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## 4 School education

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#### **Attachment tables**

Attachment tables are identified in references throughout this chapter by an 'A' suffix (for example, table 4A.3). A full list of attachment tables is provided at the end of this chapter, and the attachment tables themselves are available on the CD-ROM enclosed with the Report or from the Review website at <[www.pc.gov.au/gsp](http://www.pc.gov.au/gsp)>.

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

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- school education as a whole (government plus 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

- inclusion of the objectives for school education agreed by Australian, State and Territory governments' education ministers (the *Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians*, released in December 2008), replacing the *Adelaide Declaration* of 1999, to inform the performance indicator framework
- inclusion of the following measures to align this Report with National Education Agreement (NEA) and National Indigenous Reform Agreement (NIRA) indicators
  - additional measures for the access and equity indicator 'participation', reflecting participation in school education by students aged 6–15 by Indigenous status
  - measures in relation to participation in the National Assessment Program — Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) testing, by Indigenous status
  - additional measures for the outcome indicator 'completion' in relation to completion of year 10 by 17–19 year olds, by Indigenous status
  - inclusion of 'non-Indigenous' data in a range of performance indicators
- inclusion of data for the access and equity indicator 'VET in Schools participation' and the outcome indicator 'VET in Schools attainment', for 2006 and 2007
- reporting the outcomes of 2008 NAPLAN testing against national minimum standards for the outcome indicators 'reading performance', 'writing performance' and 'numeracy performance'. The 2008 tests were the first to be conducted against the national minimum standard and mark the commencement of a new time series for these data

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- reporting the outcomes of the 2007 National Years 6 and 10 Civics and Citizenship Assessment, for the outcome indicator ‘civics and citizenship performance’.

## **4.1 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 (other than a special school) that satisfies all of the following criteria:

- its major activity is the provision of full time day primary or secondary education or the provision of primary or secondary distance education
- it is headed by a principal (or equivalent) responsible for its internal operation
- it is possible for students to enrol for a minimum of four continuous weeks, excluding breaks for school vacations (ABS 2009).

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 socioeconomic status, 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 such 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.

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The Australian Government provides supplementary funding for government schools through the National Education Agreement (NEA), which forms part of the Intergovernmental Agreement on Federal Financial Relations, and for non-government schools through the *Schools Assistance Act 2008*, both of which came into effect on 1 January 2009. Other Australian Government payments of a smaller scale are made directly to school communities, students and other organisations to support schooling. Data in this chapter generally relate to 2008 and for that year a range of Specific Purpose Payments (SPPs) were provided directly to State and Territory governments for government schools and to school authorities for non-government schools under the previous legislation: the *Schools Assistance (Learning Together - Achievement Through Choice and Opportunity) Act 2004*. The Ministerial Council on Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs (MCEECDYA)<sup>1</sup>— 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 \$36.4 billion in 2007-08 (table 4.1). Expenditure on government schools was \$28.8 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 4A.7, 4A.11 and 4A.12.

Nationally, State and Territory governments provided 91.4 per cent of total government recurrent expenditure on government schools in 2007-08, and the Australian Government provided 8.6 per cent. In contrast, government expenditure on non-government schools in that year was mainly provided by the Australian Government (72.1 per cent), with State and Territory governments providing 27.9 per cent (table 4.1).

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<sup>1</sup> The Ministerial Council for Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs (MCEECDYA) was established on 1 July 2009 following agreement of the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) to a realignment of the roles and responsibilities of two previously existing councils — the Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA) and the Ministerial Council for Vocational and Technical Education (MCVTE).

**Table 4.1 Government recurrent expenditure on school education, 2007-08 (\$ million)<sup>a, b, c, d</sup>**

	<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 Government	808	562	524	244	186	65	33	63	2 486
State and territory governments	8 277	5 580	5 457	3 415	1 884	671	518	471	26 272
<b>Total</b>	<b>9 085</b>	<b>6 142</b>	<b>5 981</b>	<b>3 659</b>	<b>2 069</b>	<b>736</b>	<b>551</b>	<b>534</b>	<b>28 758</b>
Non-government schools									
Australian Government	1 757	1 432	1 078	552	435	116	107	53	5 531
State and territory governments	776	400	460	256	131	42	42	29	2 136
<b>Total</b>	<b>2 534</b>	<b>1 832</b>	<b>1 537</b>	<b>809</b>	<b>566</b>	<b>159</b>	<b>148</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>7 667</b>
All schools									
Australian Government	2 566	1 994	1 602	797	621	181	140	116	8 017
State and territory government	9 053	5 980	5 917	3 671	2 015	713	560	500	28 408
<b>Total</b>	<b>11 619</b>	<b>7 974</b>	<b>7 518</b>	<b>4 468</b>	<b>2 636</b>	<b>894</b>	<b>700</b>	<b>616</b>	<b>36 425</b>

<sup>a</sup> See notes to table 4A.7 for definitions and other data caveats. Data presented here include notional User Cost of Capital (UCC) and exclude capital grants. <sup>b</sup> Based on accrual accounting. <sup>c</sup> Totals may not add due to rounding. <sup>d</sup> 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: MCEECDYA *National Schools Statistics Collection* (NSSC) (unpublished); Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) (unpublished); Australian, State and Territory governments (unpublished); table 4A.7.

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 57.0 per cent of non-government school funding in 2008, with the remaining 43.0 per cent sourced from private fees and fundraising (MCEECDYA 2009a) Section 4.3 contains additional information on government expenditure per student.

## Size and scope

Descriptive information on the numbers of students, staff and schools can be found in tables 4A.1–6.

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## 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 eight years of primary school education followed by five to six years of secondary school education, depending on the State or Territory (figure 4.1). All states and territories divide school education into compulsory and non-compulsory components based primarily on age.

In 2008, the compulsory starting age for school education in states and territories was:

- 5 years of age (Tasmania)
- 6 years of age (NSW, Victoria, Queensland, WA, SA, ACT and NT)

Although some students may undertake other/alternative approved courses/programs/activities (including approved employment) in some states, in general students were required to stay at school until:

- reaching 15 years of age (NSW, ACT and NT)
- reaching 16 years of age (Victoria, SA and Tasmania)
- reaching 16 years of age or completing year 10 (Queensland)
- the end of the year in which students turn 17 years of age (WA).

As part of the Compact with Young Australians, COAG agreed to implement a National Youth Participation Requirement (NYPR) commencing on 1 January 2010 (COAG 2009). Young people will be required to participate in schooling (or an approved equivalent) until they complete Year 10, and then participate full-time (at least 25 hours per week) in education, training or employment, or a combination of these activities, until age 17. The NYPR will be implemented through state and territory legislation where equivalent provisions are not already in place, and exemptions will continue in line with existing state and territory practice.

Figure 4.1 Structure of primary and secondary schooling, 2008

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

<sup>a</sup> With the introduction of Middle Schools in 2008, secondary schooling now begins at year 7 throughout the NT. <sup>b</sup> Some schools in the NT have an intake for terms 1–3 of the 4 terms. <sup>c</sup> In QLD a non-compulsory preparatory year of schooling (prep) in the year before year 1 (replacing a part time preschool program) commenced in 2007 and was universally offered to all students aged 5 at 30 June 2008. The first full cohort of students (aged 4.5 to 5.5 years) was enrolled in 2008. <sup>d</sup> SA has an intake for each term.

Source: Adapted from ABS (2009) *Schools Australia 2008*, Cat. No. 4221.0.

### Schools

At the beginning of August 2008, there were 9562 schools in Australia (6448 primary schools, 1455 secondary schools and 1659 combined and special schools). The majority of schools were government owned and managed (71.5 per cent) (table 4.2). 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, 63.6 per cent of all secondary schools enrolled over 600 students (table 4A.19). A breakdown of primary and secondary schools by size for government, non-government and all schools is reported in tables 4A.17–19 respectively.

**Table 4.2 Summary of school characteristics, August 2008**

	<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 (no.)									
Primary	1 642	1 198	934	507	428	140	57	56	4 962
Secondary	369	253	177	97	72	39	17	15	1 039
Combined <sup>a</sup>	66	58	92	95	76	26	6	75	494
Special schools <sup>b</sup>	112	76	47	69	20	5	4	5	338
<b>Total</b>	<b>2 189</b>	<b>1 585</b>	<b>1 250</b>	<b>768</b>	<b>596</b>	<b>210</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>151</b>	<b>6 833</b>
Non-government schools (no.)									
Primary	502	428	232	151	107	29	26	11	1 486
Secondary	157	107	73	34	23	7	5	10	416
Combined <sup>a</sup>	227	147	146	104	66	30	12	15	747
Special schools <sup>b</sup>	34	21	12	8	3	1	1	–	80
<b>Total</b>	<b>920</b>	<b>703</b>	<b>463</b>	<b>297</b>	<b>199</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>2 729</b>
All schools (no.)									
Primary	2 144	1 626	1 166	658	535	169	83	67	6 448
Secondary	526	360	250	131	95	46	22	25	1 455
Combined <sup>a</sup>	293	205	238	199	142	56	18	90	1 241
Special schools <sup>b</sup>	146	97	59	77	23	6	5	5	418
<b>Total</b>	<b>3 109</b>	<b>2 288</b>	<b>1 713</b>	<b>1 065</b>	<b>795</b>	<b>277</b>	<b>128</b>	<b>187</b>	<b>9 562</b>
Proportion of schools that are government schools (%)									
Primary	76.6	73.7	80.1	77.1	80.0	82.8	68.7	83.6	77.0
Secondary	70.2	70.3	70.8	74.0	75.8	84.8	77.3	60.0	71.4
Combined <sup>a</sup>	22.5	28.3	38.7	47.7	53.5	46.4	33.3	83.3	39.8
Special schools <sup>b</sup>	76.7	78.4	79.7	89.6	87.0	83.3	80.0	100.0	80.9
<b>All schools</b>	<b>70.4</b>	<b>69.3</b>	<b>73.0</b>	<b>72.1</b>	<b>75.0</b>	<b>75.8</b>	<b>65.6</b>	<b>80.7</b>	<b>71.5</b>
Proportion of schools that are primary schools (%)									
Government	75.0	75.6	74.7	66.0	71.8	66.7	67.9	37.1	72.6
Non-government	54.6	60.9	50.1	50.8	53.8	43.3	59.1	30.6	54.5
<b>All schools</b>	<b>69.0</b>	<b>71.1</b>	<b>68.1</b>	<b>61.8</b>	<b>67.3</b>	<b>61.0</b>	<b>64.8</b>	<b>35.8</b>	<b>67.4</b>

<sup>a</sup> Combined primary and secondary schools. <sup>b</sup> Special schools provide special instruction for students with a physical and/or mental disability/impairment, or 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. – Nil or rounded to zero.

Source: ABS (2009 and unpublished) *Schools Australia 2008*, Cat. No. 4221.0; tables 4A.1–3.

### *Student body*

There were 3.4 million full time equivalent (FTE) student enrolments in primary and secondary schools in August 2008 (see section 4.6 for a definition of FTE student). Nationally, 49.1 per cent of FTE students in all schools were female (table 4.3).

A higher proportion of FTE students was enrolled in primary schools (57.3 per cent) than in secondary schools (42.7 per cent) (table 4.3). Differences in schooling

structures influence enrolment patterns. Primary school education in Queensland, WA and SA, for example, includes year 7, whereas all other jurisdictions include year 7 in secondary school (figure 4.1). The proportion of students enrolled in primary school education would be expected to be higher in jurisdictions that include year 7 in primary school (table 4.3).

Nationally, the proportion of FTE students enrolled in government schools was 66.0 per cent. A higher proportion of FTE students was enrolled in government schools at primary level (69.7 per cent) than at secondary level (61.0 per cent) (table 4.3).

**Table 4.3 FTE student enrolments, August 2008<sup>a, b</sup>**

	<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	618	455	434	213	156	45	31	23	1 975
Secondary schools	492	385	275	137	98	38	28	16	1 469
<b>All schools</b>	<b>1 110</b>	<b>840</b>	<b>709</b>	<b>350</b>	<b>255</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>3 444</b>
Proportion of FTE students who were enrolled in government schools (%)									
Primary schools	69.6	68.3	71.4	70.7	67.2	74.8	60.2	79.1	69.7
Secondary schools	62.1	58.6	62.6	58.9	61.2	68.1	54.4	68.4	61.0
<b>All schools</b>	<b>66.3</b>	<b>63.9</b>	<b>68.0</b>	<b>66.1</b>	<b>64.9</b>	<b>71.7</b>	<b>57.4</b>	<b>74.8</b>	<b>66.0</b>
Proportion of FTE students who were female (all schools) (%)									
Primary schools	48.7	48.6	48.5	48.6	48.7	48.6	49.2	48.5	48.6
Secondary schools	49.6	49.9	49.8	49.4	50.0	50.0	48.9	49.2	49.7
<b>All schools</b>	<b>49.1</b>	<b>49.2</b>	<b>49.0</b>	<b>48.9</b>	<b>49.2</b>	<b>49.3</b>	<b>49.0</b>	<b>48.8</b>	<b>49.1</b>
Proportion of FTE students who were enrolled in primary education (%)									
Government schools	58.4	58.0	64.3	65.2	63.6	56.6	54.5	63.0	60.6
Non-government schools	50.1	47.6	54.6	52.6	57.3	48.5	48.6	49.5	51.1
<b>All schools</b>	<b>55.6</b>	<b>54.2</b>	<b>61.2</b>	<b>60.9</b>	<b>61.4</b>	<b>54.3</b>	<b>52.0</b>	<b>59.6</b>	<b>57.3</b>

<sup>a</sup> 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. <sup>b</sup> Results of calculations may vary from the table due to rounding differences.

Source: ABS (2009 and unpublished) *Schools Australia 2008*, Cat. No. 4221.0; tables 4A.1–4.

Total full time student enrolments in schools in Australia were relatively stable over the 5 years to 2008, increasing by approximately 0.8 per cent each year between August 2004 and August 2008 (table 4A.21). Students as a proportion of the population in 2008 are shown in table 4A.5.

The proportion of full time students enrolled in non-government schools increased between 2004 and 2008 in all states and territories. Total non-government school enrolments expanded by 2.0 per cent per year, while full time government school enrolments increased by an average of 0.2 per cent per year (table 4A.21). The

expansion of full time enrolments in non-government schools was from a lower base than that for government schools. In absolute terms, full time students in government schools increased from 2 250 026 in 2004 to 2 264 554 in 2008. Full time students in non-government schools increased from 1 082 240 in 2004 to 1 169 737 in 2008 (table 4A.20).

