¹⁵

¹⁴ 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.

¹⁵ Apparent retention rates are reported in Part 3: Measuring and reporting performance.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students are not evenly or proportionately distributed among states and territories. Table 1.8 shows this distribution for 2019.

Table 1.8

Number and proportion of Indigenous students (full-time plus part-time) enrolled in schools by school level and state/territory, Australia, 2019

School level	State/territory								Australia
	NSW	Vic	Qld	SA	WA	Tas	NT	ACT	
Primary	45,725	10,204	42,229	8,525	17,038	4,433	9,777	1,289	139,220
Junior secondary	24,965	5,338	21,300	2,994	8,331	2,305	4,728	708	70,669
Senior secondary	6,142	1,685	6,146	1,703	2,645	815	1,384	268	20,788
Total secondary	31,107	7,023	27,446	4,697	10,976	3,120	6,112	976	91,457
Total (No.)	76,832	17,227	69,675	13,222	28,014	7,553	15,889	2,265	230,677
Proportion of Indigenous students per state (%)	33.3	7.5	30.2	5.7	12.1	3.3	6.9	1.0	100.0
Indigenous students as a proportion of total enrolments (%)	6.2	1.7	8.3	4.9	6.6	9.2	39.1	3.1	5.8

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. In SA in 2019, Year 7 students in some non-government schools were counted as secondary students, with government schools to adopt this structure from 2022. This affects the number and proportion of primary and secondary students in SA in 2019.

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.

Source: ABS, Cat. No. 4221.0, *Schools, Australia*, 2019. See also National Report on Schooling data portal.

With 76,832 Indigenous students (33.3 per cent of the national total), New South Wales had the highest number of Indigenous enrolments in 2019. This represented 6.2 per cent of the state's students, more than the national average of 5.8 per cent. It was also higher than the NSW share of total enrolments nationally (31.2 per cent) reported in table 1.5.

Victoria, with 25.1 per cent of all school students, had 7.5 per cent of all Indigenous students, representing 1.7 per cent of students in that state. Western Australia, with 10.7 per cent of total enrolments Australia-wide, accounted for 12.1 per cent of Indigenous students.

The highest concentration of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students was in the Northern Territory, which accounted for only 1.0 per cent of total school enrolments in 2019, but for 6.9 per cent of Indigenous enrolments. The 15,889 Indigenous students enrolled in Northern Territory schools made up 39.1 per cent of the Territory's school population. Because of this, data on Indigenous students has a much greater impact on overall statistics (including performance measures) for the Northern Territory than for any other state or territory.

More detailed data, tables and graphs 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

The numbers and proportions of full-time equivalent (FTE) teaching staff by school sector, school level and sex in 2019 are shown in table 1.9.

Table 1.9

Number and proportion of full-time equivalent (FTE) of teaching staff by school sector, school level and sex, Australia, 2019

School sector	Primary				Secondary				Total			
	M	F	Total	%	M	F	Total	%	M	F	Total	%
Government	18,751	85,652	104,403	69.9	29,815	48,741	78,556	56.6	48,566	134,393	182,959	63.5
Catholic	4,125	21,590	25,715	17.2	11,685	17,972	29,657	21.4	15,810	39,562	55,372	19.2
Independent	4,187	15,158	19,345	12.9	12,893	17,725	30,619	22.1	17,080	32,883	49,963	17.3
Total non-government	8,312	36,747	45,059	30.1	24,578	35,698	60,276	43.4	32,890	72,445	105,335	36.5
All schools	27,063	122,399	149,462	51.8	54,393	84,439	138,832	48.2	81,456	206,838	288,294	100.0

Notes:

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 with a full-time teacher in the same school system or school. (See Part 4: Glossary for definitions of FTE and teaching staff.)

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

Components may not add to totals due to rounding.

M = male, F = female

Percentage columns for primary and secondary show the proportions of FTE primary and secondary teachers employed in each sector. The total percentage column shows the proportions of total FTE teaching staff employed in each sector. The total row shows the number and proportion of total FTE teaching staff employed at each level. Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding.

In 2018, NSW introduced a new payroll system that is used to record staffing levels in government schools. This system provides stricter controls and validation over the way casual and temporary teachers are engaged, and information to better identify teachers that should be included as 'generally active' in schools. This led to a fall in 2019 in the number of FTE teaching staff reported for NSW government schools. This was reflected in apparent falls in the NSW total of FTE teaching staff and in the total of FTE teaching staff for the government sector nationally. This results in a break in time series for this data.

Source: ABS, Cat. No. 4221.0, *Schools, Australia*, 2019.

See also National Report on Schooling data portal for data on teaching and non-teaching staff.

In 2019, there were 288,294 full-time equivalent (FTE) teaching staff across primary and secondary schooling in Australia. This was an apparent net fall of 289 (0.1 per cent) from 2018.

The number of FTE teachers employed in non-government schools increased by 2,210 (2.1 per cent). However, there was a fall of 2,499 (1.3 per cent) in the total number of FTE teaching staff reported for government schools nationally. This resulted from a decrease in the number of FTE teachers reported for the NSW government school sector.¹⁶

¹⁶ ABS, *Schools Australia*, 2019; National Report on Schooling data portal, staff numbers data set.

In 2018, NSW introduced a new payroll system that is used to record staffing levels in government schools. This system provides stricter controls and validation over the way casual and temporary teachers are engaged, and information to better identify teachers that should be included as 'generally active' in schools. The number of FTE teachers reported by the new system was 4,936 (8.7 per cent) lower than the number of teachers reported by the previous systems in 2018.

This apparent decrease in the number of FTE teachers reported for the NSW government school sector outweighed increases reported for the government sector in other states and territories. Because of the size of the NSW government school sector, this also affects the numbers and proportions of FTE teachers for NSW, and for the government school sector nationally.

Across Australia in 2019, 63.5 per cent of FTE teachers were employed by the government school sector, 19.2 per cent by the Catholic school sector and 17.3 per cent by the independent sector. While this remains broadly consistent with the distribution of (full-time plus part-time) students across school sectors (as reported in table 1.4), there was a fall of 0.8 percentage points in the proportion of FTE teachers in government schools and a corresponding rise in the proportion of teachers in non-government schools. This reflected the apparent fall in the number of FTE teachers in the NSW government sector noted above, rather than changes in the proportions of students in the government and non-government school sectors.

In 2019, Australia's teaching workforce continued to be predominantly female, with women making up 71.7 per cent of FTE teachers, and men making up 28.3 per cent. This gap has widened since 2001, when one third (33.0 per cent) of teachers were male. In 2019, this difference was again more pronounced at the primary level (81.9 per cent female) than at secondary level (60.8 per cent female).

The number and proportion of FTE teaching staff by state/territory in 2019 is shown in table 1.10.

Table 1.10

Number and proportion of full-time equivalent (FTE) of teaching staff by state and territory and school level, Australia, 2019

School level	State/territory								
School level	NSW	Vic	Qld	SA	WA	Tas	NT	ACT	Australia
Primary	43,274	38,826	32,442	11,361	15,550	3,188	2,024	2,797	149,462
Secondary	41,475	37,525	29,588	8,565	14,700	2,957	1,407	2,614	138,832
Total	84,749	76,351	62,030	19,926	30,250	6,145	3,431	5,411	288,294
Proportion (%)	29.4	26.5	21.5	6.9	10.5	2.1	1.2	1.9	100.0

Notes:

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 with a full-time teacher in the same school system or school. (See Part 4: Glossary for definitions of FTE and teaching staff.)

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

Components may not add to totals due to rounding.

In 2018, NSW introduced a new payroll system that is used to record staffing levels in government schools. This system provides stricter controls and validation over the way casual and temporary teachers are engaged, and information to better identify teachers that should be included as 'generally active' in schools. This led to a fall in 2019 in the number of FTE teaching staff reported for NSW government schools. This was reflected in apparent falls in the NSW total of FTE teaching staff and in the total of FTE teaching staff for the government sector nationally. This results in a break in time series for this data.

Source: ABS, Cat. No. 4221.0, *Schools, Australia*, 2019.

See also National Report on Schooling data portal.

The distribution of FTE teaching staff between states and territories remains broadly consistent with the overall distribution of students (as reported in table 1.5). However, the NSW proportion of FTE teaching staff fell from 30.8 per cent in 2018 to 29.4 per cent in 2019, compared with that state's proportion of 31.2 per cent of (full-time plus part-time) students.

Changes in staffing levels for the period 2009–19 are shown in table 1.11. Between 2009 and 2019, the total number of FTE teaching staff grew by 39,098 (15.7 per cent). This was noticeably more than the percentage growth in (full-time plus part-time) student enrolments (13.3 per cent) over the same period.

Table 1.11

Number of full-time equivalent (FTE) of teaching staff by school sector, Australia, 2009–2019

School sector	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Government	162,566	163,697	165,272	167,152	167,903	169,199	171,763	176,819	180,973	185,458	182,959
Catholic	46,807	47,391	48,393	49,427	50,527	50,936	52,160	53,154	53,839	54,511	55,372
Independent	39,823	40,333	41,445	42,407	43,154	43,930	45,277	46,357	47,248	48,614	49,963
Total non-government	86,630	87,724	89,838	91,834	93,682	94,866	97,437	99,511	101,087	103,125	105,335
All schools	249,196	251,422	255,110	258,986	261,585	264,065	269,200	276,330	282,059	288,583	288,294

Notes:

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 with a full-time teacher in the same school system or school. (See Part 4: Glossary for definitions of FTE and teaching staff.)

Components may not add to totals due to rounding.

In 2018, NSW introduced a new payroll system that is used to record staffing levels in government schools. This system provides stricter controls and validation over the way casual and temporary teachers are engaged, and information to better identify teachers that should be included as 'generally active' in schools. This led to a fall in 2019 in the number of FTE teaching staff reported for NSW government schools. This was reflected in apparent falls in the NSW total of FTE teaching staff and in the total of FTE teaching staff for the government sector nationally. This results in a break in time series for this data.

Source: ABS, Cat. No. 4221.0, *Schools, Australia*, 2019.

See also National Report on Schooling data portal.

In 2019, FTE teaching staff accounted for 68.5 per cent of the FTE of all school staff. In addition to teaching staff, 132,518 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) students¹⁷ per FTE teaching staff. Table 1.12 summarises average student–teacher ratios in Australia in 2019 across the three school sectors.

Table 1.12

Full-time equivalent (FTE) student–teacher ratios, by school sector and school level, Australia, 2019

School sector	Primary	Secondary	All schools
Government	15.3	12.7	14.2
Catholic	15.7	12.3	13.9
Independent	13.7	10.4	11.7
Total non-government	14.8	11.4	12.8
All schools	15.1	12.1	13.7

Notes:

The student–teacher ratio is calculated as the number of full-time equivalent (FTE) students per FTE teaching staff.

In 2018, NSW introduced a new payroll system that is used to record staffing levels in government schools. This system provides stricter controls and validation over the way casual and temporary teachers are engaged, and information to better identify teachers that should be included as "generally active" in schools. This led to an apparent fall in the number of FTE NSW government school teachers in 2019, and, along with growth in student enrolments, to rises in student–teacher ratios for the government school sector in NSW and nationally, and for all schools in NSW and nationally. This results in a break in time series for this data.

Source: ABS, Cat. No. 4221.0, *Schools, Australia*, 2019.

See also National Report on Schooling data portal.

For all Australian schools, the average FTE student–teacher ratio in 2019 was 13.7:1, an increase from 13.5:1 in 2018. This resulted from the apparent fall in the number of FTE teaching staff noted above, along with a growth in student enrolments. The average ratio for government schools nationally increased from 13.8:1 to 14.2:1, while the overall rate for non-government schools fell from 12.9:1 to 12.8:1

The average ratio for government schools (14.2:1) was higher than ratios for non-government schools overall (12.8:1), for Catholic schools (13.9:1), and for independent schools (11.7:1).

At the primary level, the average FTE student–teacher ratio was 15.1:1 compared with 12.1:1 at the secondary level. Table 1.13 shows average student–teacher ratios in 2019 by school level and state and territory.

¹⁷ Numbers of FTE students are slightly lower than numbers of full-time plus part time students reported in part 1.2. For example, the total number of 3,948,811 students enrolled (FT plus PT) in 2019 equates to 3,943,711 FTE students.

Table 1.13

Full-time equivalent (FTE) student–teacher ratios, by state/territory and school level, Australia, 2019

School level	State/territory								Australia
	NSW	Vic	Qld	SA	WA	Tas	NT	ACT	
Primary	16.3	14.5	14.7	14.5	15.6	14.4	12.1	14.6	15.1
Secondary	12.7	11.4	12.1	12.5	12.3	12.0	11.4	12.0	12.1
All schools	14.5	13.0	13.4	13.6	14.0	13.3	11.8	13.4	13.7

Notes:

The student–teacher ratio is calculated as the number of full-time equivalent (FTE) students per FTE teaching staff.

In 2018, NSW introduced a new payroll system that is used to record staffing levels in government schools. This system provides stricter controls and validation over the way casual and temporary teachers are engaged, and information to better identify teachers that should be included as ‘generally active’ in schools. This led to an apparent fall in the number of FTE NSW government school teachers in 2019, and, along with growth in student enrolments, to rises in student–teacher ratios for the government school sector in NSW and nationally, and for all schools in NSW and nationally. This results in a break in time series for this data.

Source: ABS, Cat. No. 4221.0, *Schools, Australia*, 2019.

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 differing requirements of particular student groups, and of different school subjects, especially in secondary schools. These may include smaller maximum class sizes for practical subjects, and for senior secondary classes.

The specialist and administrative duties undertaken by teaching staff in secondary schools, such as non-teaching principals and deputy principals, subject head teachers, teacher librarians, 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.

Time series data (2009–2019) on student–teacher ratios by state and territory, school sector and school level is 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 2019, 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. In South Australia, primary education consisted of a Foundation year followed by Years 1–7, and secondary education consisted of Years 8–12.¹⁸ The Foundation year (the first year of full-time schooling) has different names in the various jurisdictions.¹⁹

The age at which schooling becomes compulsory is six years in most states and territories.²⁰ In Tasmania, it is five years (at 1 January), 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 17.²¹

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

¹⁸ In 2018, the South Australian Government announced that Year 7 will be moved from a primary school year to a secondary school (from 2022 for government schools). In 2019, this change was implemented for a number of non-government schools.

¹⁹ 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.

²⁰ 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.

²¹ In Western Australia this requirement 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.

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, 2019

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

Notes:

(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, 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, Cat. No. 4221.0, *Schools Australia*, 2019; 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 disabilities 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.

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.²²

Each state and territory also has an early childhood education sector that is separate from primary and secondary schooling²³, although early childhood centres are often attached to, or accommodated in, primary schools. Statistical data on early childhood education is excluded from this report.

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



²² 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.

²³ 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 is not included in this report. Statistical data on pre-school early childhood education is available in ABS, [Preschool Education, Australia](#), 2019 (Cat. No. 4240.0).

1.5 School funding

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

The bulk of funding for government schools comes from the state or territory government that owns and administers the school, with contributions from the Australian Government. A smaller contribution comes from fees, charges and other private sources.

The majority of income for non-government schools comes from Australian Government funding, fees, charges and other private sources, with smaller contributions from state and territory governments.

Part 1.5 focuses on reporting public funding for school education. There is no single collection of school funding data. Because of differences between the various collections, not all data reported in this part is directly comparable. Table 1.15 below outlines the key differences between the data collections.

State/territory and Australian Government funding for government and non-government schools

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 2018 – 30 June 2019. This section provides comparable information on government expenditure for government and non-government schools. Calendar year data for non-government schools has been adapted in this section to report on a comparable basis to government school financial data.

Parts 1.5.1–1.5.4 provide an outline of government (state/territory and Australian Government) recurrent funding arrangements for both government and non-government schools.

Part 1.5.5 provides information on capital expenditure on government schools. Information on capital expenditure in non-government schools is detailed in part 1.5.6 and is not directly comparable.

Non-government school income and expenditure

Non-government school funding is reported on a calendar year basis and reflects funding and expenditure for the 2019 calendar year. This data allows income for Catholic and independent schools to be reported separately, and includes information on income from private sources, including school fees.

This data is recalculated for reporting in the Report on Government Services (ROGS) for the 2018–19 financial year and is quoted in parts 1.5.1 and 1.5.4. This data also contributes to *My School* financial reporting.

Government and non-government school income

Part 1.5.6 provides data on recurrent funding information for the 2018 calendar year for both government and non-government schools on a comparable basis. This section includes reporting on government, Catholic and independent schools, and includes information on income from private sources and expenditure on capital projects. This data is published for individual schools on the *My School* website.

Due to reporting timeframes, the *My School* financial data lags behind other data sets.

Table 1.15 below outlines features of the data collections used for reporting school funding in parts 1.5.1–1.5.6.

Table 1.15

Key features of finance data collections used to report on school funding in this report

National Schools Statistics Collection (Finance)	Non-government schools finance collection	My School collection
2018–19 financial year	2019 calendar year	2018 calendar year
Government schools only	Non-government schools only. Catholic non-systemic schools are reported as Catholic schools	Government and non-government schools. Some Catholic non-systemic schools are reported as independent schools in aggregated data
Expenditure-based (based on payment of expenses)	Income and expenditure are reported (income received by schools from government and private sources)	Income based (income provided to schools from government and private sources)
Private funding not reported	Private income reported. Income reported is for both recurrent and capital applications	Private sources of income including fees and donations are reported
Expenditure such as payroll tax, user cost of capital and student transport included in government school reporting	Excludes amounts related to boarding facilities.	Expenditure such as payroll tax, user cost of capital and student transport are not included.
State level collection	School level collection	School level collection
Per student expenditure at primary, secondary or all government schools	Per student expenditure 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	Net recurrent income per student (NRIPS). NRIPS represents income per student from all sources, public and private minus deductions due to debt and capital expenditure
Reported in parts 1.5.1, 1.5.3 and 1.5.5	Reported in parts 1.5.1 and 1.5.4	Reported in part 1.5.6

Some data reported in Part 1.5 is also sourced directly from the *Report on Government Services 2021* (see table 1.16). This includes data collected by the Productivity Commission directly from state and territory governments.

My School finance data was 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 excludes 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 is 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.

For government and systemic non-government schools, where a 'system' or 'managing organisation' (such as a district, diocese, 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*.

1.5.1 Overview of government recurrent funding for school education

In 2018–19 total government recurrent funding of \$65.59 billion was provided for school education:

- \$45.73 billion (69.7 per cent) was provided through state and territory budgets, predominantly (91.7 per cent) for government schools.
- \$19.86 billion (30.3 per cent) was provided through the Australian Government budget, predominantly (60.9 per cent) for non-government schools.

Of total recurrent funding,

- the government school sector received 75.8 per cent.
- the non-government sector received 24.2 per cent.

Total recurrent school education funding was:

- \$19,327 per student for government schools
- \$11,813 per student for non-government schools.

This information is outlined in further detail in table 1.16, figure 1.4 and figure 1.5 below.

Table 1.16

Recurrent funding for school education, Australia, 2018–19

2018–2019 government funding to schools	Government		Non-government		Total	
	(\$ billion)	\$ per FTE student	(\$ billion)	\$ per FTE student	(\$ billion)	\$ per FTE student
State and territory governments	\$41.95	\$16,312	\$3.77	\$2,808	\$45.73	\$11,676
Australian Government	\$7.76	\$3,017	\$12.10	\$9,005	\$19.86	\$5,072
Total Australian/state/territory government funding	\$49.71	\$19,328	\$15.88	\$11,813	\$65.59	\$16,749

Notes:

Components may not add to totals due to rounding.

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, a portion of these assets has been acquired through Australian Government capital contributions, with states and territories responsible for maintenance costs.

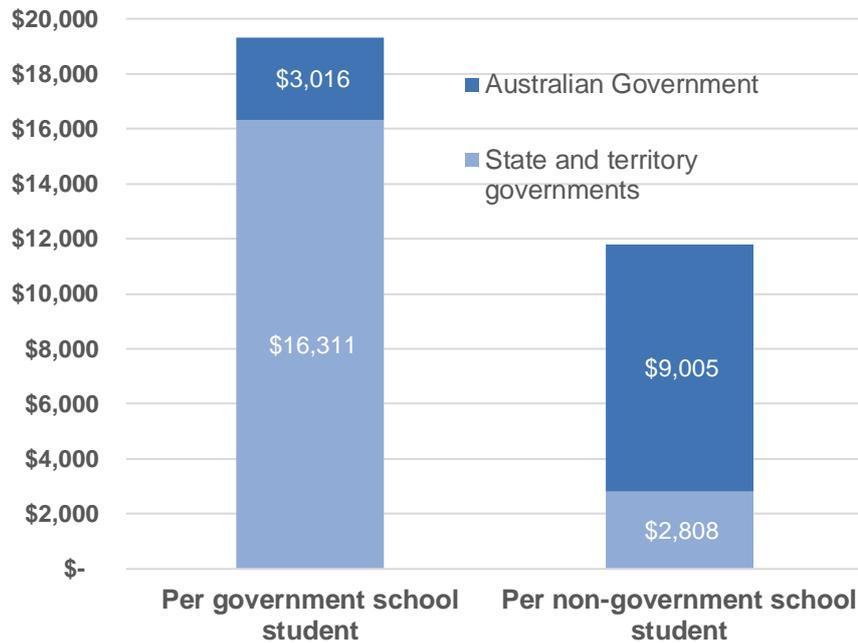
Sources: Education Council, National Schools Statistics Collection (Finance), 2019; Steering Committee for the Review of Government Service Provision (SCRGSP), *Report on Government Services 2021*, Productivity Commission; ABS, Cat. No. 4221.0 *Schools, Australia*, 2019.

