
3 School education

This chapter focuses on performance information — equity, effectiveness and efficiency — for government funded school education in Australia. Reporting relates to government funding only, not to the full cost to the community of providing school education. Descriptive information and performance indicators are variously reported for:

- government primary and secondary schools
- non-government primary and secondary schools
- school education as a whole (government and non-government primary and secondary schools).

Schooling aims to provide education for all young people. The main purposes of school education are to assist students in:

- attaining knowledge, skills and understanding in key learning areas
- developing their talents, capacities, self-confidence, self-esteem and respect for others
- developing their capacity to contribute to Australia’s social, cultural and economic development.

This year, the chapter has been enhanced by including nationally comparable learning outcomes data for:

- year 6 primary science literacy performance
- year 7 reading, writing and numeracy performance
- year 3, 5 and 7 reading, writing and numeracy performance by geolocation
- reading literacy, mathematical literacy, scientific literacy and problem solving for 15 year olds.

Section 3.1 contains a profile of school education in Australia, and provides the context for assessing performance indicators in the subsequent sections. Section 3.2 describes the framework of performance indicators for school education, and section 3.3 presents and discusses the available data relating to this framework. In section 3.4, future directions in the development and reporting of performance indicators for school education are discussed. The chapter concludes with

jurisdictions' comments in section 3.5, definitions of key terms and indicators in section 3.6, a list of supporting tables in section 3.7 and a list of references in section 3.8. Supporting tables are identified in references throughout this chapter by an 'A' suffix (for example, table 3A.3 is table 3 in the attachment). Supporting tables are provided on the CD-ROM enclosed with the Report.

3.1 Profile of school education

Service overview

Schools are the institutions within which organised school education takes place. They are differentiated by the type and level of education they provide, their ownership and management, and the characteristics of their student body. The formal statistical definition of schools used for this chapter is:

... an establishment that satisfies all of the following criteria:

- its major activity is the provision of full time day primary, secondary or special school education or 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) (ABS 2005).

Student performance can be affected by factors that may be partly or totally outside the influence of the school system, such as student commitment, family environment (including wealth, parents' educational attainment and support for the child) and the proximity of the school to other educational facilities. It is beyond the scope of this Report to consider the effect of all factors, but this section provides some context for the performance information presented later in the chapter. Further contextual information is provided in appendix A.

Roles and responsibilities

Under constitutional arrangements, the State and Territory governments have responsibility to ensure the delivery of schooling to all children of school age. They determine curricula, regulate school activities and provide most of the funding. State and Territory governments are directly responsible for the administration of government schools, for which they provide the majority of government expenditure. Non-government schools operate under conditions determined by State and Territory government registration authorities and also receive State and Territory government funding.

The Australian Government funds government and non-government schools through specific purpose payments provided directly to State and Territory governments and other payments that are made directly to school communities, students, and other organisations to support schooling. The Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA) — comprising Australian, State and Territory, and New Zealand education ministers — is the principal forum for developing national priorities and strategies for schooling.

Funding

Australian, State and Territory government recurrent expenditure on school education was \$28.6 billion in 2003-04 (table 3.1). Expenditure on government schools was \$22.6 billion, or 79.0 per cent of the total. Government schools account for most of the expenditure by State and Territory governments. These governments also contribute to the funding of non-government schools and provide services used by both government and non-government schools. More information, including Australian Government spending on Indigenous specific programs, can be found in tables 3A.6 and 3A.7.

Nationally, State and Territory governments provided 91.1 per cent of total government recurrent expenditure on government schools in 2003-04, and the Australian Government provided 8.9 per cent. In contrast, government expenditure on non-government schools in that year was mainly provided by the Australian Government (72.2 per cent), with State and Territory governments providing 27.8 per cent (table 3.1).

Expenditure data presented from the 2004 Report onward are not directly comparable with data presented in earlier reports for three reasons. First, data presented in the 2003 and earlier reports included recurrent grants made by the Australian Government for capital expenditure. Second, they excluded notional user cost of capital (UCC) for State and Territory governments. Third, data presented in the 2001 and earlier reports were recorded using cash-based accounting principles.

These changes mean that the reported expenditure by the Australian Government in 2001-02 to 2003-04 on both government schools and all schools will be lower than in 2000-01 and earlier years, and expenditure by State and Territory governments on government schools and all schools will be higher. Australian Government recurrent grants for capital contribute to the assets base on which the State and Territory depreciation and notional UCC charge are calculated.

Table 3.1 **Government recurrent expenditure on school education, 2003-04 (\$ million)^{a, b, c, d}**

	<i>NSW</i>	<i>Vic</i>	<i>Qld</i>	<i>WA</i>	<i>SA</i>	<i>Tas</i>	<i>ACT</i>	<i>NT</i>	<i>Aust</i>
Government schools									
Australian States and territories	670	458	398	202	151	55	30	51	2 015
Total	7 733	5 012	4 283	2 412	1 725	613	426	428	22 632
Non-government schools									
Australian States and territories	1 443	1 135	785	426	327	87	90	48	4 339
Total	2 050	1 434	1 152	627	431	119	124	75	6 012
All schools									
Australian States and territories	2 113	1 593	1 183	628	477	142	120	99	6 354
Total	9 783	6 446	5 434	3 039	2 156	733	550	503	28 644

^a See notes to table 3A.9 for definitions and other data caveats. Data presented here are expenditure, including notional UCC and excluding capital grants (which equates to recurrent expenditure). ^b Based on accrual accounting. ^c Totals may not add due to rounding. ^d Depreciation and user cost of capital expenses relating to government schools have been attributed to States/Territories based on ownership of the underlying assets. A portion of these assets will have been acquired through Australian Government capital contributions, with States and Territories responsible for maintenance costs. Australian Government expenditure data in this table include only Australian Government specific purpose payments. Other Australian Government funding for schools and students is not included.

Source: MCEETYA (2005e, unpublished); Department of Education, Science and Training (DEST) (unpublished); Australian, State and Territory governments (unpublished); table 3A.9.

Some data are presented on government funding of non-government schools. Caution needs to be taken when comparing data on the relative efficiency of government and non-government schools because governments provide only part of the funding for non-government schools. Governments provided 57.3 per cent of non-government school funding in 2002, with the remaining 42.7 per cent sourced from private fees and fundraising (MCEETYA 2004a, statistical annex, p. 31).

Size and scope

Descriptive information on the numbers of students, staff and schools can be found in tables 3A.1–3A.4.

Structure

The structure of school education varies across states and territories. These differences can influence the interpretation of data presented under common classifications. Formal schooling consists of six to seven years of primary school education followed by five to six years of secondary school education, depending

on the State or Territory (figure 3.1). All states and territories divide school education into compulsory and non-compulsory components based on age, not grade. School education is compulsory in all states and territories for people between 6 and 15 years of age (16 years of age in SA and Tasmania).

Figure 3.1 Structure of primary and secondary schooling, 2004

<i>Level</i>	<i>NSW, Vic, Tas, ACT</i>	<i>WA, SA, NT^a</i>	<i>Qld^b</i>
Year 12	SECONDARY	SECONDARY	SECONDARY
Year 11			
Year 10			
Year 9			
Year 8			
Year 7			
Year 6	PRIMARY	PRIMARY	PRIMARY
Year 5			
Year 4			
Year 3			
Year 2			
Year 1			
Pre-year 1	Kindergarten (NSW, ACT) Preparatory (Vic, Tas)	Pre-primary (WA) Reception (SA) ^c Transition (NT) ^d	

^a In some places in the NT, secondary schooling begins at year 7. ^b Pre-year 1 is not included in the pattern of study in Queensland. In addition to preschool in 2003 and 2004, Queensland conducted a trial of preparatory year of schooling for pre-year 1 at selected schools. ^c SA has an intake for each term. ^d The NT has an intake for terms 1–3 of its 4 terms.

Source: Adapted from MCEETYA (unpublished).

Schools

At the beginning of August 2004, there were 9615 schools in Australia. The majority of schools were government owned and managed (72.2 per cent) (table 3.2). Settlement patterns (population dispersion), the age distribution of the population, and educational policy influence the distribution of schools by size and level in different jurisdictions. Nationally, 62.5 per cent of all secondary schools enrolled over 600 students (table 3A.15). A breakdown of primary and secondary schools by size for government, non-government and all schools is reported in tables 3A.13–15 respectively.

Student body

There were 3.3 million full time equivalent (FTE) student enrolments in primary and secondary schools in August 2004 (see section 3.6 for a definition of FTE student). Nationally, the proportion of FTE students enrolled in all schools was greater in primary schools (57.8 per cent) than in secondary schools (42.2 per cent) (table 3.3).

Differences in schooling structures influence enrolment patterns. Primary school education in Queensland, WA, SA and the NT, for example, includes year 7 whereas all other jurisdictions include year 7 in secondary school (figure 3.1). As a result, the proportion of students enrolled in primary school education would be expected to be higher in the above mentioned jurisdictions than in others (table 3.3).

Nationally, the proportion of FTE students enrolled in government schools was 67.6 per cent. The proportion of FTE students in all schools who were female was 49.1 per cent. A greater proportion of FTE students enrolled in primary schools was enrolled in government schools (61.0 per cent) than in non-government schools (51.1 per cent) (table 3.3).

Table 3.2 Summary of school characteristics, August 2004

	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT	Aust
Government schools (no.)									
Primary	1 652	1 221	969	511	438	142	67	82	5 082
Secondary	368	262	183	98	74	39	22	11	1 057
Combined ^{a, b}	66	55	85	na	na	na	na	52	459
Special schools ^{b, c}	106	80	47	na	na	na	na	5	340
Combined and special schools ^b	..	..	..	166	97	33	7	..	..
Total	2 192	1 618	1 284	775	609	214	96	150	6 938
Non-government schools (no.)									
Primary	514	437	244	152	114	29	26	17	1 533
Secondary	143	101	82	37	20	7	5	7	402
Combined ^{a, b}	216	135	120	na	na	na	na	11	683
Special schools ^{b, c}	32	17	3	na	na	na	na	–	59
Combined and special schools ^b	..	..	..	100	66	30	12	..	..
Total	905	690	449	289	200	66	43	35	2 677
All schools (no.)									
Primary	2 166	1 658	1 213	663	552	171	93	99	6 615
Secondary	511	363	265	135	94	46	27	18	1 459
Combined ^{a, b}	282	190	205	na	na	na	na	63	1 142
Special schools ^{b, c}	138	97	50	na	na	na	na	5	399
Combined and special schools ^b	..	..	..	266	163	63	19	..	..
Total	3 097	2 308	1 733	1 064	809	280	139	185	9 615
Proportion of schools that are government schools (%)									
Primary	76.3	73.6	79.9	77.1	79.3	83.0	72.0	82.8	76.8
Secondary	72.0	72.2	69.1	72.6	78.7	84.8	81.5	61.1	72.4
Combined ^{a, b}	23.4	28.9	41.5	na	na	na	na	82.5	40.2
Special schools ^{b, c}	76.8	82.5	94.0	na	na	na	na	100.0	85.2
Combined and special schools ^b	..	..	..	62.4	59.5	52.4	36.8	..	..
All schools	70.8	70.1	74.1	72.8	75.3	76.4	69.1	81.1	72.2
Proportion of primary schools (%)									
Government	75.4	75.5	75.5	65.9	71.9	66.4	69.8	54.7	73.2
Non-government	56.8	63.3	54.3	52.6	57.0	43.9	60.5	48.6	57.3
All schools	69.9	71.8	70.0	62.3	68.2	61.1	66.9	53.5	68.8

^a Combined primary and secondary schools. ^b Data for combined and special schools in WA, SA, Tasmania and the ACT are not published separately due to the small number of schools in those categories. Australia totals are correct for both the combined and special school categories. ^c Special schools provide special instruction for physically and/or mentally disabled or impaired students, or those with social problems. Students must exhibit one or more of the following characteristics before enrolment is allowed: mental or physical disability or impairment, slow learning ability, social or emotional problems, and in custody, on remand or in hospital. **na** Not available. **..** Not applicable. **–** Nil or rounded to zero.

Source: ABS (2005); tables 3A.1, 3A.2 and 3A.3.

Table 3.3 **FTE student enrolments, August 2004^{a, b}**

	<i>NSW</i>	<i>Vic</i>	<i>Qld</i>	<i>WA</i>	<i>SA</i>	<i>Tas</i>	<i>ACT</i>	<i>NT</i>	<i>Aust</i>
Total FTE student enrolments at level of education ('000)									
Primary schools	624.1	455.8	386.5	206.4	157.5	46.4	31.5	24.9	1 933.2
Secondary schools	484.5	368.5	254.2	130.6	94.5	37.4	28.4	12.5	1 410.6
All schools	1 108.6	824.3	640.7	337.0	252.0	83.8	59.9	37.5	3 343.9
Proportion of FTE students who were enrolled in government schools (%)									
Primary schools	70.5	69.4	74.4	72.8	69.1	77.4	63.0	79.4	71.3
Secondary schools	63.0	60.1	64.0	61.4	63.8	70.3	56.5	71.4	62.5
All schools	67.2	65.3	70.3	68.3	67.1	74.2	59.9	76.8	67.6
Proportion of FTE students who were female (all schools) (%)									
Primary schools	48.7	48.5	48.8	48.2	48.7	48.6	48.8	48.1	48.6
Secondary schools	49.6	49.8	49.7	49.6	49.9	50.7	49.0	49.0	49.7
All schools	49.1	49.1	49.2	48.7	49.2	49.5	48.9	48.4	49.1
Proportion of FTE students who were enrolled in primary education (%)									
Government schools	59.1	58.8	63.9	65.2	64.3	57.7	55.3	68.9	61.0
Non-government schools	50.6	48.7	51.9	52.7	58.7	48.6	48.6	58.8	51.1
All schools	56.3	55.3	60.3	61.3	62.5	55.4	52.6	66.5	57.8

^a Students enrolled in special schools are included, with special school students of primary school age and/or year level included in the primary figures and those of secondary school age and/or year level included in the secondary figures. ^b Results of calculations may vary from the table due to rounding differences.

Source: ABS (2005, Schools Australia unpublished); tables 3A.1–3A.4.

Total full time student enrolments in schools in Australia were relatively stable over the five years to 2004, increasing by approximately 0.7 per cent each year between August 2000 and August 2004 (table 3A.17).

The proportion of full time students enrolled in non-government schools increased between 2000 and 2004 in all states and territories. Total non-government school enrolments expanded by an average of 2.1 per cent per year, while full time government school enrolments remained stable (table 3A.17). The expansion of full time enrolments in non-government schools, however, was from a lower base than that for government schools. In absolute terms, full time students in government schools increased from 2 248 287 in 2000 to 2 249 724 in 2004. Full time students in non-government schools increased from 999 138 in 2000 to 1 082 240 in 2004 (table 3A.16).

Part time secondary students form a significant proportion of enrolments in some jurisdictions (table 3.4). Part time courses are available to secondary students, including mature age students attending colleges and those studying years 11 or 12 or short courses (lasting five to 22 weeks). The proportion of secondary school students who were enrolled part time in 2004 varied considerably across jurisdictions, partly because jurisdictions' education authorities have different policy and organisational arrangements for part time study, as well as different

definitions of what constitutes part time study. The number of part time courses available also varied considerably across jurisdictions.

Table 3.4 Part time secondary school students in government schools

	<i>NSW</i>	<i>Vic</i>	<i>Qld</i>	<i>WA</i>	<i>SA</i>	<i>Tas</i> ^a	<i>ACT</i>	<i>NT</i>	<i>Aust</i>
Part time secondary school students in government schools (no.) ^b									
2000	3 638	2 489	3 868	4 154	7 015	3 538	7	977	25 686
2001	2 809	2 827	3 930	4 948	6 932	2 853	3	1 006	25 308
2002	2 455	3 029	4 096	4 880	7 099	2 684	10	1 052	25 305
2003	2 647	3 093	3 786	2 583	6 623	2 578	48	888	22 246
2004	2 441	3 106	3 764	2 925	6 818	2 260	25	1 043	22 382
Proportion of secondary school students in government schools who were part time students (%) ^c									
2000	1.2	1.1	2.5	4.8	10.7	12.0	–	10.9	2.9
2001	0.9	1.3	2.5	5.7	10.6	10.0	–	11.3	2.8
2002	0.8	1.4	2.6	5.6	11.0	9.6	0.1	11.7	2.8
2003	0.9	1.4	2.3	3.1	10.3	9.3	0.3	9.6	2.5
2004	0.8	1.4	2.3	3.5	10.7	8.3	0.2	10.9	2.5

^a Some 2004 student number data for Tasmania have been revised by the Tasmanian Government and these revisions may not be reflected in ABS, or other, publications. ^b Absolute number of part time secondary students (not FTE). ^c Absolute number of part time secondary students divided by absolute number of full time and part time secondary students (not FTE). – Nil or rounded to zero.

Source: ABS (2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, Schools Australia (unpublished); Tasmanian Government (unpublished); table 3A.1.

Special needs groups

Some groups of students in school education have been identified as having special needs. These special needs groups include:

- Indigenous students
- students from language backgrounds other than English (LBOTE)
- students with disabilities
- geographically remote students
- students from families of low socioeconomic status.

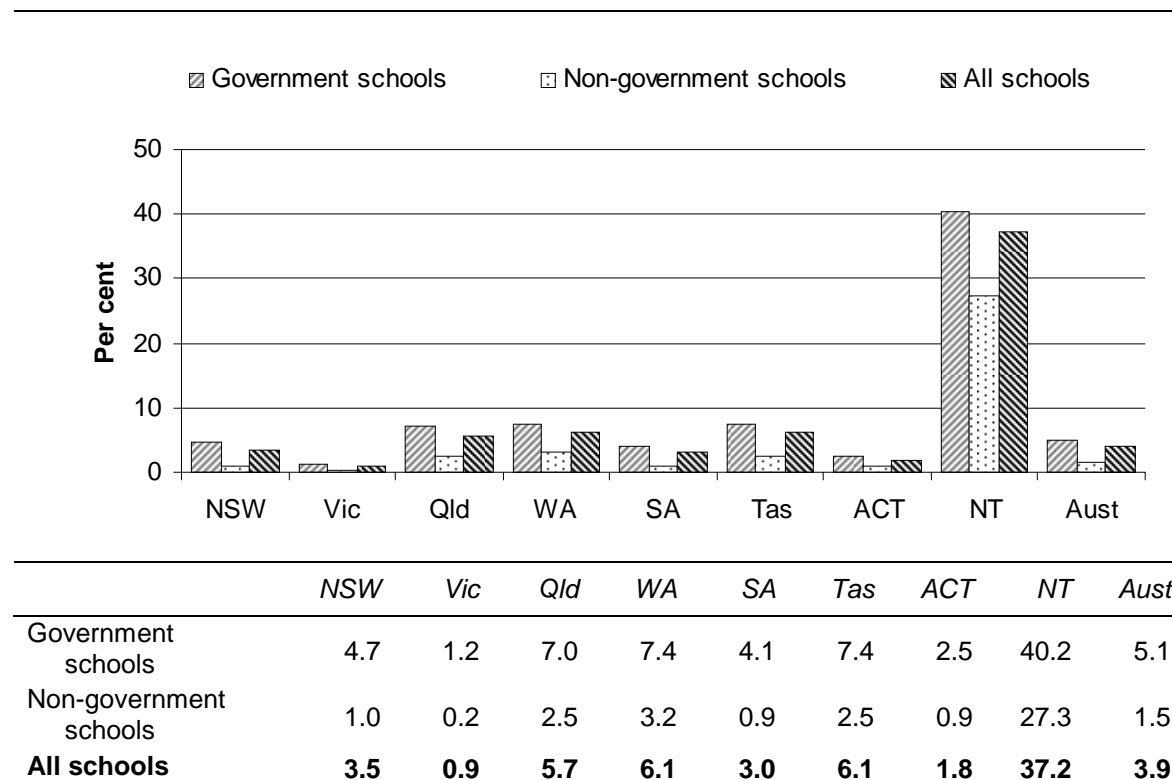
Government schools provide education for a high proportion of students from special needs groups. In 2004, 87.4 per cent of Indigenous students and 81.2 per cent of students with disabilities, for example, attended government schools (tables 3A.18 and 3A.20). This chapter reports on the proportions of Indigenous students, LBOTE students, students with disabilities and students who are geographically remote. Further information on student body mix is in tables 3A.21–23. Care needs to be taken in interpreting this information because some definitions of special needs students differ across states and territories.

Indigenous students

The proportion of full time Indigenous students in schools varies greatly across jurisdictions (figure 3.2). Table 3A.18 provides additional information on Indigenous enrolments.

In all jurisdictions, the proportion of full time Indigenous students was higher in government schools than in non-government schools. Nationally, the proportion of full time Indigenous students was 5.1 per cent for government schools and 1.5 per cent for non-government schools (figure 3.2).

Figure 3.2 Indigenous students as a proportion of all students, 2004^a



^a Full time students.

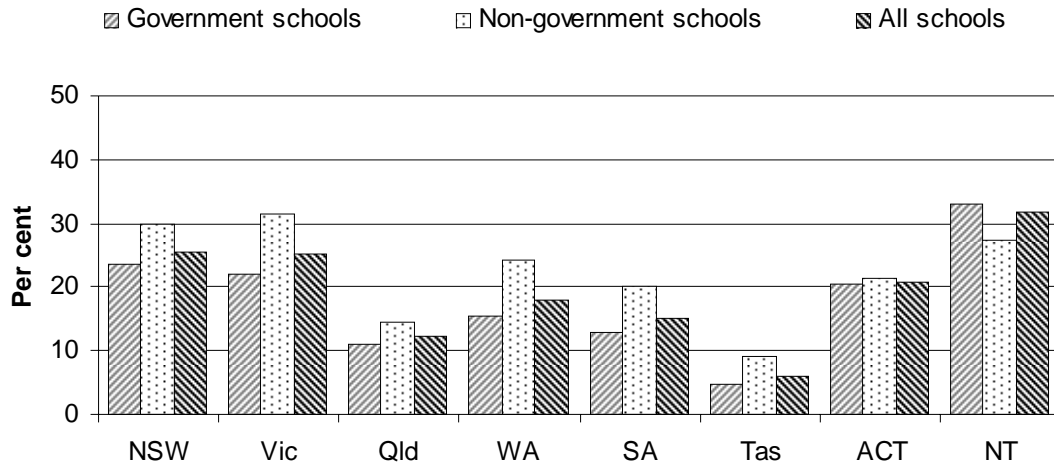
Source: ABS (2005); table 3A.18.

LBOTE students

The proportion of LBOTE students is based on data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) 2001 Census of Population and Housing. Students are counted as having a language background other than English if their home language is not English or if they (or at least one parent) were born in a non-English speaking country.

Generally, non-government schools had a higher proportion of LBOTE students than government schools in 2001 (figure 3.3).