Part time secondary students form a significant proportion of enrolments in some jurisdictions (table 4.4). 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 2008 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 4.4 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>	<i>ACT</i>	<i>NT</i>	<i>Aust</i>
Part time secondary school students in government schools (no.) <sup>a</sup>									
2004	2 441	3 106	3 764	2 925	6 818	2 260	25	1 043	22 382
2005	2 404	2 898	3 836	2 824	6 435	1 870	36	1 084	21 387
2006	2 425	2 802	3 635	2 492	6 630	1 762	8	1 109	20 863
2007	2 243	2 292	3 226	2 315	6 716	1 620	3	743	19 158
2008	2 045	2 324	2 843	1 747	6 226	1 504	–	338	17 027
Proportion of secondary school students in government schools who were part time students (%) <sup>b</sup>									
2004	0.8	1.4	2.3	3.5	10.7	8.3	0.2	10.9	2.5
2005	0.8	1.3	2.3	3.4	10.1	6.9	0.2	11.2	2.4
2006	0.8	1.2	2.1	3.0	10.4	6.5	0.1	11.4	2.3
2007	0.7	1.0	1.9	2.8	10.5	6.1	–	8.0	2.1
2008	0.7	1.0	1.6	2.1	9.8	5.7	–	3.1	1.9

<sup>a</sup> Absolute number of part time secondary students. <sup>b</sup> Absolute number of part time secondary students divided by absolute number of full time and part time secondary students. – Nil or rounded to zero.

Source: ABS (2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009 and unpublished) *Schools Australia* (various years and unpublished) Cat. No. 4221.0; table 4A.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 2008, 86.1 per cent of Indigenous students and 79.5 per cent of students with disabilities, for example, attended government schools (tables 4A.22 and 4A.24). 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 in government, non-government and all schools is in tables 4A.25–27. Care needs to be taken in interpreting this information because some definitions of special needs students differ across states and territories.

### *Indigenous students*

The number and proportion of full time Indigenous students varies greatly across jurisdictions (table 4.5). 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 5.8 per cent in government schools and 1.8 per cent in non-government schools in 2008 (table 4.5).

**Table 4.5 Indigenous full time students, 2008**

	<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>
Indigenous full time students (000) <sup>a</sup>									
Government schools	39.2	7.8	38.5	19.2	7.7	4.3	0.9	12.9	130.6
Non-government schools	5.4	1.0	6.2	3.6	0.9	0.7	0.3	3.0	21.1
<b>All schools</b>	<b>44.6</b>	<b>8.8</b>	<b>44.7</b>	<b>22.8</b>	<b>8.6</b>	<b>5.0</b>	<b>1.2</b>	<b>15.9</b>	<b>151.7</b>
Indigenous full time students as a proportion of all full time students (%)									
Government schools	5.3	1.5	8.0	8.3	4.7	7.5	2.6	44.2	5.8
Non-government schools	1.4	0.3	2.7	3.0	1.1	2.9	1.1	30.2	1.8
<b>All schools</b>	<b>4.0</b>	<b>1.1</b>	<b>6.3</b>	<b>6.5</b>	<b>3.4</b>	<b>6.1</b>	<b>2.0</b>	<b>40.7</b>	<b>4.4</b>

<sup>a</sup> Students counted as Indigenous are those who have identified as being of Indigenous origin. It is possible that the number of Indigenous students may be under-represented in some jurisdictions.

Source: ABS (2009) *Schools Australia 2008*, Cat. No. 4221.0; table 4A.22.

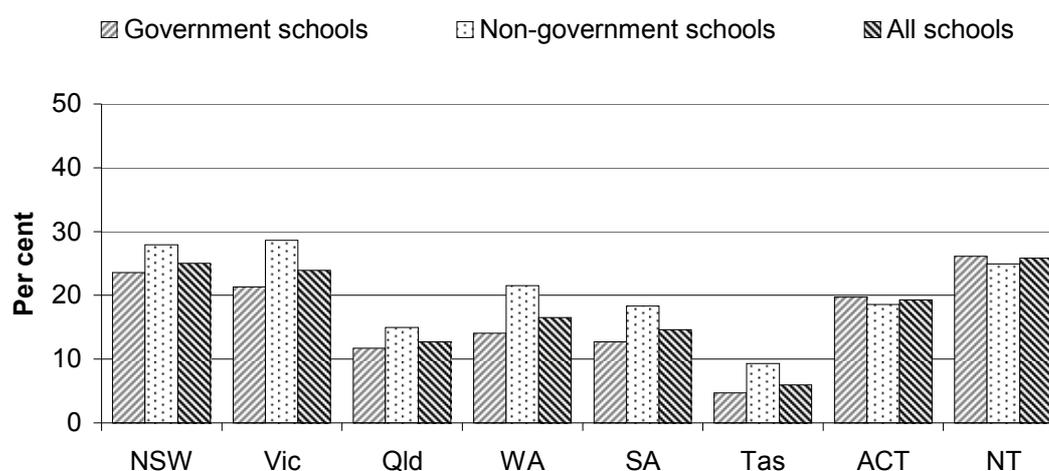
### *LBOTE students*

The proportion of LBOTE students is based on data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) 2006 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.

The proportion of LBOTE students in government and non-government schools varied across jurisdictions in 2006 (figure 4.2).

**Figure 4.2 Students from a language background other than English as a proportion of all students, 2006<sup>a, b</sup>**



<sup>a</sup> Absolute numbers of LBOTE students are sourced from the 2006 Census of Population and Housing, whilst data on all full time students are sourced from the ABS Schools Australia collection. <sup>b</sup> See table 4A.23 for details of LBOTE definitions.

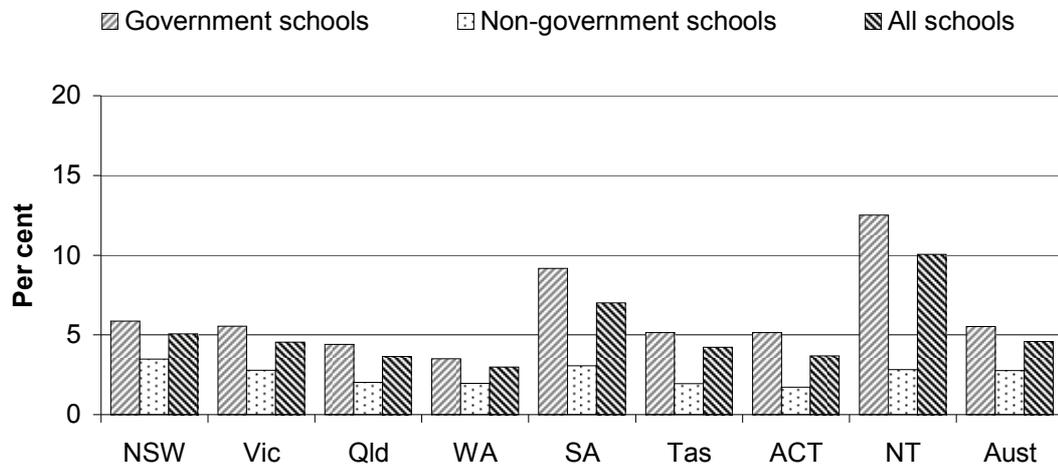
Source: DEEWR (unpublished) based on the ABS 2006 Census of Population and Housing; table 4A.23.

### *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 4.6 per cent and almost twice as high in government schools (5.5 per cent), compared with non-government schools (2.8 per cent) in 2008 (figure 4.3). Information regarding attainment and participation for students with disabilities, based on the ABS 2005 Survey of Education and Training Experience and the 2006 Census of Population and Housing are included in the attachment to the Services for people with a disability chapter of the 2010 Report (tables 14A.74–77).

Figure 4.3 **Funded students with disabilities as a proportion of all students, 2008<sup>a, b, c</sup>**



<sup>a</sup> The ABS total student data refer to the absolute number of full time students (not FTE students). <sup>b</sup> 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. <sup>c</sup> The 'funded' student data used by DEEWR refer to the FTE number of students who qualify for DEEWR 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 DEEWR funded figures also include pre year 1 students in part time programs in Queensland schools.

Source: ABS (2009) *Schools Australia 2008*, Cat. No. 4221.0; DEEWR (unpublished); table 4A.24.

### *Geographically remote students*

Identification of geographically remote students is based on the school location according to the metropolitan zone, provincial zone, remote areas and very remote areas as defined in the MCEETYA agreed classification.<sup>2</sup> The proportion of students attending schools in remote areas varies greatly across jurisdictions (table 4.6).

Nationally, the proportion of students enrolled in schools in remote areas was 1.4 per cent and more than twice as high in government schools (1.8 per cent),

<sup>2</sup> 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 data in this Report.

compared with non-government schools (0.8 per cent) in 2008. Nationally, the proportion of students enrolled in schools in very remote areas was 0.9 per cent and four times as high in government schools (1.2 per cent), compared with non government schools (0.3 per cent) in 2008 (table 4.6).

Table 4A.28 includes data relating to students attending primary and secondary schools located in metropolitan and provincial zones, as well as remote and very remote areas (see section 4.6 for a definition of the geographic classification used).

**Table 4.6 Students attending schools in remote and very remote areas as a proportion of all students, 2008<sup>a, b</sup>**

	<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>
Remote areas									
Government schools	0.5	0.1	2.2	5.8	3.9	1.0	..	17.8	1.8
Non-government schools	0.2	–	0.7	2.0	1.2	0.5	..	29.8	0.8
<b>All schools</b>	<b>0.4</b>	<b>0.1</b>	<b>1.7</b>	<b>4.5</b>	<b>2.9</b>	<b>0.9</b>	..	<b>20.8</b>	<b>1.4</b>
Very remote areas									
Government schools	0.1	..	1.7	3.4	1.1	0.5	..	29.6	1.2
Non-government schools	0.1	..	0.3	1.4	0.2	–	..	13.3	0.3
<b>All schools</b>	<b>0.1</b>	..	<b>1.2</b>	<b>2.7</b>	<b>0.8</b>	<b>0.4</b>	..	<b>25.5</b>	<b>0.9</b>

<sup>a</sup> Proportions are based on school sector (for example, students in government schools in remote areas as a proportion of all government school students). <sup>b</sup> Victoria has no very remote areas. The ACT has no remote or very remote areas. .. Not applicable. – Nil or rounded to zero.

Source: DEEWR (unpublished); table 4A.28.

## 4.2 Framework of performance indicators

This chapter provides performance information on the equity, effectiveness and efficiency of government expenditure on all schools in Australia.

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 and contribute to the funding of non-government schools. However, this chapter does not report on non government sources of funding, and so does not compare the efficiency of government and non-government schools.

The performance of school education is reported against the performance indicator framework in figure 4.4. Although data reported in this chapter refer to 2008, this framework reflects objectives which are consistent with the Melbourne Declaration

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on Educational Goals for Young Australians (the Melbourne Declaration), released in December 2008 (MCEETYA 2008a) and are aligned with the NEA and NIRA.

Box 4.1 describes the educational goals for young Australians, agreed by education Ministers in the Melbourne Declaration. Commitments to action by governments in eight inter-related areas are also included in the Melbourne Declaration (MCEETYA 2008a).<sup>3</sup>

**Box 4.1 National goals for schooling in the 21st century**

In December 2008, the MCEETYA endorsed the following national goals for school education.

Improving educational outcomes for all young Australians is central to the nation's social and economic prosperity and will position young people to live fulfilling, productive and responsible lives. Young Australians are therefore placed at the centre of the Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals.

These goals are:

Goal 1: Australian schooling promotes equity and excellence

Goal 2: All young Australians become:

- successful learners
- confident and creative individuals
- active and informed citizens.

*Source:* Adapted from MCEETYA (2008a).

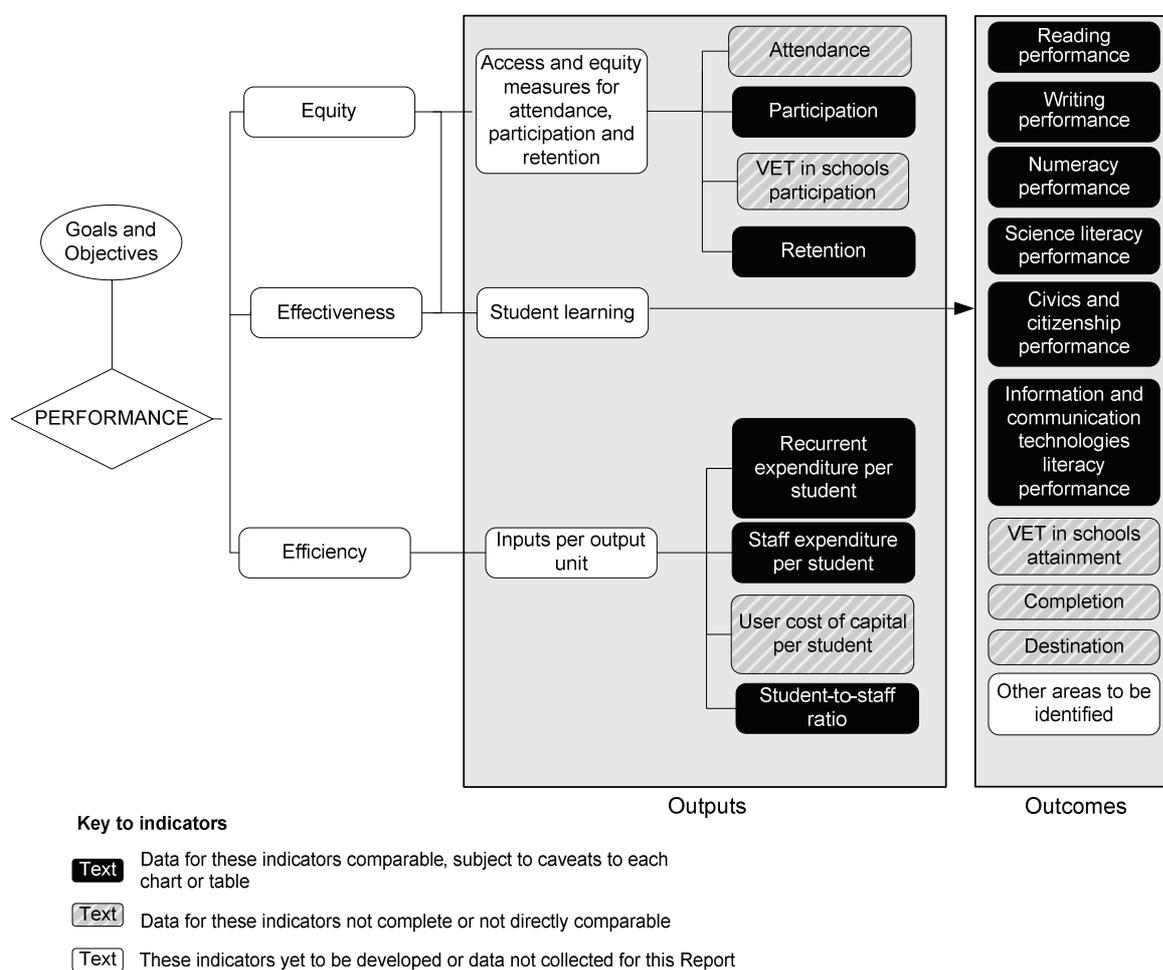
The performance of school education is reported against the indicator framework in figure 4.4. The performance indicator framework shows which data are comparable in this Report. For data that are not considered directly comparable, the text includes relevant caveats and supporting commentary. Chapter 1 discusses data comparability from a Report-wide perspective (see section 1.6).