See also National Report on Schooling data portal.

Figure 1.4 shows the contribution of state and territory governments and the Australian Government funding to the government and non-government school sectors, on a per student basis.

Figure 1.4

Government recurrent funding for school education, per student, Australia, 2018–19 (\$ per student)



Note:

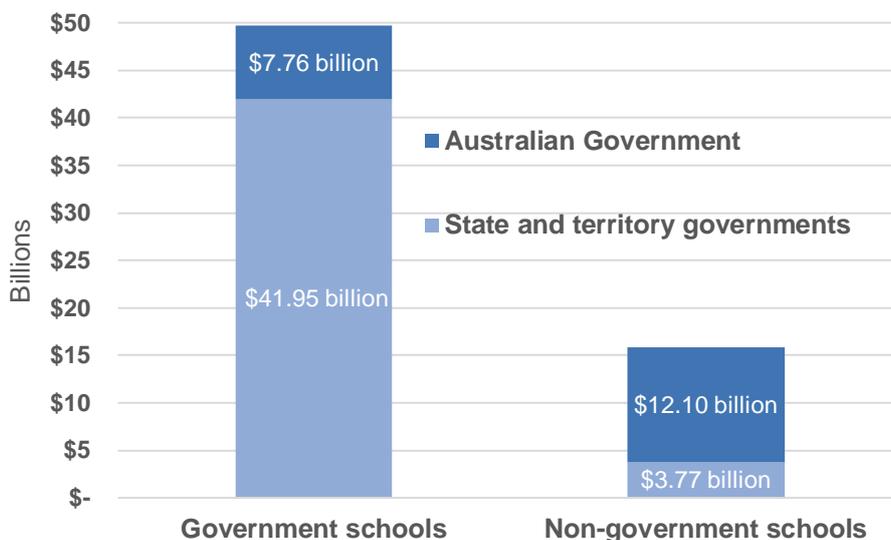
Sources: Education Council, National Schools Statistics Collection (Finance), 2019; Steering Committee for the Review of Government Service Provision (SCRGSP), *Report on Government Services 2021*, Productivity Commission; ABS, Cat. No. 4221.0 *Schools, Australia*, 2019.

See also the National Report on Schooling data portal.

Figure 1.5 reports total recurrent expenditure on government and non-government schools from all government sources in 2018–19.

Figure 1.5

Total government recurrent funding for school education, Australia, 2018–19 (\$ billion)



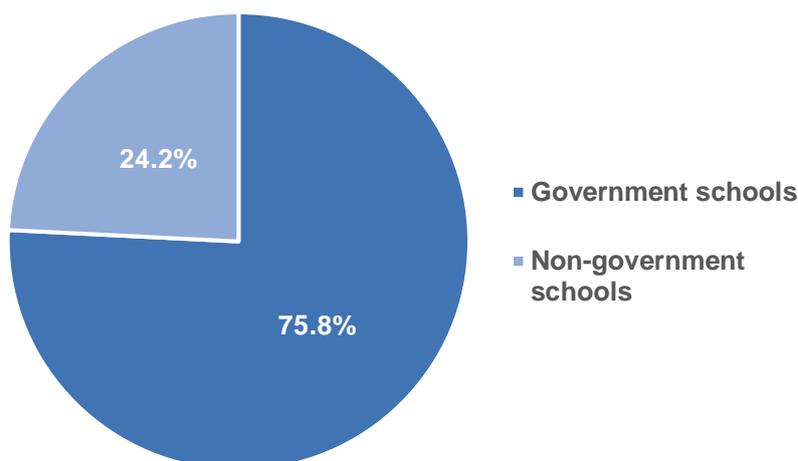
Sources: Education Council, National Schools Statistics Collection (Finance), 2019; Steering Committee for the Review of Government Service Provision (SCRGSP), *Report on Government Services 2021*, Productivity Commission; ABS, Cat. No. 4221.0 *Schools, Australia*, 2019.

See also the National Report on Schooling data portal.

Figure 1.6 below shows the relative shares of total recurrent funding for each school sector. Non-government schools received 24.2 per cent and government schools 75.8 per cent in 2018–19. These proportions are similar to those for 2017–18.

Figure 1.6

Share of recurrent government funding for school education, Australia, 2018–19



Sources: Education Council, National Schools Statistics Collection (Finance), 2019; Steering Committee for the Review of Government Service Provision (SCRGSP), *Report on Government Services 2021*, Productivity Commission; ABS, Cat. No. 4221.0 *Schools, Australia*, 2019.

See also the National Report on Schooling data portal.

1.5.2 Inter-governmental funding arrangements for school education

The power for provision and regulation of school education rests with the states and territories. State and territory governments fund the bulk of government school costs for their jurisdictions under state and territory legislation.

States and territories also provide funding for non-government schools in accordance with their respective legislative requirements.

The National School Reform Agreement came into effect in 2019. States and territories have individual agreements with the Australian Government where the parties agree to provide a specific share of funding to government and non-government schools in their jurisdiction, as measured by the Schooling Resource Standard (SRS). The SRS is an estimate of how much public funding a school needs to meet its students' educational needs.

The *Australian Education Act 2013* outlines the Australian Government funding arrangements for government and non-government schools. This includes the application of the SRS for determining funding for schools. The SRS of a school is made up of a base amount for every student along with up to six loadings to provide extra funding for disadvantaged students and schools. The amount of funding received by a school will change from year to year depending on the number of students enrolled at the school and the number of students at the school who attract additional loading funding.

The six loadings that attract funding in addition to the base amount are:

- the number of students with disability at the school who require supplementary, substantial or extensive support in the classroom
- the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students at the school
- the number of students from low socio-educational advantage backgrounds. This is based on student background data on parental education collected by ACARA
- the number of students with low English proficiency
- the location of the school
- the size of the school.

The base amount for a non-government school is discounted by the capacity of the school's community to contribute financially to the school. This discount only applies to non-government schools²⁴, and is calculated on a sliding scale based on the school's socio-economic status (SES) score. The SES score of a non-government school is based on the average SES score of each area in which the students at the school reside. From 2020 schools will start to transition away from SES and to a 'Direct Measure of Income' based on actual parental income to determine the community's capacity to contribute.

In 2019, the National School Resourcing Board conducted a review of the SRS loading for students with disability. While the review concluded that the current funding levels for the loading should remain, further work should be done to develop a strong evidence base for the students with disability loading.

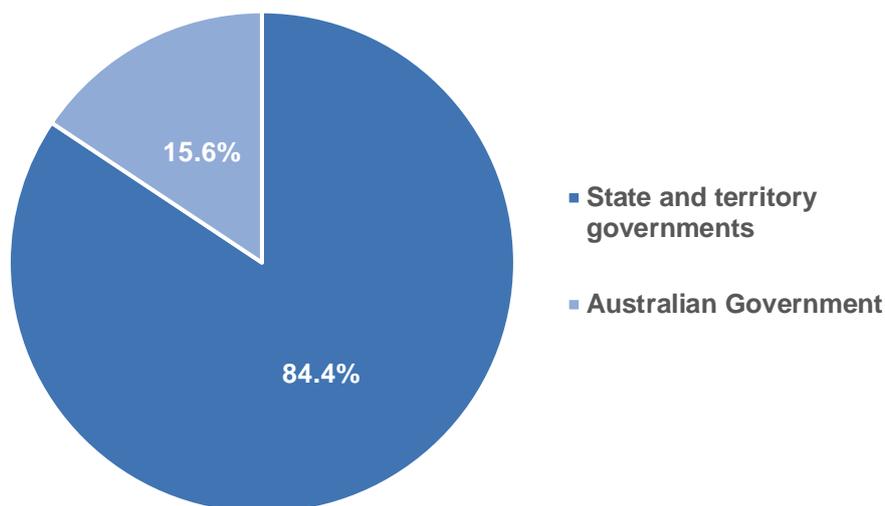
²⁴ The capacity to contribute does not apply to government schools, non-government special schools or special assistance schools, non-government majority Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander schools, or non-government sole provider schools.

1.5.3 Government funding for government schools

State and territory governments are the major funders of government schools: in 2018–19 they contributed 84.4 per cent (\$41.95 billion) of total recurrent funding, with the Australian Government contributing the remaining 15.6 per cent (\$7.76 billion). The relative proportions are shown below in figure 1.7.

Figure 1.7

Total government recurrent expenditure, government schools, Australia, 2018–19 (per cent)



Sources: Education Council, National Schools Statistics Collection (NSSC) (Finance), 2019; ABS, Cat. No. 4221.0, *Schools, Australia*, 2019.

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

Finance data for the National Schools Statistics Collection (NSSC) – Finance are provided by the various state, territory and federal education departments. This is a financial year, annual collection of total government funded expenditure data (expenditure on salary and non-salary costs) on government schools only. The collection provides education ministers with consistent data on government expenditure on school education, across government school systems and over time.

Table 1.17 shows a national overview of expenditure levels by states in 2018–19 in key operational areas such as salary and non-salary costs.

By far the major component of funding (not including user cost of capital²⁵) goes to fund schools directly. In-school expenditure includes teaching, learning, school administration, and library functions within schools.

- Excluding user cost of capital, teacher salaries expenditure accounts for 61.3 per cent of in-school expenditure.

²⁵ 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 8.0 per cent of the written down value of capital assets.

- Excluding user cost of capital, in-school non-teacher salaries expenditure accounts for 15.4 per cent of in-school expenditure.
- Excluding user cost of capital, in-school non-salary costs account for 23.3 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.

- Excluding user cost of capital, expenditure on out-of-school support functions represents approximately 5.3% per cent of total government expenditure on state and territory government schools.

Salaries are by far the largest component of expenditure on schools, with teacher salaries comprising the majority of this expenditure.

- Teaching salary costs represented 76.9 per cent of total salary costs in 2018–19 and 49.3 per cent of total expenditure inclusive of user cost of capital.
- Teaching staff salaries changed marginally from 76.9 per cent of total salary costs in 2017–18 to 76.8 per cent in 2018–19, inclusive of user cost of capital.
- Non-teaching staff salaries remained at 23.1 per cent of total salary costs.
- Non-salary costs changed marginally from 20.4 per cent of total expenditure (including user cost of capital) in 2017–18 to 20.7 per cent in 2018–19.

Table 1.17

Operating expenditure by government education systems, Australia, from 2014–15 to 2018–19 financial years (accrual basis) (nominal \$'000)

Area of expenditure	2014–15	2015–16	2016–17	2017–18	2018–19
In-school expenditure					
Salaries (teaching)	19,952,536	21,161,119	21,775,001	22,870,538	24,486,320
Salaries (non-teaching)	4,666,906	4,974,562	5,346,145	5,800,908	6,143,754
Redundancies	20,722	12,167	1,567	12,276	7,528
Non-salary costs	7,982,909	8,408,634	8,596,391	8,685,118	9,285,363
User cost of capital	5,922,211	6,101,612	6,205,593	7,301,342	7,466,917
Sub-total incl. user cost of capital	38,545,284	40,658,094	41,924,697	44,670,182	47,389,882
Out-of-school expenditure					
Salaries (teaching)	0	0	0	0	0
Salaries (non-teaching)	957,663	970,581	1,016,970	1,050,087	1,232,218
Redundancies	13,184	27,586	18,096	24,146	18,359
Non-salary costs	669,146	677,086	713,232	812,816	1,001,603
User cost of capital	46,264	46,511	58,588	54,700	66,297
Sub-total incl. user cost of capital	1,686,257	1,721,764	1,806,886	1,941,749	2,318,477
TOTAL	40,231,541	42,379,858	43,731,583	46,611,931	49,708,359

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. Note: Amounts are expressed in actual dollars (nominal) and are not adjusted for inflation

Components may not add to totals due to rounding.

Sources: Education Council, National Schools Statistics Collection (NSSC) (Finance), 2019; *National Report on Schooling in Australia* (previous years).

See also National Report on Schooling data portal.

Table 1.18

Expenditure by government education systems, by level of education and area of expenditure by state and territory, 2018–19, accrual basis (\$'000)

	NSW	Vic	Qld	SA	WA	Tas	NT	ACT	Australia
In-school primary education									
Total excl. user cost of capital	7,436,322	4,913,528	4,609,823	1,695,632	2,573,300	532,734	365,734	428,898	22,555,971
Total incl. user cost of capital	8,897,748	6,035,209	5,522,613	1,909,333	2,993,373	580,628	426,670	507,022	26,872,597
In-school secondary education									
Total excl. user cost of capital	5,793,081	3,928,904	3,758,047	1,010,489	1,858,439	430,990	234,120	352,924	17,366,994
Total incl. user cost of capital	6,861,235	4,726,509	4,349,277	1,138,759	2,269,633	481,878	268,903	421,092	20,517,285
Out-of-school									
Total excl. user cost of capital	603,419	479,396	547,952	273,663	169,546	45,530	95,252	37,422	2,252,180
Total incl. user cost of capital	624,405	492,165	550,513	280,738	189,853	46,259	95,252	39,292	2,318,477
Total- primary, secondary and out-of-school									
Total excl. user cost of capital	13,832,822	9,321,828	8,915,822	2,979,784	4,601,285	1,009,254	695,106	819,244	42,175,145
Total incl. user cost of capital	16,383,388	11,253,883	10,422,403	3,328,830	5,452,859	1,108,765	790,825	967,406	49,708,359

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.

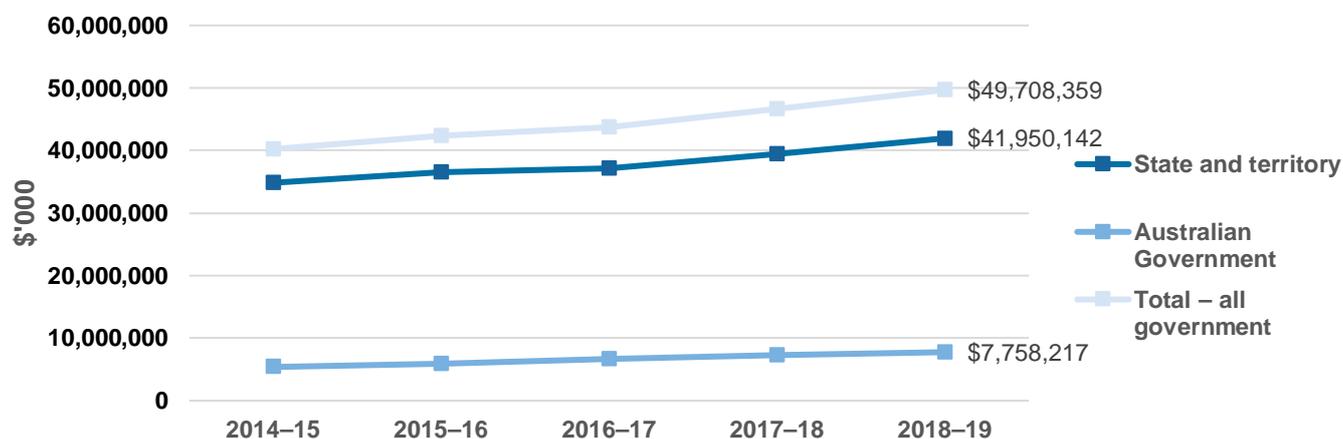
Sources: Education Council, National Schools Statistics Collection (NSSC) (Finance), 2019; *National Report on Schooling in Australia* (previous years).

See also National Report on Schooling data portal.

The annual recurrent expenditure by government education systems for the last five financial years is provided in figure 1.8. This shows government school recurrent expenditure has increased from \$40.2 billion in 2014–15 to \$49.7 billion in 2018–19 – an increase of 23.6 per cent.

Figure 1.8

Australian, state and territory government recurrent expenditure (nominal \$'000), government schools, from 2014–15 to 2018–19



Note: Amounts are expressed in actual dollars (nominal) and are not adjusted for inflation.

Sources: Education Council, National Schools Statistics Collection (Finance), 2019; Steering Committee for the Review of Government Service Provision (SCRGSP), *Report on Government Services 2021*, 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 1.19 gives a national view of levels of expenditure on government schools by state and territory governments in the period 2014–2015 to 2018–19.

In 2018–19, this expenditure reached \$17,832 for primary students and \$21,740 for secondary students. There was a growth of 5.1 per cent in total per capita funding from \$18,387 to \$19,328 between 2017–18 and 2018–19. In the same period, per capita expenditure for government primary schools increased by 5.9 per cent and by 4.1 per cent for secondary students.

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 smaller class sizes, especially in the last two years of schooling.

Table 1.19**Recurrent per capita expenditure on government schools, by school level, Australia, from 2014–15 to 2018–19 financial years (accrual basis) (nominal \$)**

Financial year	Primary	Secondary	Total
2014–15	15,243	18,949	16,662
2015–16	15,964	19,350	17,275
2016–17	16,117	19,800	17,531
2017–18	16,847	20,881	18,387
2018–19	17,832	21,740	19,328

Note:

Amounts include state/territory and Australian Government contributions. Amounts are expressed in actual dollars (nominal) and are not adjusted for inflation.

Sources: Education Council, National Schools Statistics Collection (Finance), 2019; *National Report on Schooling in Australia* (previous years).

See also National Report on Schooling data portal.

Table 1.20 below shows the per capita expenditure by state and territories, by school level, for the 2018–19 financial year.

Table 1.20**Per capita expenditure (per FTE student) on government schools, by school level, by state and territory, 2018–19 financial year, accrual basis (\$)**

State/territory	Primary	Secondary	Total
New South Wales	18,777	23,103	20,436
Victoria	16,490	20,332	17,974
Queensland	17,256	21,106	18,754
South Australia	18,377	20,136	18,994
Western Australia	17,656	21,983	19,286
Tasmania	18,092	21,581	19,517
Northern Territory	25,419	28,741	26,595
Australian Capital Territory	20,280	24,908	22,137
Australia	17,832	21,740	19,328

Note:

Amounts include state/territory and Australian Government contributions.

Source: Education Council, National Schools Statistics Collection (Finance), 2019.

See also National Report on Schooling data portal.

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 1.21 funds both recurrent and capital applications.

For Catholic schools, 71.9 per cent of per capita income is from government grants; for independent schools 45.7 per cent of their per capita income is from government grants.

Table 1.21

Non-government school per capita income, by source, Australia, 2019 calendar year

	Catholic schools		Independent schools	
	Per capita amount (\$)	% of total income	Per capita amount (\$)	% of total income
Australian government grants	9,946	55.6%	8,423	34.9%
State/territory grants	2,913	16.3%	2,610	10.8%
Total government grants	12,859	71.9%	11,033	45.7%
Private income	5,031	28.1%	13,106	54.3%
Total	17,890	100.0%	24,139	100.0%

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, Skills and Employment unpublished data.

See also National Report on Schooling data portal.

Per capita expenditure by non-government schools

Table 1.22 summarises per capita expenditure by non-government schools²⁶ according to level of schooling.

²⁶ 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 1.22

Non-government school per capita expenditure, by school sector and school type, Australia, 2019 calendar year

School sector and type	Per capita expenditure (\$)
Catholic	
Primary	14,763
Secondary	20,291
Combined	21,561
Independent	
Primary	18,823
Secondary	28,397
Combined	24,270

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, Skills and Employment 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 use a variety of mechanisms for allocating funding to non-government schools.

Table 1.23

Australian, state and territory government recurrent expenditure, non-government schools (\$'000), 2018–19

	Expenditure
Australian Government specific purpose payments (excluding capital grants)	12,103,744
State and territory government recurrent expenditure	3,774,666
TOTAL	15,878,410

Source: Steering Committee for the Review of Government Service Provision, *Report on Government Services 2020*, Productivity Commission

See also National Report on Schooling data portal

Total recurrent expenditure on non-government school education by the Australian Government, and state and territory governments in 2018–19 was approximately \$11,813 per student. This was made up of Australian Government expenditure of \$9,005 per FTE student and state and territory government expenditure of \$2,808 per FTE student.

Further detail on government expenditure on non-government schools is provided in part 1.5.1.

1.5.5 Capital expenditure

Government schools

State and territory governments provide the majority of funding for capital expenditure in government schools. Since 2009, states and territories may also use Australian Government recurrent funding for capital purposes in government schools. Therefore, allocation of Australian Government funding to capital purposes differs according to policy and practices in respective states and territories.

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.

As shown in table 1.24, capital expenditure in government schools was \$4.9 billion in the 2018–19 financial year. This table combines funding provided from the Australian Government, and state and territory sourced funding.

Table 1.24

Capital expenditure by state and territory governments in government schools, Australia, from 2014–15 to 2018–19 financial years (accrual basis) (\$'000)

Financial year	NSW	Vic	Qld	SA	WA	Tas	NT	ACT	Australia
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
2017–18	861,740	1,106,300	566,134	180,927	358,825	49,220	44,167	96,382	3,263,695
2018–19	1,649,476	1,526,800	838,760	227,996	481,426	27,391	74,628	90,102	4,916,579

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), 2019; National Report on Schooling in Australia, past years. See also National Report on Schooling data portal.

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.

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

See Part 1.5.6 *My School* financial information below for further information. Note that the data provided below is not comparable to the data shown above and is presented for the 2018 calendar year.

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 with the expenditure-based finance data quoted in previous subsections. See table 1.15 for further details on differences between the data sets.

Part 1.5.6 provides high-level profiles of recurrent funding information for the 2018 calendar year published for individual schools on the *My School* website. This includes funding from both public and private sources. Due to reporting timeframes, *My School* calendar year finance data will always lag by one year compared with most *My School* non-finance data.