Figure 3.3 Students from a language background other than English as a proportion of all students, 2001



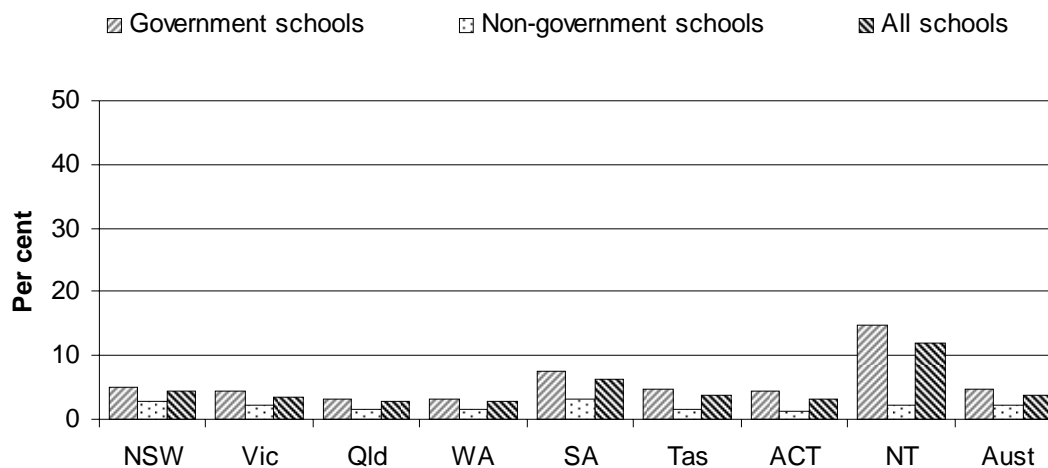
Source: DEST (unpublished) based on the ABS 2001 Census of Population and Housing; table 3A.19.

Students with disabilities

Students with disabilities are educated in both mainstream and special schools. Students with disabilities are those students who satisfy the criteria for enrolment in special education services or programs provided in the State or Territory in which they are enrolled. These criteria vary across jurisdictions.

Nationally, the proportion of students with disabilities for all schools was 3.9 per cent and approximately twice as high in government schools (4.6 per cent), compared with non-government schools (2.2 per cent) in 2004 (figure 3.4).

Figure 3.4 **Funded students with disabilities as a proportion of all students, 2004^{a, b, c}**



a FTE students. **b** To be an eligible student with disabilities, the student (among other things) must satisfy the criteria for enrolment in special education services or special education programs provided by the government of the State or Territory in which the student resides. Data should be used with caution as these criteria vary across jurisdictions, for example, SA data include a large number of students in the communication and language impairment category. This subset of students is not counted by other states/territories under funded students with disabilities. Other states/territories fund these students with other specific programs. **c** The 'funded' student data used by Department of Education, Science and Training (DEST) refer to the FTE number of students that qualify for DEST recurrent funding. This excludes Full Fee Paying Overseas students from both the government and non-government sectors as well as a number of schools in the NT (these are funded through the Grants Commission process), and on Christmas and Cocos Islands (funded through the Department of Transport and Regional Services). The DEST funded figures also include Pre-year 1 students in part time programmes in Queensland schools.

Source: DEST (unpublished); table 3A.20.

Geographically remote students

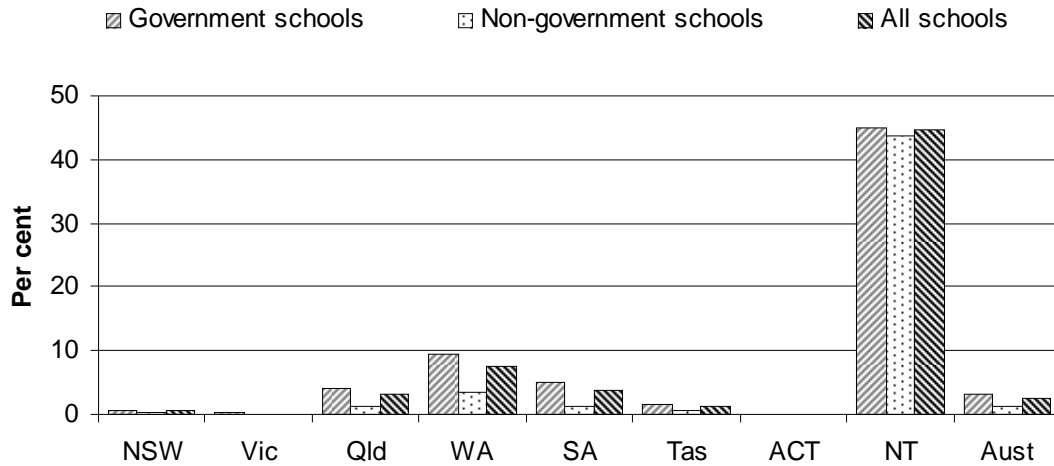
Identification of geographically remote students is based on the metropolitan, provincial and remote zones as stated in the MCEETYA agreed classification.¹ The proportion of students attending schools in remote areas varies greatly across jurisdictions (figure 3.5).

Nationally, the proportion of students enrolled in schools in remote areas was 2.4 per cent and more than twice as high in government schools (3.1 per cent), compared with non-government schools (1.2 per cent) in 2004 (figure 3.5).

¹ To investigate the possibility that these data may understate the proportion of students in remote areas as a result of relying on school location rather than students' home location, the 2001 MCEETYA data were compared with data derived from the 2001 Census. The two data sets were found to be similar, except that Tasmania had about one third more remote area students in the Census data. This result may be indicative for the 2004 data.

Table 3A.24 includes data relating to metropolitan and provincial areas, as well as remote areas (see section 3.6 for a definition of the geographic classification used).

Figure 3.5 **Students attending schools in remote zones as a proportion of all students, 2004^{a, b}**



	<i>NSW</i>	<i>Vic</i>	<i>Qld</i>	<i>WA</i>	<i>SA</i>	<i>Tas</i>	<i>ACT</i>	<i>NT</i>	<i>Aust</i>
Government schools	0.7	0.2	4.0	9.4	5.1	1.6	..	44.9	3.1
Non-government schools	0.3	–	1.3	3.6	1.4	0.6	..	43.8	1.2
All schools	0.6	0.1	3.2	7.6	3.9	1.3	..	44.7	2.4

^a Remote includes very remote areas. ^b The ACT has no remote areas. .. Not applicable. – Nil or rounded to zero.

Source: DEST (unpublished); table 3A.24.

3.2 Framework of performance indicators

This chapter provides performance indicators on the equity, effectiveness and efficiency of government expenditure on all schools in Australia. It does not compare the efficiency of government and non-government schools. Governments own and operate government schools, and have a direct interest in the equity, efficiency and effectiveness of their operation. In addition, governments are committed to providing access to education for all students. Box 3.1 describes the national goals for schooling, as endorsed by the MCEETYA.

Box 3.1 **National goals for schooling in the 21st century**

The MCEETYA endorsed in April 1999 the following set of national goals for school education.

Preamble

Australia's future depends upon each citizen having the necessary knowledge, understanding, skills and values for a productive and rewarding life in an educated, just and open society. High quality schooling is central to achieving this vision.

This statement of national goals for schooling provides broad directions to guide schools and education authorities in securing these outcomes for students.

It acknowledges the capacity of all young people to learn, and the role of schooling in developing that capacity. It also acknowledges the role of parents as the first educators of their children and the central role of teachers in the learning process.

Schooling provides a foundation for young Australians' intellectual, physical, social, moral, spiritual and aesthetic development. By providing a supportive and nurturing environment, schooling contributes to the development of students' sense of self-worth, enthusiasm for learning and optimism for the future.

Governments set the public policies that foster the pursuit of excellence, enable a diverse range of educational choices and aspirations, safeguard the entitlement of all young people to high quality schooling, promote the economic use of public resources, and uphold the contribution of schooling to a socially cohesive and culturally rich society.

Common and agreed goals for schooling establish a foundation for action among State and Territory governments with their constitutional responsibility for schooling, the Australian Government, non-government school authorities and all those who seek the best possible educational outcomes for young Australians, to improve the quality of schooling nationally.

The achievement of these common and agreed national goals entails a commitment to collaboration for the purposes of:

- further strengthening schools as learning communities where teachers, students and their families work in partnership with business, industry and the wider community;
- enhancing the status and quality of the teaching profession;
- continuing to develop curriculum and related systems of assessment, accreditation and credentialling that promote quality and are nationally recognised and valued; and
- increasing public confidence in school education through explicit and defensible standards that guide improvement in students' levels of educational achievement and through which the effectiveness, efficiency and equity of schooling can be measured and evaluated.

(Continued on next page)

Box 3.1 (Continued)

These national goals provide a basis for investment in schooling to enable all young people to engage effectively with an increasingly complex world. This world will be characterised by advances in information and communication technologies, population diversity arising from international mobility and migration, and complex environmental and social challenges.

The achievement of the national goals for schooling will assist young people to contribute to Australia's social, cultural and economic development in local and global contexts. Their achievement will also assist young people to develop a disposition towards learning throughout their lives so that they can exercise their rights and responsibilities as citizens of Australia.

Goals

1. Schooling should develop fully the talents and capacities of all students. In particular, when students leave schools they should:

- 1.1 have the capacity for, and skills in, analysis and problem solving and the ability to communicate ideas and information, to plan and organise activities and to collaborate with others;
- 1.2 have qualities of self-confidence, optimism, high self-esteem, and a commitment to personal excellence as a basis for their potential life roles as family, community and workforce members;
- 1.3 have the capacity to exercise judgment and responsibility in matters of morality, ethics and social justice, and the capacity to make sense of their world, to think about how things got to be the way they are, to make rational and informed decisions about their own lives and to accept responsibility for their own actions;
- 1.4 be active and informed citizens with an understanding and appreciation of Australia's system of government and civic life;
- 1.5 have employment related skills and an understanding of the work environment, career options and pathways as a foundation for, and positive attitudes towards, vocational education and training, further education, employment and life-long learning;
- 1.6 be confident, creative and productive users of new technologies, particularly information and communication technologies, and understand the impact of those technologies on society;
- 1.7 have an understanding of, and concern for, stewardship of the natural environment, and the knowledge and skills to contribute to ecologically sustainable development; and
- 1.8 have the knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary to establish and maintain a healthy lifestyle, and for the creative and satisfying use of leisure time.

(Continued on next page)

Box 3.1 (Continued)

2. In terms of curriculum, students should have:

2.1 attained high standards of knowledge, skills and understanding through a comprehensive and balanced curriculum in the compulsory years of schooling encompassing the agreed eight key learning areas:

- the arts
- English
- health and physical education
- languages other than English
- mathematics
- science
- studies of society and environment
- technology

and the interrelationships between them;

2.2 attained the skills of numeracy and English literacy, such that every student should be numerate, able to read, write, spell and communicate at an appropriate level;

2.3 participated in programs of vocational learning during the compulsory years and have had access to vocational education and training programs as part of their senior secondary studies; and

2.4 participated in programs and activities which foster and develop enterprise skills, including those skills which will allow them maximum flexibility and adaptability in the future.

3. Schooling should be socially just, so that:

3.1 students' outcomes from schooling are free from the effects of negative forms of discrimination based on sex, language, culture and ethnicity, religion or disability; and of differences arising from students' socioeconomic background or geographic location;

3.2 the learning outcomes of educationally disadvantaged students improve and, over time, match those of other students;

3.3 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students have equitable access to, and opportunities in, schooling so that their learning outcomes improve and, over time, match those of other students;

3.4 all students understand and acknowledge the value of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures to Australian society and possess the knowledge, skills and understanding to contribute to, and benefit from, reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians;

(Continued on next page)

Box 3.1 (Continued)

3.5 all students understand and acknowledge the value of cultural and linguistic diversity, and possess the knowledge, skills and understanding to contribute to, and benefit from, such diversity in the Australian community and internationally; and

3.6 all students have access to the high quality education necessary to enable the completion of school education to year 12 or its vocational equivalent and that provides clear and recognised pathways to employment and further education and training.

Source: Adapted from MCEETYA (1999).

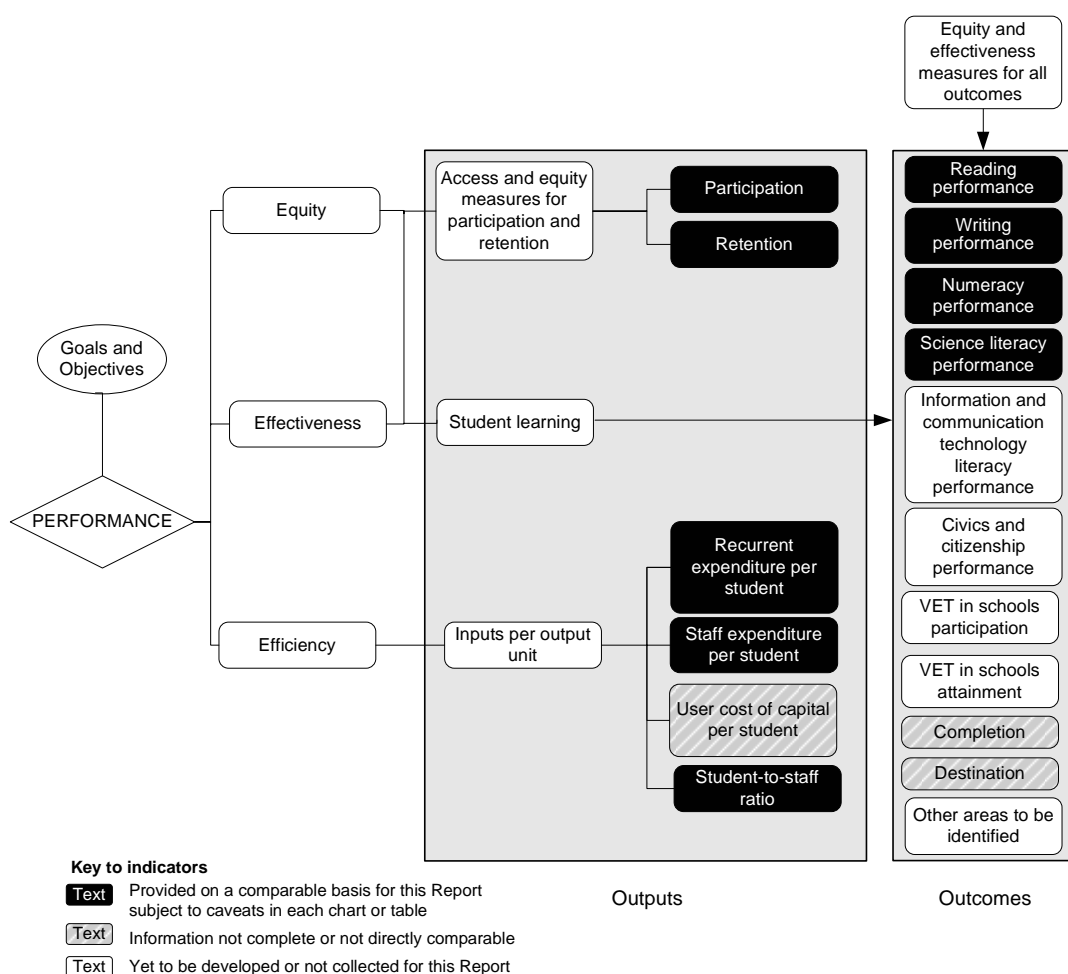
The performance of school education is reported against the indicator framework in figure 3.6. This framework is consistent with the national goals for schooling (box 3.1). The performance indicator framework shows which data are comparable in the 2006 Report. For data that are not considered directly comparable, the text includes relevant caveats and supporting commentary. Chapter 1 discusses data comparability from a Report-wide perspective (see section 1.6).

3.3 Key performance indicator results

Different delivery contexts and locations influence the equity, effectiveness and efficiency of school education services. Appendix A contains short statistical profiles on each State and Territory, which may assist in interpreting the performance indicators presented in this chapter.

The effectiveness indicators for school education in this chapter are based on achievement against the national goals for schooling. Access and equity objectives of school education can be assessed by comparing outcomes for special needs groups, such as Indigenous and LBOTE students, with those for all students through indicators such as reading, writing and numeracy performance, science literacy performance, completion rates, retention rates and participation rates. Outcomes are compared for special needs groups for available indicators where possible.

Figure 3.6 Performance indicators for all schools



Outputs

Equity and effectiveness

Access and equity measures for school education participation and retention are reported.

Participation

‘Participation’ is an output indicator of equity-effectiveness (box 3.2).

Box 3.2 Participation

'Participation' (school education participation rate) is an output-access indicator of governments' objective to develop fully the talents and capacities of young people through participation in post-compulsory schooling.

The school education participation rate is defined as the number of 15–19 year old full time school students as a proportion of the estimated resident population of the same age.

Holding other factors constant, a higher or increasing participation rate suggests an improvement in educational outcomes through greater access to school education. Participation rates in school education need to be interpreted with care because rates are influenced by jurisdictional differences in, for example:

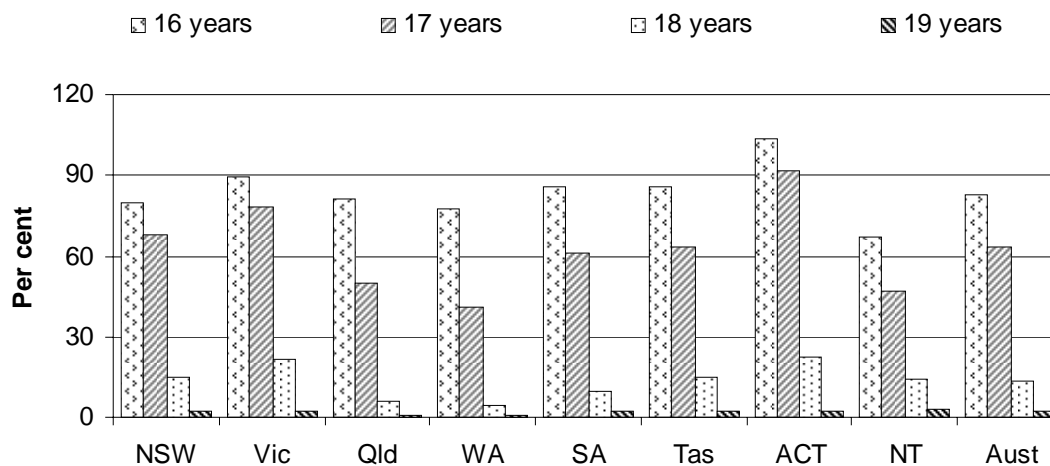
- school starting ages, year level at which secondary education commences (year 7 or year 8) and the age to which schooling is compulsory
- the extent of part time enrolment in schools (tables 3.4 and 3A.3).

This indicator does not provide information on young people who develop their talents and capacities through other options for delivering post-compulsory education and training — for example, work-based training and enrolment in technical and further education (TAFE) delivered programs. This indicator also does not provide information on the contribution of participation in schooling to the development of the students' talents and capacities.

A broader participation indicator that accounts for some of these factors is reported in the 'Education preface'.

Nationally, 50.5 per cent of 15–19 year olds were enrolled in schools in 2004 (table 3A.89). Participation rates varied by jurisdiction, age and gender. Participation rates for females (51.6 per cent) were 2.1 percentage points higher than those for males (49.5 per cent). Participation rates declined as students exceeded the maximum compulsory school age (figure 3.7).

Figure 3.7 Participation rate of people aged 16–19 in school education, all schools, 2004^{a, b, c}



^a Proportion of the population who were not of compulsory school age in some jurisdictions, but who were enrolled as full time students in August 2004. ^b School is compulsory for up to 16 year olds in SA and Tasmania. ^c Participation rates in the ACT exceed 100 per cent as a result of NSW residents from surrounding areas enrolling in ACT schools.

Source: ABS (2005); table 3A.89.

Retention

‘Retention’ is an output indicator of equity-effectiveness (box 3.3).

Box 3.3 Retention

‘Retention’ (apparent retention rate), to the final years of schooling, is an output-access indicator of governments’ objective to develop fully the talents and capacities of young people through increased participation to higher levels of schooling.

The apparent retention rate is defined as the number of full time school students in a designated level/year of education as a percentage of their respective cohort group (which is either at the commencement of their secondary schooling — at year 7 or 8 — or at year 10). Data are reported for the proportion of:

- people commencing secondary school (at year 7 or 8) and continuing to year 10
- people commencing secondary school (at year 7 or 8) and continuing to year 12
- year 10 students continuing to year 12.

(Continued on next page)

Box 3.3 (Continued)

Data are reported for all students and Indigenous students, and for government and non-government schools. Holding other factors constant, a higher or increasing apparent retention rate suggests that students have greater exposure to schooling over their lives, which is likely to result in improved educational outcomes. The term 'apparent' is used because the indicator is derived from total numbers of students in each of the relevant year levels, rather than by tracking the retention of students individually. Apparent retention to year 12 is a long standing measure that is presented as an indicator of the extent to which students progress to their final year of schooling.

Apparent retention rates are influenced by a wide range of factors, including student perceptions of the benefits of schooling, the availability of employment and further educational alternatives, socioeconomic status and population movements. Care needs to be taken in interpreting apparent retention rates in school education because rates are influenced by jurisdictional differences in:

- enrolment policies across jurisdictions, which contribute to different age/grade structures
- the extent of part time year 12 enrolment in schools.

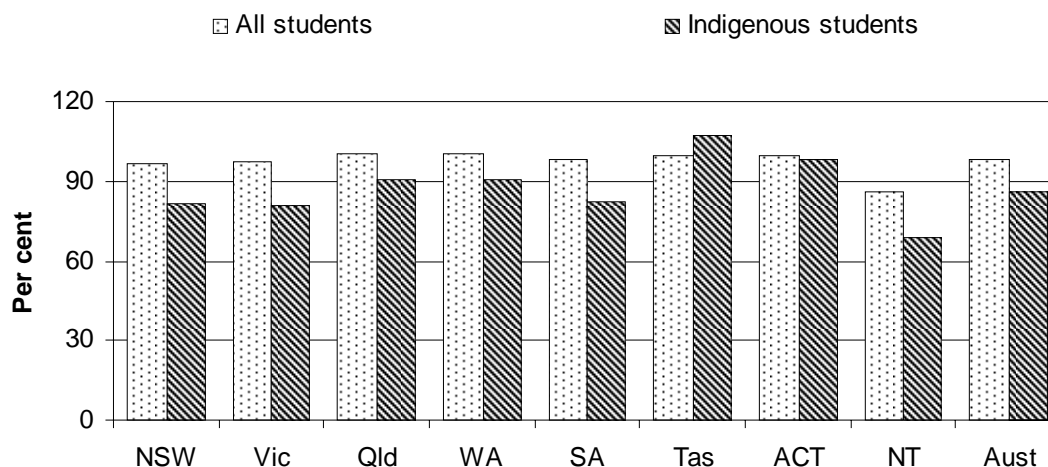
The indicator has been consistently reported over time, but does not reflect factors such as:

- students repeating a year of education or returning to education after a period of absence
- interstate movement of students
- movement between the government school sector and the non-government school sector
- the impacts of migration and full fee paying overseas students
- varying enrolment patterns in which students choose to complete their secondary schooling in TAFE institutes.

Apparent rates of retention from the commencement of secondary school at year 7 or 8 (figure 3.1 shows differences across jurisdictions) to year 10 provide one measure of the equity of outcomes for Indigenous students. Apparent retention rates for all students in most jurisdictions were 97–100 per cent in 2004 with a national proportion of 98.1 (figure 3.8). High rates are to be expected because normal year level progression means students in year 10 are generally of an age at which schooling is compulsory.

Rates for Indigenous students were considerably lower than those for all students in most jurisdictions. The national retention rate for Indigenous students was 85.8 per cent, or 12.3 percentage points lower than that for all students.

Figure 3.8 **Apparent retention rate from year 7 or 8 to year 10, full time secondary students, all schools, by Indigenous status 2004^{a, b, c, d}**



^a Apparent retention rates are affected by factors that vary across jurisdictions. For this reason, variations in apparent retention rates over time within jurisdictions may be more useful than comparisons across jurisdictions. ^b Retention rates can exceed 100 per cent for a variety of reasons, including student transfers between jurisdictions and between government and non-government schools after the base year. ^c The exclusion of part time students from standard apparent retention rate calculations has implications for the interpretation of results for all jurisdictions, but particularly for SA, Tasmania and the NT where there are high proportions of part time students in government schools (table 3.4). ^d Ungraded students are not included in the calculation of apparent retention rates. This exclusion has particular implications for the NT, where 34 per cent of Indigenous secondary students are ungraded (compared with an average of 6.9 per cent for the rest of Australia). As a result, Indigenous apparent retention rates may misrepresent the retention of students in secondary schooling in the NT.