The Report's statistical appendix 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 (including Indigenous and ethnic status) (appendix A).

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<sup>3</sup> The Melbourne Declaration replaced the Adelaide Declaration (MCEETYA 1999), released in 1999. The years of data reported in this chapter coincide with the operation of the Adelaide Declaration. However, the performance indicators reported are consistent with both the Adelaide and Melbourne Declarations.

**Figure 4.4 Performance indicators for school education**



### 4.3 Key performance indicator results

The framework of performance indicators aims to provide information on equity, efficiency and effectiveness, and to distinguish the outputs and outcomes of school education. This approach is consistent with the general performance indicator framework and service process diagram outlined in chapter 1 (see figures 1.2 and 1.3) that have been agreed by the Steering Committee.

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.

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The equity and effectiveness indicators for school education in this chapter are consistent with the national goals for school education in the Melbourne Declaration (box 4.1).

Care should be taken in interpreting these performance indicators, a number of interrelated factors affect the results, including:

- aspects of schooling
- characteristics of students (for example, student engagement and connectedness, length of time spent in schooling, demographic and socio-economic characteristics, [including remoteness and Indigenous status])
- broader education environment (for example, availability of employment and further educational alternatives, population movements).

COAG has agreed six National Agreements to enhance accountability to the public for the outcomes achieved or outputs delivered by a range of government services, (see chapter 1 for more detail on reforms to federal financial relations). The NEA covers the area of school education, and education and training indicators in the NIRA establish specific outcomes for reducing the level of disadvantage experienced by Indigenous Australians. The agreements include sets of performance indicators, for which the Steering Committee collates annual performance information for analysis by the COAG Reform Council (CRC). Revisions have been made to the performance indicators reported in this chapter to align with the performance indicators in the National Agreements.

## **Outputs**

Outputs are the actual services delivered (while outcomes are the impact of these services on the status of an individual or group) (see chapter 1, section 1.5).

### *Equity and effectiveness*

Access and equity measures for school attendance, participation and retention, and VET in schools participation, are reported in this section.

### *Attendance*

‘Attendance’ is an indicator of governments’ objective to develop fully the talents and capacities of young people through equitable access to education and learning. National and international research confirms a link between attendance and student achievement, although the factors influencing attendance and achievement are

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numerous and interrelated in complex ways. Attendance rates for special needs groups are an indication of the equity of access to school education (box 4.2).

#### **Box 4.2 Attendance**

'Attendance' (school attendance rate) is defined as the number of actual full time equivalent 'student days attended' over the collection period as a percentage of the total number of possible student days attended over the collection period.

Holding other factors equal, a high student attendance rate is desirable.

It is intended to measure student attendance over a single consistent time period (the first semester) for all schools. However, currently the measure is transitional, with most jurisdictions providing government schools data for the first semester, whereas non-government schools provide data over a period including the last 20 days in May.

Data on student attendance are collected for each State and Territory by:

- school sector (government, Catholic and independent)
- sex
- year level (1–10)
- Indigenous status (Indigenous and non-Indigenous students).

Care should be exercised in relation to the data for Indigenous students, particularly in some jurisdictions and in the non-government sectors, due to small population sizes.

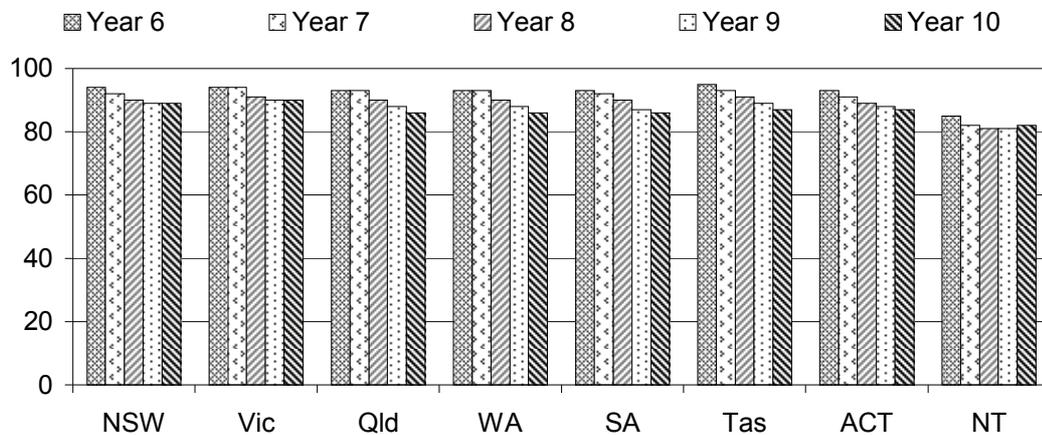
Data for this indicator are not directly comparable.

School attendance is measured in a specific collection period during the school year (see box 4.2 for details), and results may not be representative of school attendance throughout the school year.

For all students, attendance was fairly stable across years 1–5. In general, from year 6 attendance gradually declined to year 10 (typically the end of compulsory schooling) (tables 4A.95–100).

In 2008, the student attendance rate in government schools was greater than 80 per cent across all year levels and all jurisdictions (figure 4.5 and table 4A.95).

Figure 4.5 **Student attendance rate, all students, government schools, 2008**



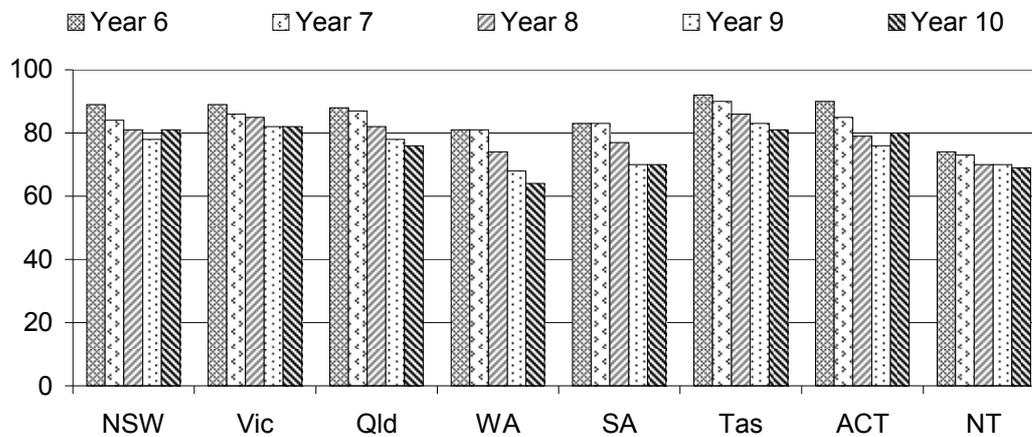
<sup>a</sup> See source for detailed explanatory notes regarding data.

Source: MCEECDYA (2009) *National Report on Schooling in Australia 2008: Additional statistics on Australian schooling chapter*, table 4A.95.

In government schools, non-Indigenous students had higher attendance rates than Indigenous students across all year levels in all jurisdictions (figure 4.6 and table 4A.96). The differences varied across states and territories, although attendance rates for non-Indigenous students were similar across all jurisdictions. A similar pattern to the government schools was observed for non-government schools (independent and Catholic schools) in most jurisdictions (tables 4A.98 and 4A.100).

Data on student attendance rates for all school sectors are also available disaggregated by sex (tables 4A.95, 4A.97 and 4A.99).

**Figure 4.6 Student attendance rate, government schools, Indigenous students, 2008<sup>a</sup>**



<sup>a</sup> See source for detailed explanatory notes regarding data.

Source: MCEECDYA (2009) *National Report on Schooling in Australia 2008: Additional statistics on Australian schooling chapter*; table 4A.96.

### *Participation*

‘Participation’ is an indicator of governments’ objective to develop fully the talents and capacities of young people through participation in secondary schooling, to enable all students to have access to the high quality education necessary to enable completion of school education to year 12 or its equivalent (box 4.3).

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### Box 4.3 Participation

'Participation' (school education participation rate) is defined by two measures:

- the total number of children aged 6–15 years and enrolled in school (full time and part time enrolments) as a proportion of the estimated resident population of the same age, reported by Indigenous status
- the number of full time and part time school students of a particular age expressed as a proportion of the estimated resident population of the same age, for each year for 14–19 year olds.

Participation rates are reported nationally and by State/Territory.

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 age/grade structures, and the participation rate is an age-based rate. The rate is comparable over time within a jurisdiction, but may not be directly comparable across jurisdictions where there are differences in the age/grade structure.

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. A broader participation indicator that accounts for some of these factors is reported in the 'Early childhood, education and training preface'.

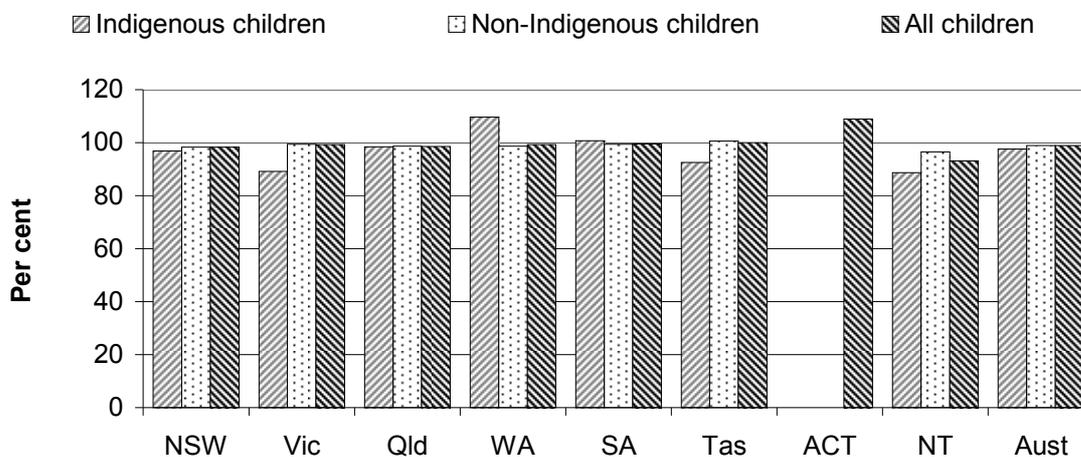
Care should be exercised in relation to the data for Indigenous students, particularly in some jurisdictions, due to small population sizes.

Data for this indicator are comparable.

#### *Proportion of children aged 6–15 years enrolled in school*

Nationally, 98.9 per cent of children aged 6–15 years were enrolled (either full or part time) in schools in 2008. Nationally, the enrolment rate for Indigenous children was 98 per cent compared to 99 per cent for non-Indigenous children. These rates also varied across jurisdictions (figure 4.7).

**Figure 4.7 Proportion of children aged 6–15 years enrolled in school, by Indigenous status, 2008<sup>a, b, c, d, e, f, g, h</sup>**



<sup>a</sup> Proportions over 100 per cent may reflect disparities between the sources of data which may provide varying counts, or, may reflect students from one jurisdiction enrolling in schools in another jurisdiction and need to be interpreted with care. <sup>b</sup> Proportions are determined using the number of students educated in the jurisdiction divided by the estimated residential population for the jurisdiction, for the age group. In some cases students may be educated in a different jurisdiction to their place of residence. <sup>c</sup> 'Non-Indigenous' and 'All children' include those for whom Indigenous status is unknown and consequently the proportion of Indigenous students may be under-represented in some jurisdictions. <sup>d</sup> Includes children enrolled full time or part time. <sup>e</sup> ABS data sources are not considered sufficiently robust to support Indigenous population estimates for the ACT at this small geographical level and for a small population, for 2008. <sup>f</sup> See footnotes to table 4A.79 for further information. <sup>g</sup> Data for 2006 for children aged 6–15 years are included in table 4A.79. Data for children aged 6–16 years in years 1–10, for 2006 and 2008, are included in table 4A.80.

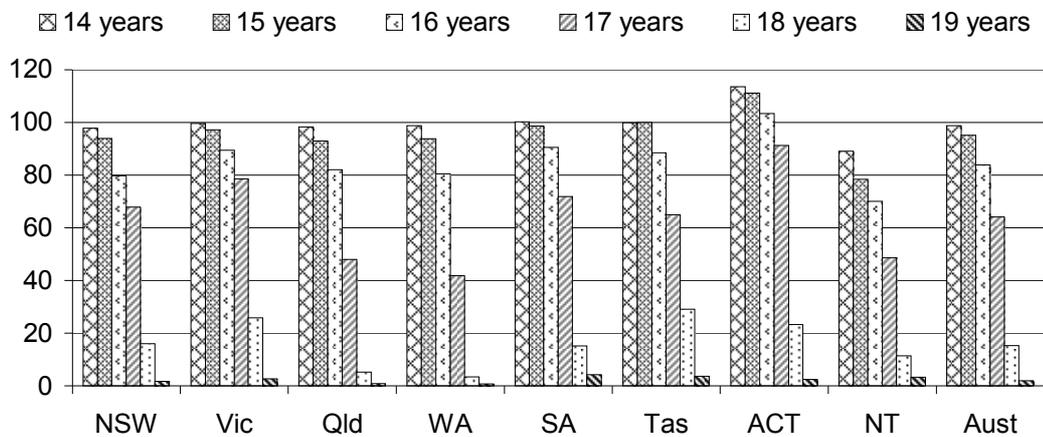
Source: ABS (unpublished) Schools Australia, 2008; ABS (unpublished) *Demographic Statistics, June quarter 2008*; ABS (2009) *Experimental Estimates and Projections, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians, 1991 to 2021* (cat. no. 3238.0); ABS (unpublished) *Experimental Estimates and Projections, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians, 1991 to 2021*; table 4A.79.

### *14–19 year olds enrolled in school*

Nationally, 58.6 per cent of 14–19 year olds were enrolled in schools in 2008 (table 4A.81). School participation rates varied by jurisdiction, age and sex. School participation rates for females (59.7 per cent) were 2.1 percentage points higher than those for males (57.6 per cent) (table 4A.81). School participation rates declined as students exceeded the maximum compulsory school age (figure 4.8).