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 *My School* finance data collection was also used to inform the Commonwealth school funding model as described in the *Australian Education Act 2013*.

The SRS funding amounts (which are used to determine the base amount described in Part 1.5.2) are derived from analysing the funding levels reported in the 2016 *My School* data collection in the 'reference schools'. (Reference schools were schools where at least 80 per cent of students achieved above the national minimum standard for reading and numeracy in NAPLAN for three years in a row.)

The *My School* data collection was also used to help determine share of funding contributed by state and territory governments towards the Schooling Resource Standard as required in the bilateral agreements with the Commonwealth government.

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

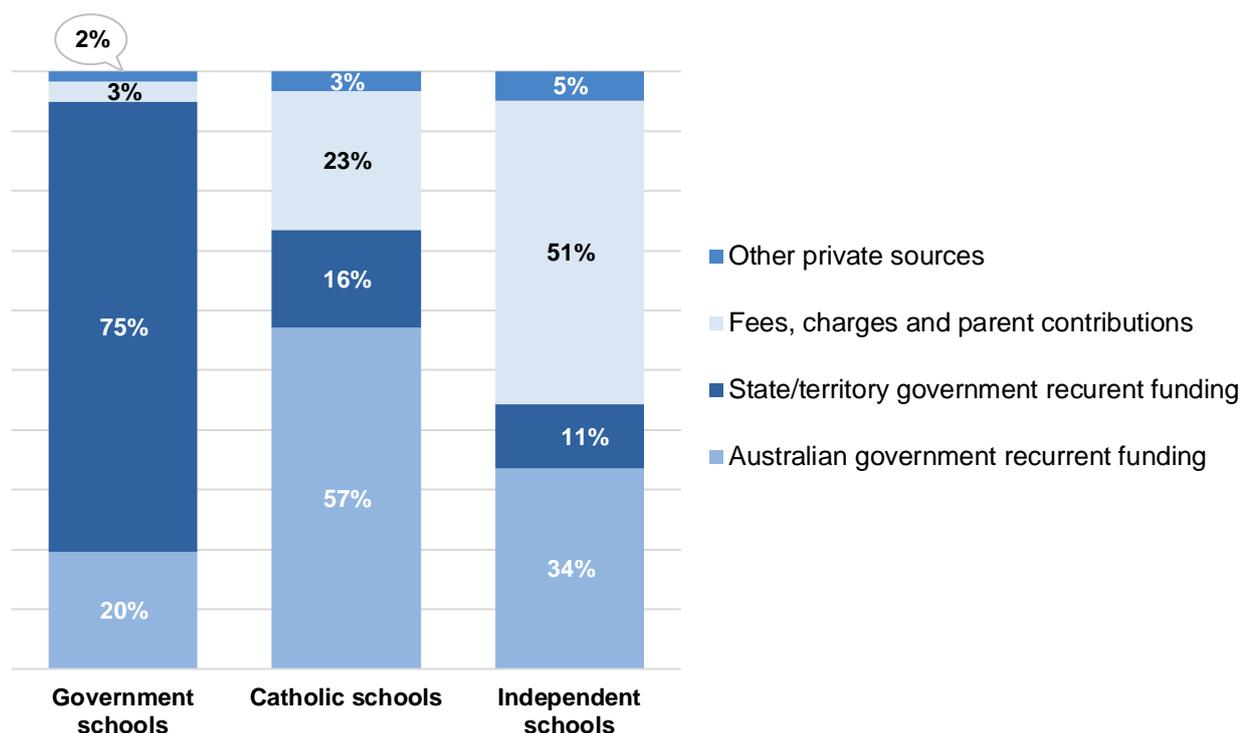
Recurrent income

For 2018, the Australian Government funding accounted for 19.5 per cent of the total gross income for government schools with state and territory governments providing the majority of funds, 75.4 per cent.

For non-government schools, the Australian Government contributed 57.1 per cent of Catholic sector gross income and 33.6 per cent of independent sector gross income. Income from fees, charges and parent contributions represented 50.9 per cent of independent sector income and 23.3 per cent of Catholic sector income. See also figure 1.10 below.

Figure 1.9

Gross income by funding source, Australia, 2018 (per cent)



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

See also National Report on Schooling data portal.

Table 1.25 below shows the movements in net recurrent income for all schools between 2017 and 2018. Total net recurrent income grew from \$58.8 billion to \$62.3 billion, or 6.1 per cent.

Table 1.25

Movements in recurrent income between 2017 and 2018

Source of income	2017 (\$ billion)	2018 (\$ billion)	Change (%)
Australian Government	17.822	19.010	6.7%
State/territory government	30.391	32.422	6.7%
Fees, charges and parental contributions	10.804	11.195	3.6%
Other private sources	1.780	1.755	-1.4%
Total gross income	60.798	64.382	5.9%
Deductions (from recurrent to capital services)	2.046	2.053	0.4%
Total net recurrent income	58.752	62.328	6.1%

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

See also National Report on Schooling data portal.

Net recurrent income per student (NRIPS)

Net recurrent income per student represents income per student from all sources, public and private minus deductions per student due to debt and capital expenditure.

As the number of students varies across years, showing income per student allows for a more informative comparison, particularly between sectors. Table 1.26 depicts income per student. In 2018, the net recurrent income per student (NRIPS) was \$15,953.

Between 2017 and 2018, the growth in net recurrent income per student (NRIPS) was 4.91 per cent. In contrast, the ABS Wage Index for education and training²⁷ grew by 2.6 per cent over the same period.

The compound annual growth in NRIPS for all schools from 2014 to 2018 was 4.2 per cent. Compound annual growth in the ABS Wage Index (education and training) was 2.5 per cent for the same period.

Between 2017 and 2018, the NRIPS increased 5.16 per cent for the government sector (to \$14,931), increased 4.17 per cent for the Catholic sector (to \$15,375), and increased 4.86 per cent for the independent sector (to \$20,927). This is shown in table 1.25 below.

Table 1.26

Movements in income per student between 2017 and 2018 (\$ per FTE student)

Source of income	2017 (\$)	2018 (\$)	Change 2017 to 2018 (%)
Australian Government	4,613	4,866	5.48
State/territory government	7,866	8,298	5.49
Fees, charges and parental contributions	2,797	2,865	2.46
Other private sources	461	449	-2.54
Total gross Income	15,736	16,478	4.71
Deductions	530	526	-0.76
Total NRIPS	15,207	15,953	4.91
NRIPS (government)	14,198	14,931	5.16
NRIPS (Catholic)	14,760	15,375	4.17
NRIPS (independent)	19,958	20,927	4.86

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

See also National Report on Schooling data portal.

²⁷ ABS Wage Index (in education and training, combined public and private sector) ABS Cat. No. 6345.0, series ID A2603449J. Wage Index growth is a useful comparator as the majority of school expenditure is due to salary costs.

Capital expenditure

My School allows for comparable reporting of capital expenditure on all schools. Table 1.27 below shows that total government capital expenditure on all schools was approximately \$3.8 billion in 2018.

Table 1.27

Total capital expenditure from government sources, all schools, 2018 (\$'000)

	NSW	Vic	Qld	SA	WA	Tas	NT	ACT	Australia
Australian Government	45,039	295,743	33,761	7,566	20,080	1,660	1,530	2,676	408,054
State/territory Governments	1,171,225	788,745	657,735	202,763	368,112	35,312	63,442	88,323	3,375,658
TOTAL Government	1,216,265	1,084,488	691,496	210,329	388,192	36,972	64,972	90,999	3,783,712

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

See also National Report on Schooling data portal.

The *My School* collection also provides for reporting of capital expenditure from government sources on non-government schools. See table 1.28 below.

In 2018, capital expenditure from government sources was

- \$158.1 million in Catholic schools
- \$107.7 million in independent schools.

Table 1.28

Capital expenditure from government sources, non-government schools, Australia, from 2014 to 2018 (accrual basis) (\$'000)

Calendar year		NSW	Vic	Qld	SA	WA	Tas	NT	ACT	Australia
2014	Catholic	32,182	30,528	148,854	7,093	11,513	3,913	1,815	2,758	238,656
	Independent	33,155	16,610	70,238	6,724	3,416	976	1,113	1,164	133,397
2015	Catholic	39,276	29,344	75,923	5,520	9,330	2,638	1,597	1,672	165,300
	Independent	26,897	14,329	42,971	5,239	7,346	317	1,606	1,547	100,252
2016	Catholic	29,450	24,904	36,426	5,689	10,670	2,238	3,767	2,157	115,301
	Independent	25,056	18,359	38,620	4,155	11,311	1,286	6,352	1,329	106,469
2017	Catholic	29,946	32,925	67,110	3,270	7,590	2,809	3,585	1,142	148,377
	Independent	24,718	25,337	35,541	6,145	6,989	640	2,806	1,449	103,625
2018	Catholic	36,447	49,392	58,570	3,484	4,245	1,088	3,840	1,080	158,146
	Independent	22,875	28,999	34,708	7,660	6,724	761	4,030	1,983	107,739

Notes:

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.

Source: ACARA, *My School*.

See also the National Report in Schooling data portal.

Part 2: Policies and priorities



Part 2 outlines the national policy context for Australian schooling in 2019 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.²⁸ The federal (Australian) government contributes to education policy through national agreements and its financial relations with the states.

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 2019, these councils were the Council of Australian Governments (COAG), the COAG Education Council, and the COAG Skills Council.

²⁸New South Wales (NSW), Victoria (Vic), Queensland (Qld), South Australia (SA), Western Australia (WA), Tasmania (Tas), Northern Territory (NT) and Australian Capital Territory (ACT).

Council of Australian Governments

The Council of Australian Governments (COAG) is the peak intergovernmental 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 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.

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.

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 include²⁹:

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 Skills Council

The COAG Skills Council was announced in August 2019. It replaces the former COAG Industry and Skills Council. The Skills Council has responsibility for skills development and national training arrangements within the vocational education and training (VET) sector.

²⁹ COAG Education Council [2014 Terms of Reference](#).

National policy developments

Alice Springs (Mparntwe) Education Declaration

In December 2018, Education Council agreed to undertake a review of the Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians.

Ministers agreed that the review consider the scope of the declaration encompassing lifelong education and agreed to hold national and state forums to consult and collaborate with key stakeholder groups during 2019. Following consultations, a new education declaration to replace the Melbourne Declaration was developed.

In December 2019, Education Council released the Alice Springs (Mparntwe) Education Declaration, committing to national educational goals and actions for the coming decade.

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

The Alice Springs (Mparntwe) Education Declaration includes the following statement in its preamble:

This Declaration sets out our vision for education in Australia and our commitment to improving educational outcomes for young Australians.

It builds on past declarations signed in Hobart, Adelaide and Melbourne, which have guided our journey over three decades. In developing this Declaration, we have heard from young people, parents, educators and the broader community and listened to what is important to them. They have told us that the Melbourne Declaration has stood the test of time, so in developing this new Declaration, we have sought to further build on and update it to meet the needs of today's young Australians.

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

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

The Alice Springs (Mparntwe) Education Declaration will come into operation in January, 2020.³⁰

³⁰ The Alice Springs (Mparntwe) Education Declaration is the fourth joint ministerial declaration on education in Australia. 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).

National School Reform Agreement

In January 2019, a new national agreement for school education came into operation. The agreement was developed through collaboration between the Australian Government and states and territories, and was informed by the findings and recommendations of the Review to Achieve Educational Excellence in Australian Schools (2018), the Independent Review of Regional, Rural and Remote Education (2018) and the final report of the STEM Partnerships Forum (2018).

The [National School Reform Agreement](#) will operate from 2019 to 2023.

The National Agreement specifies eight national policy initiatives³¹, grouped under three reform directions:

- Supporting students, student learning and student achievement
 1. Enhancing the Australian Curriculum to support teacher assessment of student attainment and growth
 2. Assisting teachers monitor student progress through online student learning assessment tools
 3. Reviewing senior secondary pathways into work, further education and training
- Supporting teaching, school leadership and school improvement
 4. Reviewing teacher workforce needs of the future
 5. Strengthening the initial teacher education³² accreditation system
- Enhancing the national evidence base
 6. Implementing a national unique student identifier (USI)³³
 7. Establishing an independent national evidence institute
 8. Improving national data quality, consistency and collection

During 2019, the Education Council commissioned work to support the implementation of the eight national policy initiatives specified in the agreement. These initiatives are being jointly developed by all Australian governments through Education Council.

Reporting and public transparency arrangements include an annual public report from Education Council to demonstrate progress towards implementation. Progress on the development of the initiatives in 2019 is also noted in the following sections of part 2.

Additionally, bilateral reform agreements between the Australian Government and the states and territories reflect state-specific initiatives in the context of each jurisdiction. States and territories report annually to the Australian Government on progress against the actions outlined in individual bilateral agreements and on their funding contributions to government and non-government schools.

³¹ The full text of the initiatives is included in Schedule B of the National Agreement

³² Initial teacher education refers to degrees and/or diplomas required for professional employment in teaching

³³ A unique single number for every student, which will help share information between schools, school sectors and states without using a student's name.

Review of the National Education Architecture

Education ministers are considering how national education bodies, the Australian Curriculum and Reporting Authority (ACARA), the Australian Institute of Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) and Educational Services Australia (ESA) can best support high quality teaching and learning across Australian schools and the objectives of the Alice Springs (Mparntwe) Education Declaration and the National School Reform Agreement. In December 2019, Education Council considered the Final Report of the Review of the National Architecture for Schooling in Australia. Senior officials will oversee consultations on reform options informed by the report before providing Education Council with advice and recommendations in 2020.

State and territory policy initiatives³⁴

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 2019, all states and territories participated in national policy initiatives under the National School Reform Agreement. Other state and territory policy initiatives are noted in the following sections of Part 2.



³⁴ Information on state and territory initiatives reported in part 2 are drawn from contributions received from state and territory education authorities.

2.2 Educational goals

The Melbourne Declaration

The [Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians](#) 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 goals for young Australians:

- | | |
|---------|--|
| Goal 1: | Australian schooling promotes equity and excellence. |
| Goal 2: | All young Australians become successful learners, confident 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 2019 in addressing the areas for action is reported in the following sections of Part 2.

The Alice Springs (Mparntwe) Education Declaration will replace the Melbourne Declaration from January 2020.

COAG targets

Over the last decade, COAG 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 2025.³⁵

Closing the Gap

Closing the Gap targets for education are part of a broader COAG agenda for Closing the Gap between outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders and other Australians.

In 2016, COAG agreed to refresh the Closing the Gap agenda ahead of the tenth anniversary of the agreement and four of the seven targets expiring in 2018. In December 2018, COAG issued a new draft framework for Closing the Gap and a draft set of targets for further discussion.

³⁵ 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.

These agreements were implemented from 2009 to 2013. Information on them is included in previous editions of this report.³⁶

Closing the Gap

In December 2018, COAG issued a revised draft framework for the Closing the Gap agenda, including for education and agreed this framework would be finalised through a partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

In March 2019, a formal partnership agreement between a coalition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander-controlled peak organisations and all Australian governments, through COAG, was established. This partnership acknowledges that direct engagement and negotiation is the preferred pathway to productive and effective outcomes. Under the agreement a Joint Council on Closing the Gap includes Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representatives, alongside ministerial representation. Further information is available on the [Closing the Gap](#) website.

STEM partnerships

The final report of the STEM Partnerships Forum, [Optimising STEM Industry School Partnerships: Inspiring Australia's Next Generation](#) (2018) emphasised the need for ongoing partnerships between education and industry to improve Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) education.

The report was influential in the development of the National School Reform Agreement. Education ministers' [Response to the STEM Partnerships Forum report](#), published in June 2019, outlines national, and state and territory initiatives in relation to STEM.

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 a number of sites across the country as part of the broader strategy to improve Australia's STEM capability.

P-TECH involves the establishment of long-term partnerships between industry, schools and tertiary education providers that 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.

In 2019, there were 13 pilot sites operating across Australia involving over 60 major employers, industry bodies and tertiary education providers. More than 3,000 students have participated in introductory P-TECH activities, with over 600 students now pursuing formal P-TECH pathways.

³⁶ Ongoing national partnerships in the early childhood education sector, are reported in Part 2.5: Strengthening early childhood.

State and territory initiatives

Under 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.

- The NSW education department, in partnership with the University of Newcastle, trained over 1,000 teachers from more than 500 schools in Quality Teaching Rounds in 2019 to focus on classroom practice and teacher development. 123 schools also participated in research exploring the impact of these rounds on learning outcomes.
- The Victorian government is providing \$22 million over four years to support enhanced Outside School Hours Care for over 400 children and young people with disability at six specialist and mainstream schools.
- Victoria's 10 Tech Schools delivered programs to students and teachers from more than 150 government, Catholic and independent secondary schools free of charge to help students to gain exposure to the latest technology, local industries and real-world industry problems to inspire interest in science, technology, engineering and mathematics and build 21st century capabilities
- Victoria also trained over 200 teachers from 100 primary schools across Victoria as mathematics and science specialists, increasing STEM knowledge and capability within primary schools.
- In Queensland, 100 kindergarten programs were delivered in schools in remote and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, many in multi-age classes. Teachers in these settings have access to curriculum support materials that connect the Australian Curriculum focus in P-6 and the learning expectations of the Queensland kindergarten learning guideline. Also in Queensland, the STEM Industry Partnerships Forum brings together a range of stakeholders from industry, university, government and education to collaborate and provide expert input to create new school partnerships and resources.
- The Western Australian Government launched the STEM skills strategy: Future jobs, future skills – driving STEM skills in Western Australia. Under the STEM skills strategy, Western Australia will work towards achieving specific targets to increase student participation in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM). As a result of the Sustainable Health Review, a whole of government approach to support early childhood health and wellbeing has been identified.
- The Catholic sector in Western Australia continued to enhance partnerships with community organisations, NGOs, businesses, Registered Training Organisations and education providers to enhance outcomes for students. Community building and partnerships were also an important feature in remote Kimberley schools.
- As part of the Northern Territory's local decision-making agenda, the community-led schools initiative enables Aboriginal people in their communities to be involved in making decisions about their children's learning. Eight schools engaged in a community-led schools pathway and 14 Local Engagement and Decision-making committees were established in 2019.
- Forging Innovative Partnerships is a key priority in the ACT's Future of Education First Phase Implementation Plan with targeted activities underway including scoping of a community school, connecting early childhood services, and infrastructure to enable schools to operate as multi-service hubs.

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](#)).

Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership

The [Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership \(AITSL\)](#) is a company owned and funded by the Australian Government. AITSL has responsibility for supporting the implementation of the [Australian Professional Standards for Teachers](#) and the [Australian Professional Standard for Principals](#).

Supporting teaching, school leadership and school improvement is one of three reform directions within the National School Reform Agreement. Reviewing teacher workforce needs of the future and strengthening the initial teacher education accreditation system are national policy initiatives under this direction.

National teacher workforce strategy

In 2019, AITSL was tasked by Education Council with leading the development of the national teacher workforce strategy. This strategy will contribute to better workforce planning, at a national level, through the analysis of future teacher workforce needs and by supporting coordinated effort.

Strengthening the initial teacher education accreditation system

AITSL is leading work to strengthen the accreditation of initial teacher education programs across Australia. This aims to ensure graduate teachers have undertaken the highest quality training and professional practice.

In December 2019, Education Council endorsed amendments to the current standards for accreditation of initial teacher education programs, including explicit reference to reading instruction, including phonics, and an increase in the time allocated to English and literacy within primary initial teacher education programs.

In addition, AITSL is working to identify best practice approaches to developing and sustaining culturally safe learning and working environments for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, teachers, school leaders and ancillary staff. Findings will ultimately lead to the development of resources and tools to support the teaching profession.

In December 2019 Education Council endorsed terms of reference for AITSL to review the impact of the compliance and regulatory burden faced by teachers and school leaders with a view to sharing best practice. The review will build on existing initiatives and will require AITSL to work closely with state and territory education departments, and non-government school authorities throughout the review process.

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

High Achieving Teachers Program

The Australian Government has committed \$28.7 million in funding in 2020, 2021 and 2022 for two programs providing alternative pathways into teaching through the [High Achieving Teachers Program](#). The government has contracted Teach for Australia and La Trobe University to deliver teaching qualifications to high-achieving graduates in needed subject areas. While undertaking post-graduate teaching qualifications, more than 400 participants will be placed in Australian secondary schools experiencing teacher workforce shortages.

Future Leaders Program

In 2019 the Australian Government also committed \$7.54 million under the Future Leaders Program for *Teach for Australia* to pilot a new approach to building school leadership. The program will provide leadership development and training to high achieving teachers with leadership potential working in regional and rural primary and secondary schools.

State and territory initiatives

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



2.5 Strengthening early childhood education

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](#))³⁷.

National Partnership Agreement on Universal Access to Early Childhood Education

The Australian Government committed \$440.1 million for 2019 under the National Partnership Agreement on Universal Access to Early Childhood Education to support universal access to quality early childhood education programs. An additional \$449.5 million was committed for 2020.

In addition, the government committed to an independent review of current arrangements and engaged The Smith Family for approximately \$1 million to implement the Attendance Strategies Project to lift participation by Indigenous and vulnerable and disadvantaged children.

Early Years Learning Framework

The Australian Government supports targeted early learning initiatives aligned with the Early Years Learning Framework. Specific programs support the overall early learning strategy: for example, the Early Learning Languages Australia (ELLA) program makes language learning engaging and interesting to children in preschool and Foundation to Year 2 through interactive apps. In 2019, over 110,000 children in 3,500 preschool services across Australia took part in the ELLA program and are learning one of the eleven available languages.