Source: ABS (2005); table 3A.91.

The apparent rate of retention from year 10 to year 12 has been derived by expressing the number of full time school students enrolled in year 12 in 2004 as a proportion of the number of full time school students enrolled in year 10 in 2002.

Factors affecting apparent retention can combine to result in a year 12 cohort that is substantially different in composition from the corresponding year 10 cohort — for example:

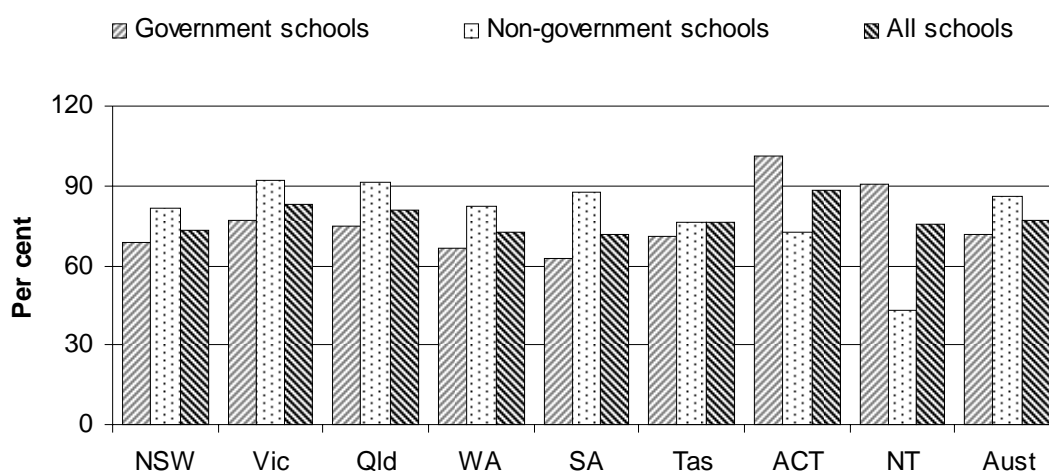
- in SA, if part time students are included in the 2004 year 12 total, then the apparent retention rate becomes 88.4 per cent (ABS 2005), compared with 71.6 per cent for full time students only (table 3A.92)
- in some jurisdictions, young people may choose to complete their post-compulsory education in the TAFE system rather than continue at school. In NSW, for example, 3807 students aged 15–19 years undertook their Higher

School Certificate or other tertiary preparation studies through TAFE institutes in 2004 (NSW Government unpublished).

Work being undertaken to improve this measure is discussed in section 3.4.

Nationally, the apparent retention rate from year 10 to year 12 for all schools was 77.1 per cent in 2004. The apparent retention rate from year 10 to year 12 for government schools was 72.0 per cent in 2004. Across jurisdictions, the apparent retention rates for government schools varied (figure 3.9).

Figure 3.9 **Apparent retention rate from year 10 to year 12, full time secondary students, by school type, 2004^{a, b, c, d}**

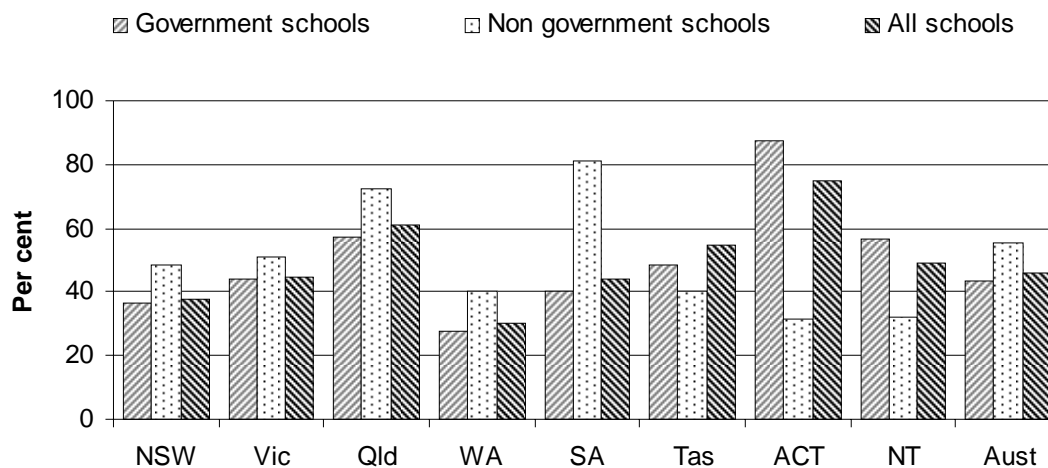


^a Apparent retention rates are affected by factors that vary across jurisdictions. For this reason, variations in apparent retention rates over time within jurisdictions may be more useful than comparisons across jurisdictions. ^b Retention rates can exceed 100 per cent for a variety of reasons, including student transfers between jurisdictions and government and non-government schools after the base year. ^c The exclusion of part time students from standard apparent retention rate calculations has implications for the interpretation of results for all jurisdictions, but particularly for SA, Tasmania and the NT where there are high proportions of part time students in government schools (table 3.4). ^d Some student number data for Tasmania have been revised by the Tasmanian Government, resulting in changes to some apparent retention rates, and these revisions may not be reflected in ABS, or other, publications.

Source: ABS (2005); Tasmanian Government (unpublished); table 3A.92.

For all schools, apparent rates of retention from year 10 to year 12 for Indigenous students in 2004 varied across jurisdictions (figure 3.10). In interpreting this indicator, note that about 10–20 per cent of Indigenous students leave school before year 10 (figure 3.8) so are not included in the base year for retention from year 10 to year 12. Further, Indigenous students as a proportion of all students was 5.1 per cent in government schools compared with 1.5 per cent in non-government schools (table 3A.18). Nationally, Indigenous retention from year 10 to year 12 for all schools in 2004 was 45.7 per cent (figure 3.10), or 31.4 percentage points lower than the rate for all students.

Figure 3.10 Apparent retention rates from year 10 to year 12, Indigenous full time secondary students, 2004^{a, b, c, d}

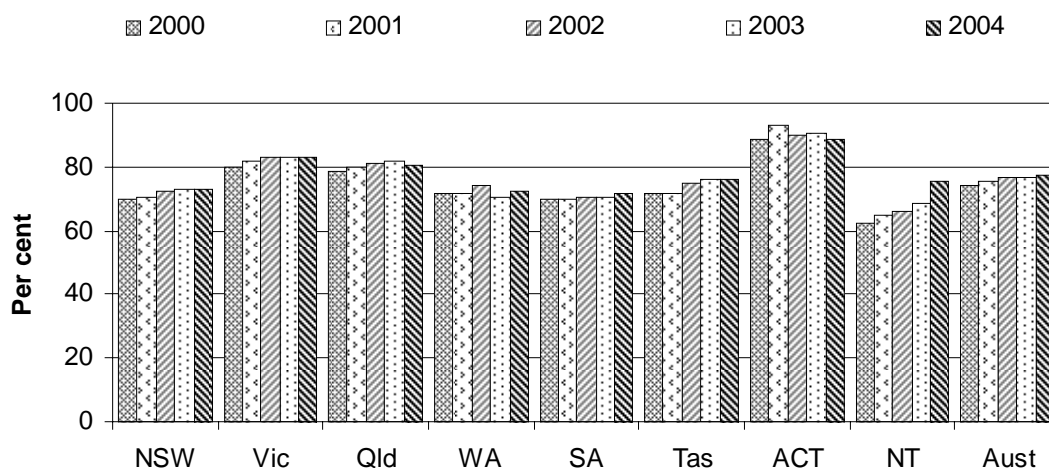


^a Apparent retention rates are affected by factors that vary across jurisdictions. For this reason, variations in apparent retention rates over time within jurisdictions may be more useful than comparisons across jurisdictions. ^b The exclusion of part time students from standard apparent retention rate calculations has implications for the interpretation of results for all jurisdictions, but particularly for SA, Tasmania and the NT where there are high proportions of part time students in government schools (table 3.4). ^c Some student number data for Tasmania have been revised by the Tasmanian Government, resulting in changes to some apparent retention rates, and these revisions may not be reflected in ABS, or other, publications. ^d Ungraded students are not included in the calculation of apparent retention rates. This exclusion has particular implications for the NT, where 34 per cent of Indigenous secondary students are ungraded (compared with an average of 6.9 per cent for the rest of Australia). As a result, Indigenous apparent retention rates may misrepresent the retention of students in secondary schooling in the NT.

Source: ABS (2005); Tasmanian Government (unpublished); table 3A.92.

Between 2000 and 2004, the apparent rates of retention from year 10 to year 12 in all schools increased nationally by 2.7 percentage points (figure 3.11).

Figure 3.11 Apparent rates of retention from year 10 to year 12, full time secondary students, all schools^{a, b, c, d}



^a Apparent retention rates are affected by factors that vary across jurisdictions. For this reason, variations in apparent retention rates over time within jurisdictions may be more useful than comparisons across jurisdictions. ^b The exclusion of part time students from standard apparent retention rate calculations has implications for the interpretation of results for all jurisdictions, but particularly for SA, Tasmania and the NT where there are high proportions of part time students in government schools (table 3.4). ^c Some student number data for Tasmania have been revised by the Tasmanian Government, resulting in changes to some apparent retention rates, and these revisions may not be reflected in ABS, or other, publications. ^d Ungraded students are not included in the calculation of apparent retention rates. This exclusion has particular implications for the NT, where 34 per cent of Indigenous secondary students are ungraded (compared with an average of 6.9 per cent for the rest of Australia). As a result, Indigenous apparent retention rates may misrepresent the retention of students in secondary schooling in the NT.

Source: ABS (2005); Tasmanian Government (unpublished); table 3A.95.

Efficiency

Governments have an interest in achieving the best results from their expenditure on schooling, both as owners and operators of government schools, and as the major providers of funds to the non-government school sector. An objective of the Review of Government Service Provision is to publish comparable estimates of costs. Ideally, such comparison includes the full range of costs to government. Where the full costs cannot be measured, cost estimated on a consistent basis is the best approach.

Table 3.5 shows information on the comparability of the source expenditure data used for this chapter.

Table 3.5 Comparability of government expenditure on government schools — items included, 2003-04

	NSW	Vic	Qld ^a	WA ^b	SA	Tas	ACT ^b	NT
Salaries	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Superannuation	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<i>Basis of estimate</i>	Accrual	Accrual	Accrual	Accrual	Accrual	Accrual	Accrual	Accrual
Workers compensation	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Payroll tax ^c	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Imputed	✓
<i>Basis of estimate</i>	Accrual	Accrual	Accrual	..	Accrual	Accrual	..	Accrual
Termination and long service leave	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<i>Basis of estimate</i>	Accrual	Accrual	Accrual	Accrual	Accrual	Accrual	Accrual	Accrual
Sick leave	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Depreciation	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗
Rent	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	na
<i>Basis of estimate</i>	Accrual	Accrual	Accrual	Accrual	Accrual	Accrual	Accrual	na
Utilities	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<i>Basis of estimate</i>	Accrual	Accrual	Accrual	Accrual	Accrual	Accrual	Accrual	Accrual
Umbrella department costs	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<i>Basis of apportionment^d</i>	Per FTE student	Formula	Formula	Formula	Per student	Per FTE student	Formula	Per student
Notional UCCC ^e	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

^a Sick leave in Queensland is embedded in the salary structure and not separately recorded. ^b Education departments in WA and the ACT are exempt from payroll tax. ^c Efficiency indicators in this chapter are adjusted for differences in payroll tax and notional UCC. ^d Umbrella department costs are apportioned according to: use (including enrolment) in Victoria; cost drivers (mainly student numbers) in Queensland; activity-based costing in the ACT; and pro rata costs based on expenditure in the NT. ^e na Not available. .. Not applicable. ✓ Included. ✗ Excluded. FTE = full time equivalent.

Source: State and Territory governments (unpublished).

Recurrent expenditure per student

‘Recurrent expenditure per student’ is an output-efficiency indicator (box 3.4).

Box 3.4 Recurrent expenditure per student

‘Recurrent expenditure per student’ (government recurrent expenditure per student) is an output-efficiency indicator of governments’ objective to fund and/or provide education in an efficient manner.

Government recurrent expenditure per student is defined as government recurrent expenditure per FTE student. It is reported for in-school primary, in-school secondary and out-of-school services, and for government and non-government schools.

Holding other factors constant, a low or decreasing government recurrent expenditure per FTE student represents better or improved efficiency. Efficiency data are difficult to interpret. While high or increasing government recurrent expenditure per student may reflect deteriorating efficiency, it may also reflect changes in the aspects of the schooling (broader curricula, higher quality education or increased accessibility), or the characteristics of the education environment (such as population dispersion). Similarly, low or decreasing expenditure per student may reflect improving efficiency or lower quality (less effective education) or more narrowly defined curricula. Efficiency data need to be interpreted within the context of the effectiveness and equity indicators to derive an holistic view of performance.

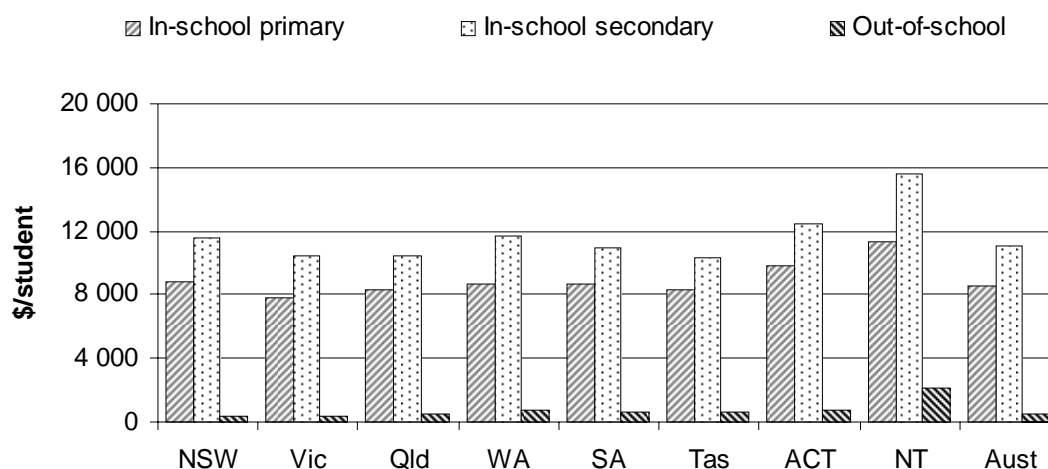
A number of factors may influence government recurrent expenditure per student. Differences in the costs of educating students can be driven by:

- influences beyond the control of governments, such as a high proportion of geographically remote students and/or a dispersed population, as well as migration between states and territories
- policy changes in education
- various approaches that education departments and schools apply in managing resources
- economies of scale.

The Commonwealth Grants Commission, when calculating relativities between states and territories to distribute Australian Government general purpose grants, accounts for influences beyond a jurisdiction’s control (called ‘disabilities’) that affect the jurisdiction’s cost of providing services and capacity to raise revenue. In relation to education, the assessment includes a variety of factors that measure disabilities such as the size of the jurisdiction, the dispersed nature of the population and the sociodemographic distribution of the population. This Report does not, however, make any cost adjustments based on any of the above factors. These factors may need to be considered when examining each jurisdiction’s expenditure per student.

A proxy indicator of efficiency is the level of government inputs per unit of output (unit cost). Nationally, in-school government expenditure per FTE student in government primary schools was \$8515 in 2003-04. In-school government expenditure per FTE student in government secondary schools was \$11 053 in 2003-04. Out-of-school government expenditure per FTE student in government schools was \$500 in 2003-04 (figure 3.12).

Figure 3.12 **Government recurrent expenditure per FTE student, government schools, 2003-04^{a, b}**

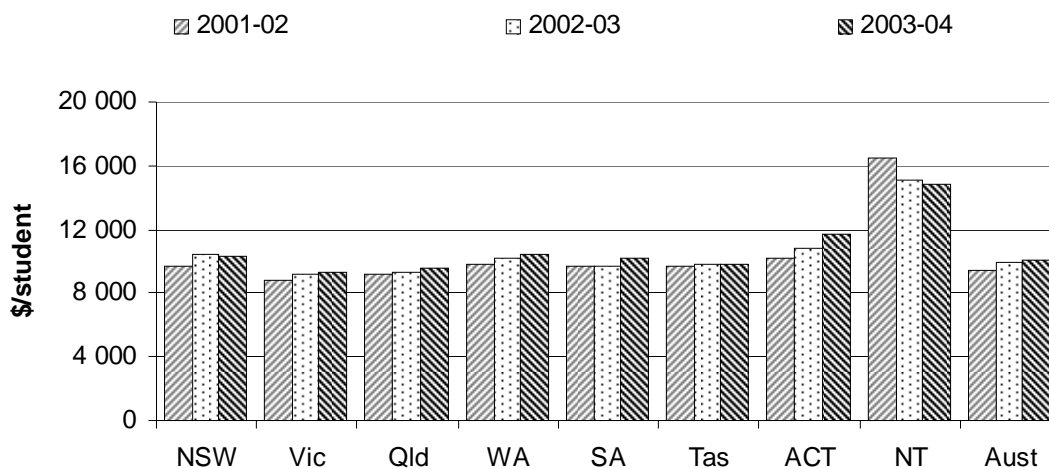


^a See notes to tables 3A.7 and 3A.8 for definitions and data caveats. ^b Payroll tax estimates have been included for WA and the ACT for comparability reasons.

Source: ABS (2005); MCEETYA (2005e); table 3A.8.

Nationally, government expenditure per FTE student in government schools was \$10 003 in 2003-04. It increased (in average real terms) between 2001-02 and 2003-04 (figure 3.13) by 2.7 per cent per year (table 3A.9).

Figure 3.13 **Government real recurrent expenditure per FTE student, government schools (2003-04 dollars)^{a, b, c}**



^a See notes to tables 3A.7 and 3A.8 for definitions and data caveats. ^b Data for 2001-02 and 2002-03 have been adjusted to 2003-04 dollars using the gross domestic product (GDP) price deflator. ^c Payroll tax estimates have been included for WA and the ACT for comparability reasons.

Source: ABS (2005); MCEETYA (2005e); table 3A.9.

Nationally, government expenditure per FTE student in non-government schools was \$5595 in 2003-04. It increased (in average real terms) between 2001-02 and 2003-04 (figure 3.14) by 3.9 per cent per year (table 3A.9).

Figure 3.14 **Government real recurrent expenditure per FTE student, non-government schools (2003-04 dollars)^{a, b, c}**



^a See notes to tables 3A.7 and 3A.8 for definitions and data caveats. ^b Data for 2001-02 and 2002-03 have been adjusted to 2003-04 dollars using the gross domestic product (GDP) price deflator. ^c The sum of Australian Government specific purpose payments for non-government schools, and State and Territory government payments to non-government schools. Data on State and Territory government payments to non-government schools are not fully comparable across jurisdictions.

Source: ABS (2005); DEST (unpublished); State and Territory governments (unpublished); table 3A.9.

Tables 3A.99, 3A.102, 3A.109, 3A.114, 3A.118 and 3A.122 contain time series data on expenditure per government school student by geographic location for some jurisdictions. Tables 3A.100, 3A.103, 3A.110, 3A.115 and 3A.123 contain time series data on expenditure per government school student by socioeconomic disadvantage for some jurisdictions. These data should be interpreted with caution because different definitions of geolocation and socioeconomic disadvantage are applied across jurisdictions.

Staff expenditure per student

‘Staff expenditure per student’ is an output-efficiency indicator (box 3.5).

Box 3.5 Staff expenditure per student

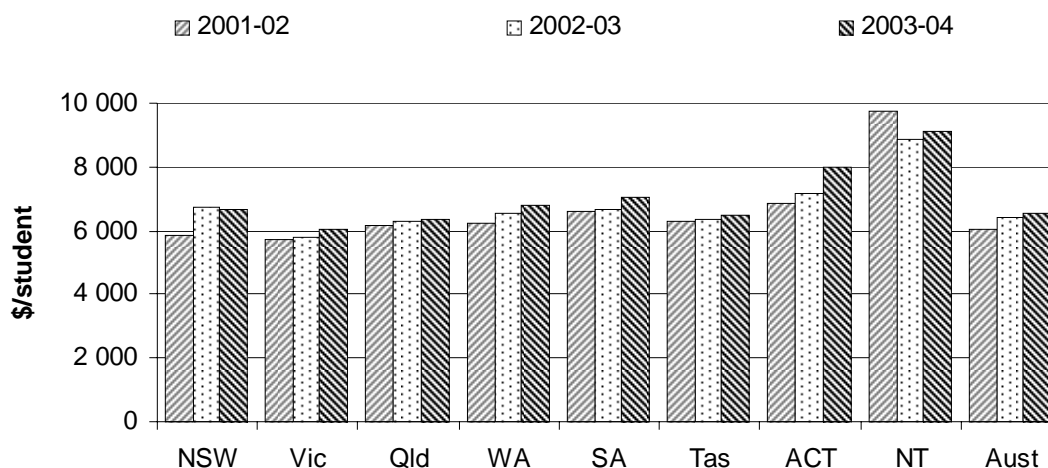
'Staff expenditure per student' (government recurrent expenditure on staff per student) is an output-efficiency indicator of governments' objective to provide education in an efficient manner.

Government recurrent expenditure on staff per student is defined as government expenditure on staff per FTE student in government schools. Expenditure on staff is the major component of spending on schools.

Holding other factors constant, low or decreasing government expenditure on staff per FTE student represents better or improved efficiency. Efficiency data are difficult to interpret and this indicator in particular is partial in nature as it does not reflect the full cost per student. While high or increasing government expenditure on staff per student may reflect deteriorating efficiency, it may also reflect improvements in schooling (through higher quality teachers), or the characteristics of the education environment (broader curricula such as information technology and the need for teachers with new skills). Similarly, a low or decreasing expenditure on staff per student may reflect improving efficiency or lower quality (less effective education) or more narrowly defined curricula. Efficiency data need to be interpreted within the context of the effectiveness and equity indicators to derive an holistic view of performance.

Expenditure on staff is the major component of government recurrent expenditure on government schools (\$14.8 billion), accounting for 65.3 per cent of the national total, in 2003-04. Of this expenditure, 80.7 per cent was on in-school teachers and 19.3 per cent was on other staff (table 3A.7). The average real increase in expenditure on staff between 2001-02 and 2003-04 was 3.7 per cent per year (figure 3.15).

Figure 3.15 Real government recurrent expenditure on staff per FTE student, government schools (2003-04 dollars)^{a, b}



^a See notes to tables 3A.7 and 3A.8 for definitions and data caveats. ^b Data for 2001-02 and 2002-03 have been adjusted to 2003-04 dollars using the gross domestic product (GDP) price deflator.

Source: ABS (2005); MCEETYA (2005e); table 3A.8.

User cost of capital per student

‘UCC per student’ is an output-efficiency indicator (box 3.6).

Box 3.6 User cost of capital per student

‘UCC per student’ (notional UCC per student) is an output-efficiency indicator of governments’ objective to provide education in an efficient manner.

Notional UCC per student is defined as the dollars of UCC per FTE student.

The notional UCC for government services is the cost of funds tied up in capital used to produce services (for example, land and buildings owned by government schools). The notional UCC makes explicit the opportunity cost of using the funds to provide services rather than investing elsewhere or retiring debt. When comparing the costs of government services, it is important to account for the notional UCC because it is:

- often a significant component of the cost of services
- often treated inconsistently (that is, included in the costs of services delivered by most non-government service providers, but effectively costed at zero for many government service providers).