Data on school participation rates since the 2009 Report differ to those presented in earlier Reports, as the scope has been expanded to include part time students and students aged 14 years (earlier Reports included full time students aged 15–19 years only). Data for 14–19 year olds from 2004–2008 are included in table 4A.82.

Figure 4.8 School participation rate of people aged 14–19 years in school education, all schools, 2008<sup>a, b</sup>



<sup>a</sup> Proportion of the population who were enrolled as full time or part time students in August 2008.

<sup>b</sup> Proportions are determined using the number of students educated in the jurisdiction divided by the estimated residential population for the jurisdiction, for the age group. In some cases students may be educated in a different jurisdiction to their place of residence. Participation rates in the ACT exceed 100 per cent as a result of NSW residents from surrounding areas enrolling in ACT schools.

Source: ABS (2009) *Schools Australia 2008*, Cat. No. 4221.0; table 4A.81.

### *Vocational education and training (VET) in schools participation*

‘VET in schools participation’ is an indicator of governments’ objective to provide vocational education and training in schools to assist all young people to secure their own futures by enhancing their transition to a broad range of post-school options and pathways (box 4.4).

This indicator was previously presented as an outcome indicator in earlier Reports. However, the indicator has been moved to the ‘equity and effectiveness’ section in recognition of the shift in emphasis of VET in schools from being an outcome to being an enabler to assist students to access school education.

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#### **Box 4.4 VET in schools participation**

'VET in schools participation' (VET in schools participation rate) is defined as the number of school students undertaking VET (with 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.

Holding other factors constant, a higher or increasing VET in schools participation rate may suggest greater access to broader secondary schooling options than traditional school education. Greater access can promote engagement in learning and the uptake of vocational career pathways.

Care needs to be taken in interpreting this indicator as it may be influenced by a number of factors which differ across states and territories, such as:

- definition of VET in schools
- senior secondary certificate requirements
- access to VET in schools prior to year 11
- number of VET in schools options and pathways available to students, particularly those in rural and remote areas.

A new arrangement for the national reporting of VET in Schools statistics was implemented for 2005 data. Due to this break in series, data for 2005 and onwards should not be compared with data from other arrangements in previous years. Data on 2006 and 2007 VET in Schools activity should also not be compared with 2005 VET in Schools activity because of data quality issues with 2005 data. The 2006 and 2007 VET in Schools statistics are also subject to some data quality issues. These issues include differences in definition and compilation practices used by states and territories to populate some fields, resulting in anomalies between states and territories. For example, the number of school students undertaking a senior secondary certificate is not comparable across states and territories due to different definitions of a senior secondary certificate.

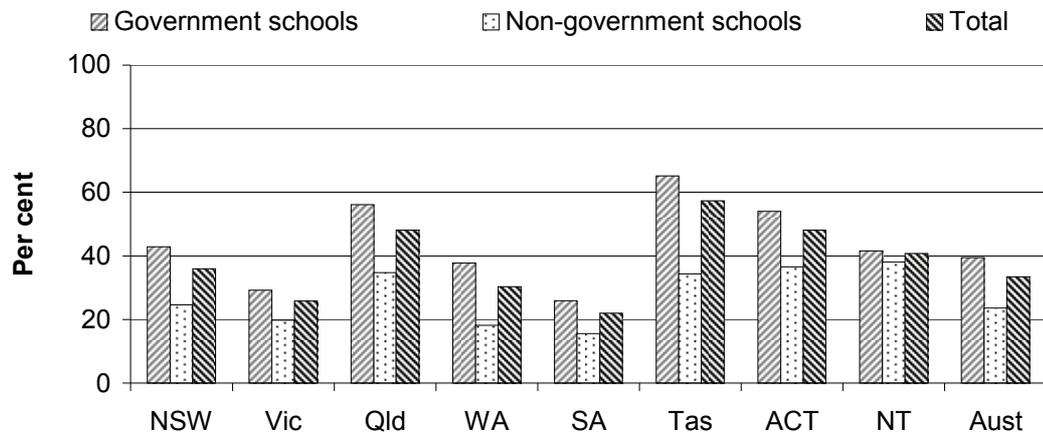
Data for this indicator are not directly comparable.

From 2005, the MCEETYA agreed that the Australian Vocational Education and Training Management Information Statistical Standard (AVETMISS) is the standard for reporting VET in Schools activity in Australia. The MCEETYA further agreed that these data would be collected by the senior secondary assessment authority in each State and Territory and reported through State Training Authorities to the national VET database compiled by the National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER).

In 2007, 33.4 per cent of students undertaking a senior secondary school certificate undertook at least one unit of competency/module of VET in schools (39.5 per cent

of students undertaking a senior secondary school certificate in government schools and 23.6 per cent in non-government schools) (figure 4.9). Of students undertaking a senior secondary school certificate, 2.9 per cent undertook at least one unit of competency/module in a school-based apprenticeship or traineeship (table 4A.92).

**Figure 4.9 Proportion of school students enrolled in a senior secondary school certificate who undertook at least one VET unit of competency/module, 2007<sup>a, b</sup>**



<sup>a</sup> Total includes other providers such as TAFE, community education, Australian Technical Colleges and students with more than one school type. Due to small numbers these are not presented separately. <sup>b</sup> The 2007 VET in Schools statistics are subject to some data quality issues and should be interpreted with caution. These issues include that secondary data sources used are not sufficiently reliable or comparable to the AVETMISS-compliant data and some data are not captured in enrolment processes.

Source: NCVET (2009) *VET in Schools 2007*; MCEETYA (unpublished) *VET In Schools* collection; tables 4A.92-93.

Data for 2006 are also included in this Report for the first time (tables 4A.92-93).

### *Retention*

‘Retention’ to the final years of schooling is an indicator of governments’ objective that all students have access to high quality education and training necessary to enable the completion of school education to year 12 or its equivalent (box 4.5).

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### Box 4.5 Retention

'Retention' (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 students commencing secondary school at year 7 or 8 and continuing to year 10
- the proportion of students commencing secondary school at year 7 or 8 and continuing to year 12
- the proportion of year 10 students continuing to year 12.

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 individual students. Data are reported for all students, Indigenous and non-Indigenous students, and for students in government and non-government schools.

Holding other factors constant, a higher or increasing apparent retention rate suggests that a large number of students are continuing to participate in school education, which is likely to result in improved educational outcomes.

This indicator does not include part time students or provide information on students who pursue year 12 (or equivalent qualifications) through non-school pathways.

Care needs be taken in interpretation because the apparent retention rate does not take account of factors such as:

- students repeating a year of education or returning to education after a period of absence
- movement or migration of students between school sectors, between states/territories and between countries
- the impact of full fee paying overseas students.

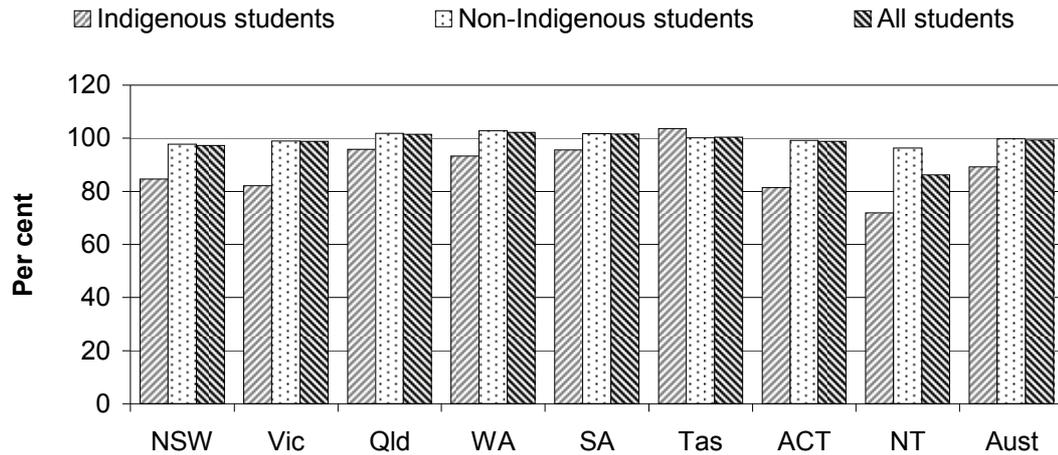
Data for this indicator are comparable.

Apparent retention rates, from the commencement of secondary school at year 7 or 8 (figure 4.1 shows the differences across jurisdictions) to year 10, for all students in most jurisdictions were 97–102 per cent in 2008, with a national rate of 99.3 (figure 4.10). 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.

Retention rates for Indigenous students provide one measure of the equity of access to schooling. Retention rates to year 10 for Indigenous students were lower than those for non-Indigenous students and all students in most jurisdictions. The national retention rate for Indigenous students was 89.2 per cent, 10.6 per cent

lower than that for non-Indigenous students and 10.1 percentage points lower than that for all students.

**Figure 4.10 Apparent retention rate from year 7 or 8 to year 10, full time secondary students, all schools, 2008<sup>a, b, c, d, e</sup>**



<sup>a</sup> 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. <sup>b</sup> Retention rates can exceed 100 per cent for a variety of reasons, including student transfers between jurisdictions. <sup>c</sup> The standard apparent retention rate calculation excludes part time students, which has implications for the interpretation of results for all jurisdictions (table 4.4). <sup>d</sup> Ungraded students are not included in the calculation of apparent retention rates. <sup>e</sup> Some students' Indigenous status is not stated. Students for whom Indigenous status is not stated are not included in the data for 'Non-Indigenous students', but are included in the data for 'All students'. Consequently, the number of Indigenous students counted in the Indigenous rates may be under-represented in some jurisdictions.

Source: ABS (2009) *Schools Australia 2008*, Cat. No. 4221.0; table 4A.83.

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 2008 as a proportion of the number of full time school students enrolled in year 10 in 2006.

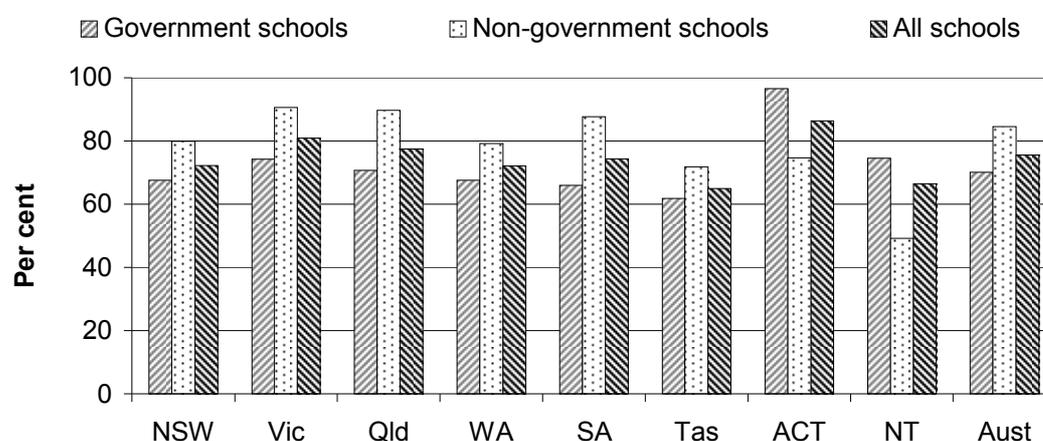
Factors affecting apparent retention can combine to result in a year 12 cohort that is substantially different in composition from the corresponding year 10 cohort — for example:

- in SA, if part time students are included in the 2008 year 12 total, then the apparent retention rate becomes 88.9 per cent, compared with 74.3 per cent for full time students only (table 4A.84)
- 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, 5971 students (of whom 3459 were aged 15–19 years)

undertook their Higher School Certificate or other tertiary preparation studies through TAFE institutes in 2008 (NSW Government unpublished).

Nationally, the apparent retention rate from year 10 to year 12 for all schools was 75.6 per cent in 2008. The apparent retention rate from year 10 to year 12 for government schools was 70.1 per cent, and for non-government schools was 84.5 per cent. The apparent retention rates for both government schools and non-government schools varied across jurisdictions (figure 4.11).

**Figure 4.11 Apparent retention rate from year 10 to year 12, full time secondary students, by school type, 2008<sup>a, b, c, d</sup>**



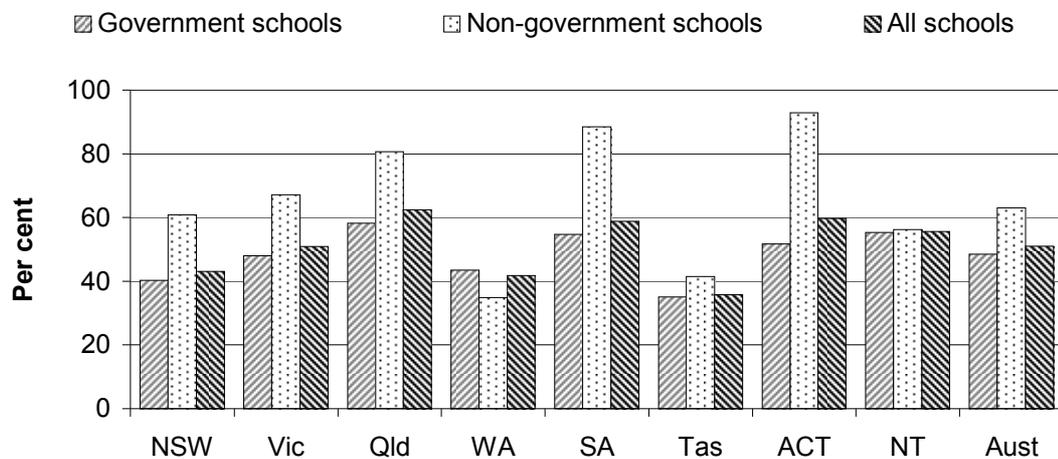
<sup>a</sup> Apparent retention rates are affected by factors that vary across jurisdictions. For this reason, variations in apparent retention rates over time within jurisdictions may be more useful than comparisons across jurisdictions. <sup>b</sup> Retention rates can exceed 100 per cent for a variety of reasons, including student transfers between jurisdictions and government and non-government schools after the base year. <sup>c</sup> The standard apparent retention rate calculation excludes part time students, which has implications for the interpretation of results for all jurisdictions (table 4.4). <sup>d</sup> Ungraded students are not included in the calculation of apparent retention rates.

Source: ABS (2009) *Schools Australia 2008*, Cat. No. 4221.0; table 4A.84.

For government and non-government schools, apparent rates of retention from year 10 to year 12 for Indigenous students in 2008 varied across jurisdictions (figure 4.12), but were consistently lower than rates for all students (figure 4.11). In interpreting this indicator, note that nationally 10.8 per cent of Indigenous students left school before year 10 (figure 4.10) — compared to 0.7 per cent of all students — so are not included in the base year for retention from year 10 to year 12. This baseline varies across jurisdictions. Further, Indigenous students made up 5.8 per cent of all students in government schools compared with 1.8 per cent in non-government schools and some jurisdictions have very low numbers of Indigenous students (table 4A.22).