The Australian Government has invested \$10.8 million to develop a phonics check to help identify those students who need more support in learning to read. This includes a hub for early literacy resources and targeted assistance for disadvantaged schools in 2021.

There are also three early learning initiatives that provide foundational STEM skills and promote positive experiences in science and mathematics for children aged three to five years: the Early Learning STEM Australia pilot, Let's Count, and Little Scientists.

In 2019, the Early Learning STEM Australia (ELSA) apps were extended to 111 preschool services, of which 65 continued from the 2018 pilot. ELSA has been extended until the end of 2020.

National Quality Framework

The National Quality Framework (NQF) drives continuous improvement in the nationally consistent quality, regulation and assessment of early childhood and child care services. 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 administering the NQF.

In December 2019, education ministers endorsed the development of a new children's education and care national workforce strategy to support the recruitment, retention, sustainability and quality of the early childhood services workforce.

³⁷ Early childhood education refers to programs that children may undertake in the years before they commence full-time schooling. This section includes information addressing the Melbourne Declaration commitment, but statistical information on pre-school early childhood education is outside the scope of this report.

State and territory initiatives

- NSW continued to implement the Start Strong reforms, including the introduction of funding for all three-year-olds in community preschools. NSW is committed to ensuring that all children in NSW can participate in 600 hours of quality preschool education in the year before school, regardless of their circumstances.
- In Victoria, early childhood education is being strengthened by the Education State Early Childhood Reform Plan, ready for kinder, ready for school, ready for life and major early childhood reform commitments, such as progressive implementation of three-year-old kindergarten, school readiness funding and the kindergarten quality improvement program.
- In Queensland
 - Fifty schools reflected on their early years practice using the National Quality Standard as a lens. Supporting Queensland's strategy to maximise continuity and alignment, participating schools identified current strengths and opportunities to refine pedagogy, organisational decisions and partnerships.
 - \$4 million was invested in 2017–2020 through the *Step up into Education initiative* to support children transitioning to school in disadvantaged areas.
 - Early Start and the P–10 Literacy continuum was used to monitor student learning and inform differentiation across the early years.
 - \$23.6 million was invested in literacy and numeracy support to students.
- In South Australia, support was provided for families and young children (particularly the vulnerable and at-risk) through the provision of health, wellbeing, and care services across the state, delivered through a network of children's centres and preschools.
- The [2018 results](#) for the Australian Early Development Census were reported in 2019 for children living in Western Australia and show continuation of an improving trend with more children developmentally on track compared with past results. The Western Australian Catholic sector increased its commitment to early years learning in all schools, with 20 schools offering out of school hours care as part of this commitment.
- The Northern Territory's Families as First Teachers program was expanded in a further seven communities, providing early learning and family support; and the NT Preschool Games continued to be implemented, building children's pre-numeracy skills and scientific literacy through an inquiry approach relevant to the context of Territorians.
- The ACT Government is delivering an Early Childhood Strategy to ensure equitable access to quality early childhood education, to facilitate transitions across settings, and to improve qualifications across the sector. The ACT continues to invest in the Preschool – Year 2 stage of schooling through the Early Years Literacy Initiative which provides professional learning, resources and in-school and system support for leaders, literacy coaches and teachers to implement 10 evidence-informed essential instructional practices in literacy. The ACT is delivering free quality early childhood education to 3-year-olds, commencing with those who need it most.
- The ACT Government is also maintaining strong partnerships between government and non-government parts of the education and care sector through the Early Childhood Advisory Council.

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

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](#)).

The Australian Government delivers a range of programs that support teaching and learning across various learning areas. For example, the government is reviewing civics and citizenship education resources and has increased some of the rebates to schools to take students in the middle and senior years (Years 4–12) to Canberra under the [Parliament and Civics Education Rebate \(PACER\)](#) program. This also addresses the Melbourne Declaration goal that young Australians become active and informed citizens.

The Australian Student Wellbeing Framework describes the elements required for school communities to promote safety and wellbeing. The framework is intended to be used by education systems and individual schools to inform their practices, programs and written materials, such as parent guides on how student wellbeing is supported in their school. It focuses on professional learning and ongoing evaluation and is available on the [Student Wellbeing Hub](#).

State and territory initiatives

- New South Wales continues to grow the evidence base and enhance student outcomes across the continuum of education. Examples include 'Tell Them from Me' surveys measuring student wellbeing, and 'What Works Best' research providing practical strategies and cases studies for teachers.
- Victoria committed \$183 million to its Middle Years Literacy and Numeracy Support initiative, which provides direct teaching support to secondary school students who are at risk of finishing school without the literacy and numeracy skills they need for future work or study. In 2019, direct support was provided to over 3,800 Year 10 students. The initiative will have supported approximately 23,000 students by the end of 2022.
- Queensland continued to provide support for middle years students through the Junior Secondary phase of education, the *P-10 Literacy continuum*, the P-12 curriculum, assessment and reporting framework and STEM initiatives including the Queensland Coding Academy, Premier's Coding Challenge, Virtual STEM Academies and Robotics Lending library.
- Three South Australian government schools were identified to pilot the transition of Year 7 into high school from 2020, with the aim of informing planning for the state-wide system move in 2022.
- The first round of 20 teachers commenced and completed the professional learning, support and mentoring provided through the Western Australian Centre for Excellence in the Explicit Teaching of Literacy internship program.
- The Northern Territory continued to use evidence-based practices to identify and support students at risk of disengaging during the transition to senior years. The Transition Network comprising seven schools (including two remote schools) researched and shared practices supporting student transition into, through and out of the middle years of schooling.
- The ACT's Future of Education Strategy saw the expansion of systemic support for schools to implement the Positive Behaviour for Learning (PBL) model. PBL is a whole-of-school approach to creating safe and supportive school environments through the identification of agreed values, behaviours and the application of consistent in-school and systemic responses.

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.

Senior Secondary Pathways Review

A review of senior secondary pathways into work, further education and training is a national policy initiative under the National School Reform Agreement.

The scope of the review includes senior secondary arrangements in Australia, particularly how they support student pathways to post-school destinations including through the Vocational Education and Training (VET) sector, university participation or direct employment, including through apprenticeships. It will also take account of the barriers faced by some students in pursuing certain pathways, including students with disability, students in regional, rural and remote areas, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. The Review panel was announced in August 2019 and is expected to report to Education Council in mid-2020. More information on the review is available from the [Education Council Pathways Review](#) website.

National Career Education Strategy

[Future Ready: A student focused National Career Education Strategy](#) was endorsed by the Education Council in February 2019. The aim of Future Ready is that every student in every school has access to high quality career education to make informed decisions about future education and training pathways. Future Ready is a practical framework for governments, schools, industry, and career education bodies to assess existing career education provision to prepare students for the future of work. A range of career education and VET resources are also available through the [Future Ready website](#).

VET delivered to secondary students

Programs for the delivery of VET to secondary students³⁸, 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 Framework³⁹ (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 2019 is reported in Part 3: Measuring 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](#).

³⁸ The Preparing Secondary Students for Work framework uses the term 'VET delivered to secondary students' to describe accredited VET undertaken by school students. This was previously known as 'VET in Schools' (VETiS).

³⁹ 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.

Education Council's [Preparing Secondary Students for Work: A framework for vocational learning and VET delivered to secondary students](#) provides that all secondary students should experience quality vocational learning and have access to quality VET courses that are integrated into secondary schooling and valued by students, parents, teachers and employers. The framework clarifies the distinction between vocational learning (career education and general work-related curriculum) and VET (nationally recognised training described within an industry-developed training package or an accredited course). It emphasises that VET delivered to secondary students is the same as all other VET, and that the same quality standards apply.

The framework, as well as a range of VET and career education tools and other resources, is published on the Australian Government's [My Skills website](#).⁴⁰

State and territory initiatives

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

State and territory initiatives in 2019 included:

- The NSW Government is implementing the Educational Pathways Pilot Program to improve career advice, increase school-based apprenticeships and traineeships and help disadvantaged and disengaged students further their education. Twenty-four schools are participating in the pilot that will help young people transition to post-school VET and higher education.
- The Victorian Government is supporting a range of programs including:
 - design and delivery of the \$26.2million VET–VCAL Workforce Reform Project, aimed at increasing supply and quality of teachers specialising in vocational education and training (VET)
 - funding of \$109 million to transform career education
 - a new Careers e-Portfolio for Year 9, assisted by professional diagnostic career assessment and one-on-one guidance
 - launching Head Start Apprenticeships and Traineeships as a new flexible model in senior secondary schooling, involving an optional additional year of school in 100 Victorian government schools
 - \$43.8 million to continue and expand the Navigator program to support disengaged young people to re-engage them back into education.
- The new Queensland senior assessment and tertiary entrance system commenced with Year 11 in 2019 with full implementation in 2020.
- Queensland has invested \$8 million from 2018-2022 to deliver the Link and Launch initiative to assist disengaged Year 12 school completers to engage in education, training or employment.
- In South Australia, a state-wide VET for School Students Policy released in October 2019 aims to introduce clear, articulated pathways, enhance career education and improve student outcomes of VET pathways for school students.

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.

- Schools in Western Australia were able to select from a panel of private registered training organisations to deliver vocational education and training at the school through an auspice arrangement using a standardised contract.
- The Western Australian Catholic sector continued to expand curriculum offerings in senior secondary schooling to cater for the post-school needs of all students. The Virtual School Network (ViSN) provides opportunities for school with smaller senior secondary cohorts to continue to provide the appropriate curriculum breadth.
- The Northern Territory implemented a data system monitoring student progress towards attainment of a senior secondary certificate of education or equivalent. Data captured allows schools and the education department to provide targeted support to students based on individual needs.
- In the ACT, the Future of Education First Implementation Plan includes a range of activities that support personalised learning and pathways for young people. This includes accelerated pathways for gifted and talented students, streamlined VET offerings, Future Skills Academies to build STEM capacity in ACT public schools, and enhanced student voices in decision making.



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



The [Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority \(ACARA\)](#) is an independent statutory authority responsible to Education Council, established in legislation⁴¹. ACARA's functions in curriculum and assessment are to:

- develop and administer a national school curriculum, including content of the curriculum and achievement standards, for school subjects specified in the Charter⁴²
- 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 three-dimensional design of the Foundation – Year 10 Australian Curriculum recognises the importance of disciplinary knowledge, skills and understanding within the eight learning areas, alongside general capabilities and cross-curriculum priorities.



⁴¹ *Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority Act (2008)*, Section 6. ACARA's data and reporting functions are listed in Part 2.10 Strengthening transparency and accountability.

⁴² Education Council determines the ACARA Charter. The current charter took effect from November 2016.

There are eight learning areas in the Australian curriculum, corresponding to those listed by education ministers in the Melbourne Declaration:⁴³

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

During 2019, ACARA continued to collect and review evidence to inform its advice to the Education Council on refinements to the Australian Curriculum, due in 2020.

ACARA invited submissions from state and territory departments of education and non-government school authorities to monitor the effectiveness of the Foundation – Year 10 Australian Curriculum. These consultations focused on the nature and scope of essential curriculum content; the place of general capabilities; the recognition of Australia's First Peoples within the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures cross-curriculum priority; and support for curriculum implementation.

Responses represented education departments, non-government school sectors and curriculum authorities in most states and territories. The overall findings suggest a strong desire from jurisdictions for refinement of the Australian Curriculum within its existing structure. The content and findings of the consultations are published in the [Monitoring the effectiveness of the Foundation – Year 10 Australian Curriculum 2019](#) report.

In December 2019 Education Council agreed to bring forward a review of the Australian Curriculum for Foundation – Year 10 to ensure it is meeting the needs of students. Ministers noted that it was timely to undertake a review, which will commence in 2020. There will be extensive consultation including with the teaching profession and key stakeholder groups.

Learning Progressions and Online Formative Assessment

Supporting students, student learning and student achievement is one of three reform directions within the National School Reform Agreement. Two national policy initiatives specified under this direction are:

- Enhancing the Australian Curriculum to support teacher assessment of student attainment and growth against clear descriptors
- Assisting teachers to monitor individual student progress and identify student learning needs through opt-in online and on demand student learning assessment tools with links to student learning resources, prioritising early years foundation skills.

⁴³ Schedule 1 of the ACARA charter specifies subjects in each of these learning areas for Foundation – Year 10 and for the areas of English, Mathematics, Science, and Humanities and Social Sciences for Years 11 and 12.

The implementation of these initiatives is being led by ACARA, ESA and AITSL, through the Learning Progressions and Online Formative Assessment initiative.

In 2019, ACARA, with ESA and AITSL, commenced a discovery phase to explore how learning progressions and formative assessment can enhance the capacity of teachers to make evidence-based decisions about their students' learning. The discovery phase was focused on three main areas: the development of learning progressions and aligned assessments; engagement with teachers to understand what they need and how they want to be able to work; and research into effective practices.

In December 2019, Education Council agreed that the initiative will proceed to a second, alpha, phase with strengthened engagement with the teaching profession and their representative bodies, so that the views and experiences of teachers, school leaders and their representatives guide the next phase of this initiative.

More information on this initiative is available from the [Online Formative Assessment Initiative](#) website.

Curriculum projects

In 2019 ACARA held workshops for teachers across the states and territories in English, Mathematics, Science, History and Languages. These workshops included professional learning in task design and allowed ACARA to collect a range of work samples. Work samples for F–4 Humanities and Social Sciences (HASS) were published in March 2019 and Years 5–6/7 HASS in June 2019. Work samples for F–10 German were published in March 2019, and F–10 Spanish in June 2019. In addition, new content elaborations were published to support teachers in integrating the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures cross-curriculum priority into the Foundation to Year 10 Australian Curriculum in Science.

ACARA was funded by the Australian Government to develop illustrations of practice that present exemplary practice in using the Australian Curriculum, in particular in the general capabilities, to implement career education programs. This project supports the National Career Education Strategy. Nine illustrations of practice were published in June 2019.

In 2019 ACARA continued to manage the National Innovation in Science Agenda, Digital Technologies in Focus project. Approximately 160 disadvantaged schools in urban, rural and remote locations across all states and territories, incorporating over 2,300 teachers and more than 30,000 students are participating in this project. Curriculum specialist support is provided for each of the schools, with the integration of technology being showcased through the publication of school stories, resources and professional learning modules on the Digital Technologies in Focus section of the Australian Curriculum website.

The Australian Government continued to support ACARA in its role in national curriculum and assessment. The government finalised a review into civics and citizenship education resources. A key outcome of the review is to implement a digital resources hub in 2020 to provide teachers with easy access to high quality, age appropriate and current civics and citizenship resources aligned with the Australian Curriculum.

The Australian Government also funded the Constitution Education Fund Australia including the development of resources for teachers that align with the Australian Curriculum: Humanities and Social Sciences.

In October 2019, NSW released the Interim Report for the Curriculum Review of the NSW state curriculum.

2.8.2 The National Assessment Program



The National Assessment Program consists of:

- annual national literacy and numeracy tests (National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy, NAPLAN)
- three-yearly sample assessments in science literacy, civics and citizenship, and information and communication technology (ICT) literacy
- Australia's participation in international assessments.

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

For national reporting purposes, key performance measures (KPMs) for participation and achievement in assessments within the NAP have been approved by education ministers and are specified in the *Measurement Framework for Schooling in Australia 2019*.

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. Students in these year levels are assessed through tests in reading, writing, language conventions (spelling, grammar and punctuation) and numeracy.

NAPLAN is a nationwide measure to see whether or not young Australians are developing the literacy and numeracy skills that provide the critical foundation for other learning and for their productive and rewarding participation in the community. The tests are aligned with the Australian Curriculum: English F–10 and the Australian Curriculum: Mathematics F–10.

ACARA is responsible for the development and oversight of the delivery of the NAPLAN tests. States and territories are responsible for the administration of the tests in each jurisdiction.

2019 was the twelfth year of NAPLAN testing.

NAPLAN result data for 2019 are available in interactive form on the 'Results' page of the ACARA [National Assessment Program website](#). The 'Results' page and the [NAPLAN National Report for 2019](#) provide comparisons of performance by state/territory, by student characteristics such as gender, Indigeneity, and parental education; and by school characteristics such as location. The 2019 NAPLAN National Report and Test Incident Report were published in April 2020.

KPMs for NAPLAN participation, and for achievement in reading, writing, and numeracy in 2019 are reported in Part 3: Measuring and reporting performance and in the National Report on Schooling data portal.

Proficient and highly proficient achievement standards for NAPLAN tests for reading, writing and numeracy are included as new KPMs for future reporting in the [Measurement Framework for Schooling in Australia 2019](#). However, the reporting and timing of these measures are dependent upon a full transition to NAPLAN online and separate endorsement of the standards by education ministers.

A joint review of NAPLAN was commissioned by the governments of New South Wales, Queensland, Victoria and the Australian Capital Territory in 2019. The final report will be provided to Education Council in 2020. The review includes consideration of the objectives of standardised testing and whether NAPLAN continues to meet these objectives.

NAPLAN Online

The national platform for online assessment was funded by the Australian Government and built by Education Services Australia (ESA). In 2019, ACARA continued to assist ESA in its work to enable the online assessment platform to successfully deliver NAPLAN Online, and to work with state and territory governments in building capacity to utilise platform functionality.

Approximately 50 per cent of students participating in NAPLAN undertook the tests online in 2019 in all states and territories. This was a significant increase from 15 per cent of students completing NAPLAN online in 2018, with the Northern Territory and Tasmania participating online for the first time. Results for paper and online tests are reported on the same NAPLAN assessment scale.

In June 2019, Education Council discussed the technical issues that affected the 2019 NAPLAN Online assessment, which resulted in significant connectivity disruptions across jurisdictions. Ministers received an update on an independent review commissioned by education officials into this disruption, which will support efforts to identify and address the issues for future assessments. Education Council agreed to extend the current plan for schools to transition to NAPLAN Online by one year to 2021.

Important note: In March 2020, Education Council agreed to cancel NAPLAN for 2020 due to COVID-19. Given the cancellation of NAPLAN 2020 and the impacts on schooling due to COVID-19, education ministers decided in June 2020 that the timeline for full transition to NAPLAN Online will be further deferred from 2021 to 2022.

In 2019 ACARA worked with accessibility experts to identify the feasibility of making NAPLAN online accessible to braille users. Feedback from the pilot study highlighted the complexity of delivering the online tests in braille and identified the need to further investigate the use of additional technologies such as screen readers.

The National Assessment Program – sample assessments

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

Important note: In June 2020 Education Council decided to postpone the NAP-ICTL sample assessment scheduled for 2020 by 12 months to 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The NAP sample assessment cycle will continue from 2021, resulting in a one-off four-year gap (as opposed to the normal three-year gap) in the time series for each of the sample assessments.

NAP – Civics and Citizenship

The sixth NAP – Civics and Citizenship assessment of a sample of Years 6 and 10 students was delivered online in October and November 2019, and, for the first time, incorporated aspects of the Australian Curriculum: History. The report on its key findings was released in January 2021. KPMs for Civics and Citizenship 2019 are reported in Part 3 Measuring performance and in the National Report on Schooling data portal.

NAP – Science Literacy

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

NAP – ICT Literacy

The most recent NAP – ICT Literacy sample assessment took place in 2017.

National Assessment Program – international assessments

Three international National Assessment Program (NAP) sample assessments are used as a basis for KPMs for schooling.

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 current cycle of TIMSS (2019) took place in Australia in late 2018. Results were released in December 2020. Key performance measures for TIMSS 2019 are reported in Part 3 Measuring performance.

Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA)

PISA takes place every three years and assesses 15-year-olds in reading, mathematical literacy and scientific literacy. PISA is developed and administered internationally by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). The most recent cycle was PISA 2018. Results were released in December 2019.

Important note: In 2020, OECD member countries and associates decided to postpone the PISA 2021 assessment to 2022 and the PISA 2024 assessment to 2025 to reflect post-COVID difficulties.

Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS)

PIRLS is a five-yearly assessment of reading literacy for Year 4 students. The IEA is responsible for PIRLS. Results for the most recent cycle of PIRLS (2016) were released in December 2017. The next cycle of PIRLS is planned for 2021.

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

For most non-government schools⁴⁴, 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.

Further information is provided in Part 1.5 School funding.

Learning for Life program

The Australian Government also provided \$48 million over four years (2016–17 to 2019–20) to expand The Smith Family's Learning for Life program. This program provides financial, practical and emotional support to disadvantaged young Australians in primary, secondary schools and tertiary institutions.

The funding is supporting school students in over 90 disadvantaged communities across Australia. As at December 2019, almost 20,000 additional school students were supported, bringing the total number of students accessing the program to over 52,000.

Indigenous Advancement Strategy Children and Schooling Program

During 2019, the Australian Government established the National Indigenous Australians Agency (NIAA). The agency provides policy leadership and advice on issues, initiatives and programs with the aim of improving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education outcomes.

Through the Children and Schooling Program of the Indigenous Advancement Strategy the agency provides over \$220 million each year in targeted complementary funding to improve Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander educational outcomes.

⁴⁴ The capacity to contribute does not apply to government schools, non-government special schools or special assistance schools, non-government majority Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander schools, or non-government sole provider schools.

The Remote School Attendance Strategy (RSAS) is a community-based strategy to help students attend school. During 2019 the RSAS operated in 84 schools across remote Northern Territory, New South Wales, Queensland, South Australia and Western Australia.

The 2019–20 Commonwealth budget included \$200 million funding for an Indigenous Youth Education Package to provide funding for scholarships, academies and mentoring for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people. The package has invested in a suite of projects providing over 20,000 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students with increased access to secondary education opportunities and additional support and mentoring throughout their studies.