The UCC reflects the annual UCC per student, and is set at 8 per cent of the value of non-current physical assets (for example, land, buildings, plant and equipment).

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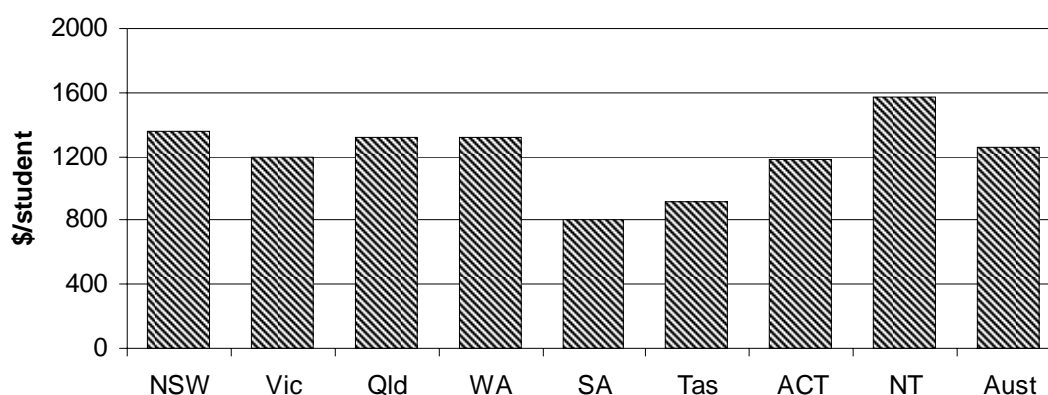
Box 3.6 (Continued)

Holding other factors constant, a low or decreasing UCC per student represents better or improved efficiency. Efficiency data are difficult to interpret and this indicator in particular is only partial in nature as it does not reflect the full cost per student. While high or increasing UCC per student may reflect deteriorating efficiency, it may also reflect changes in the aspects of the schooling (broader curricula, enhanced facilities), or the characteristics of the education environment (such as population dispersion). Similarly, low or decreasing UCC per student may reflect improving efficiency or lower quality (less effective education) or fewer facilities or reduced capital maintenance. Efficiency data need to be interpreted within the context of the effectiveness and equity indicators to derive an holistic view of performance.

The Steering Committee accepts that the asset valuation data, from which the notional UCC has been calculated, are not fully comparable across jurisdictions until 2003-04 (table 3A.11). It also recognises that the treatment of costs in the past has not fully recognised the cost of public capital used by agencies to deliver services — that is, capital has generally been considered ‘free’. This can lead to significant underestimation of costs of those services for which government capital is a major input. Using an imperfect costing of government capital, therefore, is preferable to not costing it at all, and also provides an incentive to improve data over time. The data definitions for asset reporting and valuation methods applied for 2003-04 are nationally consistent resulting in comparable asset values data across jurisdictions which are used to calculate the notional UCC.

The notional UCC per FTE government school student in 2003-04 averaged \$1254 nationally (figure 3.16).

Figure 3.16 Notional UCC per FTE student, government schools, 2003-04^a



^a See notes to table 3A.9 for definitions and data caveats.
Source: ABS (2005); MCEETYA (unpublished); table 3A.9.

Student-to-staff ratio

The 'student-to-staff ratio' is an output-efficiency indicator (box 3.7).

Box 3.7 Student-to-staff ratio

The 'student-to-staff ratio' is an output-efficiency indicator of governments' objective to provide education in an efficient manner.

The student-to-staff ratio is defined as the number of FTE students per FTE staff. Data are reported for primary, secondary and all schools, and for teaching and non-teaching staff. The student-to-teacher ratio presents the number of students per teacher where teachers are classified in a way that can be compared across jurisdictions. A low ratio means there are a small number of students per teacher. (The ratio is not a measure of class size.)

Holding other factors constant, a high or increasing student-to-teacher ratio represents better or improved efficiency, but only when output quality and outcomes are the same as (or higher than) those in the other systems being compared. A low or decreasing student-to-teacher ratio may reflect decreasing efficiency, but may also reflect a higher quality education system, if it is assumed that teachers have more time for each student and that this results in better student outcomes. There is, however, no clear agreement in international literature that smaller class sizes necessarily improve outcomes.

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Box 3.7 (Continued)

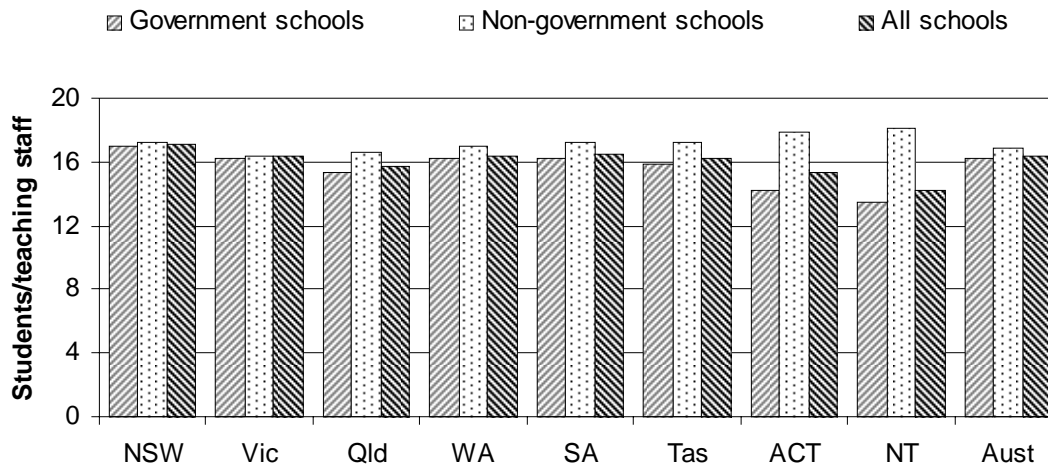
The ratio needs to be interpreted with care because it is aggregated across all subjects and year levels, so it does not reflect the fact that a lower ratio may be more important for certain subjects and/or year levels and it does not account for learning outcomes, teacher quality, experience and qualifications. Further, it can be affected by a number of factors, including:

- the proportion of small rural schools — for example, a large proportion of small rural schools can significantly lower the overall average student-to-teacher ratio, while a large proportion of students in metropolitan schools can increase the ratio
- the proportion of special needs students — for example, special schools catering for students with disabilities generally have significantly lower student to teacher ratios than those of mainstream schools because additional resources are required in mainstream schools for these students
- the degree to which administrative work is undertaken by people classified as teachers (such as principals, deputy principals and senior teachers)
- other inputs to school education (for example, non-teaching staff, computers, books and laboratory equipment).

Efficiency data need to be interpreted within the context of the effectiveness and equity indicators to derive an holistic view of performance.

Nationally, for government primary schools, the student-to-teacher ratio was 16.2 in 2004. For non-government primary schools, the student-to-teacher ratio was 16.9 in 2004. For all primary schools, the student-to-teacher ratio was 16.4 in 2004 (figure 3.17).

Figure 3.17 Ratio of FTE students to FTE teaching staff, primary schools, 2004^a

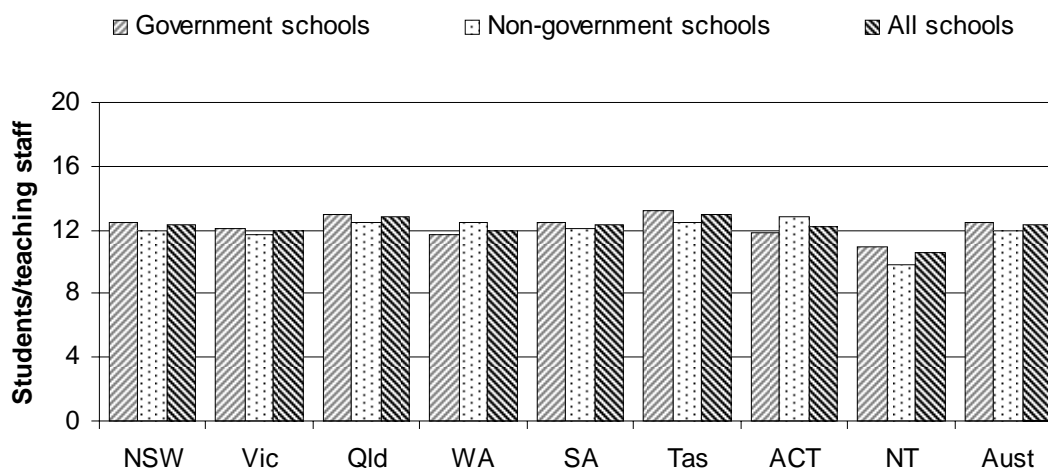


^a See notes to table 3A.12 for definitions and data caveats.

Source: ABS (2005); table 3A.12.

Nationally, for government secondary schools, the student-to-teacher ratio was 12.4 in 2004. For non-government secondary schools, the student-to-teacher ratio was 12.0 in 2004. For all secondary schools, the student-to-teacher ratio was 12.3 in 2004 (figure 3.18).

Figure 3.18 Ratio of FTE students to FTE teaching staff, secondary schools, 2004^a



^a See notes to table 3A.12 for definitions and data caveats.

Source: ABS (2005); table 3A.12.

Nationally, for all government schools, the student-to-teacher ratio was 14.5 in 2004. For all non-government schools, the student-to-teacher ratio was 14.1 in 2004. For all schools, the student-to-teacher ratio was 14.3 in 2004 (table 3A.12).

Refer to table 3A.12 for further detail on student-to-staff ratios for all jurisdictions. Tables 3A.101, 3A.104-5, 3A.107-8, 3A.111-12, 3A.116, 3A.119-120 and 3A.124 contain time series data on student-to-staff ratios by geographic location for some jurisdictions. Tables 3A.106, 3A.113, 3A.117 and 3A.121 contain time series data on student-to-staff ratios by socioeconomic disadvantage for some jurisdictions. These data should be interpreted with caution because different definitions of geolocation and socioeconomic disadvantage are applied across jurisdictions.

Outcomes

Nationally comparable learning outcomes

‘Reading performance’, ‘writing performance’, ‘numeracy performance’ and ‘science literacy performance’ have been identified as outcome indicators of school education (boxes 3.8–3.11). Years 3, 5 and 7 nationally comparable learning outcomes data for 2002 and 2003 for reading, writing and numeracy performance, and year 6 scientific literacy performance for 2003 are reported. Learning outcomes data and accompanying information from the national collection for 2001–03 are reported in tables 3A.25–72. Limitations of national learning outcomes data are detailed in the 2004 Report (box 3.1, pages 3.36-7).

Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) 2003 learning outcomes data for 15 year olds are reported across three domains: reading literacy, mathematical literacy and scientific literacy. Problem solving was also assessed as a discrete test in 2003, and data are reported in table 3A.87. PISA is an initiative of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and assessments are conducted triennially. PISA focuses on the ability of 15 year olds to apply their knowledge and skills to real-life problems and situations, rather than on how much curriculum based knowledge they possess.

In 2003, approximately 276 000 students from 41 countries participated in the PISA survey. From Australia this included over 12 500 students from 321 schools. Mathematical literacy was the major domain tested. Detailed information about PISA 2003 is available in Thomson et al. (2004a, 2004b) and OECD (2004). PISA 2003 assessment results are reported as the proportion of Australian students who achieved at or above the OECD mean, as well as at or above proficiency level 3 for reading literacy. Thirty of the 41 participating countries were OECD

countries. Information and data on PISA 2000 are included in the 2003 Report (SCRCSSP 2003, pages 3.18-19, 3.22-23 and 3.26–28) and tables 3A.76, 3A.78–81, 3A.83–86.

Interpreting learning outcomes data

Caution needs to be exercised in making comparisons in the results across the two PISA surveys. In relation to the results against the OECD averages, there are small changes to the countries included in the OECD averages in 2000 and 2003, which mean that the OECD averages are not strictly comparable across the two surveys. In addition, care needs to be exercised in making conclusions about trends based on data from only two points in time.

To assist with making comparisons between jurisdictions, 95 per cent confidence intervals are presented in charts, calculated from the standard errors in accompanying tables (tables 3A.76–88). Confidence intervals are a standard way of expressing the degree of sampling and measurement error associated with the survey estimates or performance data. An estimate of 80 with a confidence interval of ± 2 , for example, means that if the total population had been surveyed rather than a sample, or had another sample been drawn, there is a 95 per cent chance that the result would lie between 78 and 82. The learning outcomes proportion for a jurisdiction, therefore, can be thought of in terms of a range. If one jurisdiction's rate ranges from 78–82 and another's from 77–81, then it is not possible to say with confidence that one differs from the other (because there is unlikely to be a statistically significant difference). Where ranges do not overlap, there is a high likelihood that there is a statistically significant difference. To say that there is a statistically significant difference means there is a high probability that there is an actual difference; it does not imply that the difference is necessarily large or important.

Reading performance

'Reading performance' is an outcome indicator (box 3.8).

Box 3.8 Reading performance

'Reading performance' is an outcome indicator of governments' objective that young Australians should attain high standards of knowledge, skill and understanding in core curriculum areas.

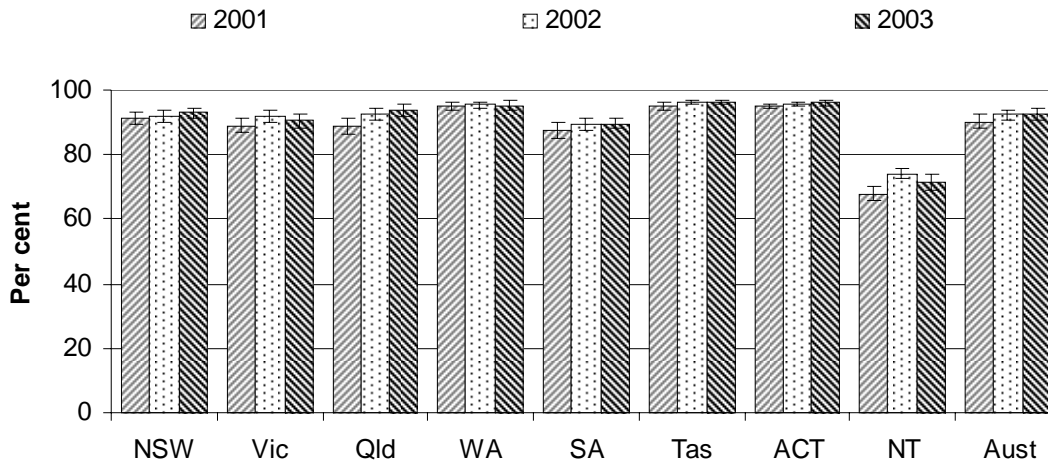
Reading performance is defined as the proportion of assessed years 3, 5 and 7 students who achieved the national reading benchmark for a given year, reported by sex, Indigenous status and LBOTE status. The benchmarks describe nationally agreed minimum acceptable standards for reading performance at years 3, 5 and 7. Student performance is measured (or assessed) by State-based testing programs which are equated by a national process designed to (or intended to) allow comparable reporting against the benchmarks.

Holding other factors equal, a high or increasing proportion of students achieving the reading benchmark is desirable. This indicator is affected by socioeconomic circumstances, age, length of time spent in schooling, and LBOTE and Indigenous status.

Nationally, the proportion of assessed year 3 students who achieved the reading benchmark in 2003 was 90.7–94.1 per cent (figure 3.19). The national proportion of students by equity group who achieved the year 3 reading benchmark in 2003 was:

- 92.9–95.7 per cent for female students, higher than the proportion for male students (88.8–92.8 per cent)
- 71.9–85.7 per cent for Indigenous students
- 88.0–92.0 per cent for LBOTE students (figure 3.20).

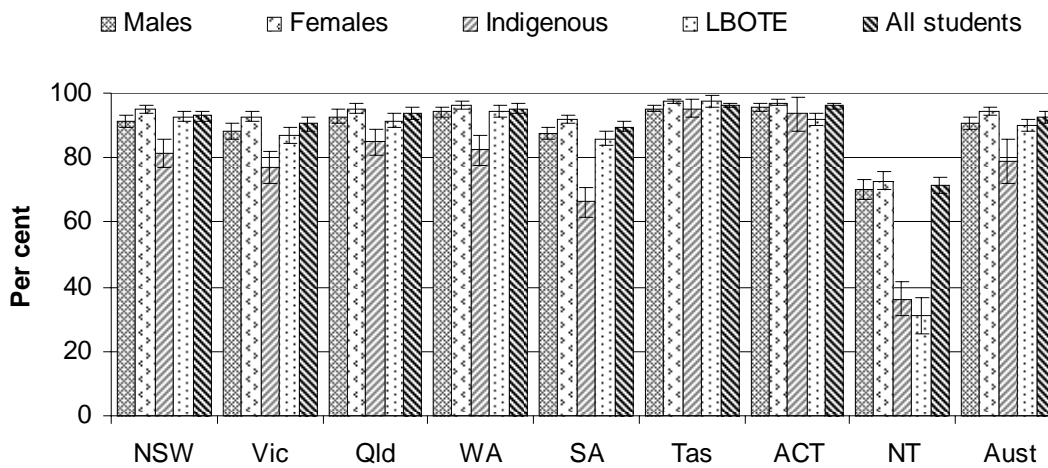
Figure 3.19 Proportion of year 3 students achieving the reading benchmark^{a, b}



^a Error bars represent the 95 per cent confidence interval associated with each point estimate. ^b For further information and caveats see tables 3A.28-29, 3A.43-44 and tables 3A.59-60.

Source: MCEETYA 2005a, 2005b; tables 3A.25, 3A.40 and 3A.55.

Figure 3.20 Proportion of year 3 students achieving the reading benchmark, by equity group, 2003^{a, b}



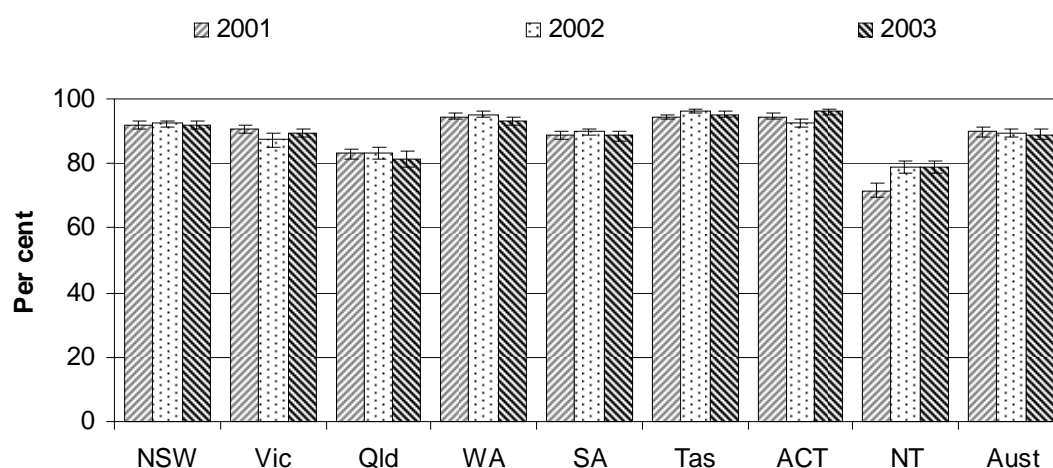
^a Error bars represent the 95 per cent confidence interval associated with each point estimate. ^b For further information and caveats see tables 3A.59-60.

Source: MCEETYA 2005a, 2005b; table 3A.55.

The proportion of assessed year 5 students who achieved the reading benchmark in 2003 was 87.5–90.5 per cent nationally (figure 3.21). The proportion of students by equity group who achieved the year 5 reading benchmark in 2003 was:

- 90.2–93.0 per cent for female students, higher than the proportion for male students (85.0–88.6 per cent)
- 63.6–71.8 per cent for Indigenous students
- 87.1–90.3 per cent for LBOTE students (figure 3.22).

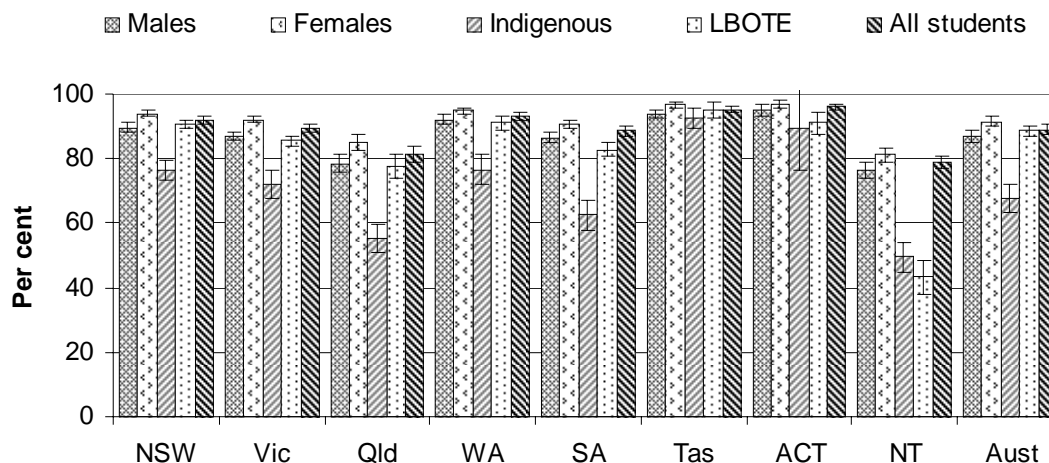
Figure 3.21 **Proportion of year 5 students achieving the reading benchmark^{a, b}**



^a Error bars represent the 95 per cent confidence interval associated with each point estimate. ^b For further information and caveats see tables 3A.28-29, 3A.43-44 and tables 3A.59-60.

Source: MCEETYA 2005a, 2005b; tables 3A.26, 3A.41 and 3A.56.

Figure 3.22 Proportion of year 5 students achieving the reading benchmark, by equity group, 2003^{a, b}



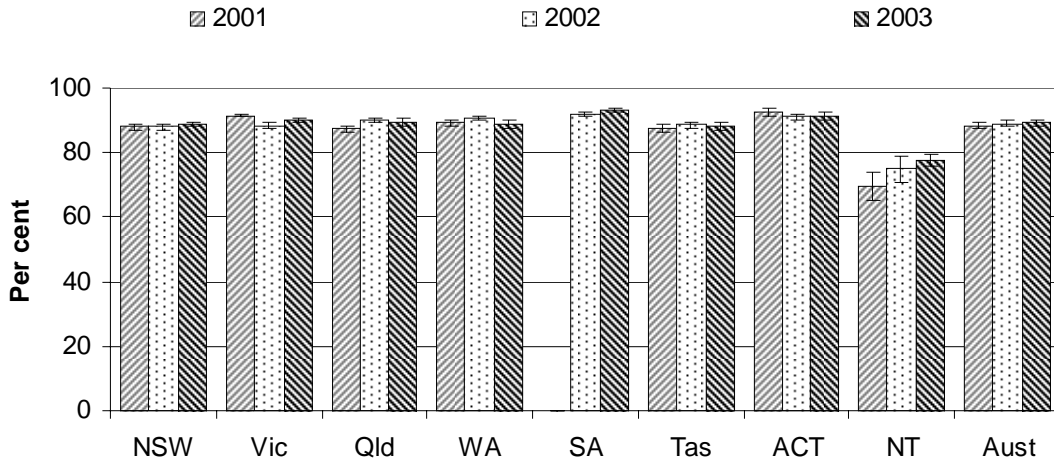
^a Error bars represent the 95 per cent confidence interval associated with each point estimate. ^b For further information and caveats see tables 3A.28-29, 3A.43-44 and tables 3A.59-60.