Nationally, Indigenous retention from year 10 to year 12 for all schools in 2008 was 51.0 per cent (figure 4.12), compared to 75.6 per cent for all students. However, Indigenous retention from year 10 to year 12 for all schools has risen in the past five years from 45.7 per cent in 2004 to 51.0 per cent in 2008, with the gap in year 10 to year 12 retention rates between Indigenous students and all students decreasing from 31.5 percentage points in 2004 to 24.6 percentage points in 2008 (table 4A.87).

**Figure 4.12 Apparent retention rates from year 10 to year 12, Indigenous full time secondary students, 2008<sup>a, b, c, d</sup>**

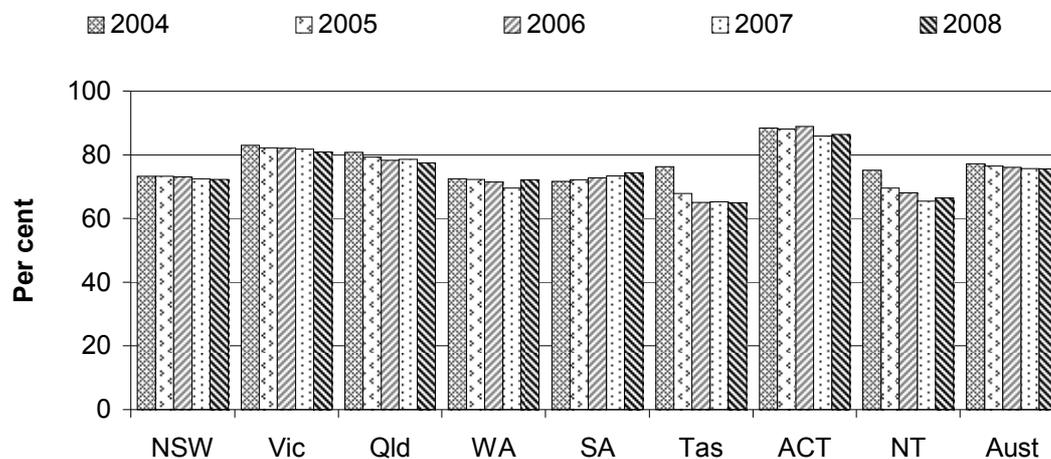


<sup>a</sup> Apparent retention rates are affected by factors that vary across jurisdictions. For this reason, variations in apparent retention rates over time within jurisdictions may be more useful than comparisons across jurisdictions. <sup>b</sup> The standard apparent retention rate calculation excludes part time students, which has implications for the interpretation of results for all jurisdictions (table 4.4). <sup>c</sup> Ungraded students are not included in the calculation of apparent retention rates. <sup>d</sup> Some students' Indigenous status is not stated. Consequently, the number of Indigenous students counted in these rates may be under-represented in some jurisdictions.

Source: ABS (2009) *Schools Australia 2008*, Cat. No. 4221.0; table 4A.84.

Nationally, apparent rates of retention for all full time students from year 7 or 8 to year 10 have risen slightly from 98.1 per cent in 2004 to 99.3 per cent in 2008 (table 4A.87), while the rate of retention from year 10 to year 12 has decreased from 77.2 per cent in 2004 to 75.6 per cent in 2008 (figure 4.13). Retention rates between years 10 and 12 for government and non-government schools are in attachment tables 4A.85-86.

**Figure 4.13 Apparent rates of retention from year 10 to year 12, full time secondary students, all schools<sup>a, b, c</sup>**



<sup>a</sup> 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. <sup>b</sup> The standard apparent retention rate calculation excludes part time students, which has implications for the interpretation of results for all jurisdictions (table 4.4). <sup>c</sup> Ungraded students are not included in the calculation of apparent retention rates. This exclusion has particular implications for the NT, prior to 2008, where 10.9 per cent of Indigenous secondary students are ungraded in 2007 (compared with an average of 4.2 per cent for the rest of Australia, but in 2008 the NT proportion of ungraded students has substantially reduced) and this should be considered when interpreting the data.

Source: ABS (2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009) *Schools Australia*, Cat. No. 4221.0; table 4A.87.

### 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 major providers of funds to the non-government school sector. An objective of the Steering Committee is to publish comparable estimates of costs. Ideally, such comparison should include the full range of costs to government. Where the full costs cannot be measured, estimating costs on a consistent basis is the best approach. Table 4A.15 shows information on the comparability of the source expenditure data for government schools used for this chapter. Table 4A.14 shows the treatment of assets by school education agencies.

### Recurrent expenditure per student

‘Recurrent expenditure per student’ is an indicator of governments’ objective to fund and/or provide education in an efficient manner (box 4.6).

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#### **Box 4.6 Recurrent expenditure per student**

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

Holding other factors constant, a low or decreasing government recurrent expenditure per FTE student may represent better or improved efficiency.

A number of factors may influence government recurrent expenditure per student (see Commonwealth Grants Commission reference in chapter 1, section 1.5 for further details). This Report does not, however, make any cost adjustments based on these or any of the following factors. Care needs to be taken in interpretation of efficiency data because 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
- economies of scale.

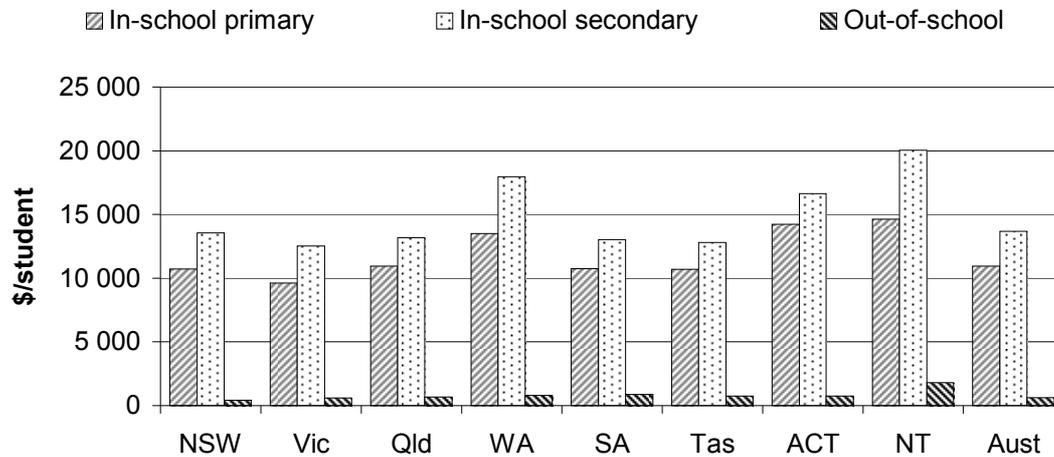
These factors may need to be considered when examining each jurisdiction's expenditure per student.

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 aspects of schooling (increasing school leaving age, improving outcomes for Indigenous students and students from low socioeconomic backgrounds, broader curricula or enhancing teacher quality), 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.

Data for this indicator are comparable.

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 \$10 936 and in-school government expenditure per FTE student in government secondary schools was \$13 684 in 2007-08. Out of school government expenditure per FTE student in government schools was \$622 in 2007-08 (figure 4.14).

**Figure 4.14 Government recurrent expenditure per FTE student, government schools, 2007-08<sup>a, b</sup>**

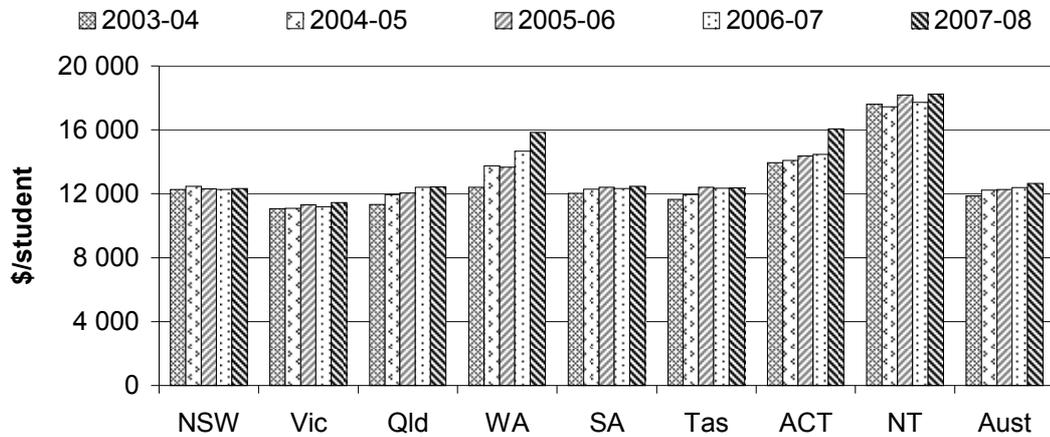


<sup>a</sup> See notes to tables 4A.12 for definitions and data caveats. <sup>b</sup> Payroll tax estimates have been included for WA and the ACT for comparability reasons.

Source: ABS (2009) *Schools Australia 2008*, Cat. No. 4221.0; MCEECDYA (unpublished) *National Schools Statistics Collection* (NSSC); table 4A.12.

Nationally, government expenditure per FTE student in all government schools was \$12 639 in 2007-08. It increased (in average annual real terms) between 2003-04 and 2007-08 by 1.6 per cent per year (figure 4.15).

Figure 4.15 Government real recurrent expenditure per FTE student, government schools (2007-08 dollars)<sup>a, b, c</sup>

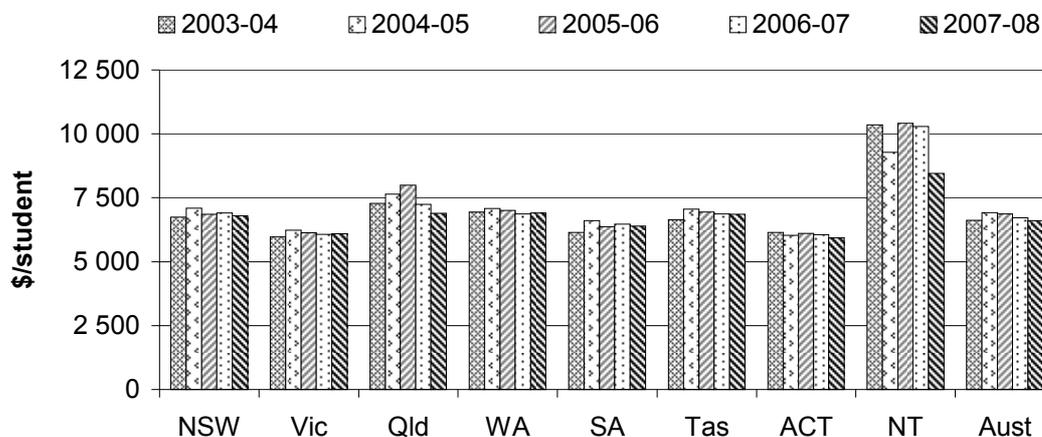


<sup>a</sup> See notes to table 4A.8 for definitions and data caveats. <sup>b</sup> Data for 2003-04 to 2006-07 have been adjusted to 2007-08 dollars using the gross domestic product (GDP) price deflator. <sup>c</sup> Payroll tax estimates have been included for WA and the ACT for comparability reasons.

Source: ABS (2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009) *Schools Australia*, Cat. No. 4221.0; MCEECDYA (unpublished) NSSC; table 4A.8.

Nationally, government expenditure per FTE student in all non-government schools was \$6607 in 2007-08 (figure 4.16). It has fluctuated over time but decreased in average annual real terms between 2003-04 and 2007-08 by 0.1 per cent per year (table 4A.9).

Figure 4.16 Government real recurrent expenditure per FTE student, non-government schools (2007-08 dollars)<sup>a, b, c</sup>



<sup>a</sup> See notes to table 4A.9 for definitions and data caveats. <sup>b</sup> Data for 2003-04 to 2006-07 have been adjusted to 2007-08 dollars using the gross domestic product (GDP) price deflator. <sup>c</sup> 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, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009) *Schools Australia*, Cat. No. 4221.0; DEEWR (unpublished); State and Territory governments (unpublished); table 4A.9.

Nationally, government real recurrent expenditure per FTE student in all schools was \$10 602 in 2007-08. It increased (in average annual real terms) between 2003-04 and 2007-08 by 1.0 per cent per year (table 4A.10).

### *Staff expenditure per student*

‘Staff expenditure per student’ is an indicator of governments’ objective to provide education in an efficient manner (box 4.7).

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**Box 4.7 Staff expenditure per student**

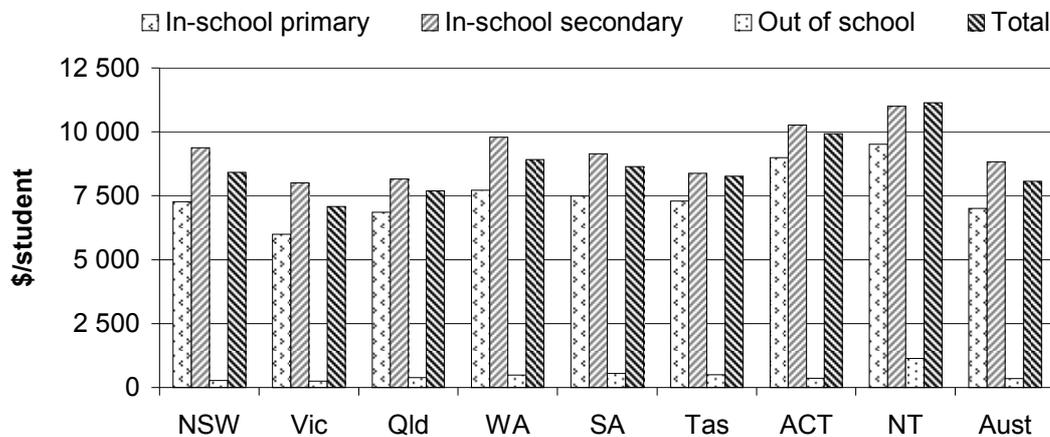
Staff expenditure per student<sup>1</sup> is defined as government recurrent expenditure on staff per FTE student in government schools. Expenditure on staff is the major component of spending on schools.

Holding other factors constant, low or decreasing government expenditure on staff per FTE student may represent 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 (smaller class sizes, broader curricula such as information technology and the need for teachers with new skills, population dispersion and more geographically remote students). 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.

Data for this indicator are comparable.

Government recurrent expenditure on staff in government schools, accounted for \$18.4 billion (63.9 per cent) of the total expenditure in 2007-08 (table 4A.12). Nationally, expenditure on staff per FTE student ranged from \$348 for out-of-school to \$8823 for in-school secondary (figure 4.17).