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

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

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.

Improving the national evidence base is one of three policy reform directions specified in the National Schools Reform Agreement, which came into operation in 2019. Agreed policy initiatives in this area are implementing a national unique student identifier (USI); establishing an independent national evidence institute to inform teacher practice, system improvement and policy development; and improving national data quality, consistency and collection.

The Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority

The data collection and reporting functions of ACARA⁴⁵ are to:

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

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

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

⁴⁵ ACARA's functions in curriculum and assessment are listed in Part 2.8: Promoting world-class curriculum and assessment

Measurement Framework for Schooling in Australia

In 2019, ACARA completed a periodic review of the Measurement Framework for Schooling in Australia, in consultation with jurisdictions and school sectors. The review updated the framework to the reporting years 2019–2023 and revisited the key performance measures (KPMs) for schooling in light of national policy decisions, including the National Schools Reform Agreement.

As specified in the National Schools Reform Agreement, the revised framework includes additional KPMs for proficient and highly proficient achievement standards for NAPLAN tests in reading, writing and numeracy. However, the reporting and timing of these measures are dependent upon a full transition to NAPLAN online and separate endorsement of the standards by education ministers.⁴⁶ The [Measurement Framework for Schooling in Australia 2019](#) was approved by Education Council in December 2019 and published on the ACARA website in January 2020.

ACARA will further revise the measurement framework in 2020 to reflect the Alice Springs (Mparntwe) Education Declaration, subject to Education Council endorsement.

National Report on Schooling in Australia

In 2019, ACARA published the *National Report on Schooling in Australia 2017* following endorsement by Education Council. The *National Report on Schooling in Australia 2018* was prepared in consultation with representatives of state and territory education authorities, other government agencies, and non-government school sectors for approval and publication in early 2020.

National Report on Schooling data portal

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

It includes current statistics and time series data on school numbers, enrolments, staffing and funding, and data on the agreed KPMs for schooling, including attendance, retention, assessment and Year 12 or equivalent attainment. The portal allows readers to view and download data at the national level, and 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. Updated data for existing data sets was added in April and December 2019.

My School

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

In February 2019, Education Council agreed on the content and form of the 2018 NAPLAN results to be published on the *My School* website. Ministers agreed that, as 2018 was the first year of transition to NAPLAN Online, *My School* would include information on NAPLAN results as in previous years, with school mean and student gain data presented for schools that undertook NAPLAN Online. ACARA worked with states and territories to finalise the presentation of this data.

My School was updated in April 2019 with 2018 school profile and population data, 2018 NAPLAN results and 2017 school financial information. Student attendance rates for Semester 1, 2019 and 2018 data for

⁴⁶ Given the cancellation of NAPLAN 2020 due to COVID-19 and other impacts on schooling, education ministers decided in June 2020 that the timeline for full transition to NAPLAN Online will be deferred from 2021 to 2022.

senior secondary outcomes and VET in schools were added in November 2019. Student attendance rates for Term 3, 2019 were added in December 2019.

NAPLAN data reporting on *My School*

In June 2019, Education Council received the report of the NAPLAN Reporting Review. The report recommended reviewing the quantity and focus of NAPLAN data displayed on *My School* and providing clear guidance to schools, the public and students about the purposes and proper uses of NAPLAN and *My School*.

In December 2019, Ministers agreed that the focus of NAPLAN reporting will move from school averages to reporting on the gains made by students at the school, focussing on student progress. A number of complex terms will be better explained, and visual changes will be made to assist parents and carers interpret data. Further advice regarding specific changes will be provided to parents and school communities ahead of the March 2020 *My School* release.

National Evidence Institute

Establishing a National Evidence Institute to inform teacher practice, system improvement and policy development is a policy initiative under the National School Reform Agreement. The new institute will have a practitioner focus supporting better teaching and learning practice in schools and early learning settings. In December 2019, Education Council committed to establish the new National Evidence Institute as a joint ministerial company. This institute will translate educational research into practice in a way that supports teachers in the classroom. The institute will commence operations in 2020.

Unique Student Identifier

Establishing a national unique student identifier (USI)⁴⁷ is a policy initiative under the National School Reform Agreement. In December 2019, Education Council agreed on design criteria and a model for the generation and operation of a national USI for the Australian school sector that will support better understanding of student progression and improve the national education evidence base. The USI model agreed by Council allows systems and schools to maintain their existing arrangements and map local identifiers to a national identifier. Senior officials will oversee the development of a detailed implementation plan before providing advice back to Council in 2020 on a recommended approach to implementation.

Australian Schools List website

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

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

⁴⁷ A unique single number for every student, that will help share information between schools, school sectors and states without using a student's name.

Teacher workforce data

In 2019, the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) continued to implement the Australian Teacher Workforce Data collection that will provide the first national, longitudinal picture of the teacher workforce. By linking data on initial teacher education students and current teachers, the data collection will provide information to assist in managing workforce needs and understanding teacher supply and experiences.

Nationally Consistent Collection of Data on School Students with Disability

Since 2015, all schools have participated in the Nationally Consistent Collection of Data (NCCD) on School Students with Disability under the authority of the Education Council. Since 2018 the NCCD has been used to calculate the Commonwealth school funding loading for students with disability.

Selected data from the NCCD is published in the National Report on Schooling data portal.



Part 3:

Measuring and reporting performance



Part 3 reports on the performance of Australian schooling in 2019, using the nationally agreed key performance measures (KPMs) for schooling specified in the *Measurement Framework for Schooling in Australia 2019*.

3.1 Measurement Framework for Schooling in Australia

The [Measurement Framework for Schooling in Australia 2019](#) provides the basis for national reporting on the performance of schooling in 2019, as agreed by education ministers, and is the main focus of the statistical data included in this report.

The measurement framework defines 32 national key performance measures (KPMs) for schooling, specifies the data sources for these KPMs and outlines the reporting cycle for the period 2019–2023.

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

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

- strategic measures 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, 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.

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

Nineteen KPMs are reported for 2019.

The measures are reported at the national level, and by various breakdowns, such as state and territory, school sector, school year and Indigenous status. For relevant KPMs, time series for the previous ten years 2009–2018 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.

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

The remaining thirteen KPMs do not apply to the 2019 reporting year:

- enrolment (reported for census years only)
- student achievement in the NAP international assessments PISA and PIRLS
- NAP sample assessments Science Literacy and Information and Communication Technology Literacy
- proficient and highly proficient standards for NAP reading, writing and numeracy, planned for reporting from 2022⁴⁸

⁴⁸ The reporting of proficiency standards, and the timing of this, are dependent upon a full transition to NAPLAN online, and on separate endorsement of the standards by Education Council.

3.2 Student participation

Part 3.2 reports on KPMs for student enrolment, attendance and apparent retention specified in the [Measurement Framework for Schooling in Australia 2019](#).

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, as 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.

Data for this KPM is drawn from the five-yearly Australian Census of Population and Housing⁴⁹. At the most recent Census in 2016, the national enrolment rate for 6–15-year-olds was 99.4 per cent. Data disaggregated by state and territory, and other disaggregations for 2011 and 2016, is available in the National Report on Schooling data portal.⁵⁰

At approaching 100 per cent, KPM1(a) provides evidence that long-standing policies for universal access to schooling, and for compulsory education for this age group are implemented in practice. This addresses 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).

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.

⁴⁹ 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.

⁵⁰ Prior to 2019, an annual measure for the enrolment KPM, based on the National Schools Statistics Collection (NSSC), was also reported. From 2019, this measure has been deleted as a measure of the KPM because of statistical inconsistencies. However, data drawn from this source is reported in the National Report on Schooling data portal.

3.2.2 Attendance

Like enrolment rates, the national KPMs for attendance in the [Measurement Framework for Schooling in Australia 2019](#) relate to students in the compulsory years of schooling. However, attendance measures are specified in terms of school year (Years 1–10) rather than by student age. Where KPM 1(a) reports on the proportion of children enrolled in school, KPMs 1(b) and 1(c) report on the proportion of available time that students spend at school once enrolled.

Key Performance Measure 1(b)

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

Key Performance Measure 1(c)

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

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

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

In 2019, nationally comparable student attendance data was collected, as set out in the national standards, for all schools in all jurisdictions.⁵¹

⁵¹ Data on student attendance levels (KPM 1(c)) could not be collected for NSW government schools prior to 2018.

Attendance rates

Table 3.1 reports KPM 1(b) by state and territory and school sector for 2019.

Table 3.1

Student attendance rates, Years 1–10, by state and territory and school sector, Australia, 2019 (per cent)

School sector	NSW	Vic	Qld	SA	WA	Tas	NT	ACT	Australia
Government	91.1	91.5	90.6	90.4	90.2	90.0	78.9	90.1	90.7
Catholic	92.8	92.6	91.9	92.6	92.3	91.8	77.7	92.2	92.4
Independent	93.3	93.4	93.0	93.1	92.9	93.5	85.7	93.0	93.1
All	91.7	92.0	91.1	91.2	90.9	90.8	79.7	91.1	91.4

Note:

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](#).

Table 3.2 reports this KPM nationally, by school sector, for 2014–2019.

Table 3.2

Student attendance rates, Years 1–10, by school sector, Australia, 2014–2019 (per cent)

School sector	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Government	91.9	92.0	91.9	91.8	91.3	90.7
Catholic	93.9	93.6	93.6	93.4	92.9	92.4
Independent	94.3	93.9	93.8	93.7	93.5	93.1
All	92.7	92.6	92.5	92.4	91.9	91.4

Notes:

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

2018 and 2019 attendance rates for NSW and Australia are not fully comparable to previous years, due to changes in the calculation method for NSW government schools in 2018.

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 2019 was 91.4 per cent. The fall of 0.5 percentage points from 91.9 per cent in 2018 was not statistically significant. The Key Performance Measures Dashboard in the [National Report on Schooling data portal](#) reports a downward trend over the period 2014–2019 of -0.2 percentage points per annum.

All states and territories reported reduced attendance rates in 2019, with the largest falls in the Northern Territory (1.1 percentage points); Western Australia (0.9 percentage points) and Victoria (0.7 percentage points).

The average attendance rate for Years 1–10 in 2019 exceeded 90 per cent in all states and territories except the Northern Territory, where the much lower average attendance rate (63.3 per cent) for the high proportion⁵² of Indigenous students led to an average rate for all students of 79.7 per cent.

The national average attendance rate in 2019 was 90.7 per cent for government schools and 92.7 per cent for non-government schools, with average percentage rates for all sectors in the low–mid 90s in each of the years 2014–2019.

A common characteristic across all states and territories was lower average attendance rates in Years 7–10 than in Years 1–6. At the national level in 2019, the average attendance rate for Years 7–10 was 89.9 per cent compared with 92.4 per cent for Years 1–6. There was little difference in the 2019 national average attendance rate for girls (91.6 per cent) and boys (91.2 per cent). Average attendance rates were higher in major cities (92.1 per cent) than in remote areas (85.8 per cent), and lowest in very remote areas. (70.5 per cent).⁵³

Table 3.3 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 2019.

Table 3.3

Student attendance rates, Years 1–10, by state and territory and Indigenous status, Australia, 2014 and 2019 (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
All students	93.6	93.0	92.2	92.1	91.7	92.1	82.3	92.3	92.7
Gap Indigenous/non-Indigenous (percentage points)	6.4	6.3	7.6	11.5	15.3	3.9	20.7	7.3	9.7
2019									
Indigenous	84.8	85.4	83.5	79.8	75.4	87.0	63.3	82.9	81.5
Non-Indigenous	92.2	92.1	91.9	91.8	92.1	91.2	90.7	91.4	92.0
All students	91.7	92.0	91.1	91.2	90.9	90.8	79.7	91.1	91.4
Gap Indigenous/non-Indigenous (percentage points)	7.4	6.7	8.4	12.0	16.7	4.2	27.4	8.5	10.5
Change in gap 2014–19 (percentage points)	1.0	0.4	0.8	0.5	1.4	0.3	6.7	1.2	0.8

⁵² As at August 2019, 40.1 per cent of full-time students in Years 1–10 in the Northern Territory were identified as Indigenous, compared with 6.0 per cent of full-time students in Years 1–10 across Australia. (ABS, *Schools, Australia, 2019, table 42 (b)*)

⁵³ Student attendance rates disaggregated by year level, sex and geolocation are available in the National Report on Schooling data portal, Student attendance data set.

Notes:

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

2018 and 2019 attendance rates for NSW and Australia are not fully comparable to previous years, due to changes in the calculation method for NSW government schools in 2018.

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

There was a decrease of 2.0 percentage points in the average Indigenous school attendance rate from 2014 (83.5 per cent) to 2019 (81.5 per cent). The average national attendance rate for non-Indigenous students also fell – but by less than for Indigenous students, increasing the gap between them.

In 2019, at the national level, there was a 10.5 percentage point gap between the average attendance rates for Indigenous and non-Indigenous students, a rise of 0.8 percentage points since 2014. Above average gaps in attendance rates were again recorded in the Northern Territory, Western Australia and South Australia.

Geographic differences were 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 92.3 per cent, in remote schools 90.5 per cent and in very remote schools 90.0 per cent. But for Indigenous students, these rates were 84.4 per cent (major cities), 74.3 per cent (remote) and 61.1 per cent (very remote), a difference of 23.3 percentage points between Indigenous students in major cities and in very remote schools, and a gap of 28.9 percentage points between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students in schools in very remote areas.⁵⁴

The average attendance rate for Indigenous students was lower for older year groups: 84.5 per cent for Years 1–6 but 76.5 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 locations, with an average national attendance rate of only 43.9 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.⁵⁵

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 3.4 shows KPM 1(c) by state and territory, by school sector, for 2019.

⁵⁴ National Report on Schooling data portal, Student attendance data set

⁵⁵ National Report on Schooling data portal, Student attendance data set

Table 3.4

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, 2019 (per cent)

School sector	NSW	Vic	Qld	SA	WA	Tas	NT	ACT	Australia
Government	73.1	72.6	69.4	70.1	69.5	69.5	47.6	67.1	71.1
Catholic	77.1	76.4	73.1	76.7	76.9	73.0	48.3	72.5	75.7
Independent	79.7	80.3	78.7	77.9	78.8	79.8	64.4	79.3	79.2
All students	74.9	74.4	71.3	72.5	72.1	71.4	50.0	70.5	73.1

Notes:

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

2018 was the first year for which data on student attendance levels could be collected for NSW government schools. As a result, the attendance levels (KPM 1(c)) reported for NSW and for Australia for 2018 and 2019 are not comparable with those for the previous three years.

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

In 2019, 73.1 per cent of Australian students in Years 1–10 attended school for at least 90 per cent of school days. The proportion of students whose attendance rate was at least 90 per cent was between 70 and 75 per cent in each of the states and territories, except for the Northern Territory, where it was 50.0 per cent. As with KPM 1(b), this result is due to significantly lower levels of attendance for Indigenous students in remote and very remote areas of the Territory. The proportions in all states and territories were higher for non-government than for government school students.

The decrease of 2.1 percentage points in the national measure for this KPM from 75.2 per cent in 2018 to 73.1 per cent in 2019 was not statistically significant. Long-term trend data for Australia and New South Wales is not available because of breaks in these time series. Trend data for the period 2015–2019 for other states and territories is available in the Key Performance Measures data set in the National Report on Schooling data portal.

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 2019 confirms that a much lower proportion of Indigenous than non-Indigenous students were present at school for 90 per cent or more of the expected number of days. Table 3.5 shows KPM 1(c) by state and territory, by Indigenous status, for 2019 and the gap in this measure between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students.

Table 3.5

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, 2019 (per cent)

State/territory	NSW	Vic	Qld	SA	WA	Tas	NT	ACT	Australia
Indigenous	53.0	53.5	48.3	42.2	36.2	59.5	22.4	45.6	46.9
Non-Indigenous	76.4	74.8	73.5	74.1	74.9	72.6	68.6	71.3	74.8
All students	74.9	74.4	71.3	72.5	72.1	71.4	50.0	70.5	73.1
Gap Indigenous/non-Indigenous (percentage points)	23.4	21.3	25.2	31.9	38.7	13.1	46.2	25.7	27.9

Notes:

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

2018 was the first year for which data on student attendance levels could be collected for NSW government schools. As a result, the attendance levels (KPM 1(c)) reported for NSW and for Australia for 2018 and 2019 are not comparable with those for the previous three years.

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

In 2019, less than half of Australia's Indigenous students attended school for 90 per cent of the time or more, with a gap of 27.9 percentage points between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students. The gaps in the Northern Territory, Western Australia and South Australia were above the national average.

Closing the gap

In 2014, the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) agreed to a target to close the gap in school attendance between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students within five years (by the end of 2018). The base year for this target is 2014. Progress towards this target is measured using the average attendance rate for Years 1–10 (KPM 1(b)). The final assessment of the target is based on Semester 1, 2019 attendance data.

Closing the Gap target

Close the gap in school attendance between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students by the end of 2018

The [Closing the Gap Report 2020](#) reports that the target to halve the gap for Indigenous children in school attendance within five years (by 2018) was not met nationally or in any state or territory. It also notes that, 'based on Semester 1 school attendance rates for Years 1 to 10, attendance has not improved for Indigenous students over the past five years to 2019.'

Further commentary on student attendance data in relation to the target is available in the *Closing the Gap Report 2020*.

3.2.3 Apparent retention

Apparent retention rates estimate the progression of students through school over several years through several grades / year levels. They measure the proportion of a year group or cohort that is still enrolled in that cohort after one or more calendar years.

These rates are designated as 'apparent' because they are based on aggregate enrolment data and do not record the progression of individual students.⁵⁶ Apparent retention rates do not distinguish between students progressing at a 'normal' rate of one grade per calendar year and students who repeat a grade or are promoted, thus moving between cohorts; students who choose to adopt flexible study patterns in senior years; or students who join or leave a cohort through migration.

As such, apparent retention rates measure the net change in the size of a cohort as students leave or join it. This makes them imperfect as a 'tracking mechanism' for individual students, but provides an approximate measure of student progression for the majority of a year group. Apparent retention rates are more accurate at national and at state and territory level and less accurate for geographic areas with mobile populations and for individual schools.

KPM 1(e) in the [Measurement Framework for Schooling in Australia 2019](#) measures the apparent retention of students from Year 10 to Year 12.

Key Performance Measure 1(e)

Apparent retention rate from Year 10 to Year 12

Table 3.6 and figure 3.1 show KPM 1 (e) by school sector for the period 2009–2019.

Table 3.6

Apparent retention rates (uncapped)⁵⁷, Year 10 – Year 12, by school sector, Australia, 2009–2019 (per cent)

School sector	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Government	71.4	74.1	75.0	74.8	76.7	78.6	79.2	79.5	79.8	79.2	78.0
Catholic	80.5	81.8	83.9	84.2	85.4	86.8	86.3	86.4	86.5	85.4	84.9
Independent	91.0	89.8	90.1	89.0	88.9	90.9	90.0	89.7	90.9	91.1	91.0
All	76.7	78.5	79.5	79.3	80.7	82.5	82.7	82.9	83.3	82.8	82.0

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 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.

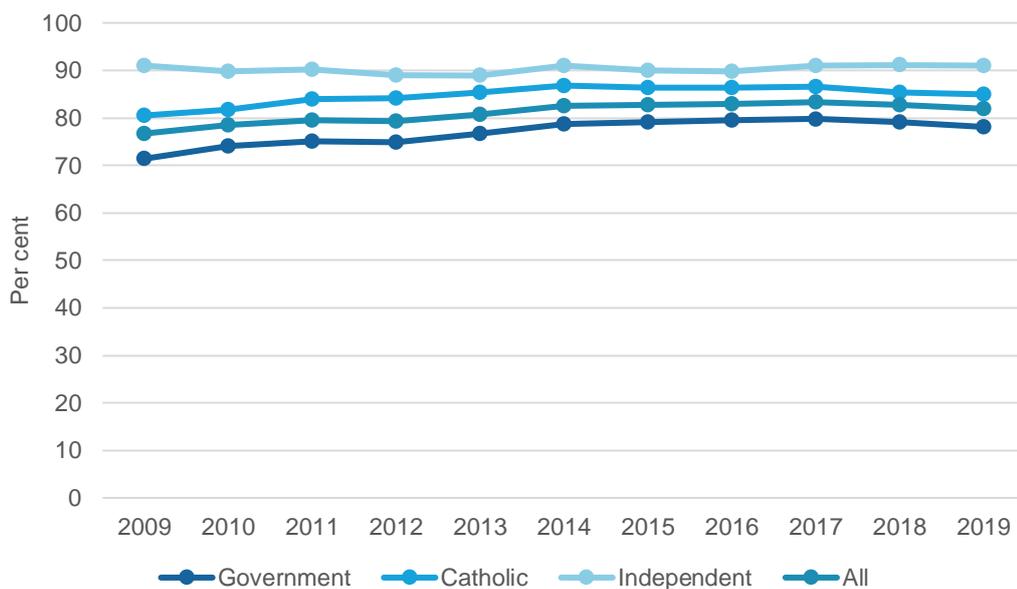
Source: ABS, Cat. No. 4221.0, *Schools, Australia*, 2019 and previous releases. See also National Report on Schooling data portal

⁵⁶ Unit record enrolment data by student is not currently collected at the national level for all states and territories or for non-government schools, so measures that rely on tracking of individual students cannot currently be derived nationally.