Source: MCEETYA 2005a, 2005b; table 3A.56.

The proportion of assessed year 7 students who achieved the reading benchmark in 2003 was 88.5–90.3 per cent nationally (figure 3.23). The proportion of students by equity group who achieved the year 7 reading benchmark in 2003 was:

- 91.1–92.7 per cent for female students, higher than the proportion for male students (86.0–88.2 per cent)
- 63.3–69.5 per cent for Indigenous students
- 85.2–87.6 per cent for LBOTE students (figure 3.24).

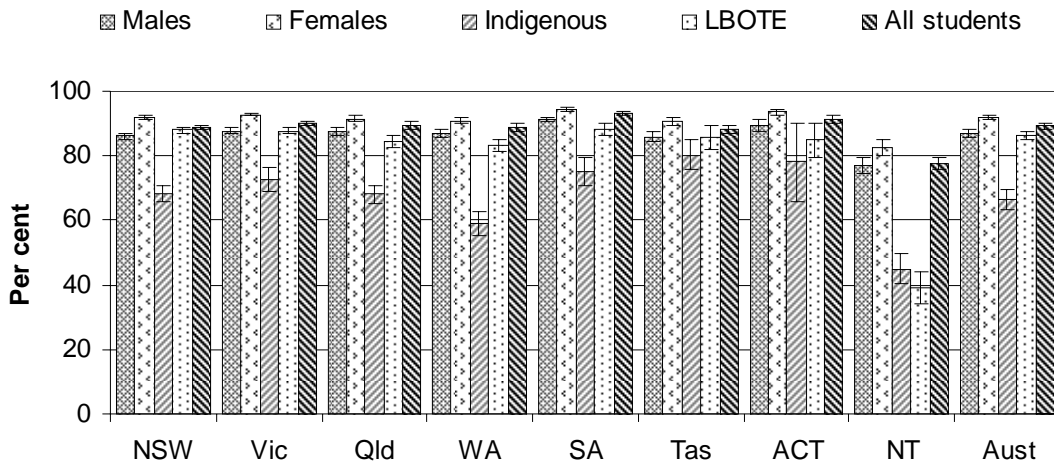
Figure 3.23 Proportion of year 7 students achieving the reading benchmark^{a, b, c}



^a Error bars represent the 95 per cent confidence interval associated with each point estimate. ^b SA 2001 data were not available. ^c For further information and caveats see tables 3A.28-29, 3A.43-44 and tables 3A.59-60.

Source: MCEETYA 2005a, 2005b; tables 3A.27, 3A.42 and 3A.57.

Figure 3.24 Proportion of year 7 students achieving the reading benchmark, by equity group, 2003^{a, b}



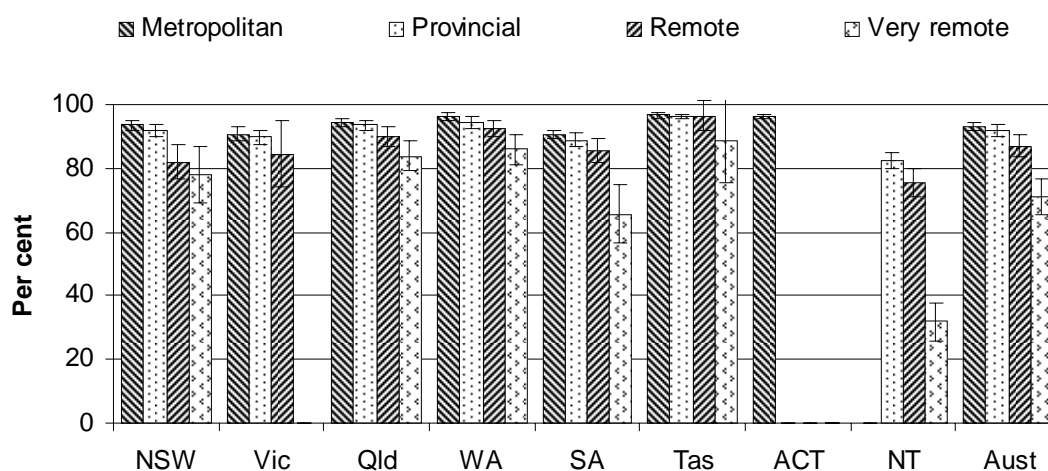
^a Error bars represent the 95 per cent confidence interval associated with each point estimate. ^b For further information and caveats see tables 3A.59-60.

Source: MCEETYA 2005a, 2005b; table 3A.57.

Nationally, the proportion of assessed students from remote areas who achieved the reading benchmark in 2003 was:

- 83.7–90.5 per cent for year 3 students, below the proportion for metropolitan students (91.6–94.6 per cent), no different to the proportion for provincial students (89.7–93.7 per cent), and above the proportion for very remote students (65.5–76.9 per cent) (figure 3.25)
- 78.4–84.6 per cent for year 5 students, below the proportion for metropolitan (88.6–91.4 per cent) and provincial students (86.0–89.4 per cent), and above the proportion for very remote students (57.5–67.5 per cent)
- 79.3–85.7 per cent for year 7 students, below the proportion for metropolitan (89.7–91.3 per cent) and provincial students (87.1–89.3 per cent), and above the proportion for very remote students (55.6–66.4 per cent) (table 3A.58).

Figure 3.25 **Proportion of year 3 students achieving the reading benchmark, by geolocation, 2003^{a, b, c}**



^a Error bars represent the 95 per cent confidence interval associated with each point estimate. ^b Data for year 3 students are shown and may not be representative of all primary students. ^c Insufficient or no students in an area of geographic classification are not included. There are no remote or very remote areas in the ACT.

Source: MCEETYA 2005a, 2005b; table 3A.58.

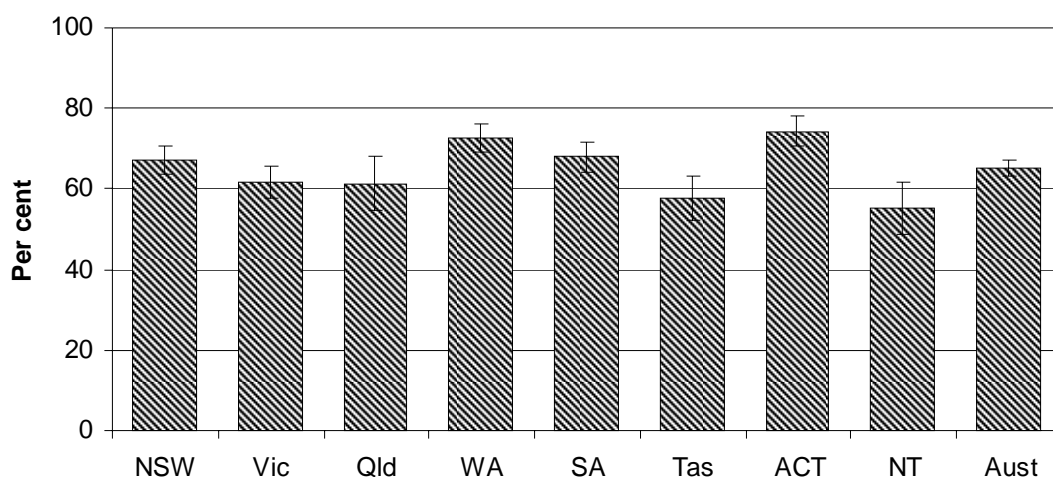
Reading literacy was a domain tested in the PISA 2003 survey. Nationally, in 2003 the proportion of 15 year old students who achieved at the OECD mean or above for reading literacy was:

- 63.3–67.3 per cent for all 15 year old students (figure 3.26)
- 71.1–75.9 per cent for female students, higher than the proportion for male students (54.9–59.9 per cent)

- 26.1–40.3 per cent for Indigenous students, 38.1–60.5 per cent for geographically remote students and 47.8–53.2 per cent for students from low socioeconomic status families (tables 3A.77–78).

State and Territory data for males, females and students from low socioeconomic status families are shown in table 3A.77. Data for PISA 2000 are shown in tables 3A.76 and 3A.78. Results for reading literacy between PISA 2000 and PISA 2003 cannot be compared.

Figure 3.26 Proportion of 15 year old students who achieved at the OECD mean or above, reading literacy, 2003^a



^a Error bars represent the 95 per cent confidence intervals associated with each point estimate.

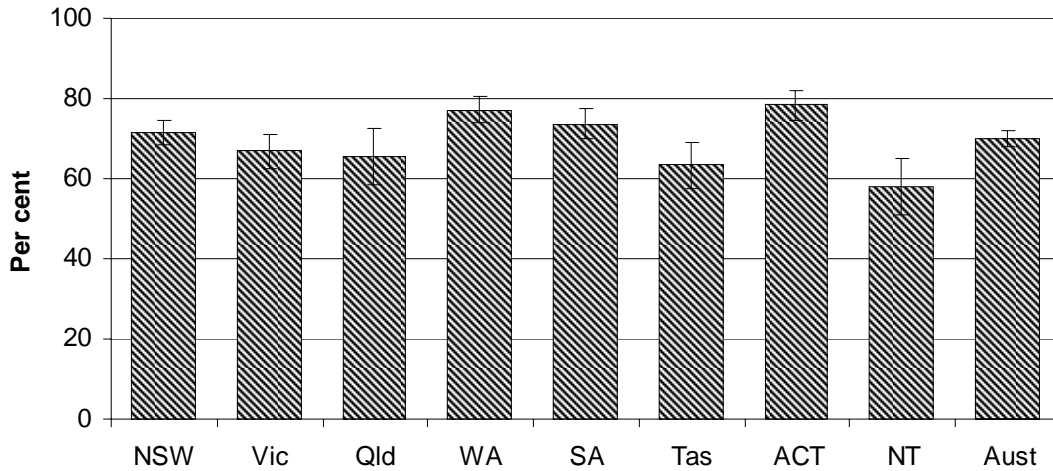
Source: Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) (unpublished); table 3A.77.

Results for reading literacy are also available as the percentage of students achieving proficiency level 3 or above in the overall reading literacy scale for both 2000 and 2003 (tables 3A.79–80). Reading literacy is the only domain where data by proficiency level are currently available across two cycles.

The PISA 2003 results indicate that nationally, the proportion of 15 year old students who achieved at level 3 or above in the overall reading literacy scale was:

- 67.9–71.9 per cent for all Australian students, higher than the proportion for the all students OECD average (57.9–58.7 per cent) (figure 3.27)
- 75.6–80.0 per cent for female students, higher than the proportion for male students (59.8–64.8 per cent)
- 30.5–45.7 per cent for Indigenous students, 44.5–62.5 per cent for geographically remote students and 53.5–58.9 per cent for students from low socioeconomic status families (table 3A.80).

Figure 3.27 Proportion of 15 year old students achieving level 3 or above, overall reading literacy scale, 2003^{a, b}



^a Error bars represent the 95 per cent confidence intervals associated with each point estimate. ^b The PISA overall reading literacy scale has five defined proficiency levels, from level 5 (the highest) to level 1 (the lowest) with an additional level referred to as 'Below level 1' which covers those students who are unable to reach even the first threshold of the skills that PISA seeks to measure. At level 3, students are capable of reading tasks of moderate complexity such as locating multiple pieces of information, making links between different parts of a text and relating it to familiar everyday knowledge. Level 3 or above can be described as a level of achievement that is reasonably challenging and which requires students to demonstrate more than minimal or elementary skills to be regarded as reaching it.

Source: Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) (unpublished); table 3A.79.

Writing performance

'Writing performance' is an outcome indicator (box 3.9).

Box 3.9 Writing performance

'Writing performance' is an outcome indicator of governments' objective that young Australians should attain high standards of knowledge, skill and understanding in core curriculum areas.

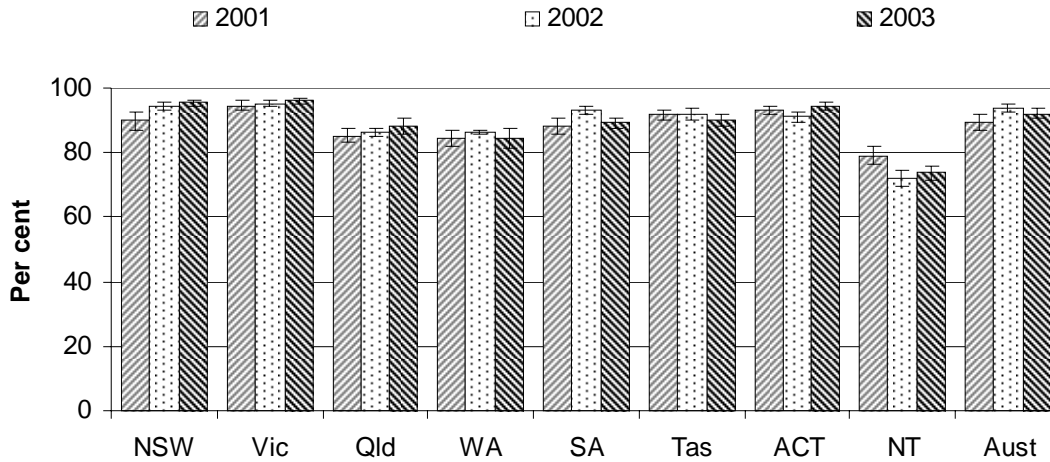
Writing performance is defined as the proportion of assessed years 3, 5 and 7 students who achieved the national writing benchmark for a given year, reported by sex, Indigenous status and LBOTE status. The benchmarks describe nationally agreed minimum acceptable standards for writing performance at years 3, 5 and 7. Student performance is measured (or assessed) by State-based testing programs which are equated by a national process designed to (or intended to) allow comparable reporting against the benchmarks.

Holding other factors equal, a high or increasing proportion of students achieving the writing benchmark is desirable. This indicator is affected by socioeconomic circumstances, age, length of time spent in schooling, and LBOTE and Indigenous status.

Nationally, the proportion of assessed year 3 students who achieved the writing benchmark in 2003 was 90.7–93.7 per cent (figure 3.28). The national proportion of students by equity group who achieved the year 3 writing benchmark in 2003 was:

- 93.5–95.9 per cent for female students, higher than the proportion for male students (87.9–91.9 per cent)
- 71.1–79.3 per cent for Indigenous students
- 90.9–93.7 per cent for LBOTE students (figure 3.29).

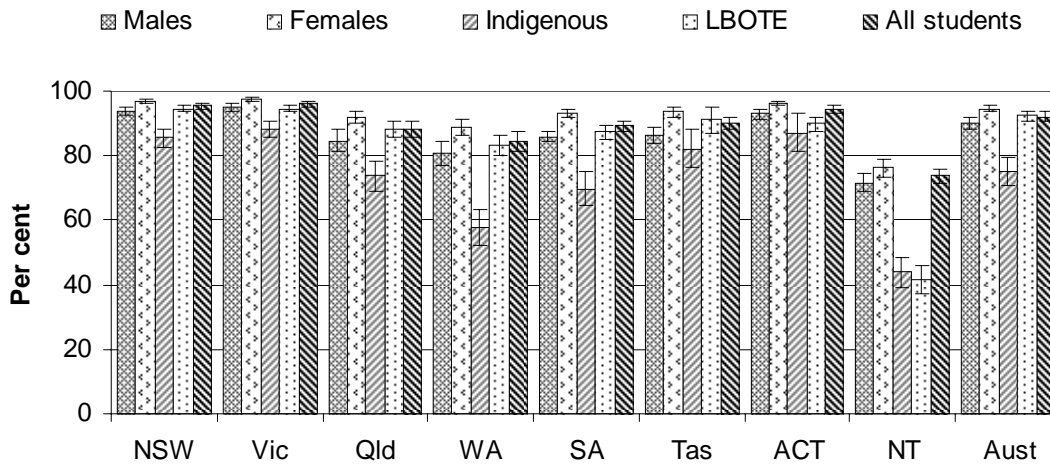
Figure 3.28 Proportion of year 3 students achieving the writing benchmark^{a, b}



^a Error bars represent the 95 per cent confidence interval associated with each point estimate. ^b For further information and caveats see tables 3A.33-34, 3A.48-49 and tables 3A.65-66.

Source: MCEETYA 2005a, 2005b; tables 3A.30, 3A.45 and 3A.61.

Figure 3.29 Proportion of year 3 students achieving the writing benchmark, by equity group, 2003^{a, b}



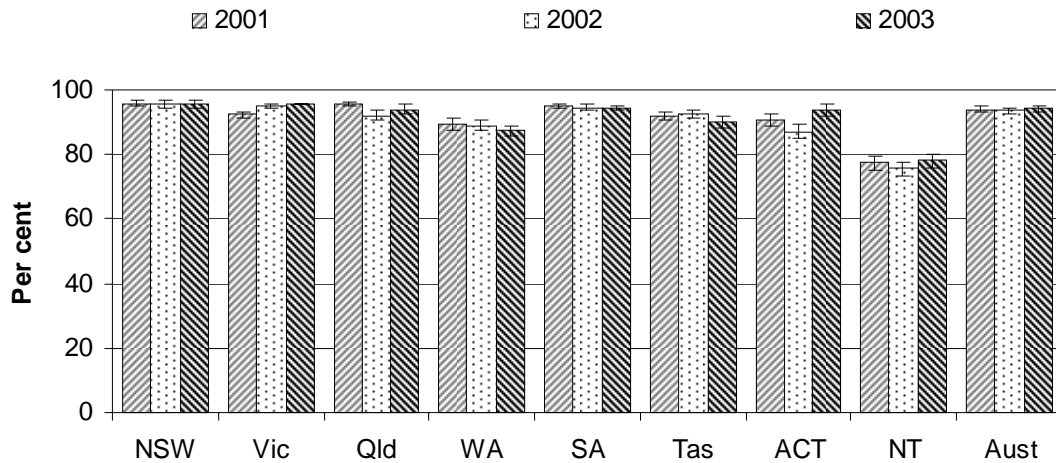
^a Error bars represent the 95 per cent confidence interval associated with each point estimate. ^b For further information and caveats see tables 3A.65-66.

Source: MCEETYA 2005a, 2005b; table 3A.61.

Nationally, the proportion of assessed year 5 students who achieved the writing benchmark in 2003 was 93.0–95.2 per cent (figure 3.30). The national proportion of students by equity group who achieved the year 5 writing benchmark in 2003 was:

- 95.0–97.2 per cent for female students, higher than the proportion for male students (90.6–93.6 per cent)
- 75.8–83.4 per cent for Indigenous students
- 91.3–93.7 per cent for LBOTE students (figure 3.31).

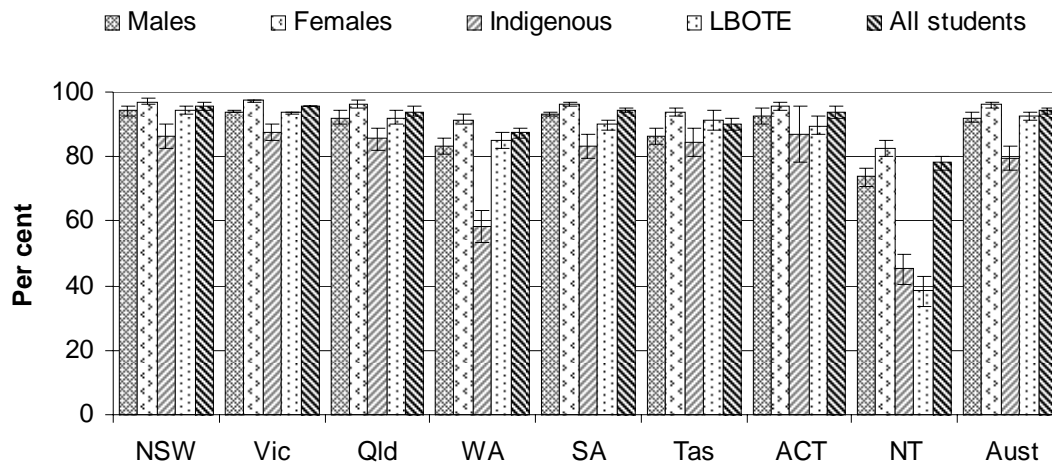
Figure 3.30 **Proportion of year 5 students achieving the writing benchmark^{a, b}**



^a Error bars represent the 95 per cent confidence interval associated with each point estimate. ^b For further information and caveats see tables 3A.33-34, 3A.48-49 and tables 3A.65-66.

Source: MCEETYA 2005a, 2005b; tables 3A.31, 3A.46 and 3A.62.

Figure 3.31 Proportion of year 5 students achieving the writing benchmark, by equity group, 2003^{a, b}



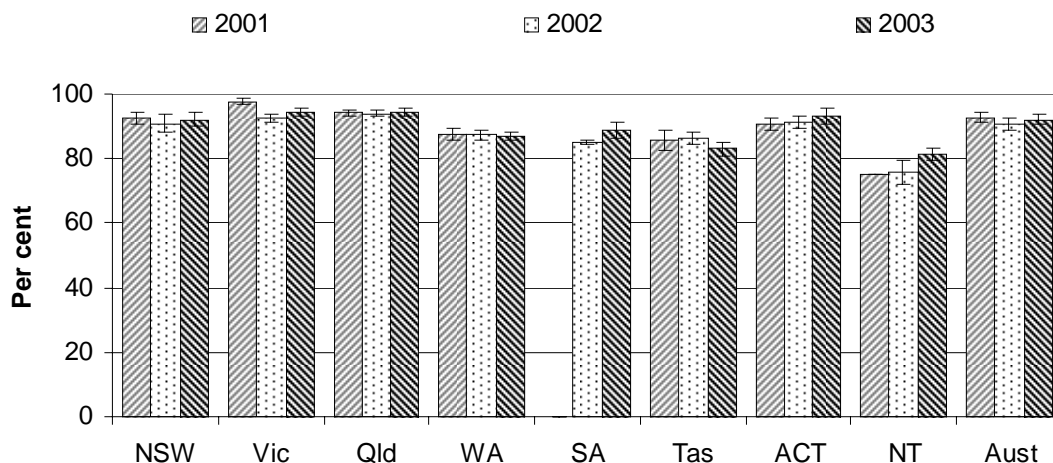
^a Error bars represent the 95 per cent confidence interval associated with each point estimate. ^b For further information and caveats see tables 3A.65-66.

Source: MCEETYA 2005a, 2005b; table 3A.62.

Nationally, the proportion of assessed year 7 students who achieved the writing benchmark in 2003 was 90.4–93.8 per cent (figure 3.32). The national proportion of students by equity group who achieved the year 7 writing benchmark in 2003 was:

- 94.0–96.4 per cent for female students, higher than the proportion for male students (87.0–91.4 per cent)
- 70.0–78.8 per cent for Indigenous students
- 88.9–93.1 per cent for LBOTE students (figure 3.33).

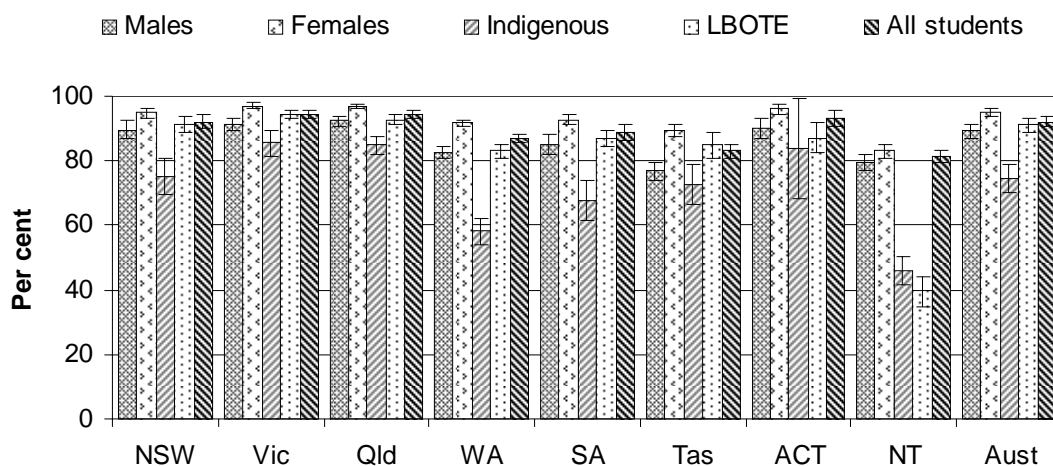
Figure 3.32 Proportion of year 7 students achieving the writing benchmark^{a, b, c}



^a Error bars represent the 95 per cent confidence interval associated with each point estimate. ^b SA 2001 data were not available. ^c For further information and caveats see tables 3A.33-34, 3A.48-49 and tables 3A.65-66.