**Figure 4.17 Government recurrent expenditure on staff in government schools, per FTE student, 2007-08<sup>a, b</sup>**



<sup>a</sup> See notes to table 4A.12 for definitions and data caveats. <sup>b</sup> Expenditure on staff includes teaching staff and other staff, and includes expenditure on redundancy payments.

Source: ABS (2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009) *Schools Australia*, Cat. No. 4221.0; MCEECDYA (unpublished) NSSC; table 4A.12.

### *User cost of capital per student*

‘User cost of capital (UCC) per student’ is an indicator of governments’ objective to provide education in an efficient manner (box 4.8).

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#### **Box 4.8 User cost of capital per student**

'UCC per student' is defined as the notional costs to governments of the funds tied up in capital used to produce services (for example, land and buildings owned by government schools) per FTE student. 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).

Notional UCC reflects the annual UCC per FTE student, and is set at 8 per cent of the value of non-current physical assets (for example, land, buildings, plant and equipment) which are re-valued over time.

Holding other factors constant, a low or decreasing UCC per student may represent better or improved efficiency.

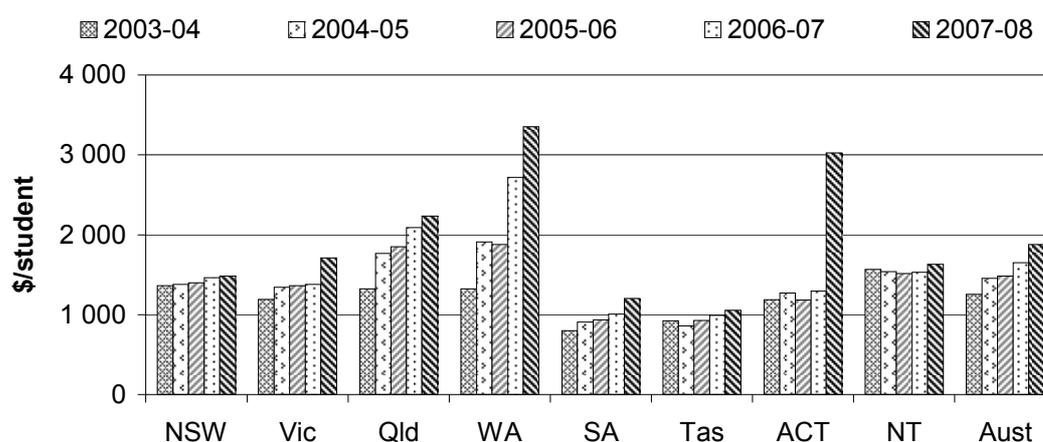
Efficiency data are difficult to interpret and this indicator in particular is only partial in nature as it does not reflect the full cost per student. While high or increasing UCC per student may reflect deteriorating efficiency, it may also reflect changes in aspects of schooling (broader curricula, enhanced facilities), or the characteristics of the education environment (such as population dispersion and/or rapid growth and more geographically remote students). 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.

Data for this indicator are not directly comparable.

The Steering Committee accepts that the asset valuation data, from which the notional UCC has been calculated, were not fully comparable across jurisdictions until 2003-04 (table 4A.15). 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. However, using an imperfect costing of government capital 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 from 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 2007-08 averaged \$1878 nationally (figure 4.18).

**Figure 4.18 Notional UCC per FTE student, government schools<sup>a, b</sup>**



<sup>a</sup> See notes to tables 4A.6 and 4A.13 for definitions and data caveats. <sup>b</sup> Notional UCC per FTE student is derived by dividing the notional UCC in table 4A.13 with the FTE student numbers in table 4A.6. Notional UCC is set at 8 per cent of the value of non-current physical assets, which are re-valued over time.

Source: ABS (2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009) *Schools Australia*, Cat. No. 4221.0; MCEECDYA (unpublished) NSSC; tables 4A.6 and 4A.13.

### *Student-to-staff ratio*

‘Student-to-staff ratio’ is an indicator of governments’ objective to provide education in an efficient manner (box 4.9).

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#### **Box 4.9 Student-to-staff ratio**

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-staff 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.

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 which may differ across the states and territories, including:

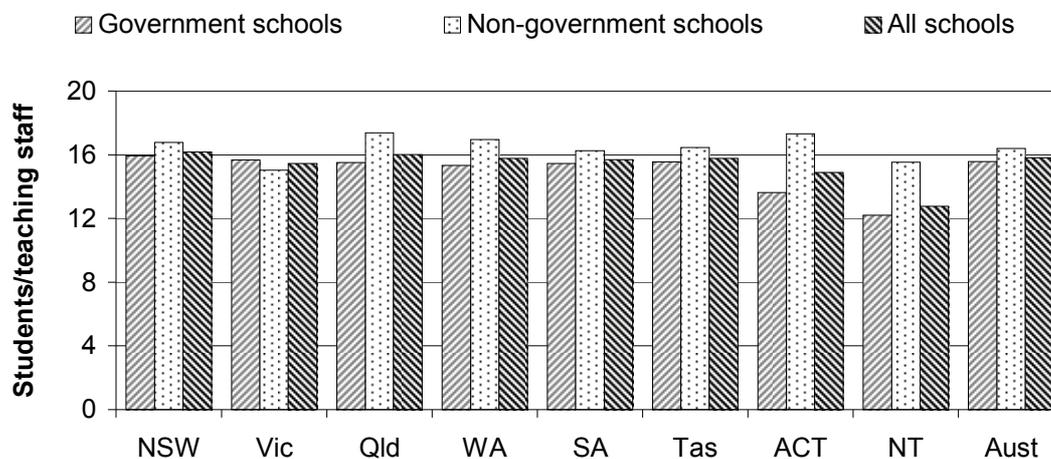
- the proportion of special needs students — for example, special schools catering for students with disabilities generally have significantly lower student-to-teacher ratios than those of mainstream schools and additional resources are also required in mainstream schools where special needs students attend
- 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).

Care needs to be taken in interpreting efficiency data as differences in the costs of educating students can be driven by influences beyond the control of governments, such as a dispersed and/or geographically remote population. Efficiency data need to be interpreted within the context of the effectiveness and equity indicators to derive an holistic view of performance.

Data for this indicator are comparable.

Nationally, for government primary schools, the student-to-teacher ratio was 15.6 in 2008. For non-government primary schools, the student-to-teacher ratio was 16.4 in 2008. For all primary schools, the student-to-teacher ratio was 15.8 in 2008 (figure 4.19).

**Figure 4.19 Ratio of FTE students to FTE teaching staff, primary schools, 2008<sup>a</sup>**

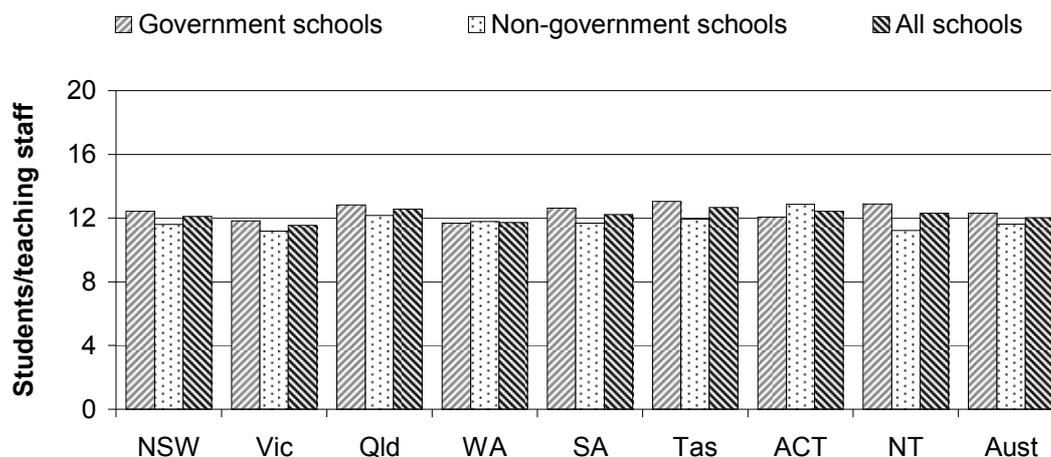


<sup>a</sup> See notes to table 4A.16 for definitions and data caveats.

Source: ABS (2009) *Schools Australia 2008*, Cat. No. 4221.0; table 4A.16.

Nationally, for government secondary schools, the student-to-teacher ratio was 12.3 in 2008. For non-government secondary schools, the student-to-teacher ratio was 11.6 in 2008. For all secondary schools, the student-to-teacher ratio was 12.0 in 2008 (figure 4.20).

**Figure 4.20 Ratio of FTE students to FTE teaching staff, secondary schools, 2008<sup>a</sup>**



<sup>a</sup> See notes to table 4A.16 for definitions and data caveats.

Source: ABS (2009) *Schools Australia 2008*, Cat. No. 4221.0; table 4A.16.

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Nationally, for all government schools, the student-to-teacher ratio was 14.1 in 2008. For all non-government schools, the student-to-teacher ratio was 13.7 in 2008. For all schools, the student-to-teacher ratio was 13.9 in 2008 (table 4A.16).

Refer to table 4A.16 for further detail on student-to-staff ratios, including those for non-school staff and all staff, for all jurisdictions.

## **Outcomes**

Outcomes are the impact of services on the status of an individual or group (while outputs are the actual services delivered) (see chapter 1, section 1.5).

### *Nationally comparable learning outcomes*

‘Reading performance’, ‘writing performance’, ‘numeracy performance’, ‘science literacy performance’, ‘civics and citizenship performance’, and ‘information and communication technology literacy performance’ have been identified as indicators of learning outcomes and are discussed in this section. The outcomes for VET in schools attainment, completion rates, and school leaver destination are discussed in the following section.

The nationally comparable learning outcomes encompasses all of the MCEECDYA endorsed tests which have been developed nationally to measure student performance across government and non-government schools in relation to the National Goals for Schooling, and also Australia’s participation in two international tests: the OECD Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA); and the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS).

Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 nationally comparable NAPLAN national minimum standard learning outcomes data for reading, writing and numeracy performance for 2008 are reported. Details of reported learning outcomes data and accompanying information from the national collection are reported in tables 4A.29–52. State and Territory data are also available by Indigenous status and geolocation, and are included in this Report.

In addition to the national literacy and numeracy assessments undertaken annually, triennial national sample assessments are undertaken on a rotating basis. Triennial year 6 science literacy performance data for 2003 and 2006 are reported in tables 4A.53–55. Triennial year 6 and year 10 civics and citizenship performance data for 2004 and 2007 are reported in tables 4A.56–58. Triennial year 6 and

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year 10 information and communication technology literacy performance data for 2005 are reported in tables 4A.59–61.

The PISA provides learning outcomes data for 15 year olds in three core assessment domains: reading literacy, mathematical literacy and scientific literacy. In 2006, approximately 400 000 students from 57 countries participated in the PISA Assessment. From Australia this included over 14 170 students from 356 schools. Scientific literacy was the major domain tested in the PISA 2006 cycle. Detailed information about PISA 2006 is available in Thomson et al. (2007) and OECD (2007).

Data on scientific literacy from PISA 2003 and 2006 (tables 4A.68–72) are included in this chapter. Earlier data on reading literacy (tables 4A.62–64), mathematical literacy (tables 4A.65–67) and problem solving (tables 4A.73–74) are also included. At this stage there is no nationally agreed standard for scientific literacy. This chapter reports the proxy standard of the proportion of students who achieve at or above proficiency level 3 for scientific literacy.

Results from PISA 2003 and PISA 2000 were included in the 2006 Report (SCRGSP 2006, pages 3.37-38, 3.44–46, 3.58-59 and 3.61-62) and 2003 Report (SCRCSSP 2003, pages 3.19, 3.22-23 and 3.26–28) respectively. Information and data on PISA 2000, 2003 and 2006 are available in Lokan et al. (2001), Thomson et al. (2004a, 2004b), Thomson and De Bertoli (2007) and tables 4A.62–74.

Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) focuses on the mathematics and science curriculum, identifying the concepts and processes students have learned, the factors which are linked to students' opportunity to learn, and how these factors influence students' achievements. Years 4 and 8 learning outcomes data for 2006-07 are presented in this Report (tables 4A.75–78). In 2006-07, students from 59 countries participated in the TIMSS. From Australia this included 8177 students from 457 schools. Australian students also participated in the three previous TIMSS, in 1994-95, 1998-99 and 2002-03. Detailed information about TIMSS is available at the TIMSS website (ACER 2009) and tables 4A.75–78.

### *Interpreting learning outcomes data*

To assist with making comparisons between jurisdictions, where appropriate, 95 per cent confidence intervals are presented in charts and attachment tables. Confidence intervals are a standard way of expressing the degree of uncertainty associated with survey estimates or performance measurement. An estimate of 80 with a confidence interval of  $\pm 2.0$ , for example, means that if another sample had

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been drawn, or if another combination of test items had been used, 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.

Care should be taken when making comparisons in the results across the three PISA cycles. Time series comparisons can only be made across PISA data once a subject has been a major assessment domain. For example:

- Reading literacy was the major assessment domain in PISA 2000. Therefore, PISA 2000 is able to be compared with PISA 2003 and PISA 2006 for reading literacy results.
- Mathematical literacy was the major assessment domain in PISA 2003. Therefore, PISA 2003 is able to be compared with PISA 2006 for mathematical literacy results.
- Scientific literacy was the major assessment domain in PISA 2006. Therefore, PISA 2006 is not able to be compared with previous cycles for scientific literacy.

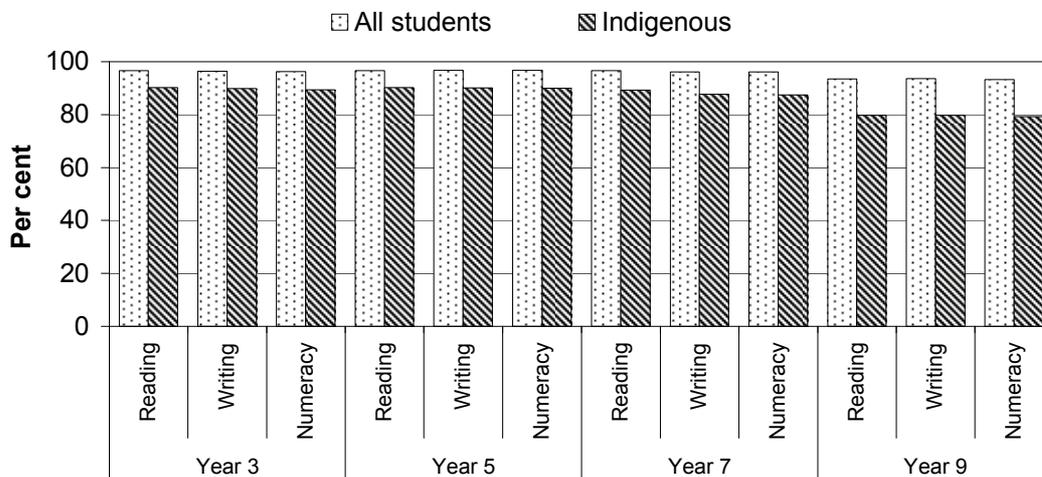
### *Participation in NAPLAN testing*

Participation in NAPLAN testing is defined as the number of assessed and exempt students in years 3, 5, 7 and 9, as a proportion of the total number of students in years 3, 5, 7 and 9.