⁵⁷ Since 2015 Schools Australia has included apparent retention rates that are capped at 100 per cent, as well as the uncapped apparent retention rates reported historically. This report continues to publish uncapped apparent retention rates because, due to student movements and international migration, it is quite possible for a state, school sector or school to have higher enrolments in Year 12 than in Year 10 two years previously, resulting in apparent retention rates above 100 per cent. Uncapped rates are more suitable for undertaking time series analysis of the data.

Figure 3.1

Apparent retention rates (uncapped), Year 10 – Year 12, by school sector, Australia, 2009–2019 (per cent)



Source: ABS, Cat. No. 4221.0, *Schools, Australia*, 2019 and previous releases

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.⁵⁸

After five successive years of growth, the national apparent retention rate from Year 10 to Year 12 decreased by 0.5 percentage points in 2018, and by a further 0.8 percentage points in 2019. The fall in the measure between 2018 and 2019 was not statistically significant.

The Key Performance Measures data set in the National Report on Schooling data portal reports a long-term upward trend in this measure of 0.5 percentage points per annum for the period 2010–2019.

Apparent retention rates from Year 10 to Year 12 fell within all three school sectors in 2019, with the fall most pronounced in the government sector. This suggests that a long period of convergence (2009–2016) in these rates between the three school sectors may have ended. This saw the gap in the rates between the government and independent sectors narrow from 19.6 percentage points in 2009 to 10.2 percentage points in 2016, but, by 2019, this had widened to 13.0 percentage points, a net reduction in this gap of 6.6 percentage points over the ten-year period 2009–2019.

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

Caution is also advised when interpreting apparent retention rates disaggregated by state and territory, as they do not distinguish movements of students between jurisdictions, net migration for the age cohort,

⁵⁸ These included the mandatory requirement for all young people to participate in schooling until they complete Year 10, and the requirement to participate full time in schooling or other education, training or employment, or a combination of these activities, until the age of 17. These were implemented progressively in all states and territories between 2006 and 2010.

or numbers of overseas students enrolling in senior secondary schooling, from students progressing from Year 10 to 12 within a state.

Table 3.7 shows KPM 1 (e) by state and territory.

Table 3.7

Apparent retention rates (uncapped), Year 10 – Year 12 by state and territory, Australia, 2009, 2018 and 2019 (per cent) and changes 2009–2019 and 2018–2019 (percentage points)

State/territory	NSW	Vic	Qld	SA	WA	Tas	NT	ACT	Australia
2009	73.5	81.2	78.8	77.5	73.5	64.1	62.3	88.8	76.7
2018	76.3	84.7	87.8	90.8	85.0	73.2	65.1	90.0	82.8
2019	75.8	83.3	88.1	89.1	85.5	74.3	64.1	89.8	82.0
Change 2009–19	2.3	2.1	9.3	11.6	12.0	10.2	1.8	1.0	5.3
Change 2018–19	-0.5	-1.4	0.3	-1.7	0.5	1.1	-1.0	-0.2	-0.8

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 2019 is Year 10 in 2017. 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 and trend analysis by state and territory, see the National Report on Schooling data portal Key Performance Measures data set.

Source: ABS, Cat. No. 4221.0, *Schools, Australia*, 2018 and previous releases.

In 2019, KPM 1 (e) fell in five of the eight states and territories as well as nationally.

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

- Rates at the state and territory level can be inflated or deflated by interstate migration, including students transferring from one state to another to undertake senior secondary schooling. These movements are not taken into account 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 in order to meet participation requirements. This varies between states and territories because of historical differences 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 12.⁵⁹
- 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

⁵⁹ 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.

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 net increase in retention from Year 10 to Year 12 over the last ten years is in line with the policy intent of all Australian governments. However, as noted above, falls in the last two years may indicate that this trend has come to an end.



Table 3.8 and figure 3.2 report this KPM, by Indigenous status, for the period 2009–2019.

Table 3.8

Apparent retention rates (uncapped), Year 10 to Year 12, by Indigenous status (per cent) and gap Indigenous/non-Indigenous (percentage points) Australia, 2009–2019

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Indigenous	50.1	52.5	53.5	53.3	55.8	60.4	60.6	60.9	63.0	62.6	60.0
Non-Indigenous	77.7	79.5	80.6	80.4	81.9	83.6	83.8	84.0	84.3	83.9	83.2
Gap (Indigenous/ non-Indigenous)	27.6	27.0	27.1	27.1	26.1	23.2	23.2	23.1	21.3	21.3	23.2

Notes:

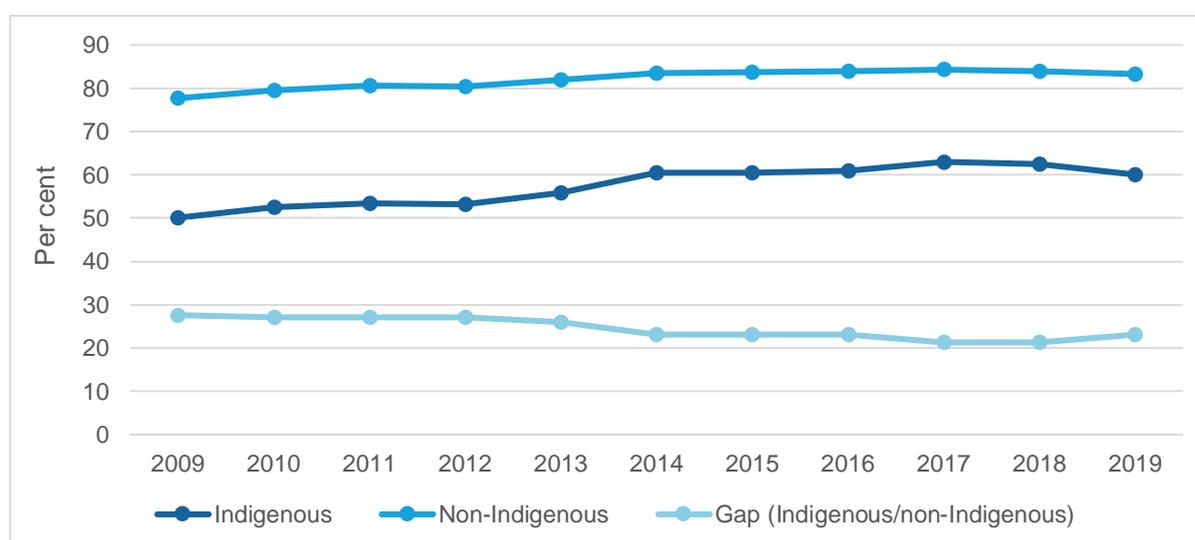
The apparent retention rate measures the number of full-time school students in a designated level/year of schooling as a percentage of their respective cohort group in a base year. The base year for apparent retention rates Year 10 to Year 12 in 2019 is Year 10 in 2017. Counts of students are as at 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*, 2019 and previous releases.

Figure 3.2

Apparent retention rates (uncapped), Year 10 to Year 12, by Indigenous status, Australia, 2009–2019 (per cent)



Source: ABS, Cat. No. 4221.0, *Schools, Australia*, 2019 and previous releases.

In 2019, the apparent retention rate from Year 10 to Year 12 for Indigenous students decreased for the second year in a row. The fall of 2.6 percentage points in 2019 followed a fall of 0.4 percentage points in 2018.

Over a longer period, Year 10 to Year 12 retention for Indigenous students has increased substantially – by 9.9 percentage points since 2009. This is more than the rise for non-Indigenous students of

5.5 percentage points over this period, leading to a narrowing of the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students by 4.4 percentage points.

At 23.2 percentage points, the gap widened by 1.9 percentage points in 2019, with Indigenous students still significantly less likely to proceed to Year 12 than other students.

Table 3.9 reports KPM 1(e) by state and territory for 2009, 2018 and 2019. The table displays variations between states and territories in apparent retention rates for both Indigenous students and non-Indigenous students and in the percentage point gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous rates.

Table 3.9

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) 2009, 2018 and 2019

2009	NSW	Vic	Qld	SA	WA	Tas	NT	ACT	Australia
Indigenous	43.7	49.1	60.6	63.9	41.3	39.8	42.2	67.9	50.1
Non-Indigenous	74.5	81.4	79.8	77.9	75.5	65.7	72.4	89.2	77.7
Gap (Indigenous/non-Indigenous)	30.8	32.3	19.2	14.0	34.2	25.9	30.2	21.3	27.6
2018	NSW	Vic	Qld	SA	WA	Tas	NT	ACT	Australia
Indigenous	49.3	66.9	74.9	85.5	63.7	62.3	44.2	92.6	62.6
Non-Indigenous	77.8	84.9	88.8	91.0	86.3	74.1	78.1	89.9	83.9
Gap (Indigenous/non-Indigenous)	28.5	18.0	13.9	5.5	22.6	11.8	33.9	-2.7	21.3
2019	NSW	Vic	Qld	SA	WA	Tas	NT	ACT	Australia
Indigenous	48.5	65.4	72.9	78.3	66.0	61.0	43.8	80.7	60.0
Non-Indigenous	77.4	83.6	89.3	89.6	86.7	75.5	77.7	90.1	83.2
Gap (Indigenous/non-Indigenous)	28.9	18.2	16.4	11.3	20.7	14.5	33.9	9.4	23.2
Change in gap 2009-2019	-1.9	-14.1	-2.8	-2.7	-13.5	-11.4	3.7	-11.9	-4.4
Change in gap 2018-2019	0.4	0.2	2.5	5.8	-1.9	2.7	0.0	12.1	1.9

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 from Year 10 to 12 in 2019 is Year 10 in 2017. 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 in some states and territories can affect results for these jurisdictions.

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

Source: ABS, Cat. No. 4221.0, *Schools, Australia*, 2019 and earlier releases.

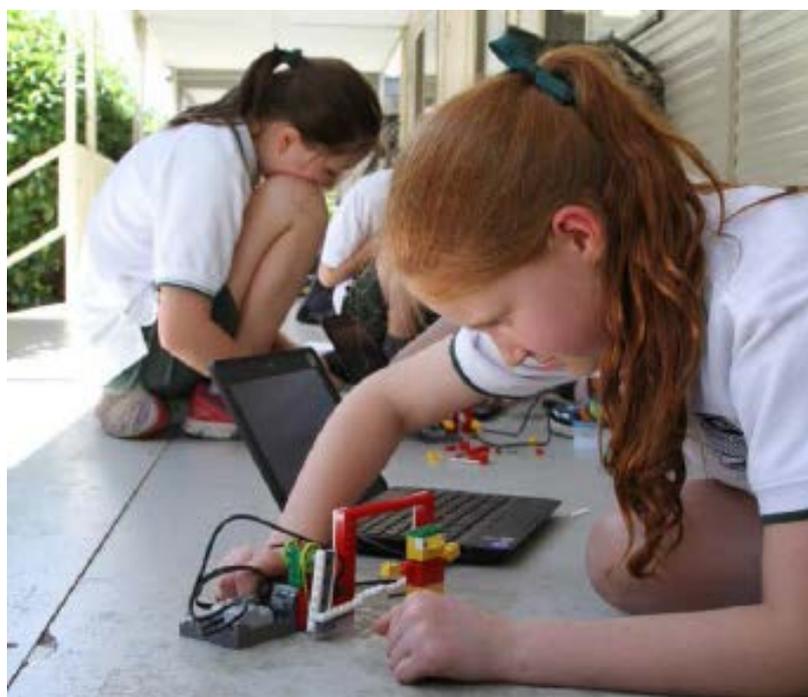
In 2019, the apparent retention rate from Year 10 to Year 12 for Indigenous students fell in all states and territories except Western Australia. The gap in apparent retention between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students widened in all states and territories except Western Australia, where it narrowed by 1.9 percentage points, and the Northern Territory, where it was unchanged.

As well as factors affecting the state-by-state comparison of apparent retention rates overall, variations between jurisdictions in retention rates for Indigenous students may be due to:

- 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
- the geographic distribution of the Indigenous population, especially its concentration in rural and remote communities.

Further information on gaps in outcomes between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous Australians, including progress towards COAG Closing the Gap targets for education, is provided in the [Closing the Gap Report 2020](#).

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



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 2019](#).

For 2019, this includes KPMs for NAP – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN), NAP sample assessment – Civics and Citizenship and mathematics and science literacy from the international Trends in Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS).

3.3.1 NAP – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN)

In 2019, the twelfth year of national literacy and numeracy testing, Year 3, 5, 7 and 9 students in Australia were assessed on the test domains of reading, writing, language conventions (spelling, grammar and punctuation) and numeracy. KPMs are approved for reading, writing and numeracy.

The [2019 NAPLAN National Report](#) and the [NAPLAN results](#) page of the NAP website provide nationally comparable information on the 2019 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 and parental education and by school location.

This section reports on NAPLAN 2019 and discusses trends in NAPLAN achievement over time.

Trends are calculated from the line of best fit in a graph of all relevant data in a time series. The average annual change is calculated from the line of best fit and a test is performed to determine if a trend is evident. This differs from the comparisons between various years published in the 2019 NAPLAN National Report and on the NAPLAN results page: these are comparisons between two points in time rather than trends over time. For the trends in NAPLAN mean scale scores (KPMs 2b, 2d and 3b) an additional criterion has been applied, requiring the average annual change to exceed a minimum effect size, equivalent to 1.0 score points. This approach addresses the understatement of measurement error in the annual change and reduces the likelihood that some trends in the mean scale score may simply result from chance variation.

Trend data is provided in the Key Performance Measures data set in the National Report on Schooling data portal.

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

2019 was the second year of the transition from NAPLAN paper tests to NAPLAN tests conducted online. In 2019, approximately 50 per cent of students took NAPLAN online. Online test results were equated with the paper test results and are reported on the same NAPLAN assessment scale.

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 KPMs in the [Measurement Framework for Schooling in Australia 2019](#).

NAPLAN participation

Key performance measure 1(d)

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

Table 3.10 reports KPM 1(d) for 2019.

Table 3.10

Proportion of students participating in at least one NAPLAN test for Years 3, 5, 7 and 9, 2019 (per cent)

	Year 3	Year 5	Year 7	Year 9	All
Proportion of students participating in at least one NAPLAN test (%)	96.1	96.5	96.0	92.9	95.4

Notes:

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

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

Source: ACARA, unpublished data

From 2019, the KPM for NAPLAN participation is reported as participation in at least one NAPLAN assessment.

- Year 9 had the lowest participation in NAPLAN, decreasing from 96.0% in 2008 to 92.9% in 2019.
- While participation across all years has dropped since 2008 an increase in participation was recorded for the first time between 2018 and 2019. Participation of all students in at least one NAPLAN assessment increased from 95.2% in 2018 to 95.4% in 2019.
- Additional information on participation by test domain and by subgroups such as Indigenous students is reported on the results tab of [NAP website](#) and the [2019 NAPLAN National Report](#). This includes data on absences and withdrawal rates.
- As with previous years, participation rates in NAPLAN in 2019 were lower for Indigenous students than for non-Indigenous students.

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

Reading

Key performance measure 2(a)

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

Key performance measure 2(b)

NAPLAN mean scale scores for reading

Table 3.11 reports KPMs 2(a) and 2(b) for Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 in 2019.

Table 3.11

Summary for reading for Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 for Australia, proportion at or above national minimum standards (per cent); mean scale scores, 2019

	Year 3	Year 5	Year 7	Year 9
Proportion of students at or above national minimum standard (%)	95.9	94.7	94.5	91.8
CI \pm	0.2	0.2	0.3	0.4
Mean scale score	432.2	506.1	546.3	581.3
(standard deviation)	(86.0)	(70.7)	(67.4)	(67.2)

Notes:

Exempt students do not sit the test. For reporting purposes, they are deemed to be below the national minimum standard.

CI = confidence interval.

Confidence intervals reflect the level of uncertainty associated with the measurement of achievement. They define a range of values within which the true level of achievement is likely to lie. This table shows 95 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 that the true value lies between 89.5 per cent and 90.5 per cent.

Sources: ACARA, *National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy, Achievement in Reading, Writing, Language Conventions and Numeracy, National Report for 2019*; ACARA (unpublished data).

Summary of changes in reading between 2018 and 2019:

- At the national level, 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 score for reading for any year level.

Summary of trends in reading for the period 2008–2019:

- For Year 3 and 5 in Victoria, Queensland, Western Australia and the ACT, Year 3 in the Northern Territory and Year 9 in Western Australia there were upward trends in the proportions of students achieving at or above the national minimum standard.
- Across all jurisdictions, for Year 3 and Year 5 there were upward trends in mean scale scores for reading. This was also the case for Year 7 in Queensland.

- For Indigenous students across Australia in Years 3 and 5, there were upward trends both in the proportions of students achieving at or above the national minimum standard and in the mean scale scores.

Table 3.12 summarises the national long-term trends in reading achievement from 2008 to 2019.

Table 3.12

Summary of long-term trends in reading achievement for Years 3, 5, 7 and 9, Australia, proportion of students at or above national minimum standard (per cent); mean scale scores, 2008 to 2019

	Year 3	Year 5	Year 7	Year 9
Average annual change in proportion above national minimum standard (percentage points)	0.3	0.3	0.0	0.0
Trend	↑	↑	↔	↔
Average annual change in mean scale score (points on NAPLAN scale)	2.6	2.0	0.5	0.5
Trend	↑	↑	↔	↔

Notes

↑ = the long-term trend was positive/upward

↓ = the long-term trend was negative/downward

↔ = a long-term trend was not evident

Source: ACARA, National Report on Schooling data portal

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 3.13 reports on KPM 2(c) and 2(d) for Years 3, 5, 7 and 9, 2019.

Table 3.13

Summary for writing for Years 3, 5, 7 and 9, Australia: proportion of students achieving at or above the national minimum standard (per cent); mean scale scores, 2019

	Year 3	Year 5	Year 7	Year 9
Proportion of students at or above national minimum standard (%)	96.3	92.8	89.4	82.4
CI \pm	0.2	0.2	0.4	0.6
Mean scale score	422.5	474.1	513.2	548.8
(standard deviation)	63.1	64.5	71.0	78.7

Notes:

Exempt students were not assessed and were deemed to have not 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.

Sources: ACARA, *National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy, Achievement in Reading, Writing, Language Conventions and Numeracy, National Report for 2019*; ACARA, unpublished data.

The writing genre assessed in NAPLAN 2019 was narrative writing. Students and teachers were not advised in advance whether the genre would be narrative or persuasive. Since 2016, there have been two writing prompts: one for Years 3 and 5; and one for Years 7 and 9. A common writing scale for both genres has only been in place since 2011, hence reporting on writing uses 2011 as the base year for measuring long-term trends.

Summary of changes in writing between 2018 and 2019:

- Between 2018 and 2019 the proportions of students achieving the national minimum standard in writing in Years 3 and 5 showed statistically significant increases nationally.
- The proportions of students achieving at or above national minimum standard also increased between 2018 and 2019 for Year 3 and Year 5 students in New South Wales, Queensland, South Australia, Western Australia and Tasmania; for Year 5 students in Victoria and the ACT; and for Year 9 students in South Australia and Tasmania.
- Mean scale scores for Year 3 students nationally increased significantly between 2018 and 2019.

- Year 3 students in New South Wales, Queensland, South Australia, Western Australia and Tasmania showed statistically significant improvement in mean scale scores from 2018 to 2019. This was also the case for Year 5 students in Tasmania and Year 9 students in South Australia and Tasmania.
- Mean scale scores for Indigenous students in Year 3 and Year 9 increased significantly from 2018 to 2019 at the national level.

For the period 2011–2019, there were no evident trends nationally in the proportions of students achieving at or above national minimum standard in writing. There were downward long-term trends in mean scale scores for Years 7 and 9 in writing. This data is summarised in table 3.14.

Table 3.14

Summary of long-term trends in writing achievement for Years 3, 5, 7 and 9, Australia: proportion of students at or above national minimum standard (per cent); mean scale scores, 2011–2019

	Year 3	Year 5	Year 7	Year 9
Average annual change in proportion at or above national minimum standard (percentage points)	0.1	0.0	-0.3	-0.3
Trend	↔	↔	↔	↔
Average annual change in mean scale score (points on NAPLAN scale)	0.2	-1.2	-1.8	-1.8
Trend	↔	↔	↓	↓

Notes

↑ = the long-term trend was positive/upward

↓ = the long-term trend was negative/downward

↔ = a long-term trend was not evident

Source: ACARA, National Report on Schooling data portal

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, 2019.

Table 3.15

Summary for numeracy for Years 3, 5, 7 and 9, Australia: proportion of students at or above national minimum standard (per cent); mean scale scores, 2019

	Year 3	Year 5	Year 7	Year 9
Proportion of students at or above national minimum standard (%)	95.5	95.4	94.3	96.0
CI \pm	0.2	0.2	0.3	0.3
Mean scale score	408.1	495.9	554.4	592.1
(standard deviation)	(73.9)	(67.1)	(75.5)	(63.9)

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.

Sources: ACARA, *National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy, Achievement in Reading, Writing, Language Conventions and Numeracy, National Report for 2019*; ACARA (unpublished data).

There were no statistically significant changes in the KPMs for numeracy at the national level between 2018 and 2019.

Summary of trends in numeracy for the period 2008–2019:

Over the period 2008–2019 there were upward trends in the proportions of Indigenous students in Years 5 and 9 achieving at or above the national minimum standard for numeracy. This was also the case for Year 5 students overall.

There were also upward trends in the proportions of students achieving the national minimum standard for numeracy in several states and territories, particularly for the Year 5 and Year 9 cohorts. These included:

- Year 3 in Queensland and the ACT.
- Year 5 in Victoria, Queensland, South Australia, Western Australia, Tasmania and the Australian Capital Territory

- Year 9 in Queensland, Western Australia, Tasmania and the Northern Territory

At the national level, there were upward trends in mean scale scores for numeracy for Years 3 and 5 overall, and for Indigenous students in Years 3, 5 and 9.