Source: MCEETYA 2005a, 2005b; tables 3A.32, 3A.47 and 3A.63.

Figure 3.33 Proportion of year 7 students achieving the writing benchmark, by equity group, 2003^{a, b}



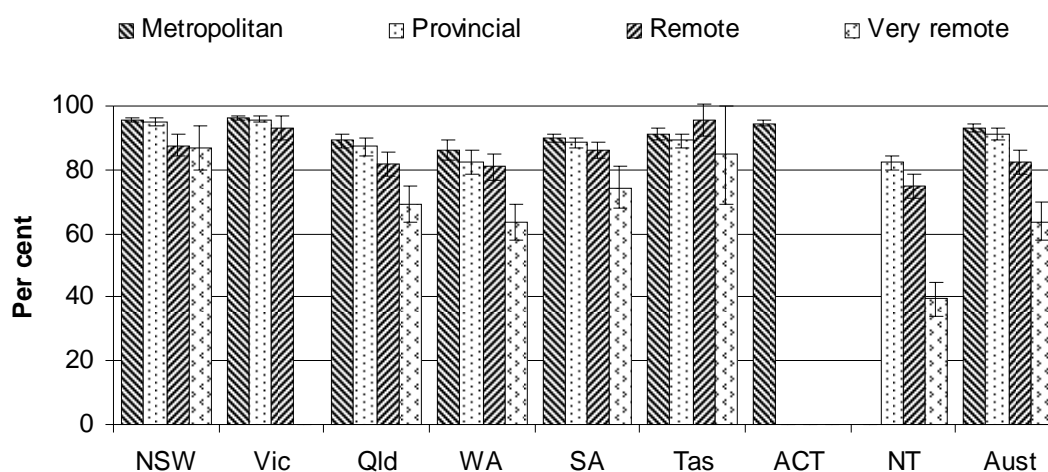
^a Error bars represent the 95 per cent confidence interval associated with each point estimate. ^b For further information and caveats see tables 3A.65-66.

Source: MCEETYA 2005a, 2005b; table 3A.63.

Nationally, the proportion of assessed students from remote areas who achieved the writing benchmark in 2003 was:

- 78.6–86.0 per cent for year 3 students, below the proportion for metropolitan (91.7–94.5 per cent) and provincial students (89.6–93.2 per cent), and above the proportion for very remote students (57.7–69.5 per cent) (figure 3.34)
- 84.9–91.1 per cent for year 5 students, below the proportion for metropolitan (93.8–95.8 per cent) and provincial students (92.2–95.0 per cent), and above the proportion for very remote students (63.7–74.1 per cent)
- 80.1–87.1 per cent for year 7 students, below the proportion for metropolitan (91.5–94.7 per cent) and provincial students (88.7–92.7 per cent), and above the proportion for very remote students (61.7–72.3 per cent) (table 3A.64).

Figure 3.34 **Proportion of year 3 students achieving the writing benchmark, by geolocation, 2003^{a, b, c}**



^a Error bars represent the 95 per cent confidence interval associated with each point estimate. ^b Data for year 3 students are shown and may not be representative of all primary students. ^c Insufficient or no students in an area of geographic classification are not included. There are no remote or very remote areas in the ACT.

Source: MCEETYA 2005a, 2005b; table 3A.64.

Writing literacy was not a domain tested in either the 2000 or 2003 PISA surveys.

Numeracy performance

‘Numeracy performance’ is an outcome indicator (box 3.10).

Box 3.10 Numeracy performance

'Numeracy performance' is an outcome indicator of governments' objective that young Australians should attain high standards of knowledge, skill and understanding in core curriculum areas.

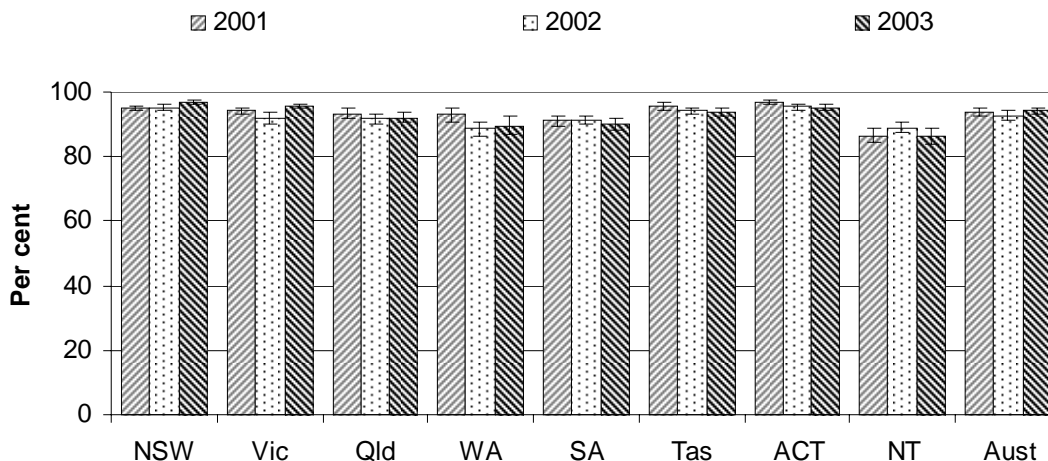
Numeracy performance is defined as the proportion of assessed years 3, 5 and 7 students who achieved the national numeracy benchmark for a given year, reported by sex, Indigenous status and LBOTE status. The benchmarks describe nationally agreed minimum acceptable standards for numeracy performance at years 3, 5 and 7. Student performance is measured (or assessed) by state-based testing programs which are equated by a national process designed to (or intended to) allow comparable reporting against the benchmarks.

Holding other factors equal, a high or increasing proportion of students achieving the numeracy benchmark is desirable. This indicator is affected by socioeconomic circumstances, age, length of time spent in schooling, and LBOTE and Indigenous status.

Nationally, the proportion of assessed year 3 students who achieved the numeracy benchmark in 2003 was 93.1–95.3 per cent (figure 3.35). The national proportion of students by equity group who achieved the year 3 numeracy benchmark in 2003 was:

- 93.5–95.9 per cent for female students, no different to the proportion for male students (92.7–94.9 per cent)
- 76.8–84.2 per cent for Indigenous students
- 92.2–94.4 per cent for LBOTE students (figure 3.36).

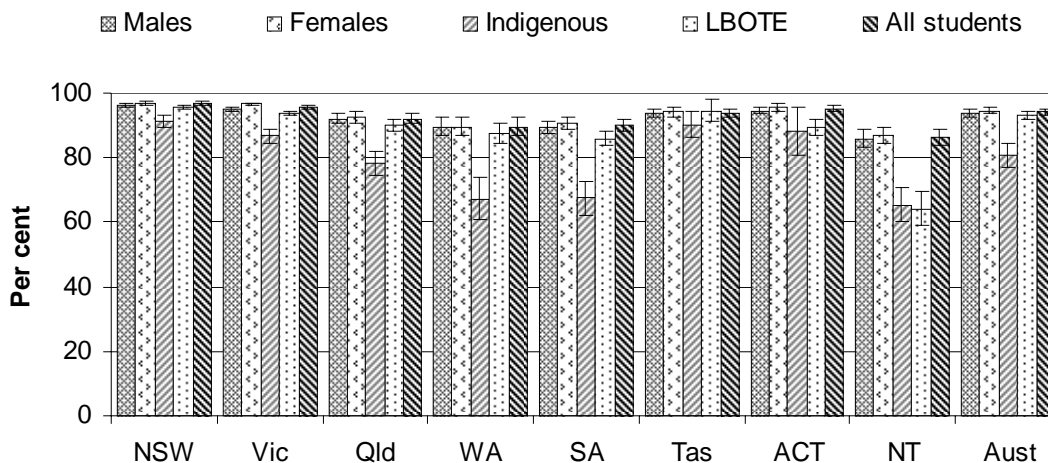
Figure 3.35 Proportion of year 3 students achieving the numeracy benchmark^{a, b}



^a Error bars represent the 95 per cent confidence interval associated with each point estimate. ^b For further information and caveats see tables 3A.38-39, 3A.53-54 and tables 3A.71-72.

Source: MCEETYA 2005a, 2005b; tables 3A.35, 3A.50 and 3A.67.

Figure 3.36 Proportion of year 3 students achieving the numeracy benchmark, by equity group, 2003^{a, b}



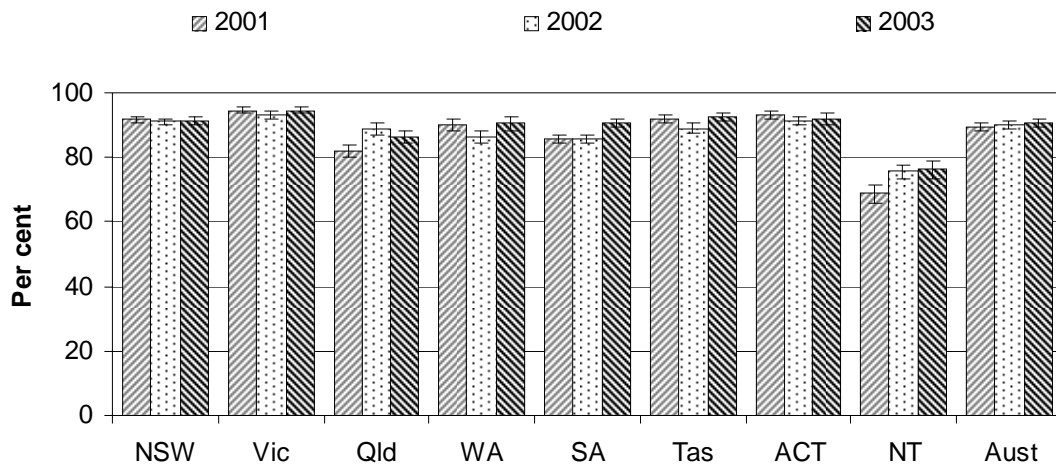
^a Error bars represent the 95 per cent confidence interval associated with each point estimate. ^b For further information and caveats see tables 3A.71-72.

Source: MCEETYA 2005a, 2005b; tables 3A.67.

Nationally, the proportion of assessed year 5 students who achieved the numeracy benchmark in 2003 was 89.6–92.0 per cent (figure 3.37). The national proportion of students by equity group who achieved the year 5 numeracy benchmark in 2003 was:

- 90.1–92.7 per cent for female students, no different to the proportion for male students (89.0–91.6 per cent)
- 63.7–71.5 per cent for Indigenous students
- 87.9–90.7 per cent for LBOTE students (figure 3.38).

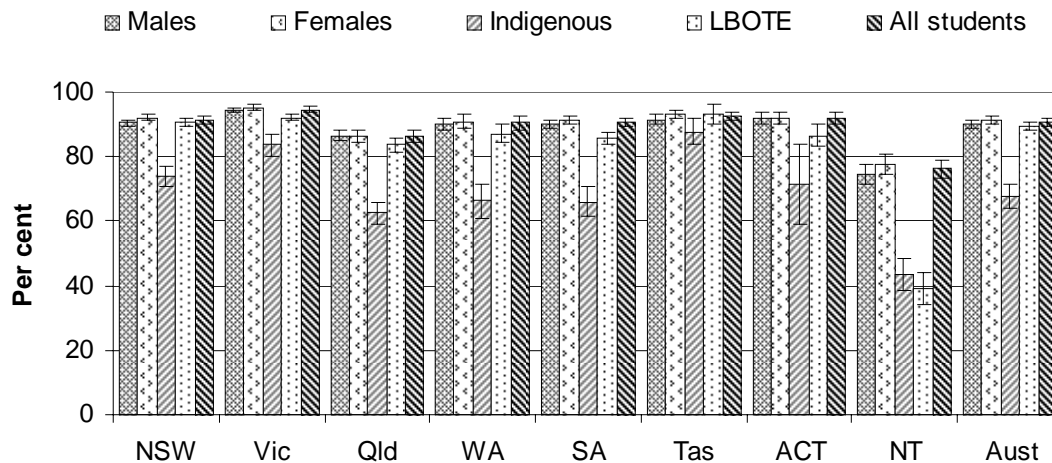
Figure 3.37 **Proportion of year 5 students achieving the numeracy benchmark^{a, b}**



^a Error bars represent the 95 per cent confidence interval associated with each point estimate. ^b For further information and caveats see tables 3A.38-39, 3A.53-54 and tables 3A.71-72.

Source: MCEETYA 2005a, 2005b; tables 3A.36, 3A.51 and 3A.68.

Figure 3.38 Proportion of year 5 students achieving the numeracy benchmark, by equity group, 2003^{a, b}



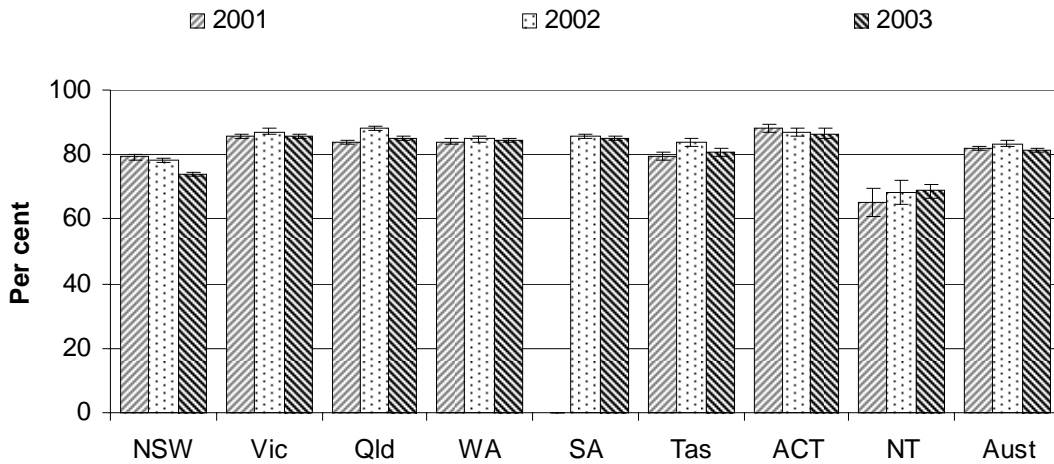
^a Error bars represent the 95 per cent confidence interval associated with each point estimate. ^b For further information and caveats see tables 3A.71-72.

Source: MCEETYA 2005a, 2005b; table 3A.68.

Nationally, the proportion of assessed year 7 students who achieved the numeracy benchmark in 2003 was 80.5–82.1 per cent (figure 3.39). The national proportion of students by equity group who achieved the year 7 numeracy benchmark in 2003 was:

- 80.7–82.5 per cent for female students, no different to the proportion for male students (80.1–81.9 per cent)
- 46.4–52.2 per cent for Indigenous students
- 75.4–77.8 per cent for LBOTE students (figure 3.40).

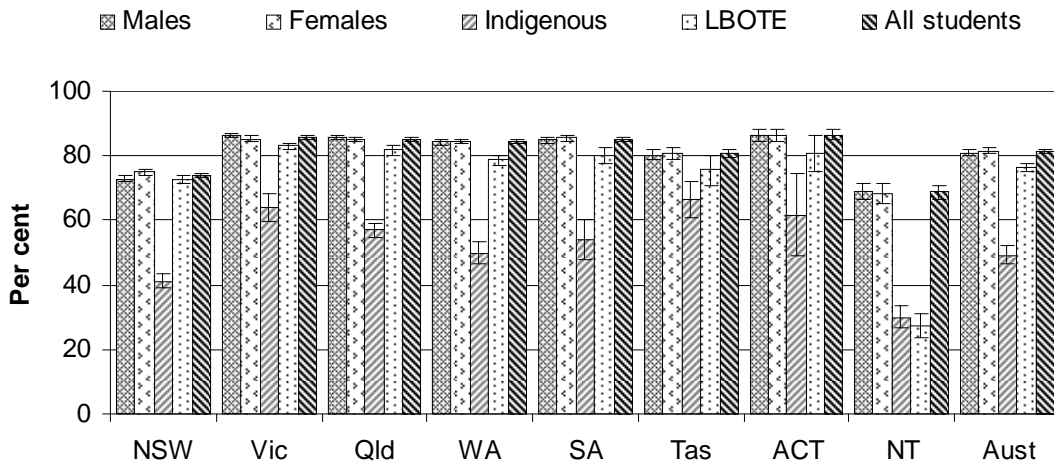
Figure 3.39 Proportion of year 7 students achieving the numeracy benchmark^{a, b, c}



^a Error bars represent the 95 per cent confidence interval associated with each point estimate. ^b SA 2001 data were not available. ^c For further information and caveats see tables 3A.38-39, 3A.53-54 and tables 3A.71-72.

Source: MCEETYA 2005a, 2005b; tables 3A.37, 3A.52 and 3A.69.

Figure 3.40 Proportion of year 7 students achieving the numeracy benchmark, by equity group, 2003^{a, b}



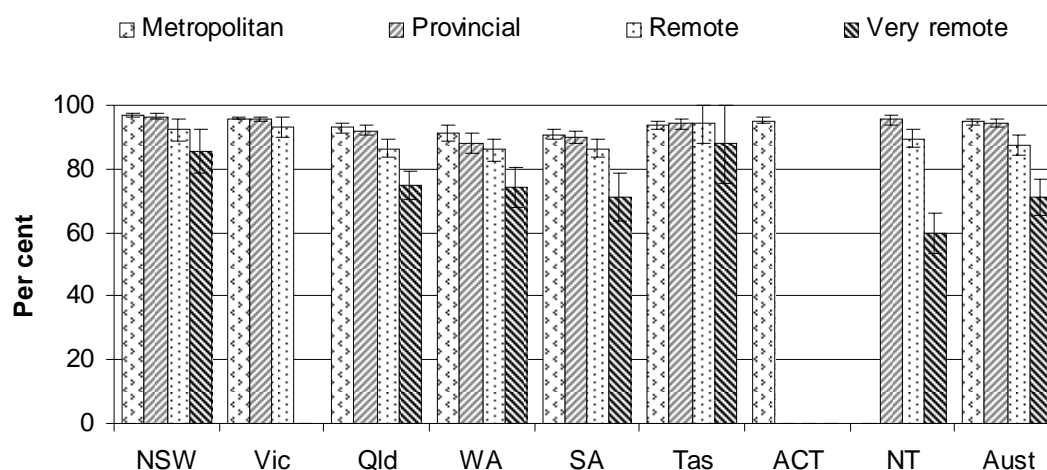
^a Error bars represent the 95 per cent confidence interval associated with each point estimate. ^b For further information and caveats see tables 3A.71-72.

Source: MCEETYA 2005a, 2005b; table 3A.69.

Nationally, the proportion of assessed students from remote areas who achieved the numeracy benchmark in 2003 was:

- 84.4–90.8 per cent for year 3 students, below the proportion for metropolitan (93.7–95.7 per cent) and provincial students (92.8–95.4 per cent), and above the proportion for very remote students (65.5–76.9 per cent) (figure 3.41)
- 78.6–85.8 per cent for year 5 students, below the proportion for metropolitan (90.7–92.9 per cent) and provincial students (87.9–91.7 per cent), and above the proportion for very remote students (55.8–66.6 per cent)
- 71.2–78.4 per cent for year 7 students, below the proportion for metropolitan students (81.7–83.3 per cent), no different to the proportion for provincial students (78.2–80.4 per cent), and above the proportion for very remote students (46.2–56.0 per cent) (table 3A.70).

Figure 3.41 **Proportion of year 3 students achieving the numeracy benchmark, by geolocation, 2003^{a, b, c}**



^a Error bars represent the 95 per cent confidence interval associated with each point estimate. ^b Data for year 3 students are shown and may not be representative of all primary students. ^c Insufficient or no students in an area of geographic classification are not included. There are no remote or very remote areas in the ACT.

Source: MCEETYA 2005a, 2005b; table 3A.70.

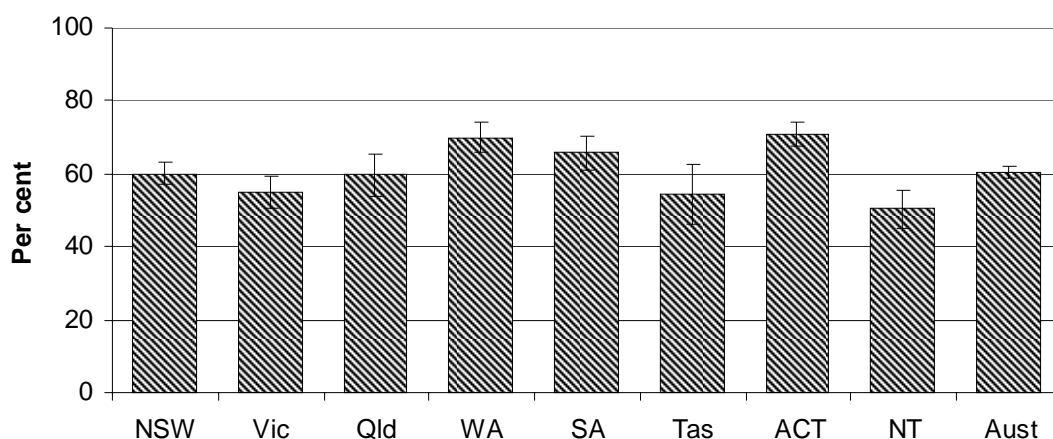
Mathematical literacy was the major domain focused on in testing for the PISA 2003 survey. Nationally, in 2003 the proportion of 15 year old students who achieved at the OECD mean or above for mathematical literacy was:

- 58.6–62.2 per cent for all students (figure 3.42)
- 57.2–62.2 per cent for female students, higher than the proportion for males (58.4–63.8 per cent)

- 18.2–29.6 per cent for Indigenous students, 31.5–59.3 per cent for geographically remote students and 40.8–46.6 per cent for students from low socioeconomic status families (tables 3A.82-83).

State and Territory 2003 data for males, females and students from low socioeconomic status families are shown in table 3A.82. Data for PISA 2000 are shown in tables 3A.81 and 3A.83. Results for mathematical literacy between PISA 2000 and PISA 2003 cannot be compared. The PISA 2000 mathematical literacy minor assessment included items in two content areas, rather than the four content areas examined in the PISA 2003 major assessment. It is expected that trend data for mathematical literacy will be available from 2003 onwards.

Figure 3.42 **Proportion of 15 year old students who achieved at the OECD mean or above, mathematical literacy, 2003^a**



^a Error bars represent the 95 per cent confidence intervals associated with each point estimate.

Source: Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) (unpublished); table 3A.82.

Science literacy performance

‘Science literacy performance’ is an outcome indicator (box 3.11).

Box 3.11 Science literacy performance

'Science literacy performance' is an outcome indicator of governments' objective that young Australians should attain high standards of knowledge, skill and understanding in core curriculum areas.