Assessed students participate on the day of testing. Exempt students are recently arrived in Australia and of a language background other than English or having a significant intellectual disability. Other students are absent or withdrawn. Holding other factors constant, a higher or increasing proportion of participating students (assessed plus exempt students) in NAPLAN testing suggests an improvement in that aspect of educational participation.

The national proportion of assessed and exempt students in years 3, 5, 7 and 9 as a proportion of the total number of students in years 3, 5, 7 and 9, for reading, writing and numeracy in 2008 is shown in figure 4.21. In all categories and years, the proportion of all students participating exceeded the proportion of Indigenous students participating (data are not available for non-Indigenous students).

**Figure 4.21 Year 3, 5, 7 and 9 student participation in NAPLAN assessment by Indigenous status, 2008<sup>a, b</sup>**

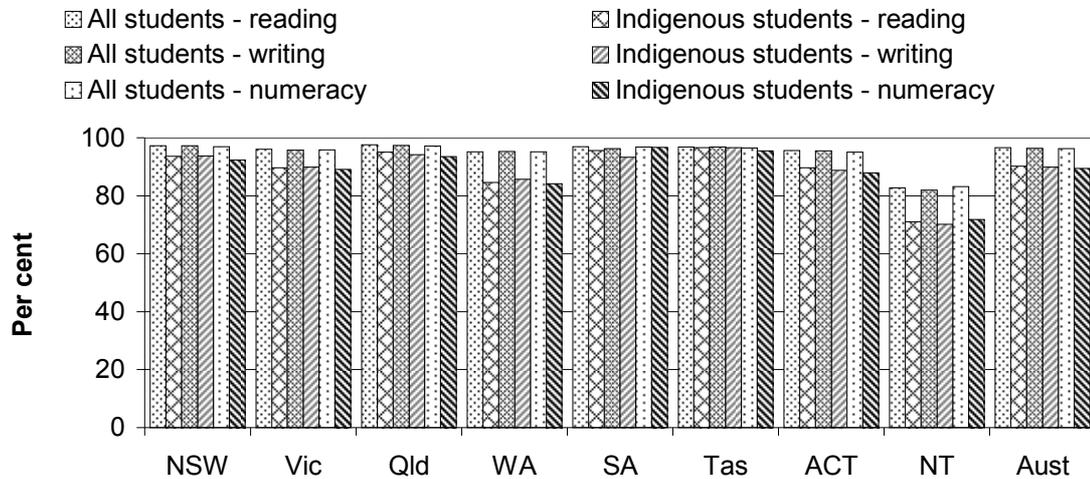


<sup>a</sup> Participation rates are calculated on the basis of all assessed and exempt students as a percentage of the total number of students reported by schools which includes those absent and withdrawn. <sup>b</sup> A student is considered to be 'Indigenous' if he or she identifies as being of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander origin. Some students' Indigenous status is not recorded and it is possible that the proportion of Indigenous students may be under-represented in some jurisdictions.

Source: MCEETYA 2008, *National Report on Schooling in Australia 2008: National Assessment Program Literacy and Numeracy, Achievement in Reading, Writing, Language Conventions and Numeracy*; tables 4A.35, 4A.43, 4A.51.

Year 3 student participation in assessment for all students was 96.6 per cent for reading, 96.4 per cent for writing and 96.3 per cent for numeracy. For Indigenous students the participation rates were 90.2 per cent for reading, 89.9 per cent for writing and 89.4 per cent for numeracy. These results varied across jurisdictions (figure 4.22). Data for years 5, 7 and 9 for reading, writing and numeracy respectively are included in tables 4A.35, 4A.43, and 4A.51.

Figure 4.22 Year 3 student participation in NAPLAN assessment by Indigenous status, 2008<sup>a, b, c</sup>



<sup>a</sup> Participation rates are calculated on the basis of all assessed and exempt students as a percentage of the total number of students reported by schools, which includes those absent and withdrawn. <sup>b</sup> Data for year 3 students are shown and may not be representative of students in years 5, 7 and 9, which are detailed in tables 4A.35, 4A.43, and 4A.51. <sup>c</sup> A student is considered to be 'Indigenous' if he or she identifies as being of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander origin. Some students' Indigenous status is not recorded and it is possible that the proportion of Indigenous students may be under-represented in some jurisdictions.

Source: MCEETYA (2008) 2008 National Assessment Program — Literacy and Numeracy: Achievement in reading, writing, language conventions and numeracy; table 4A.35, 4A.43, 4A.51.

### Reading performance

'Reading performance' is an indicator of governments' objective that all students should attain the skills of English literacy, such that every student should be able to read, write, spell and communicate at an appropriate level. It is an indicator of students' achievement in a key learning area of school education (box 4.10).

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#### Box 4.10 Reading performance

'Reading performance' is defined by two measures:

- Percentage of students achieving at or above the national minimum standard in reading: The proportion of assessed years 3, 5, 7 and 9 students who achieve at or above the national reading national minimum standard for a given year, reported by sex, Indigenous status, LBOTE, socioeconomic status and geolocation (section 4.2 identifies the profile of equity groups in each State and Territory). The standard describes the nationally agreed minimum acceptable standard for reading performance at years 3, 5, 7 and 9.
  - Up to and including 2007, student performance has been measured by annual State and Territory-based testing programs which were equated through a national process designed to allow comparable reporting against the national reading benchmark. Commencing in 2008, common national tests in literacy and numeracy were held for all students at years 3, 5, 7 and 9. These tests replace the former State and Territory-based assessments and report national minimum standards, representing a break in the time series. This Report includes the outcomes of 2008 common national testing programs only. Results of State and Territory-based testing programs are available in the 2009 Report (and previous issues).
- Percentage of students achieving at or above the proficient standard on the OECD PISA combined reading scale in a triennial international assessment: The proportion of assessed 15 year old students who achieve at or above the proficient standard (agreed by the MCEETYA to be level 3) on the OECD PISA combined reading scale for a given year, reported by sex, Indigenous status, socioeconomic status and geolocation.

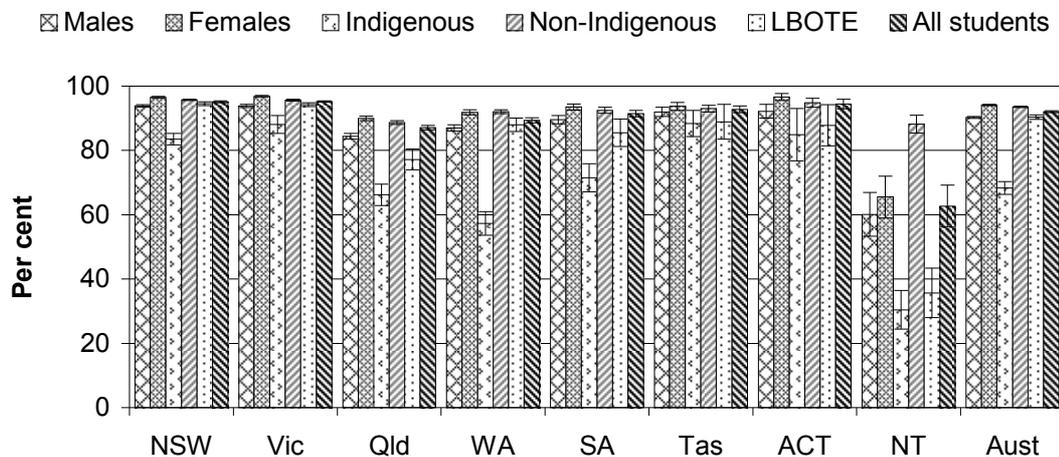
A high or increasing proportion of students achieving the national minimum standard or proficient standard in reading is desirable.

Data for this indicator are comparable.

Nationally, the proportion of assessed year 3 students who achieved the reading national minimum standard in 2008 was 91.8–92.4 per cent. The national proportion of students by equity group who achieved the year 3 reading national minimum standard in 2008 was:

- 93.9–94.3 per cent for female students, higher than the proportion for male students (90.0–90.6 per cent)
- 66.3–70.3 per cent for Indigenous students and 93.3–93.7 per cent for non-Indigenous students
- 89.7–91.1 per cent for LBOTE students (figure 4.23).

Figure 4.23 Proportion of year 3 students achieving the reading national minimum standard, by equity group, 2008<sup>a, b</sup>



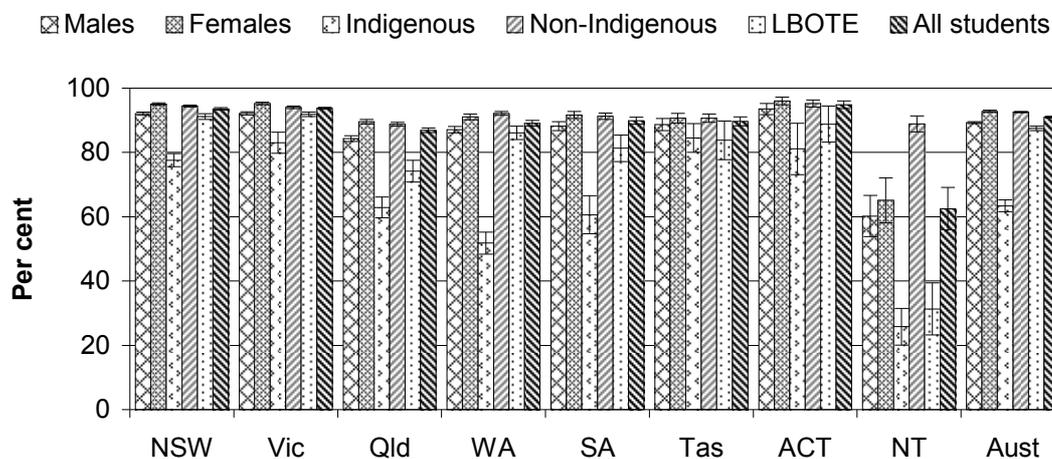
<sup>a</sup> Error bars represent the 95 per cent confidence interval associated with each point estimate. <sup>b</sup> For further information and caveats see table 4A.29.

Source: MCEETYA (2008) *2008 National Assessment Program — Literacy and Numeracy: Achievement in reading, writing, language conventions and numeracy*; table 4A.29.

The proportion of assessed year 5 students who achieved the reading national minimum standard in 2008 was 90.7–91.3 per cent nationally. The proportion of students by equity group who achieved the year 5 reading national minimum standard in 2008 was:

- 92.5–93.1 per cent for female students, higher than the proportion for male students (89.0–89.6 per cent)
- 61.6–65.2 per cent for Indigenous students and 92.4–92.8 per cent for non-Indigenous students
- 86.8–88.2 per cent for LBOTE students (figure 4.24).

**Figure 4.24 Proportion of year 5 students achieving the reading national minimum standard, by equity group, 2008<sup>a, b</sup>**



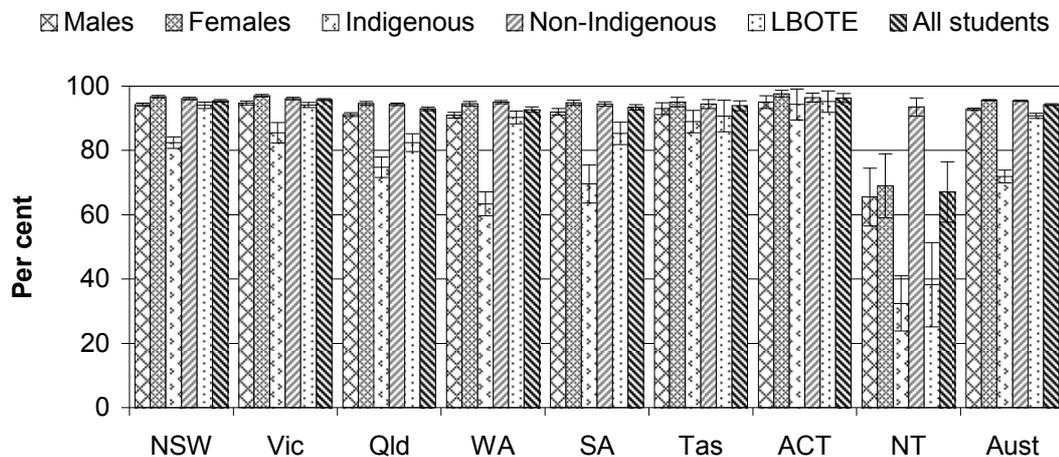
<sup>a</sup> Error bars represent the 95 per cent confidence interval associated with each point estimate. <sup>b</sup> For further information and caveats see table 4A.30.

Source: MCEETYA (2008) *2008 National Assessment Program — Literacy and Numeracy: Achievement in reading, writing, language conventions and numeracy*; table 4A.30

The proportion of assessed year 7 students who achieved the reading national minimum standard in 2008 was 93.9–94.5 per cent nationally. The proportion of students by equity group who achieved the year 7 reading national minimum standard in 2008 was:

- 95.4–95.8 per cent for female students, higher than the proportion for male students (92.5–93.1 per cent)
- 69.9–73.9 per cent for Indigenous students and 95.2–95.6 per cent for non-Indigenous students
- 90.0–91.6 per cent for LBOTE students (figure 4.25).