Upward trends in mean scale scores 2008–2019 were also evident for:

- Year 3 in Queensland, South Australia and Western Australia.
- Year 5 in Queensland, South Australia, Western Australia and the Northern Territory.
- Year 7 in Western Australia .
- Year 9 in Queensland and Western Australia.

A summary of trends in numeracy at the national level for the period 2008–2019 is shown in table 3.16.

Table 3.16

Summary of long-term trends in numeracy achievement for Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 for Australia: proportion of students at or above national minimum standard (per cent); mean scale scores, 2008–2019

	Year 3	Year 5	Year 7	Year 9
Average annual change in proportion above national minimum standard (percentage points)	0.1	0.2	0.0	0.2
Trend	↔	↑	↔	↔
Average annual change in mean scale score (points on NAPLAN scale)	1.3	1.3	0.8	0.9
Trend	↑	↑	↔	↔

Notes:

↑ = the long-term trend was positive/upward

↓ = the long-term trend was negative/downward

↔ = a long-term trend was not evident

Source: ACARA, National Report on Schooling data portal

3.3.2 NAP Sample – Civics and Citizenship

The National Assessment Program Civics and Citizenship (NAP-CC) is undertaken by sample groups of Year 6 and Year 10 students. Assessments have been held every three years since 2004 and have been delivered online from 2013.

Civics refers to the study of Australia's system of government, historical and current governance practices; Australian identity and culture; democratic processes; the judicial system; and the impact of local, state, national, regional and global influences. Citizenship relates to being part of a group that carries with it a sense of belonging or identity and includes rights and responsibilities, duties and privileges.

In 2019, the NAP-CC incorporated, for the first time, aspects of the Australian Curriculum: History. The assessment was delivered online during October and November to a stratified random sample of schools: 5,611 Year 6 students in 332 schools and 4,510 Year 10 students in 295 schools participated in the assessment.

The proportion of participating students achieving at or above the national proficient standard (level 2 for Year 6 and level 3 for Year 10) is the KPM for NAP Civics and Citizenship at each year level.

Key performance measure 5

Proportion of participating students in Years 6 and 10 achieving at or above the national proficient standard in NAP – Civics and Citizenship

In 2019, 53% of participating Year 6 students achieved at or above the national proficient standard and 38% of Year 10 students achieved at or above the national proficient standard. These were statistically similar to achievement levels in the previous assessment in 2016.

KPM 5 for the six assessments from 2004 is shown in table 3.17.

Table 3.17

Proportion of students achieving at or above the national proficient standard (Year 6 – level 2; Year 10 – level 3), Civics and Citizenship 2004–2019, Australia (per cent)

	2004	2007	2010	2013	2016	2019
Year 6 (%)	50	53	52	52	55	53
CI±	3.0	2.8	2.4	2.4	2.4	2.0
Year 10 (%)	39	42	49	44	38	38
CI±	2.8	2.6	3.7	2.6	2.7	2.6

Notes:

CI = confidence interval. Confidence intervals reflect the level of uncertainty associated with the measurement of achievement. They define a range of values within which the true level of achievement is likely to lie. 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 that the true value lies between 89.5 per cent and 90.5 per cent.

Source: ACARA, National Assessment Program – Civics and Citizenship

See also National Report on Schooling data portal.

Further information on student achievement in civics and citizenship in 2019, including by state and territory, is provided in the National Report on Schooling data portal and in the National Assessment Program – Civics and Citizenship report 2019.

3.3.3 NAP international assessment – Trends in Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS)

The Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) is an international comparative study of Year 4 and Year 8 student achievement in mathematics and science. Australia has participated in TIMSS since it commenced in 1995; 2019 marked the seventh TIMSS assessment. The TIMSS assessment is broadly designed to align with the mathematics and science curricula in participating countries. TIMSS was administered late in 2018 in the southern hemisphere and in mid-2019 in the northern hemisphere.

A total of 58 countries participated in Year 4 TIMSS and 39 countries participated in Year 8 TIMSS. In Australia, a sample of 5,890 students from 287 primary schools and 9,060 Year 8 students from 284 secondary schools undertook the assessment. This was a representative sample of schools with students from a range of backgrounds and locations around Australia comprising approximately 1.9 per cent of Year 4 students and 3.1 per cent of Year 8 students.

In Australia, TIMSS is managed by the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER), which also publishes the reports on Australian students. Reports and further information are available on the [ACER website](#).

The proportions of students achieving at or above the national proficient standard (intermediate international benchmarks) in TIMSS are KPMs in the Measurement Framework for Schooling in Australia.

Key performance measure 3(d)

Proportion of participating students in Years 4 and 8 achieving at or above the national proficient standard on the TIMSS mathematics scales

Key performance measure 4(c)

Proportion of participating students in Years 4 and 8 achieving at or above the national proficient standard on the TIMSS science scales

The proportions of Australian students achieving at or above the national proficient standards in mathematics and science in TIMSS 2019, and in the three previous TIMSS assessments, are shown in table 3.18.

In 2019, 69.6 per cent of Year 4 students achieved at or above the mathematics proficient standard. This was not significantly different to the achievement in 2015.

For students in Year 8, 68.0 per cent of students achieved at or above the proficient standard in mathematics. Once again, this was not significantly different to the proportion achieving at or above the proficient standard in 2015.

For science in 2019, the proportion of Year 4 students achieving at or above the proficient standard (78.3 per cent) was not significantly higher than in 2015.

In 2019, 74.2 per cent of students in Year 8 were at or above the proficient standard or above in science. This was a significant increase compared to the proportion proficient in 2015 (68.8 per cent).

Table 3.18

Proportion of students achieving at or above the national proficient standard, TIMSS, 2007–2019 (per cent)

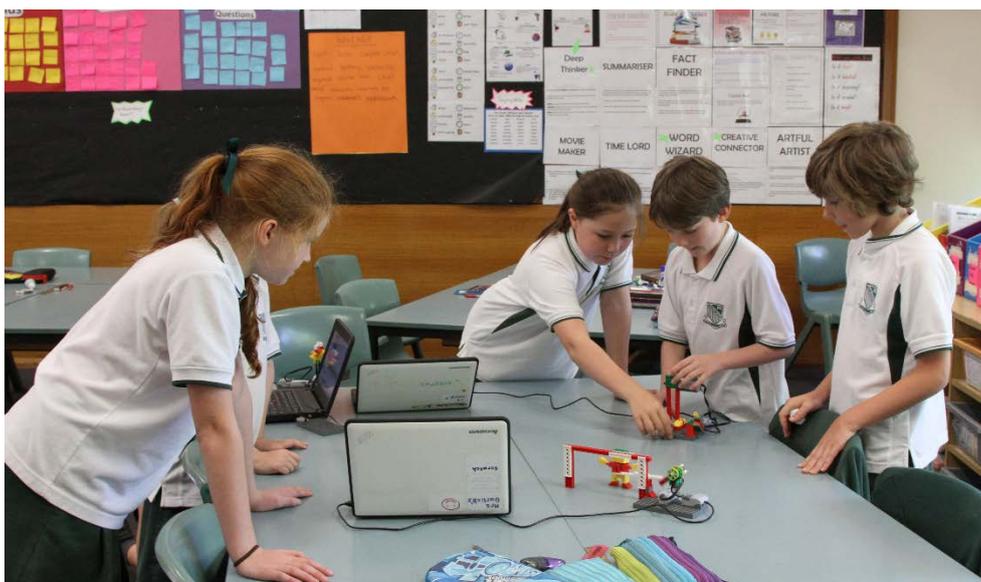
	2007	2011	2015	2019
Mathematics				
Year 4	70.5	70.2	70.2	69.6
CI±	3.5	2.8	2.6	2.5
Year 8	60.8	62.9	64.4	68.0
CI±	3.5	4.6	3.1	2.9
Science				
Year 4	76.4	71.6	75.4	78.3
CI±	3.3	2.7	2.7	2.3
Year 8	69.9	70.3	68.8	74.2
CI±	3.2	3.8	2.6	2.4

Notes

CI = confidence interval.

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

Source: ACER, unpublished.



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/accredited modules) for VET qualifications in different industries and occupations are included in national training packages or accredited courses, 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 \(AQF\)](#)⁶⁰, which also provides guidelines for Senior Secondary Certificate of Education qualifications (Year 12 qualifications) and qualifications in the higher education sector.

Secondary school students in all states and territories can undertake nationally recognised VET courses⁶¹ as part of their school program, usually in the senior years of schooling, as part of the Senior Secondary Certificate of Education in each jurisdiction.⁶²

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.

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.

⁶⁰ 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, III and IV, Diploma and Bachelor Degree are examples of qualifications within the AQF.

⁶¹ The term 'VET delivered to secondary students' has replaced the term 'VET in Schools (VETiS)' historically used for these programs. However, in 2019, the term 'VET in Schools' continued to be used in the VET sector to identify VET delivered to secondary students and for data collection and reporting purposes.

⁶² See glossary for the names of senior secondary certificates of education issued by each state and territory.

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.

VET KPM and program measures

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 (or accredited course module) in a VET qualification at AQF Certificate II or above.⁶³

Key performance measure 1(f)

Participation of young people, including secondary students, in VET

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

The 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.



⁶³ AQF Certificate II is regarded as entry level training for employment.

Table 3.19 and figure 3.3 show national data for this KPM for the period 2009–2019.

Table 3.19

Number and proportion of 15–19-year-olds who successfully completed at least one unit of competency/module as a part of a VET qualification at AQF Certificate II or above, Australia, 2009–2019

Australia	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Number of 15–19-year-olds successfully completing at least one unit of competency at AQF II or above ('000)	359.1	374.0	399.2	418.5	395.5	494.8	438.0	414.6	413.4	402.0	409.0
15–19-year-old population ('000)	1,462.4	1,460.0	1,453.5	1,459.7	1,466.7	1,474.7	1,469.9	1,475.2	1,482.6	1,490.7	1,499.8
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	27.0	27.3

Notes:

'Unit of competency' includes training package units of competency and nationally accredited VET modules. 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 AVETMISS⁶⁴ data on all nationally accredited training. This constitutes a break in the time series.

From January 2015, VET students have been allocated a unique student identifier (USI). From 2015 onwards, NCVER has applied a de-duplication process, using the USI, to better estimate the counts of students participating in VET activity. This constitutes a further break in the time series between 2014 and 2015.

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

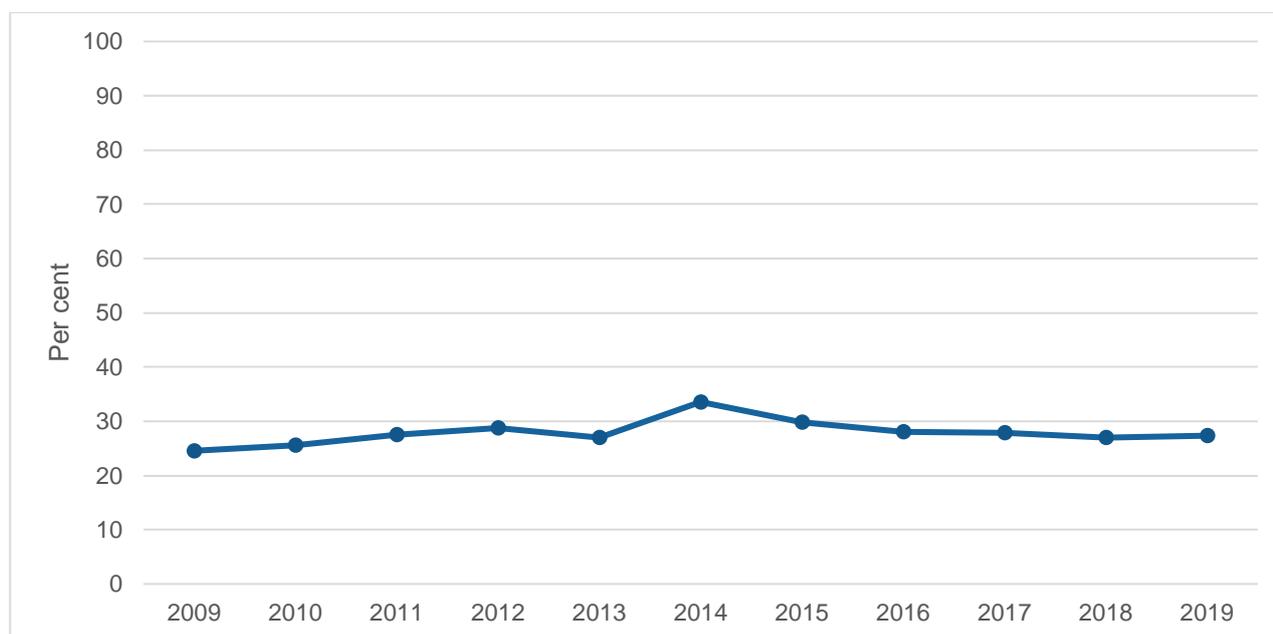
Sources: NCVER, National VET in Schools Collection 2009–19; NCVER, National VET Provider Collection 2009–19; ABS, Cat. No. 3101.0, *Australian Demographic Statistics*, December 2019 (release date 18/06/2020).

See also National Report on Schooling data portal

⁶⁴ 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, 2009–2019



Sources: NCVET, National VET in Schools Collection 2009–19; NCVET, National VET Provider Collection 2009–1; ABS, Cat. No. 3101.0, *Australian Demographic Statistics* December 2019 (release date 18/06/2020)

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

There is a further break in the series between 2014 and 2015, following the introduction of a national unique student identifier (USI) (student number) for VET students. The USI allows all training activity undertaken by a student to be electronically linked, irrespective of where the training took place. This has enabled the removal of duplicate student entries from 2015, resulting in reductions in the KPM and a break from data reported for 2014.⁶⁵

The increase in the KPM between 2018 and 2019 is not statistically significant. There is a downward trend of -0.6 percentage points per annum over the period 2015–2019.

Data for KPM 1(f) by state and territory, disaggregated by Indigenous status, sex, geolocation and language background is provided in the National Report on Schooling data portal.

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

⁶⁵ However, as data for many VET in Schools students has been provided without a USI, some duplication may occur in the count of these students.

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 3.20 reports VET program measure 1 for 2019 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 disaggregated by Indigenous status, sex, geolocation and language background.

Table 3.20

Number of 15–19-year-olds participating in VET at AQF Certificate II or above, by field of education of major course, Australia, 2019

Field of education	Number of students
01 – Natural and physical sciences	1,954
02 – Information technology	13,832
03 – Engineering and related technologies	66,398
04 – Architecture and building	44,659
05 – Agriculture, environmental and related studies	12,801
06 – Health	22,894
07 – Education	5,085
08 – Management and commerce	67,286
09 – Society and culture	68,714
10 – Creative arts	27,583
11 – Food, hospitality and personal services	58,749
12 – Mixed field programmes	17,610
13 – Other	1,463
Total	409,028

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 2019; NCVER, National VET Provider Collection 2019.

VET program measure 2

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

Table 3.21 reports on the number VET qualifications completed by 15–19-year-olds in 2019, by the AQF level of qualifications.

Table 3.21

VET qualifications completed by 15–19-year-olds, by qualification level of major course, Australia, 2019

Qualification level	Number
Certificate I	24,396
Certificate II	112,232
Certificate III	66,068
Certificate IV	11,622
Diploma or higher	11,442
Total	225,760

Notes:

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

Numbers of students and numbers of qualifications should not be compared.

Sources: NCVER, National VET in Schools Collection 2019; NCVER, National VET Provider Collection 2019.

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

VET delivered to secondary students

KPM 1(f) and the VET program measures include all 15–19-year-old students undertaking VET. The data below refers to VET delivered to 15–19-year-old secondary school students. For the purposes of the national VET in Schools data collection⁶⁶, these are students who are undertaking accredited VET as a part of a Senior Secondary Certificate of Education.⁶⁷ This data is not restricted to Certificate II or above, or to students who have successfully completed at least one unit of competency.

⁶⁶ 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.

⁶⁷ In some jurisdictions, students who have left school (that is, they are not secondary students) but are receiving credit for a VET course towards a senior secondary certificate may be included in these counts. To the extent that these students are included, this inflates the data as a measure of the number of secondary school students undertaking VET.

Table 3.21 shows the number of 15–19-year-old students undertaking VET delivered to secondary students each year in the period 2009–2019 with school-based apprentices and trainees disaggregated.

Table 3.22

Number of 15–19-year-old students undertaking VET in Schools / VET delivered to secondary students, Australia, 2009–2019

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
School-based apprentices and trainees ('000)	20.9	17.3	18.1	22.5	21.7	20.5	19.7	16.9	19.7	18.0	17.0
Other VET in Schools program students ('000)	195.8	203.6	218.3	219.8	218.1	216.1	226.8	216.9	218.0	208.9	214.9
Total VET in Schools students ('000)	216.7	220.9	236.4	242.3	239.7	236.6	246.5	233.7	237.7	226.8	232.0

Note:

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, 2019; NCVER, VET in Schools 2019; NCVER, [Data builder](#).

In 2019, there were 231,950 students aged 15–19 years enrolled in VET in Schools / VET delivered to secondary students. Based on this data, it is estimated that nearly half of senior secondary students undertook one or more VET courses in 2019 as part of their Senior Secondary Certificate.⁶⁸

Of these students, 17,035 (7.3 per cent) were undertaking a school-based apprenticeship or traineeship. The majority of students (56.3 per cent) were enrolled in Certificate II qualifications and a further 34.3 per cent were enrolled in Certificate III qualifications.

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

Between 2018 and 2019, the number of VET in Schools students aged 15–19 years increased by 2.3 per cent. There was a fall of 5.3 per cent in the number of students undertaking school-based apprenticeships and traineeships.

Further detailed information, including data disaggregated by state and territory, data definitions and data quality issues, are provided in the NCVER publication [VET in Schools 2019](#) and in the NCVER [Data builder](#).

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](#).

⁶⁸ This estimate is calculated as the number of VET in Schools students as a proportion of the number of senior secondary students (full-time plus part time) as reported in part 1.2 (table 1.4) of this report. It is an estimate only, as there are some disparities between the counting of VET in Schools students and of Year 11 and 12 enrolments in the NSSC. For example: Some VET students undertaking training with more than VET provider may be counted more than once in the VET in Schools data collection; 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 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.

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 2019](#) specifies that data drawn from the Census of Population and Housing⁶⁹, will also be reported for census years.

Key performance measure 1(g)

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

Key performance measure 1(h)

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

⁶⁹ 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 most recent census was in 2016.

KPMs 1(g) and 1(h) are shown for the period 2009–2019 and for census years 2011 and 2016 in table 3.23. Figure 3.4 illustrates KPMs 1(g) and 1(h), as measured by SEW, over the period 2009–2019.

Table 3.23

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, 2009–2019 (per cent)

Calendar year	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
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	88.6	87.0
CI±	1.4	1.5	1.4	1.0	1.2	1.1	0.3	1.3	1.0	1.2	0.9
Full-time participation rates for 15–19-year-olds (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	74.6	75.5
CI±	2.0	1.6	1.5	1.7	1.1	1.6	1.7	1.5	1.5	1.6	1.8
Full-time participation rates for 20–24-year-olds (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 decrease in KPM 1(g) from 2018 to 2019 was statistically significant. The increase in KPM 1(h) in 2019 was not statistically significant.

Trend data for the annual SEW measures of these KPMs for the period 2008–2019 is included in the Key Performance Measures data set in the National Report on Schooling data portal. This shows a long-term upward trend in KPM 1(g) of 0.3 percentage points per annum, and a long-term downward trend in KPM 1(h) of -0.4 percentage points per annum over this period.

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 2019; ABS, *Census of Population and Housing*, 2011, 2016.

See also National Report on Schooling data portal.

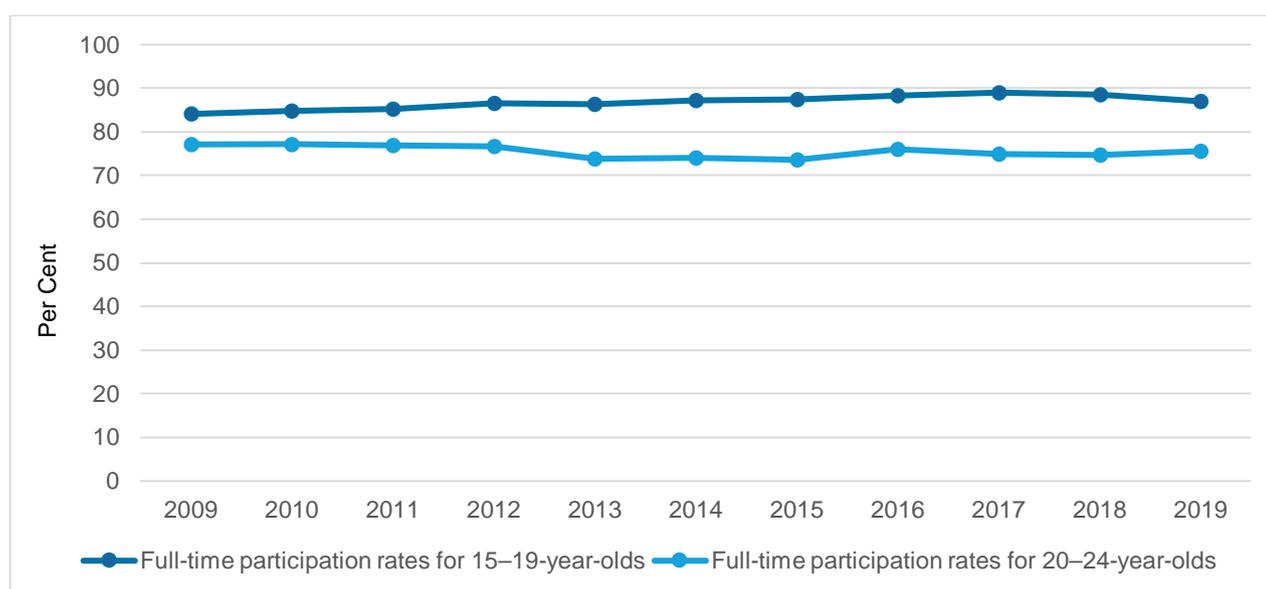
As shown in table 3.23, full-time participation rates for young people in their mid–late teens were consistently higher than for those in their early to mid-20s. This is to be expected, as the 15–19-year age group includes a high proportion of secondary school students for whom full-time participation in education, training or work is compulsory, at least until age 17⁷⁰.