Science literacy performance is defined as the proportion of year 6 primary students achieving at or above the proficient standard in scientific literacy, reported by sex, Indigenous status, LBOTE status and geolocation (national data only for subgroups). The proficient standard for year 6 scientific literacy is set at proficiency level 3.2 (of levels 1 to 4 or above). This is a level of performance based on what 'well advanced' or 'expert' students should know and be able to do by the end of year 6. It differs from the literacy and numeracy benchmark standards where the focus is on identifying the minimum skill and knowledge requirements students would be expected to demonstrate to progress to the next level of schooling (MCEETYA 2005d). Student performance is measured (or assessed) by a national sample assessment program resulting in comparable reporting against the standard.

Holding other factors equal, a high proportion of students achieving at or above the proficient standard in scientific literacy is desirable. This indicator is affected by socioeconomic circumstances, age, length of time spent in schooling, and LBOTE and Indigenous status.

The National Year 6 Science Assessment measures scientific literacy and was conducted for the first time in 2003, and will be conducted triennially. Approximately 6 per cent of the total Year 6 student population was sampled randomly and assessed. The sample was drawn from all states and territories and both government and non-government schools participated. In 2003, 14 172 students from 650 government and non-government schools across states and territories participated in the national science literacy assessment (MCEETYA 2005d).

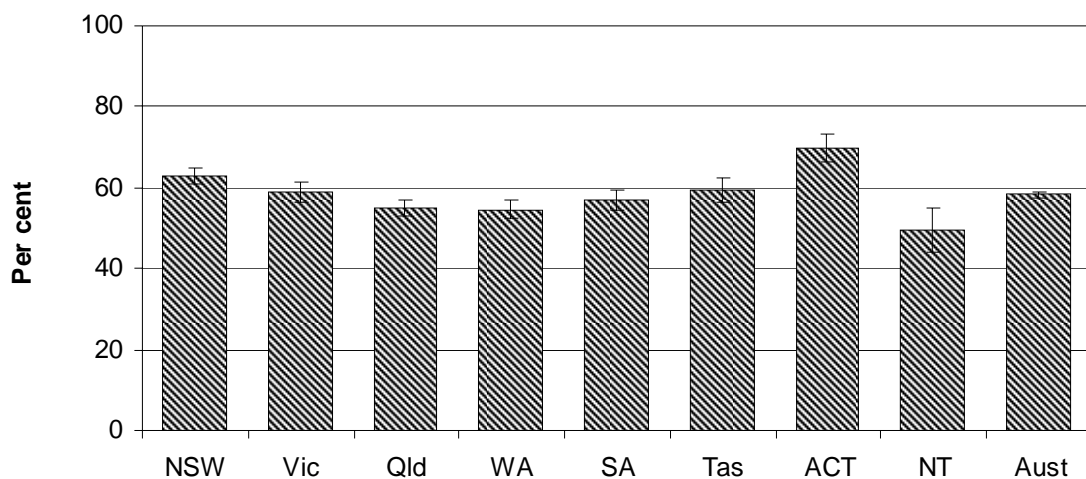
Year 6 scientific literacy 2003 results are reported as the proportion of Australian students from the sampled students (year 6 enrolled in participating schools) who achieved at the proficient standard or above. Nationally, the proportion of participating year 6 students who achieved at the proficient standard or above in scientific literacy was 57.3–59.1 per cent (figure 3.43). The national proportion of students by equity group who achieved at the proficient standard or above in scientific literacy was:

- 56.2–58.6 per cent for female students, no different than the proportion for male students (57.8–60.4 per cent)
- 25.3–34.3 per cent for Indigenous students
- 45.1–51.1 per cent for LBOTE students (table 3A.75).

The national proportion of students by geolocation who achieved at the proficient standard or above in scientific literacy was:

- 58.0 per cent for mainland state capital city region students, (49.5–52.3 per cent of these students achieving at the proficient standard)
- 55.5 per cent for provincial city statistical district students, (45.6–51.2 per cent of these students achieving at the proficient standard)
- 48.6 per cent for remote zone students, (35.8–46.8 per cent of these students achieving at the proficient standard) (table 3A.74).

Figure 3.43 **Proportion of year 6 students achieving at the proficient standard or above, scientific literacy, 2003^{a, b}**



^a Error bars represent the 95 per cent confidence intervals associated with each point estimate. ^b Minimum standards like the benchmarks in literacy and numeracy have not been set for scientific literacy. The standard for scientific literacy is set at proficiency level 3.2 (of levels 1 to 4 or above) a challenging level of performance, with students needing to demonstrate more than minimal or elementary skills to be regarded as reaching it. Data represent the proportion of students at or above the proficient standard.

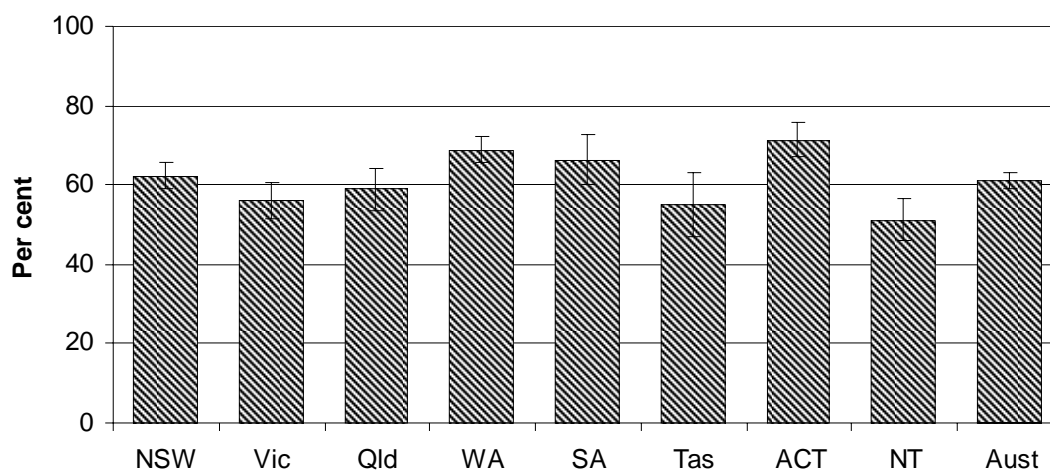
Source: MCEETYA (2005d); table 3A.73.

Scientific literacy was a domain tested in the PISA 2003 survey. Nationally, in 2003 the proportion of 15 year old secondary students who achieved at the OECD mean or above for scientific literacy was:

- 59.4–63.0 per cent for all students (figure 3.44)
- 58.9–63.9 per cent for female students, no different than the proportion for male students (58.6–63.4 per cent)
- 19.9–31.3 per cent for Indigenous students, 32.4–56.4 per cent for geographically remote students and 42.0–47.4 per cent for students from low socioeconomic status families (tables 3A.85-86).

State and Territory data for males, females and students from low socioeconomic status families are shown in table 3A.85 and data for PISA 2000 are shown in tables 3A.84 and 3A.86.

Figure 3.44 **Proportion of 15 year old students achieving at the OECD mean or above, scientific literacy, 2003^a**



^a Error bars represent the 95 per cent confidence intervals associated with each point estimate.

Source: Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) (unpublished); table 3A.85.

Other outcomes

Information and communication technology literacy performance

The Steering Committee has identified 'information and communication technology literacy performance' as an outcome indicator of school education (box 3.12).

Box 3.12 Information and communication technology literacy performance

'Information and communication technology literacy performance' is an outcome indicator of governments' objective that young Australians should be confident, creative and productive users of new technologies.

Information and communication technology literacy performance is a measure of the proportion of years 6 and 10 students achieving the proficient standard. Data collections for information and communication technology indicators have been developed (see section 3.4 for details).

Vocational education and training (VET) in schools participation

The Steering Committee has identified ‘VET in schools participation’ as an outcome indicator of school education (box 3.13).

Box 3.13 VET in schools participation

‘VET in schools’ participation is an outcome indicator of governments’ objective that young Australians should attain employment related skills.

VET in schools participation rate is defined as the number of school students undertaking VET (with new apprenticeships and traineeships disaggregated) as part of their senior secondary school certificate in a calendar year, as a proportion of all school students undertaking a senior secondary school certificate in that year.

Data collections for ‘VET in schools’ indicators have been developed (see section 3.4 for details).

Vocational education and training (VET) in schools attainment

The Steering Committee has identified ‘VET in schools attainment’ as an outcome indicator of school education (box 3.14).

Box 3.14 VET in schools attainment

‘VET in schools’ attainment is an outcome indicator of governments’ objective that young Australians should attain employment related skills.

VET in schools attainment rate is defined as the number of school students enrolled in a senior secondary school certificate in a calendar year who have completed at least one VET unit of competency/module, as a proportion of all school students undertaking a senior secondary school certificate in that year.

Data collections for ‘VET in schools’ indicators have been developed (see section 3.4 for details).

Civics and citizenship performance

The Steering Committee has identified ‘civics and citizenship performance’ as an outcome indicator of school education (box 3.15).

Box 3.15 Civics and citizenship performance

'Civics and citizenship performance' is an outcome indicator of governments' objective that students be active and informed citizens with an understanding and appreciation of Australia's system of government and civic life through broad curricula.

Civics and citizenship for year 6 and year 10 is defined as the:

- percentage of students achieving a particular standard in civic knowledge
- percentage of students achieving a particular standard in citizenship participation, skills and civic values.

Data collections for civics and citizenship indicators have been developed (see section 3.4 for details).

Completion

'Completion' is an outcome indicator (box 3.16).

Box 3.16 Completion

'Completion' (estimated completion rate) is an outcome indicator of governments' objectives to develop fully the talents and capacities of young people through participation in schooling and for students to attain high standards of knowledge, skills and understanding through a comprehensive and balanced curriculum in the higher years of schooling.

The estimated completion rate is defined as the number of students who obtain a year 12 (or equivalent) certificate as a proportion of the estimated potential year 12 population. The criteria for obtaining a year 12 certificate vary across jurisdictions. The estimated completion rate is reported by socioeconomic status, location and gender. Geographic isolation is determined using the agreed MCEETYA Geographic Location Classification. Socioeconomic status is determined according to the ABS Index of Disadvantage on the basis of postcode of students' home addresses. Low socioeconomic status is the average of the three lowest deciles, medium socioeconomic status is the average of the four medium deciles and high socioeconomic status is the average of the three highest deciles.

Holding other factors constant, a higher or increasing estimated completion rate suggests an improvement in educational outcomes. The aggregation of all postcode locations into three categories — high, medium and low — means there may be significant variation within the categories. Low deciles, for example, will include locations ranging from those of extreme disadvantage to those of moderate disadvantage.

Estimated completion rates are used because information on participation and retention rates is generally not available by socioeconomic background or geographic location. Estimated completion rates are primarily used as indicators of trends. Comparisons across jurisdictions are not recommended and need to be made with care, for the following reasons:

- assessment, reporting and requirements for obtaining year 12 certificates vary across states and territories — for example, from moderated school-based assessment to a mix including external and internal assessment, and from completion of a pattern of study to a prescribed level of attainment
- inaccuracies arise from using both home postal address and school location address in compiling completion rates data. Small changes in population or completions can affect the estimates of completion rates, particularly for smaller states and territories
- students completing their secondary education in TAFE institutes are included in reporting for some jurisdictions and not in others, and the proportion of these students also varies across jurisdictions.

Year 12 completion rates in 2004 by socioeconomic background, location and gender are provided in tables 3.6 and 3.7. Nationally, completion rates for students from low (59 per cent) and medium socioeconomic backgrounds (66 per cent) were 20 percentage points and 13 percentage points respectively below those for students from a high (79 per cent) socioeconomic background in 2004. Completion rates were higher for female (73 per cent) students than for male (62 per cent) students in total and in all socioeconomic categories (table 3.6).

Table 3.6 Completion rates, year 12, by socioeconomic status and gender, 2004 (per cent)^{a, b, c}

	<i>NSW</i>	<i>Vic</i>	<i>Qld</i>	<i>WA</i>	<i>SA</i>	<i>Tas</i>	<i>ACT^d</i>	<i>NT^d</i>	<i>Aust</i>
Low socioeconomic status deciles									
Male	58	55	55	49	44	39	np	11	53
Female	69	67	69	58	67	51	np	19	66
All students	64	61	62	53	55	45	np	15	59
Medium socioeconomic status deciles									
Male	60	58	65	60	58	56	np	35	60
Female	70	73	74	71	81	62	np	48	72
All students	65	65	69	66	69	59	np	41	66
High socioeconomic status deciles									
Male	74	78	69	73	72	61	79	np	75
Female	81	89	73	79	92	70	76	np	83
All students	77	83	71	76	82	65	77	np	79
Total									
Male	63	65	63	61	58	48	79	25	62
Female	73	78	72	70	80	58	76	36	73
All students	68	71	67	66	69	53	77	30	68

^a Data are estimates. They express the number of year 12 completions (year 12 certificates issued by State and Territory education authorities) as a proportion of the estimated population that could attend year 12 in that calendar year. There are variations in assessment, reporting and certification methods for year 12 across states and territories. ^b The ABS Index of Disadvantage has been used to calculate socioeconomic status on the basis of postcode of students' home addresses. ^c Low socioeconomic status is the average of the three lowest deciles, medium socioeconomic status is the average of the four middle deciles and high socioeconomic status is the average of the three highest deciles. ^d The populations in the high socioeconomic deciles of the NT and the low and medium socioeconomic deciles of the ACT are too small to produce meaningful results. **np** Not published.

Source: DEST (unpublished).

Nationally, the completion rate was higher in the metropolitan zone (70 per cent) than in all areas (68 per cent). The completion rate was lower in the provincial (63 per cent) and remote (54 per cent) zones than for all areas (table 3.7). Gender differences are also evident with completion rates higher for females for all localities. In the metropolitan zone, the female completion rate was 75 per cent compared with 65 per cent for males. In the remote zone, the female completion rate was 63 per cent compared with 47 per cent for males (table 3.7). Time series data on national completion rates are shown in tables 3A.96 and 3A.97.

Table 3.7 **Completion rates, year 12, by locality and gender, 2004**
(per cent)^{a, b}

	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT	Aust
Metropolitan zone ^c									
Male	66	68	64	63	62	56	79	np	65
Female	74	79	71	71	80	64	76	np	75
All students	70	73	67	67	71	60	77	np	70
Provincial zone ^d									
Male	56	57	60	56	48	42	np	32	55
Female	68	73	74	68	81	53	np	50	70
All students	62	64	67	62	63	47	np	41	63
Remote zone ^e									
Male	53	61	61	52	54	29	..	17	47
Female	83	74	78	65	87	59	..	22	63
All students	67	67	69	58	69	43	..	20	54
All areas									
Male	63	65	63	61	58	48	79	25	62
Female	73	78	72	70	80	58	76	36	73
All students	68	71	67	66	69	53	77	30	68

^a Data are estimates. They express the number of year 12 completions (year 12 certificates issued by State and Territory education authorities) as a proportion of the estimated population that could attend year 12 in that calendar year. There are variations in assessment, reporting and certification methods for year 12 across states and territories. ^b Definitions are based on the agreed MCEETYA Geographic Location Classification. ^c The ACT is included in the metropolitan zone. ^d Darwin is included in the provincial zone. ^e The remote zone includes both remote and very remote areas. There are no very remote areas in Victoria and the ACT, and only a small population in Tasmania. .. Not applicable. **np** Not published.

Source: DEST (unpublished).

Destination

The Steering Committee has identified ‘destination’ as an outcome indicator of school education (box 3.17).

Box 3.17 Destination

'Destination' (school leaver destination) is an outcome indicator of governments' objective to develop fully the talents and capacities of young people through schooling. The aim is to provide information about what happens to students after they leave school.

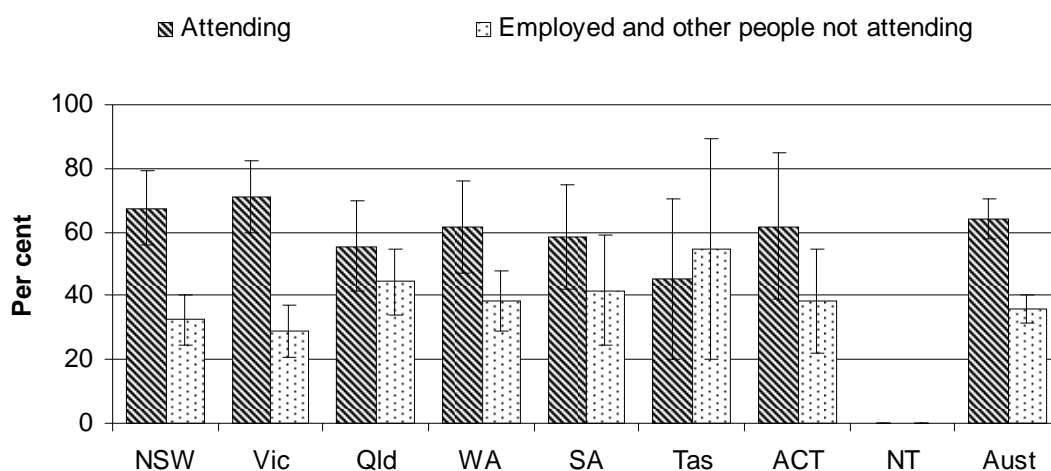
School leaver destination is defined as the number of school leavers who attend post school education as a percentage of all school leavers. It is reported by highest level of schooling completed (year 12 or year 11 and below).

Holding other factors constant, a higher or increasing estimated proportion of school leavers attending post school study suggests that school leavers have greater exposure to further study which is likely to result in improved educational and employment outcomes. Destination of school leavers is influenced by a number of factors including the level of unemployment.

Nationally, 64.1 per cent of year 12 school leavers were enrolled in further study, with 38.9 per cent attending higher education and 25.2 per cent attending TAFE courses or other study (figure 3.45, table 3A.98). For year 11 and below school leavers 33.4 per cent were attending further education (table 3A.98).

Of the 35.9 per cent of year 12 school leavers who were not attending further education, 13.1 per cent were employed full time and 22.8 per cent were either employed part time, unemployed or not in the labour force (figure 3.45). Detailed information relating to year 12, year 11 and below and all school leavers across jurisdictions is in table 3A.98.

Figure 3.45 Destination of year 12 students, 2004^{a, b, c, d}



^a Data are for year 12 students who left school in 2003. ^b Estimates with a relative standard error of 25 to 50 per cent should be used with caution. Estimates with a relative standard error greater than 50 per cent are considered too unreliable for general use. Some estimates reported are between 25 to 50 per cent or greater than 50 per cent. A confidence interval of greater than 12.75 per cent reflects a relative standard error of greater than 25 per cent. Error bars represent the 95 per cent confidence interval associated with each point estimate. Data are not published for the NT due to unreliable estimates as described above but NT data are included in Australia totals. ^c The categories for employment and enrolment are not exclusive. That is, for example, people enrolled may also be employed. ^d 'Other' includes part time workers, unemployed people and people not in the labour force.

Source: ABS survey of Education and Work (unpublished); table 3A.98.

The Education preface of this Report includes destination data of year 12 and year 11 and below school leavers in 2004 at the national level, and examines the proportions of male and female students attending other educational institutions in 2004 after leaving school in the previous year (table B.4).

3.4 Future directions in performance reporting

Participation, retention and completion rates

The participation, apparent retention and completion rates included in this Report may not reflect the increasing number of students who enrol in school part time or choose to pursue their senior secondary studies or an equivalent VET qualification at TAFE. These measures are under examination, and supplementary participation measures are reported in the 'Education preface'.

Nationally comparable reporting of learning outcomes

The MCEETYA Performance Measurement and Reporting Taskforce is developing performance measures to assess outcomes in a range of learning areas. This work will provide additional nationally comparable data that will be incorporated into the Review's performance indicator framework.

Enhanced literacy and numeracy measures

Education ministers have agreed to pursue a broadening of the national reporting framework to enhance reporting of literacy and numeracy outcomes at the years 3, 5 and 7 levels, and from 2007 to include Year 9 students in the assessment program. Three areas for potential enhancements to the reporting of literacy and numeracy outcomes were identified: reporting an extended range of student achievement so as to be consistent with information from the national sample assessments; reporting against a common scale in order to improve understanding of student development; and development of a more nationally consistent approach to improve national comparability of test results. A report was provided to ministers in December 2003, and the MCEETYA Performance Measurement and Reporting Taskforce is continuing its work in this area. A trial of the new literacy and numeracy tests will take place in May 2006, and a report will be provided to ministers in August 2006.

VET in schools

Education ministers have endorsed two new indicators for VET in schools, replacing five measures previously approved or noted. Participation and attainment data for VET in schools are expected to be collected annually from 2005 and reported annually from 2006. These new indicators are detailed in boxes 3.13 and 3.14.

Civics and citizenship

Education ministers have agreed to a national civics and citizenship assessment of students at years 6 and 10 every three years. The first national sample assessment was undertaken in October 2004. Years 6 and 10 civics and citizenship assessment data are expected to be available by 2006 and will be reported triennially.

Information and communication technology

Education ministers have agreed to a national information and communication technology assessment of students at years 6 and 10 every three years. The

MCEETYA Performance Measurement and Reporting Taskforce has developed a definition of information and communication technology literacy, and the first assessment was undertaken in 2005, with further assessments to be undertaken at three year intervals. Years 6 and 10 information and communication technology literacy data are expected to be available in 2006 and will be reported triennially.

Attendance measures

The Steering Committee has identified school attendance as an important area for future reporting. Attendance at school has a significant impact on later academic success and if attendance is erratic then children are unable to reach educational benchmarks (SCRGSP 2005b). The MCEETYA Performance Measurement and Reporting Taskforce is working on developing key performance measures for attendance.

Nationally consistent definitions

The collection of nationally comparable data — against which educational achievement and outcomes can be reported — involves, among other factors, the collection of nationally consistent information on student group background characteristics. National definitions have been developed for gender, Indigenous status, LBOTE students, geographic location and socioeconomic status and have been nationally agreed. National definitions for all items (except students with disabilities) will be applied to data collection instruments in 2005 for literacy and numeracy testing and the National Assessment Program sample assessments for science, civics and citizenship, and information and communication technology. The nationally agreed definitions will be applied to all new student enrolments from 2006 for all national reporting requirements on student outcomes.

The MCEETYA Performance Measurement and Reporting Taskforce is working on a definition for students with disabilities.

3.5 Jurisdictions' comments

This section provides comments from each jurisdiction on the services covered in this chapter. Appendix A contains data that may assist in interpreting the performance indicators presented in this chapter. These data cover a range of demographic and geographic characteristics, including age profile, geographic distribution of the population, income levels, education levels, tenure of dwellings and cultural heritage (such as Indigenous and ethnic status).

Australian Government comments

“ The Australian Government provides funding to government and non-government schools to improve learning outcomes for all students.

Targeted funding is provided to improve the learning outcomes of students with special needs, including Indigenous students, students with disabilities, those from a language background other than English, low socioeconomic status or who are geographic isolated. Indigenous students are slowly closing the gap but still achieve substantially below national averages. The Australian Government is continuing to fund the Scaffolding Literacy programme, which aims to develop literacy skills of Indigenous students to a high level very quickly. Ongoing funding for the What Works project will continue to assist teachers share best practice and prepare new materials based on the needs identified by schools with significant numbers of Indigenous students.

The Government's priorities also include support for VET in School to help those 49 per cent of senior secondary students with abilities which lie outside traditional academic skills successfully complete schooling and achieve a Year 12 Certificate. Assistance for all young Australians to make the transition from school to further education and training or work is also funded by the Australian Government. Successful pilot programmes, the Career and Transition (CAT) Pilot and the Partnership Outreach Education Model (POEM) are supporting young people (aged 13 to 19 years) through this transition.