The decrease of 1.6 percentage points in KPM 1(g) from 2018 to 2019 was statistically significant. The increase of 0.9 percentage points in KPM 1(h) in 2019 was not statistically significant.

Since 2009, there has been a net increase in full-time participation for 15–19-year-olds from 84.1 per cent to 87.0 per cent, but a net fall in the participation rate for 20–24-year-olds from 77.1 per cent to 75.5 per cent⁷¹, despite a rise over this period in participation in education and training by this age group.

Figure 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, 2009–2019 (per cent)



Note:

Refer to table 3.23 for confidence intervals.

Source: ABS, Cat. No. 6227.0, *Education and Work*, May 2019.

Trend data for the annual SEW measures of these KPMs for the period 2008–2019 is included in the Key Performance Measures data set in the National Report on Schooling data portal. This shows a long-term upward trend in KPM 1(g) of 0.3 percentage points per annum, and a long-term downward trend in KPM 1(h) of -0.4 percentage points per annum over this period.

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, and the performance of schooling in facilitating this. It excludes people who were still at school from both the numerator and the denominator.

⁷⁰ Based on SEW data, 82.6 per cent of 15–19-year-olds in 2019 were engaged in formal study.

⁷¹ 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

SEW data for this KPM is reported for the period 2009–2019 in table 3.24 and figure 3.5. Census data for the years 2011 and 2016 is reported in table 3.24.

Table 3.24

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, 2009–2019 (per cent)

Calendar year	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
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	74.3	74.0
CI±	1.7	1.5	1.4	1.3	1.1	1.4	1.4	1.2	1.3	1.6	1.6
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 fall in the measure in 2019 is not statistically significant. There is no evident trend in the measure over the period 2008–2019

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.

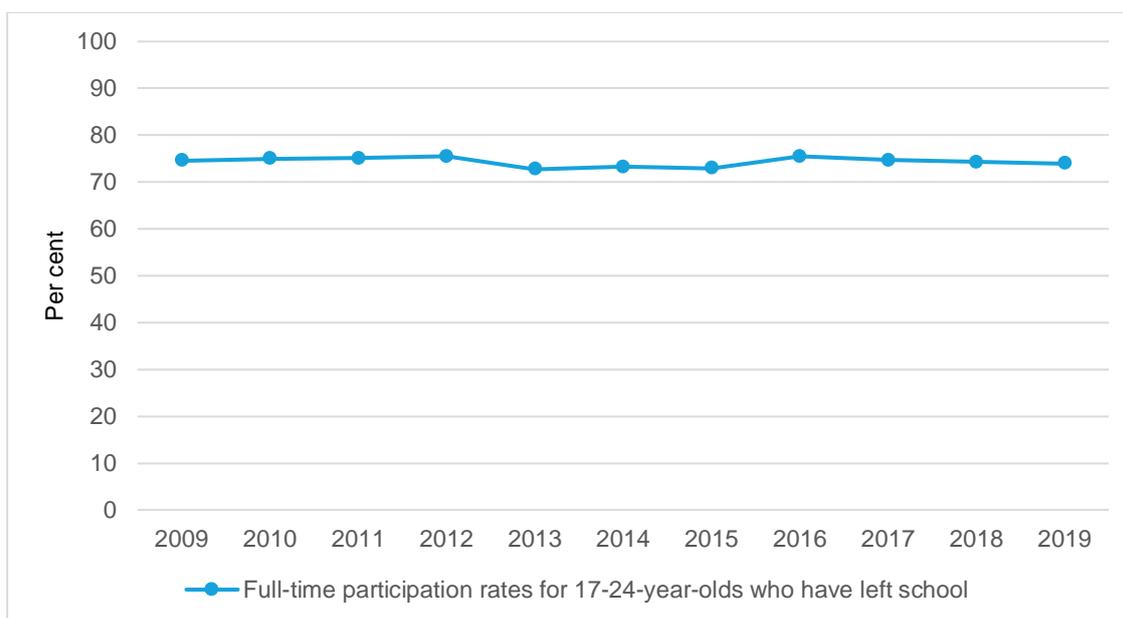
The change in the census measure from 2011 to 2016 is not statistically significant.

Sources: ABS, Cat. No. 6227.0, *Education and Work*, May 2019; ABS, Census of Population and Housing, 2011, 2016.

See also [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, 2009–2019 (per cent)



Note:

Refer to table 3.24 for confidence intervals.

Source: ABS, Cat. No. 6227.0, *Education and Work*, May 2019.

There has been little change in KPM 1(i) since 2009. The fall of 0.3 percentage points in 2019 is not statistically significant, and there is no evident trend in the measure over the period 2008–2019.

Data on KPMs 1(g), 1(h) and 1(i) by state and territory is provided in the National Report on Schooling data portal in both the Key Performance Measures data set and the Participation and Attainment data set. However, because of sample size and other factors, SEW data for particular age groups is less reliable when disaggregated by state and territory, especially for smaller jurisdictions.⁷²

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 provides 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 is reported in the National Report on Schooling data portal.

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

⁷² The survey sample covers the full working-age population, so numbers of 15-19-year-olds and 20-24-year-olds surveyed are relatively small in some states and territories.

3.4.3 Student attainment

The attainment key performance measures (KPMs) specified in the *Measurement Framework for Schooling in Australia 2019* measure the level of educational attainment achieved by young Australians by the time they have reached their early–mid-twenties. These measures reflect 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 2019* specifies that data drawn from the Census of Population and Housing, will also be reported for census years.

Table 3.25 reports KPMs 7(a) and 7(b) at the national level for the period 2009–2019. 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.⁷³

For comparison purposes, table 3.25 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).

⁷³ 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 3.25

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, 2009–2019 (per cent)

Calendar year	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
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	90.0	89.3
CI±	1.6	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.5	1.5	1.1	1.6	1.2	1.2	1.4
Proportion of the 20–24-year-old population that has attained at least Year 12 or equivalent, or AQF Certificate II or above (Census measure)			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	88.8	88.2
CI±	1.7	1.5	1.3	1.3	1.5	1.5	1.1	1.6	1.2	1.2	1.6
Proportion of the 20–24-year-old population that has attained at least Year 12 or equivalent, or AQF Certificate III or above (Census measure)			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	82.1	82.5
CI±	1.7	1.7	1.7	1.6	1.6	1.8	1.6	1.9	1.4	1.4	1.6
Proportion of the 20–24-year-old population that has attained at least Year 12 or equivalent (Census measure)			75.3					79.5			

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 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 SEW 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 7(b) from 2018 to 2019 are not statistically significant.

Trend data for the annual measures of these KPMs for the period 2008–2019 is provided in the Key Performance Measures data set in the National Report on Schooling data portal. This shows long-term upward trends of 0.5 percentage points per annum for both KPM 7(a) and KPM 7(b) over this period.

The rise in the Census measure of KPM 7(a) between 2011 and 2016 was not statistically significant. The rise in the Census measure of KPM 7(b) between 2011 and 2016 was statistically significant.

Data reported from the Census of Population and Housing excludes respondents who provided incomplete or insufficient information on their attainment in education and work. As such, the data does 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 2019. 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 90.0 per cent in 2018 but fell to 89.3 per cent in 2019. The fall in this measure in 2019 was not statistically significant.

The COAG Education target for this measure (90 per cent by 2015) was not met within the target timeframe.⁷⁴

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 in 2009 to 88.8 per cent in 2018 but fell to 88.2 per cent in 2019. The fall in this measure in 2019 was not statistically significant.

The COAG Education target for this measure is 90 per cent by 2020. The Australian Government's [Performance reporting dashboard](#) reports that there was no improvement in this measure in 2019⁷⁵.

Trend data for the annual measures of these KPMs for the period 2008–2019 is available in the Key Performance Measures data set in the National Report on Schooling data portal. This shows long-term upward trends of 0.5 percentage points per annum for both KPM 7(a) and KPM 7(b) over this period.



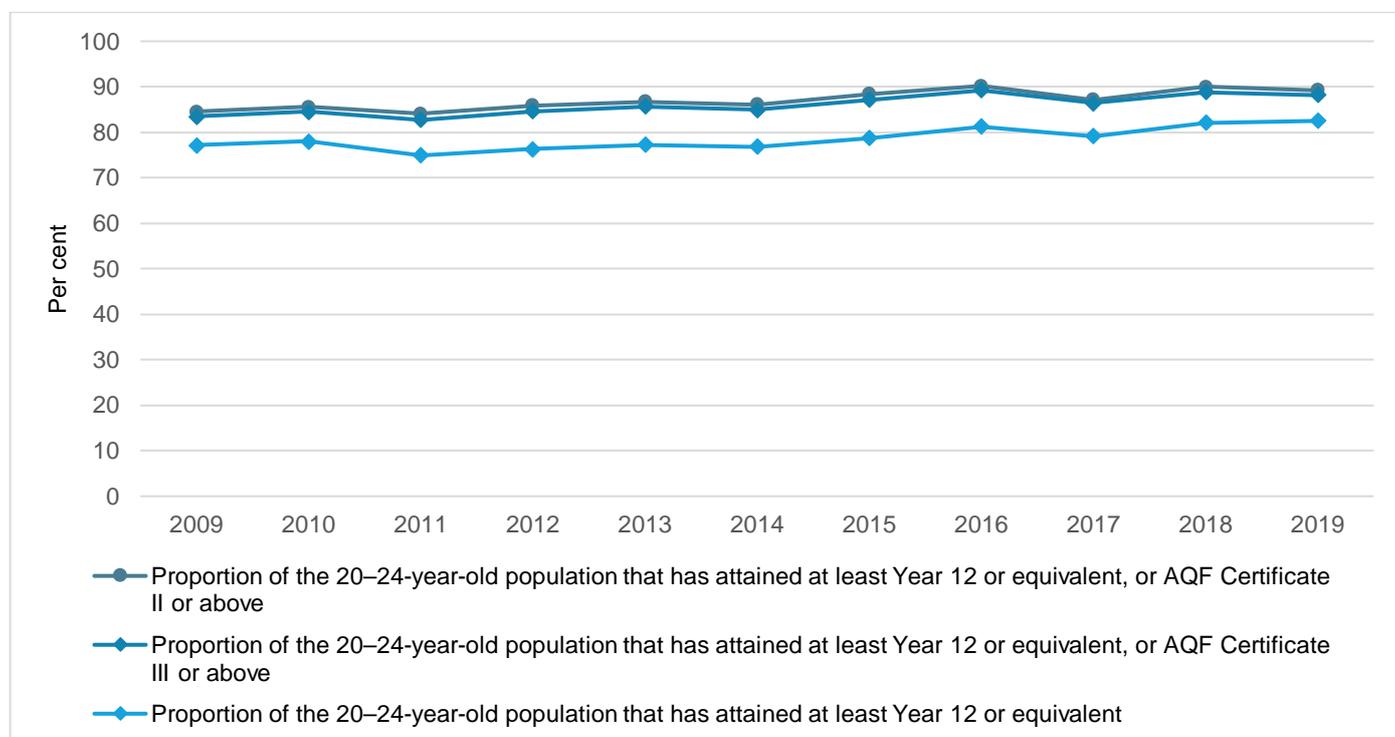
⁷⁴ The COAG target for the completion of Year 12 or equivalent or Certificate II for the overall population has expired. It remains a target for attainment by Indigenous young people (90 per cent by 2020), but this cannot be measured using SEW data.

⁷⁵ Productivity Commission 2020, Performance Reporting Dashboard, Canberra (accessed August 2020).

Figure 3.6 depicts the annual movement in the two attainment measures from 2009 to 2019, as measured by SEW, along with the proportion of 20–24-year-olds having attained at least Year 12 or equivalent.

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 20–24-year-olds having attained at least Year 12 or equivalent; Australia, 2009–2019 (per cent)



Note:

Refer to table 3.25 for confidence intervals.

Source: ABS, Cat. No. 6227.0, *Education and Work*, May 2019.

See also National Report on Schooling data portal.

In each of the years 2009–2019, there has been little difference between the two attainment KPMs with a difference of 1.1 percentage points in 2019. As shown in figure 3.6, the two measures have moved in parallel over the period.

Both KPMs have also paralleled movements in the proportion of 20–24-year-olds that has attained at least Year 12 or equivalent. In 2019, 82.5 per cent of 20–24-year-olds had attained at least Year 12 or equivalent. A further 5.7 per cent, who had not attained Year 12, had attained Certificate III or above, and a further 1.1 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, because pursuing a VET qualification post-Year 10 is considered a legitimate alternative to Years 11 and 12 as a pathway to further education and work.

However, as shown in figure 3.6, it is the main component of KPMs 7(a) and 7(b), with variations in the two KPMs generally following variations in Year 12 or equivalent attainment. In 2019, the apparent falls in both KPMs occurred despite a small apparent rise in the proportion of the age group having attained Year 12 or equivalent.

SEW data for KPMs 7(a) and 7(b) by state and territory are provided on the National Report on Schooling data portal in both the Key Performance Measures data set and the Participation and attainment data set. The Participation and attainment data set also includes data on the attainment of Year 12 or equivalent and of other AQF qualifications.

However, because of sample size and other factors, SEW data for particular age groups (such as 20–24-year-olds) is less reliable when disaggregated by state and territory, especially for smaller jurisdictions.

Census of Population and Housing data for the attainment KPMs for the census years 2006, 2011 and 2016 is also published in the National Report on Schooling data portal and provides more robust measures for disaggregation by state and territory.

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

Closing the Gap

The COAG target for closing the gap in Year 12 or equivalent attainment is to halve the gap for Indigenous people aged 20–24 in Year 12 attainment or equivalent attainment rates by 2020.

Closing the Gap target

Halve the gap in Year 12 or equivalent attainment between Indigenous and non-Indigenous 20–24-year-olds by 2020

Progress against this target is measured using Census of Population and Housing data on the proportion of 20–24-year-old Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who have completed Year 12, or obtained a Certificate level II or above qualification (KPM 7(a)). This is supplemented with data from the ABS National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Survey (NATSIHS) 2018–19.

[The Closing the Gap Report 2020](#) reports that this target is on track. It reports that:

Over the past decade, the Year 12 attainment rate for Indigenous Australians increased by around 21 percentage points, from around 45 per cent in 2008 to 66 per cent in 2018–19. The proportion of non-Indigenous students attaining Year 12 or equivalent also increased, but by a smaller amount (around 5 percentage points). As such, the gap has narrowed by 15 percentage points—from around 40 percentage points in 2008 to 25 percentage points in 2018–19. (p 58).

Census data on Year 12 or equivalent or Certificate II/III attainment disaggregated by state and territory and Indigenous status are also reported in the Key Performance Measures data set and the Participation and attainment data set in the National Report on Schooling data portal.

Part 4: Glossary



Note on data sources and terms:

A main source of data reported in the *National Report on Schooling in Australia 2019* and in 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 government departments of education, the Australian Government Department of Education, Skills and Employment and the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) on behalf of education ministers.

Data for government schools is submitted to the ABS by state and territory departments of education.

Data for non-government schools in all states and territories is collected by the Australian Government Department of Education, Skills and Employment and a subset is provided to the ABS for the NSSC.

Data from the collection is published by the ABS in [Schools, 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 *National Report on Schooling in Australia 2019* and the National Report on Schooling data portal include the National Student Attendance Data collection (ACARA); the Survey of Education and Work (ABS); the Census of Population and Housing (ABS); Australian Demographic Statistics (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).

Accrual accounting

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

Apparent retention rate

An indicative measure of student progression through secondary school. An apparent retention rate is a measure of the proportion of full-time school students who have stayed at school for a designated calendar year and year level. 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 year and is expressed as a percentage. For example, an apparent retention rate from Year 10 to 12 in 2019 measures the proportion of Year 10 students in 2017 that continued to Year 12 in 2019.

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.

See [Schools, Australia](#) explanatory notes for further information.

Attendance

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

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

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

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

Capital expenditure

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

Census of Population and Housing

Australia's largest statistical collection undertaken by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS). The Census of Population and Housing 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 2019* specifies the use of census data to report on a number of key performance measures for census years.

Estimated resident population (ERP)

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 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 2019](#).

Full-time equivalent (FTE) students

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

A full-time student is one who undertakes the prescribed minimum workload required to complete a given year level in a calendar year. This may vary between states and territories and from year to year. A part-time student is one who undertakes a workload less than that prescribed as full-time. Methods for estimating the FTE value of part-time students vary between states and territories due to different policy and administrative arrangements. The recorded FTE value for each student is capped at 1.

Full-time equivalent (FTE) student–teacher ratios

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

Full-time equivalent (FTE) teaching staff

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

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

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

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.

Measurement Framework for Schooling in Australia

The *Measurement Framework for Schooling in Australia 2019*, as agreed by education ministers, provides the basis for national reporting on the performance of schooling in 2019, 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 2019–2023.

The framework is maintained by the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) on behalf of 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 National Assessment Program (NAP), as specified in the *Measurement Framework for Schooling in Australia 2019*, 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 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 school systems only and published by ACARA in this report and in the National Report on Schooling data portal.

Primary education

See *School level and school year*.

Recurrent funding

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

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, early learning or long-day care centres, senior technical and agricultural colleges, evening schools, continuation classes and institutions such as business or coaching colleges.

Multi-campus arrangements are counted as one school. Changes to school counts in this publication can occur when multiple schools amalgamate into a single multi-campus school, or multi-campus schools divide into separate schools.

School level and school year

All states and territories provide for 13 years of formal school education. Typically, schooling commences at age 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-Year 1/Foundation Year⁷⁶, lasts for either seven or eight years and is followed by secondary education of six or five years respectively.

⁷⁶ The 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.

For national reporting purposes, primary education comprises a Foundation year followed by Years 1–6 in New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland, Western Australia⁷⁷, Tasmania, the Northern Territory and the Australian Capital Territory. Primary education generally comprises a Foundation year followed by Years 1–7 in South Australia.⁷⁸

Junior secondary education includes the years from commencement of secondary schooling to Year 10, including ungraded secondary.

Senior secondary education comprises Years 11 and 12 in all states and territories.

Categories used in tables and graphs showing ‘school level’ are ‘primary’ and ‘secondary’. In some tables, the categories ‘primary’, ‘junior secondary’, ‘senior secondary’ and ‘total secondary’ are used.

Students attending special schools are allocated to either primary or secondary education on the basis of school year or school level, where identified. Where a school year or school level is not identified, students are allocated to primary or secondary level of education according to the typical age level in each state or territory.

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 systemic and non-systemic schools are counted as ‘Catholic’.

⁷⁷ 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.

⁷⁸ The structure of schooling for some non-government schools in South Australia changed in 2019, with year 7 becoming the first year of secondary school.

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.

Exception: For the purposes of financial reporting in part 1.5.6, based on data drawn from the *My School* data collection, a number of Catholic non-systemic schools in NSW, SA and WA are counted as 'independent'. Government funding for these schools is distributed directly to the schools rather than through Catholic school system authorities. This affects comparisons between school sectors for those states and nationally. Financial data reported in part 1.5.6 should not be compared with financial data included elsewhere in this report.

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*.

Senior secondary certificate of education

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

New South Wales	Higher School Certificate (HSC)
Victoria	Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE) Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL)
Queensland	Queensland Certificate of Education (QCE)
South Australia	South Australian Certificate of Education (SACE)
Western Australia	Western Australian Certificate of Education (WACE)
Tasmania	Tasmanian Certificate of Education (TCE)
Northern Territory	Northern Territory Certificate of Education and Training (NTCET)
Australian Capital Territory	Australian Capital Territory Senior Secondary Certificate (ACTSSC)

Special school

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

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

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

- likely to be recognised by the state minister as a special assistance school, 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 employees who spend the majority of their time in contact with students. They support students either by direct class contact or on an individual basis, and are engaged to impart school curriculum. For the purposes of this report, teaching staff includes principals, deputy principals, campus principals and senior teachers mainly involved in administration.
- (b) Specialist support staff are employees who perform functions to support students or teaching staff. While these staff may spend 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 employees 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 employees involved in the maintenance of buildings and grounds. Also included are staff providing associated technical services, other janitorial staff and staff who service equipment. School cleaners, whether salaried or employed on contract, are excluded.

For further details on the definition of staff, see [Schools, Australia 2019, 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.

Students 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

see *Attendance*

Survey of Education and Work

The Survey of Education and Work (SEW), conducted annually by the ABS, provides selected information on participation in education, highest educational attainment, transition from education to work, and current labour force and demographic characteristics for the population aged 15–74 years. Data from Education and Work 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 2019](#), 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 was 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.