Consistent with accountability requirements under the *Schools Assistance (Learning Together – Achievement Through Choice and Opportunity) Act 2004*, the Australian Government is providing significant funding to support the trialling during 2006 of common national test instruments in literacy and numeracy, at Years 3, 5, 7 and 9. Common national tests in these two foundational areas should ensure the prompt reporting of results, including the achievements of students against the agreed minimum benchmarks.

Also during 2006, the Government will be working with the States, Territories and the non-government school sector to develop and trial measures of student attendance, to enable nationally comparable reporting of student attendance up to Year 10, including separate reporting for Indigenous students.

A further focus of the Australian Government is the continued professional development of teachers. The National Institute of Quality Teaching and School Leadership is being funded under the Australian Government Quality Teacher Programme.”

New South Wales Government comments

“ The NSW 2005-06 recurrent and capital budget for education exceeded \$10 billion for the first time — \$440 million more than the previous year. The Budget confirms the NSW Government’s commitment to public education and its determination to meet the challenges of the future. In 2003-04, NSW spent an average of \$10 334 per student in Government schools, well above the Australian average.

Over the next four years, over \$538 million will be allocated to the NSW State Literacy and Numeracy Strategy. Literacy and numeracy programs such as Reading Recovery and Count Me in Too will continue to provide essential support in the early years of schooling to ensure all students have sufficient basic skills to underpin success in later years.

Funding of \$583 million over the next four years, including recurrent funding of \$476 million and capital funding of \$107 million for additional classrooms, is also being provided to continue the class size reduction program. This initiative is being delivered in stages, with class sizes being reduced to a State-wide average of 19.7 in 2005 for Kindergarten. By 2007, it is intended that the statewide average class size not exceed 22 students in Year 1 and 24 in Year 2.

NSW is providing \$146 million over the next four years to significantly enhance professional development for teachers in Government schools. In 2005, approximately \$16 million was provided to Government schools under the Professional Learning Policy for Schools.

Over the next four years, \$60 million is being allocated to improving the range of placement and support options for disruptive students. By 2007, eight new behaviour schools and seven new tutorial centres will be established. This will bring the total number of behaviour schools to 35 and tutorial centres to 40. Additional specialist teacher positions are also being established to improve students learning opportunities and outcomes.

NSW leads Australia through its investment in information and communications technology in schools. Over the next four years, \$942 million will be provided for technology. The continuing Technology for Learning program includes the provision of internet services and technology support in schools and capital funding for new computers. Bandwidth has been progressively upgraded in schools and TAFE NSW colleges, using both Government owned infrastructure and a range of telecommunication carriers.

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Victorian Government comments

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The Victorian Government is committed to a vision of an assured future for all Victorians and a prosperous society through learning. A strong education system is vital to ensure that Victorians have the knowledge and skills to be active, informed and productive citizens.

The Government's continued investment in school education has had a positive effect on class size. Class sizes in prep to year 2 continue to drop, with average class sizes of 20.8 students in 2005, the lowest level on record since 1973.

Increasing the participation rates in all stages of education is a key goal of the Government. Retention rates remain strong with high numbers of students staying on to the beginning of year 12. The February apparent retention rate from year 7 to year 12 has increased from 81.2 per cent in 1999 to 85.1 per cent in 2005.

The proportion of young people completing year 12 or equivalent has continued to improve. In 2004, 78.5 per cent of 19 year-olds completed year 12 or its equivalent, an improvement on the 77.5 per cent who completed in 2003. In addition, the number of 20–24 year-olds who had completed year 12 or equivalent in 2004 was 85.2 per cent, nearly 3 per cent higher than the Australian average.

Key initiatives from the Blueprint for Government Schools continue to be implemented by the Government. The Blueprint outlines the reform agenda for a highly effective government school system for Victoria. The development of the Victorian Essential Learning Standards, scheduled for release in term 4 of 2005, is a key Blueprint initiative. The Standards will ensure that students finish their compulsory years of schooling equipped with the knowledge, skills and personal qualities needed for further education, work and life.

The Leading Schools Fund has supported whole-school transformation for government secondary schools. The fund provides \$162 million over the three year implementation phase to employ 450 additional teachers and to redevelop and build new facilities.

A new School Accountability and Improvement Framework which assists schools to focus on key improvement strategies was launched in March 2005. The framework is supported by a number of targeted programs designed to build the leadership capacity of principals and teachers.

The Student Resource Package was launched in January 2005, replacing the School Global Budget. In a major step forward, funding allocation is now student-focused rather than expenditure input-focused. This will ensure that funding is directed to where it is most needed.

The Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL) provides an alternative pathway to the Victorian Certificate of Education for students in years 11 and 12. In 2005, 8125 students enrolled in the VCAL at 322 sites. Sixty per cent of those students complete the VCAL successfully.

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Queensland Government comments



A strong focus on improving outcomes for all Queensland students has informed a number of initiatives announced in 2005.

Further implementation of the Education and Training Reforms for the Future saw the preparatory year introduced in an additional 25 State and five non-State schools, along with the statewide expansion of the senior phase of learning trials, to improve opportunities for young people to achieve a Senior Certificate or Certificate III vocational qualification. In support of these reforms, Queensland announced in April 2005 the introduction of the Queensland Certificate of Education. The Certificate will require Year 12 students to meet strict standards and will recognise a broader range of achievements by students, such as TAFE courses, university subjects and structured work experience.

In May 2005, Queensland released the Bound for Success consultation paper, to improve educational outcomes for Indigenous students in the Cape York and Torres Strait. Consultations with Cape and Torres Strait communities and other key stakeholders commenced in June, and will inform the development of comprehensive strategies to improve Indigenous education in the far north.

The Queensland Government announced the development of the Queensland Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Framework (QCAR) in April 2005, followed by a detailed policy statement and expert paper in July 2005. QCAR aims to improve student learning through the implementation of comparable assessment and reporting of student achievement right across the state. QCAR will introduce comparable assessment at key junctures in Years 4, 6 and 9, in addition to the existing national testing agenda at Years 3, 5, 7 and 9. The Queensland Studies Authority will develop the materials and tools for the framework, to be introduced in all schools — state, Catholic and Independent — from Prep to Year 10.

Queensland has committed to increased consistency and transparency in reporting to parents and school communities about student and school performance. As part of this commitment, Queensland will publish annually a broad range of Year 12 outcomes and student destinations. In 2005, young people across the state participated in the first Next Step Destination survey, to identify their work, training and further education pathways after they complete Year 12. The information gained from the survey will provide a rich evidence base to inform school practice and policy at a local, regional and state level. The survey will be conducted each year.

In 2005, Queensland introduced several other important initiatives designed to make schools safer and healthier places, including the introduction of the Healthy Food and Drink Supply Strategy to increase the nutritional value of food and drinks supplied in Queensland schools and the implementation of a new plan to improve services and support for students with disabilities. The passage of the *Education (Queensland College of Teachers) Act 2005* in October 2005 introduced a new system of teacher registration to raise professional standards and provide new levels of student safety.



Western Australian Government comments



The Department of Education and Training is committed to providing all young people a high quality of education or training to meet their particular needs, regardless of where they live.

For government schools the emphasis continues to be on standards of student achievement, pastoral care, values, behaviour management and quality of teaching. For training institutions it is on improving access, flexibility and quality of provision.

The Department has strengthened its focus on ways to address skill shortages, reform of apprenticeship training, and strategies for post-compulsory education and training that specifically target improvements in Years 11 and 12.

The Department's retention and transition strategy requires that each education district develop a District Education and Training Plan detailing how all young people aged between 15 and 17 years will have access to appropriate learning environments, learning programs and career development and support services. Legislation to increase the compulsory education period by a further two years focuses on the importance of educational provision for 15 to 17 year olds.

The number of apprenticeships and traineeships increased, and 350 students joined the new School Apprenticeship Link program which aims to address the skills shortages in trades by offering direct pathways from school into apprenticeships. Over a third of school-based traineeships provided opportunities to Aboriginal youth.

The Department's focus on improving literacy and numeracy standards continued with the four-year Getting it Right literacy and numeracy strategy reaching its target of 200 FTE extra specialist teachers. Also, the Aboriginal Literacy Strategy, based on English as a second language practices, was introduced in remote schools to develop literacy programs that can be sustained over time despite staff turnover.

The Department's comprehensive testing program of student performance included the Monitoring Standards in Education (MSE) sample testing program at Years 3, 7 and 10, the Western Australian Literacy and Numeracy full-cohort testing program at Years 3, 5 and 7 and MSE9 full-cohort testing of all Year 9 government school students in reading, viewing, mathematics and science.

Additional funding has been allocated to the Behaviour Management and Discipline strategy over the next four years to reduce class sizes in Years 4 to 9 and to develop strategies for managing student behaviour problems more effectively. A total of 200 primary and 75 secondary schools are being assisted.



South Australian Government comments

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As part of South Australia's strategic plan, education is acknowledged as intrinsically important to the social and economic development of the State.

In 2005, the Department of Education and Children's Services (DECS) Statement of Directions 2005–10 was released representing a blueprint for action for public education and care in South Australia.

The State's commitment to give children the best start from an early age has resulted in the reduction of junior primary class sizes and the forging of stronger foundations in literacy. Since 2003-04, \$9.28 million per annum has been targeted to reduce the number of children in junior primary classes in our most disadvantaged schools. The commitment of \$35 million over four years towards the Early Literacy Program in schools and preschools has resulted in over 5000 educators attending core professional learning days and over 180 extra teacher positions being provided for school mentoring programs in 2005.

Measures to increase the engagement of young people in school training or work have gained momentum. In 2004, student data revealed that retention rates were at an eight-year high. Programs forming part of the Social Inclusion School Retention Action Plan have seen significant increases in students participating in Vocational Education Training programs. Members of local communities across the state are working together through the seventeen Futures Connect clusters across the state and the Innovative Community Action Networks to support the engagement and retention of those students who have disengaged from school, or are at risk of leaving school early. Other projects include a community-mentoring program for young people and the development of innovative curriculum to engage young people in applied learning.

Inclusive policy and practice is continuing. Secondary students with disabilities previously transported by taxi or special bus are being provided with transport training to use public transport. The installation of cutting edge technology is assisting students with hearing impairments in Aboriginal Anangu schools.

The state's commitment to significantly improve the educational outcomes of all Aboriginal children and students across South Australia will be implemented through the DECS Aboriginal Strategy 2005–2010.

Quality teaching has been furthered through the development of the DECS Professional Standards for Teachers in South Australia. And to help ensure that students will experience science and mathematics are exciting, relevant and engaging, the Premier's Industry Awards for Teachers of Science and Mathematics are providing 36 teachers each year with the opportunity to take up 10-day placements with a local business to learn how science and mathematics is applied in the workplace.

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Tasmanian Government comments



In December 2003 the Minister announced an extended review of all services for students with special educational needs and/or additional educational needs. The Review was asked to consider the full scope of service provision across the department, including policy and practice, resourcing, capacity-building and accountability. The review report, *Essential Learnings for All*, was formally launched in July 2004. The review acknowledged that Tasmania is at the forefront of inclusive educational practises nationally.

The report stressed the importance of the values base of the new *Essential Learnings* curriculum and the community orientation of Tasmanian public education. It made recommendations intended to translate the department's inclusion policies into greater practical effort in schools and classrooms. The recommendations of the Review were accepted in full including a major organisational restructure within the school sector with the creation of 27 new clusters of schools with each having a board of Principals to develop new strategies that specifically suit the needs of all students.

Tasmania's strategy for post-Year 10 education and training, *Tasmania: A State of Learning*, was published. It was the result of widespread consultation with learners, parents, employers, unions, government agencies and community groups. The strategy proposed four key elements and 27 initiatives aimed at:

- improving young Tasmanians' participation in education and training beyond compulsory schooling
- building a skilled workforce with the capacity to support Tasmanian business and industry in a growing economy
- enabling second-chance learning opportunities for people of all ages, and
- creating communities that value lifelong learning.

Among those initiatives is one that will require participation of young people in education beyond Year 10. Other initiatives designed to better support youth transition include the provision of pathway planning and transition support, integrating youth services, reviewing Year 11 and 12 curriculum and enabling appropriate career, work and enterprise education.

From the commencement of 2004 the Tasmanian Qualifications Authority was established to combine and integrate the functions of three previous bodies including the Tasmanian Secondary Assessment Board, responsible for the accreditation of the Tasmanian Certificate of Education. The development of a much closer relationship between schools, VET providers and Higher Education, in particular the University of Tasmania, means that the pathways available for young people moving from compulsory schooling will become clearer, allowing greater flexibility in the movement between the three sectors.



Australian Capital Territory Government comments

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The Department of Education and Training has responsibility for the delivery of quality education services through government preschools and schools, the registration of non-government schools and the administration of vocational education and training in the ACT. The Canberra Plan and in particular the Social Plan (2004) outline the ACT Government's commitment to education, lifelong learning and training.

In February 2005, the first phase of the new curriculum framework for ACT schools, *Every Chance to Learn Curriculum for ACT Schools (preschool to year 10), Principles and Framework (Phase 1) 2005* was released.

Development work on the new ACT curriculum framework has involved the refinement of the Essential Learning Achievements and identification of markers of progress for early childhood, later childhood, early adolescence and later adolescence, for each of the Essential Learning Achievements. The framework will be trialled and validated in schools in 2006.

As part of its Canberra Plan commitment to education, the ACT has also introduced the Promoting Healthy Students initiative that aims to improve the health and fitness of all students in ACT schools. The focus on student health and well being specifically addresses nutrition, physical activity and drug education for students from preschool to year 12, school canteen accreditation and the development of a primary school physical activity resource. In addition two senior secondary health coordinators were appointed to coordinate health services on college campuses.

The ACT Government also provided funding for all schools in the territory to be connected to broadband services to improve information and communication technology delivery to schools.

In accord with the equity principles of the Education Act (2004) the ACT Government has provided additional support funding to each ACT government school to assist disadvantaged students from lower social economic backgrounds to access specific educational activities or services offered by their school.

The department launched its School Excellence Initiative in 2004. An integral part of this, the School Improvement Framework, guides and directs the school review and development processes in ACT government schools. In addition, the department published *Teachers: The Key to Student Success: A Discussion Paper*, to assist ACT government schools with this process.

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Northern Territory Government comments

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The Department of Employment, Education and Training works with Territorians to improve education and training outcomes for our students of all ages by creating and improving pathways between school, training and employment so all Territorians have the opportunity to actively participate in the future of the Territory.

In primary school education, while there has been a small improvement overall in the percentage of Indigenous students reaching national benchmarks in reading, numeracy and writing, overall our Indigenous students fall far short of the percentages of non-Indigenous students reaching benchmark.

In secondary education, while the number of Indigenous students receiving an NT Certificate of Education (NTCE) has risen from 28 in 1999 to 60 in 2004, this is still a very small number and represents only 9 per cent of the total number of NTCEs awarded.

The \$42 million Building Better Schools (BBS) initiative to improve secondary schools over the next four years was launched following extensive community consultation on the Secondary Education Report. BBS is focussed on improving student outcomes in secondary schools across the NT, better engaging young people and their families in secondary schooling and providing access to secondary education for Indigenous students.

An independent Teacher Registration Board was established to ensure teachers employed in government and non-government schools have suitable qualifications and are encouraged to commit to ongoing professional development.

In the past year, Interactive Distance Learning (IDL) lessons have continued for schools of the air and the NT Open Education Centre, including over 100 indigenous community students. There has been a marked increase in support and training for home tutors and parents from both Katherine School of the Air and Alice Springs School of the Air over IDL with ICT skills of students and families proving to be greatly enhanced as a flow on benefit of IDL. Through the Building Better Schools initiative, an IDL studio will be established at Katherine School of the Air in 2005 to enable the school to provide full time IDL lessons.

Due to the success of the Accelerated Literacy pilot, the program now involves a further 14 schools, bringing the total to 20. At the end of 2004, the program involved 1446 target students. A further 121 teachers and about 80 non-teaching staff have been trained in the methodology. Charles Darwin University has undertaken an analysis of available data, which shows measurable improvements in literacy levels for accelerated literacy students.

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3.6 Definitions of key terms and indicators

Apparent retention rates	The number of full time students in a designated year of schooling, expressed as a percentage of their respective cohort group at an earlier base year — for example, the percentage of full time students who continued to year 12 in 2004 from respective cohort groups at year 10. In this example, the rate is calculated by dividing the total number of full time students in year 12 in 2004 by the total number of full time students in year 10 in 2002.
Full time equivalent student	The FTE of a full time student is 1.0. The method of converting part time student numbers into FTEs should be based on the student's workload compared with the workload usually undertaken by a full time student. The FTE of part time primary students was included for the first time for 2001.
Full time student	A person who satisfies the definition of a student and undertakes a workload equivalent to, or greater than, that usually undertaken by a student of that year level. The definition of full time student varies across jurisdictions.
Geographic classification	<p>Geographic categorisation is based on the agreed MCEETYA Geographic Location Classification which, at the highest level, divides Australia into three zones (the metropolitan, provincial and remote zones). A further disaggregation comprises five categories: metropolitan and provincial zones each subdivided into two categories, and the remote zone. Further subdivisions of the two provincial zone categories and the remote zone category provide additional, more detailed, classification options. When data permit, a separate very remote zone can be reported along with the metropolitan, provincial and remote zones, as follows.</p> <p><i>A. Metropolitan zone</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Mainland State capital city regions statistical divisions: Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane, Adelaide and Perth statistical divisions.2. Major urban statistical districts (100 000 or more population): ACT–Queanbeyan, Cairns, Gold Coast–Tweed, Geelong, Hobart, Newcastle, Sunshine Coast, Townsville, Wollongong. <p><i>B. Provincial zone (non-remote)</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">3. Provincial city statistical districts plus Darwin statistical division. Provincial city statistical districts and Darwin statistical division (50 000–99 999 population): Albury–Wodonga, Ballarat, Bathurst–Orange, Burnie-Devonport, Bundaberg, Bendigo, Darwin, Launceston, La Trobe Valley, Mackay, Rockhampton, Toowoomba, Wagga Wagga. Provincial City Statistical Districts (25 000–49 999 population): Bunbury, Coffs Harbour, Dubbo, Geraldton, Gladstone, Shepparton, Hervey Bay, Kalgoorlie–Boulder, Lismore, Mandurah, Mildura, Nowra–Bomaderry, Port Macquarie, Tamworth, Warrnambool.

	<p>4. Other provincial areas (CD ARIA Plus score \leq 5.92)</p> <p> Inner provincial areas (CD ARIA Plus score $<$ 2.4)</p> <p> Outer provincial areas (CD ARIA Plus score $>$ 2.4 and $<$ 5.92)</p> <p>C. Remote zone</p> <p>5. Remote zone (CD ARIA Plus score $>$ 5.92)</p> <p> Remote areas (CD ARIA Plus score $>$ 5.92 and \leq 10.53)</p> <p> Very remote areas (CD ARIA Plus score $>$ 10.53)</p>
Government recurrent expenditure per full time equivalent student	Total government recurrent expenditure divided by the total number of FTE students. Expenditure is based on the National School Statistics Collection (MCEETYA 2004b), with adjustments for notional UCC charges and payroll tax. Notional UCC is included for all jurisdictions and payroll tax estimates are included for those jurisdictions not subject to it (WA and the ACT). Expenditure figures are in financial years and student numbers are in calendar years, so the total number of students is taken as the average of two years. When calculating the 2003-04 average expenditure per student, for example, the total expenditure figure is at 2003-04 but the total student number figure is the average of student numbers from 2003 and 2004.
Indigenous student	A student of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander origin who identifies as being an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander or from an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander background. Administrative processes for determining Indigenous status vary across jurisdictions.
In-school costs	Costs relating directly to schools. Staff, for example, are categorised as being either in-school or out-of-school. They are categorised as in-school if they usually spend more than half of their time actively engaged in duties at one or more schools or ancillary education establishments. In-school employee related expenses, for example, represent all salaries, wages awards, allowances and related on costs paid to in-school staff.
Language background other than English (LBOTE) student	A status that is determined by administrative processes that vary across jurisdictions.
Out-of-school costs	Costs relating indirectly to schools. Staff, for example, are categorised as being either in-school or out-of-school. They are categorised as out-of-school if they do not usually spend more than half of their time actively engaged in duties at one or more schools or ancillary education establishments. Out-of-school employee related expenses, for example, represent all salaries, wages awards, allowances and related on costs paid to out-of-school staff.
Part time student	A student undertaking a workload that is less than that specified as being full time in the jurisdiction.
Participation rate	The number of full time school students of a particular age, expressed as a proportion of the estimated resident population of the same age at June.
Potential year 12 population	An estimate of a single-year age group that could have participated in year 12 that year, defined as the estimated resident population aged 15–19 years, divided by 5.
Real expenditure	Nominal expenditure adjusted for changes in prices, using the GDP price deflator and expressed in terms of final year prices.

Scientific literacy	Scientific literacy and scientific literacy: the application of broad conceptual understandings of science to make sense of the world, understand natural phenomena, and interpret media reports about scientific issues. It also includes asking investigable questions, conducting investigations, collecting and interpreting data and making decisions.
Socioeconomic status	As per footnotes to table 3A.96, which provide definitions specific to each table. Elsewhere in the Report, socioeconomic status data are presented that are not fully comparable across jurisdictions because administrative processes for determining socioeconomic status vary across jurisdictions.
Source of income	In this chapter, income from either the Australian Government or State and Territory governments. Australian Government expenditure is derived from specific purpose payments (current and capital) for schools. This funding indicates the level of monies allocated, not necessarily the level of expenditure incurred in any given financial year. The data provide, therefore, only a broad indication of the level of Australian Government funding.
Student-to-staff ratios	The number of FTE students per FTE teaching and non-teaching staff. Students at special schools are allocated to primary and secondary. The FTE of staff includes those who are generally active in schools and ancillary education establishments.
Student	A person who is formally (officially) enrolled or registered at a school, and is also active in a primary, secondary or special education program at that school. Students at special schools are allocated to primary and secondary on the basis of their actual grade (if assigned); whether or not they are receiving primary or secondary curriculum instruction; or, as a last resort, whether they are of primary or secondary school age.
Student, primary	A student in primary education, which covers pre-year 1 to year 6 in NSW, Victoria, Tasmania and the ACT, pre-year 1 to year 7 in WA, SA and the NT, and year 1 to year 7 in Queensland.
Student, secondary	A student in secondary education, which commences at year 7 in NSW, Victoria, Tasmania and the ACT, and at year 8 in Queensland, SA, WA and the NT.
Students with disabilities	Students included in the annual system reports to DEST. The definitions of students with disabilities are based on individual State and Territory criteria, so data are not comparable across jurisdictions.
Teacher	Teaching staff have teaching duties (that is, they are engaged to impart the school curriculum) and spend the majority of their time in contact with students. They support students, either by direct class contact or on an individual basis. Teaching staff include principals, deputy principals and senior teachers mainly involved in administrative duties, but not specialist support staff (who may spend the majority of their time in contact with students but are not engaged to impart the school curriculum) (MCEETYA 2002b).
Ungraded student	A student in ungraded classes who cannot readily be allocated to a year of education. These students are included as either ungraded primary or ungraded secondary, according to the typical age level in each jurisdiction.

3.7 Supporting tables

The files containing the supporting tables are provided in Microsoft Excel format as \Publications\Reports\2006\Attach3A.xls and in Adobe PDF format as \Publications\Reports\2006\Attach3A.pdf. The files containing the supporting tables can also be found on the Review web page (www.pc.gov.au/gsp). Users without access to the CD-ROM or Internet can contact the Secretariat to obtain the supporting tables (see contact details on the inside front cover of the Report).

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