Figure 4.25 Proportion of year 7 students achieving the reading national minimum standard, by equity group, 2008<sup>a, b</sup>



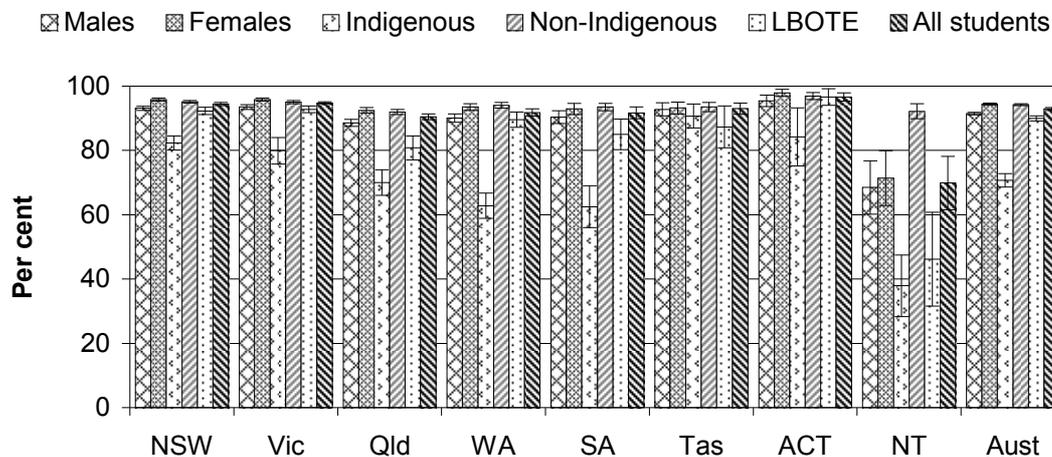
<sup>a</sup> Error bars represent the 95 per cent confidence interval associated with each point estimate. <sup>b</sup> For further information and caveats see table 4A.31.

Source: MCEETYA (2008) *2008 National Assessment Program — Literacy and Numeracy: Achievement in reading, writing, language conventions and numeracy*; table 4A.31.

The proportion of assessed year 9 students who achieved the reading national minimum standard in 2008 was 92.5–93.3 per cent nationally. The proportion of students by equity group who achieved the year 9 reading national minimum standard in 2008 was:

- 94.1–94.7 per cent for female students, higher than the proportion for male students (91.1–91.9 per cent)
- 68.6–72.8 per cent for Indigenous students and 93.9–94.5 per cent for non-Indigenous students
- 89.2–90.8 per cent for LBOTE students (figure 4.26).

**Figure 4.26 Proportion of year 9 students achieving the reading national minimum standard, by equity group, 2008<sup>a, b</sup>**



<sup>a</sup> Error bars represent the 95 per cent confidence interval associated with each point estimate. <sup>b</sup> For further information and caveats see table 4A.32.

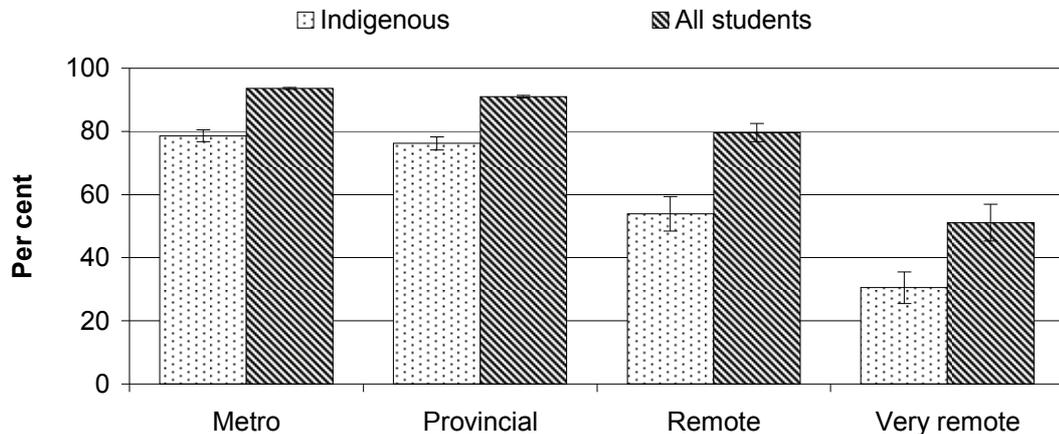
Source: MCEETYA (2008) *2008 National Assessment Program — Literacy and Numeracy: Achievement in reading, writing, language conventions and numeracy*; table 4A.32.

Nationally, the proportion of assessed students who achieved the reading national minimum standard by geolocation in 2008 was:

- 93.3–93.9 per cent for all year 3 students in metropolitan areas, higher than the proportion for provincial students (90.6–91.4 per cent), remote students (76.7–82.5 per cent) and very remote students (45.3–56.9 per cent) (figure 4.27)
- 92.1–92.7 per cent for all year 5 students in metropolitan areas, higher than the proportion for provincial students (89.6–90.4 per cent), remote students (76.8–82.6 per cent) and very remote students (40.0–52.2 per cent) (table 4A.33)
- 94.9–95.5 per cent for all year 7 students in metropolitan areas, higher than the proportion for provincial students (93.5–94.3 per cent), remote students (80.5–87.3 per cent) and very remote students (42.8–55.6 per cent) (table 4A.33)
- 93.3–94.1 per cent for all year 9 students in metropolitan areas, higher than the proportion for provincial students (91.9–92.9 per cent), remote students (78.4–86.2 per cent) and very remote students (42.7–59.9 per cent) (table 4A.33).

For all categories of remoteness across years 3, 5 and 7 and 9, the reading outcomes for Indigenous students were lower than those for all students. As with all students, outcomes for Indigenous students declined as remoteness increased — furthermore, the gap in learning outcomes between Indigenous students and all students was greater in remote and very remote areas than in metropolitan and provincial areas.

**Figure 4.27 National proportion of year 3 students achieving the reading national minimum standard, by Indigenous status and geolocation, 2008<sup>a, b, c</sup>**



<sup>a</sup> Error bars represent the 95 per cent confidence interval associated with each point estimate. <sup>b</sup> Data for year 3 students are shown and may not be representative of students in years 5, 7 and 9 which are detailed in table 4A.33. <sup>c</sup> Insufficient or no students in an area of geographic classification are not included.

Source: MCEETYA (2008) *2008 National Assessment Program — Literacy and Numeracy: Achievement in reading, writing, language conventions and numeracy*, table 4A.33.

Nationally, the proportion of assessed Indigenous students who achieved the reading national minimum standard by geolocation in 2008 was:

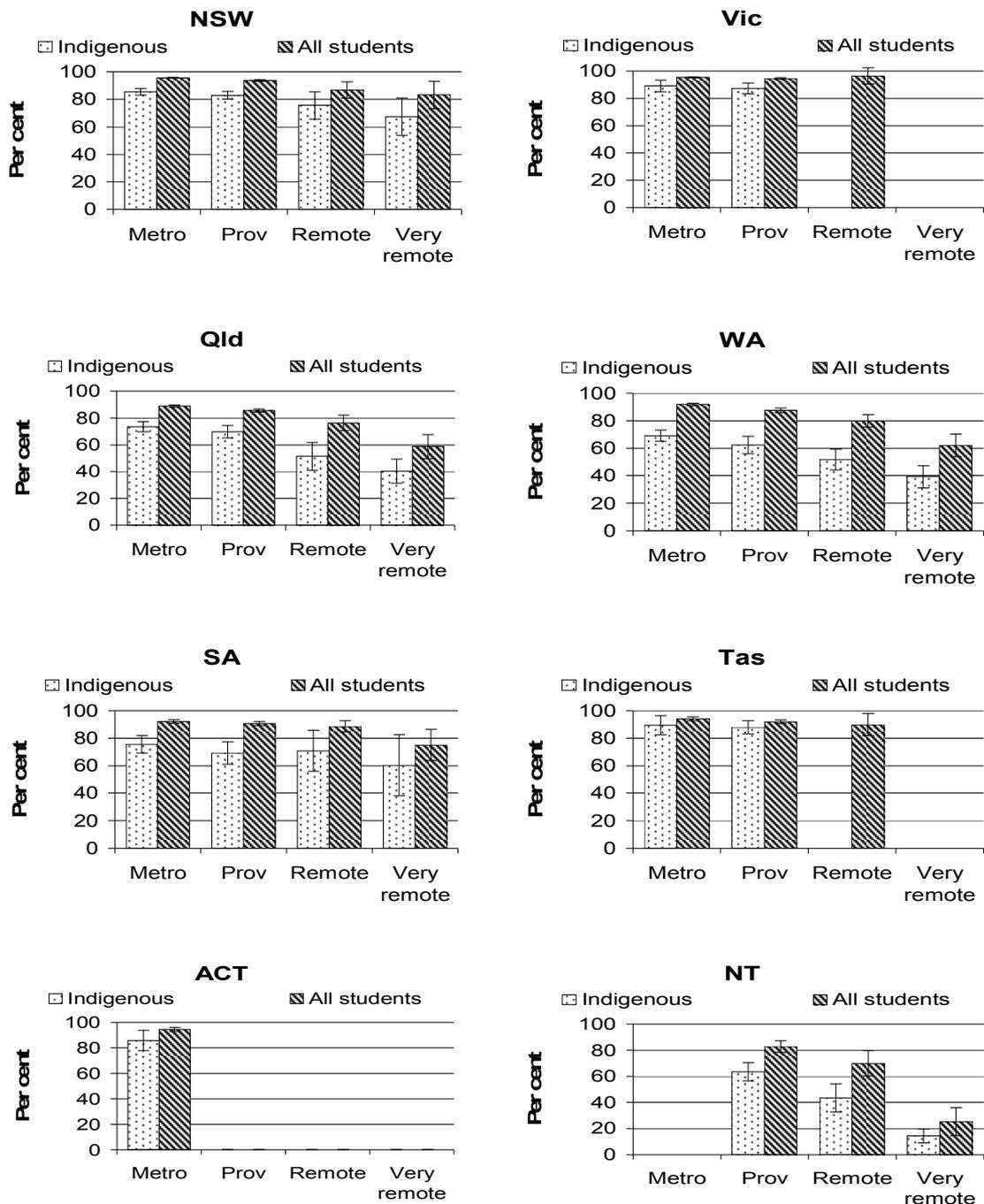
- 76.7–80.5 per cent for Indigenous year 3 students in metropolitan areas, no different to the proportion for provincial students (74.1–78.3 per cent). The proportion for remote students (48.4–59.4 per cent) was higher than for very remote students (25.5–35.5 per cent) (figure 4.27)
- 72.5–76.3 per cent for Indigenous year 5 students in metropolitan areas, no different to the proportion for provincial students (68.8–73.2 per cent). The proportion for remote students (42.6–53.0 per cent) was higher than for very remote students (17.5–25.9 per cent) (table 4A.33)
- 81.4–84.6 per cent for Indigenous year 7 students in metropolitan areas, no different to the proportion of provincial students (77.8–81.4 per cent). The proportion for remote students (48.9–64.3 per cent) was higher than for very remote students (23.2–32.8 per cent) (table 4A.33)
- 75.8–81.0 per cent for Indigenous year 9 students in metropolitan areas, no different to the proportion of provincial students (72.9–77.7 per cent). The proportion for remote students (47.7–67.1 per cent) was higher than for very remote students (22.1–35.9 per cent) (table 4A.33).

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State and Territory results are presented for year 3 reading literacy (by Indigenous status and geolocation) in figure 4.28 (results for years 5 and 7 and 9 reading literacy are in table 4A.33). Relatively large confidence intervals mean it is difficult to draw conclusions from these data. However, the general pattern in jurisdictions appears similar to the national results.

Data for exemptions, absent/withdrawn and participation by equity groups in reading testing in 2008 are provided in table 4A.34. Participation rates in reading testing for Indigenous students and all students are provided in table 4A.35. National data on achievement of the national minimum standard for reading by socio-economic status are provided in table 4A.36.

Figure 4.28 Proportion of year 3 students achieving the reading national minimum standard, by Indigenous status and geolocation, 2008<sup>a, b, c</sup>



<sup>a</sup> Error bars represent the 95 per cent confidence intervals associated with each point estimate. <sup>b</sup> Geolocation data are based on the MCEETYA Schools Geographic Location Classification and represent school location. <sup>c</sup> There are no very remote areas in Victoria. There are no provincial, remote or very remote areas in the ACT. There is no metropolitan zone in the NT.

Source: MCEETYA (2008) 2008 National Assessment Program — Literacy and Numeracy: Achievement in reading, writing, language conventions and numeracy; table 4A.33.

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Table 4A.64 includes data on achievement on the PISA reading literacy scale, by socio-economic status (national data only).

### *Writing performance*

‘Writing performance’ is an indicator of governments’ objective that all students should attain the skills of English literacy; such that every student should be able to read, write, spell and communicate at an appropriate level. It is an indicator of students’ achievement in a key learning area of school education (box 4.11).

#### **Box 4.11 Writing performance**

‘Writing performance’ is defined as the proportion of assessed years 3, 5, 7 and 9 students who achieve at or above the national minimum standard for a given year, reported by sex, Indigenous status, LBOTE, socioeconomic status and geolocation (section 4.2 identifies the profile of special needs groups in each State and Territory). The standard describes the nationally agreed minimum acceptable standard for writing performance at years 3, 5, 7 and 9.

A high or increasing proportion of students achieving the national minimum standard in writing is desirable.

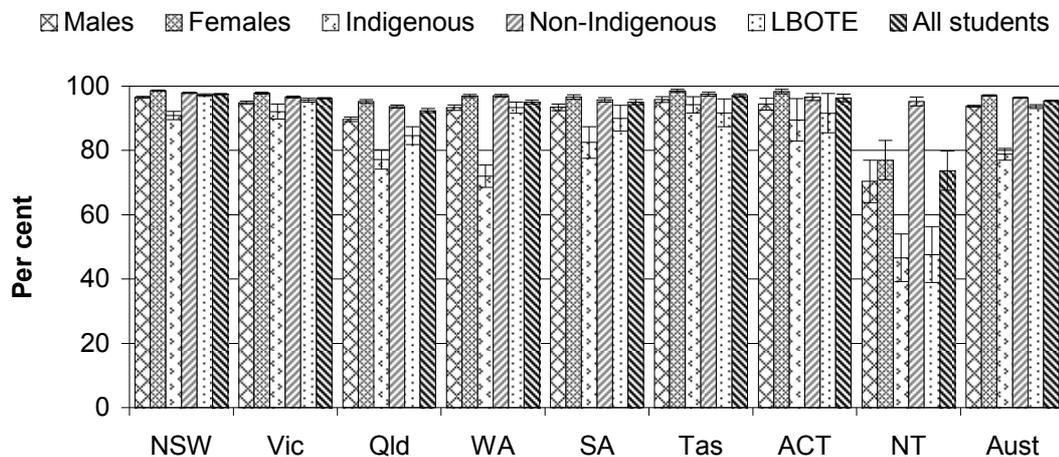
Up to and including 2007, student performance has been measured by annual State and Territory-based testing programs which were equated through a national process designed to allow comparable reporting against the national writing benchmark. Commencing in 2008, common national tests in literacy and numeracy were held for all students at years 3, 5, 7 and 9. These tests replace the State and Territory-based assessments and report national minimum standards, representing a break in the time series. This Report includes the outcomes of 2008 common national testing programs only. Results of State and Territory-based testing programs are available in the 2009 Report (and previous issues).

Data for this indicator are comparable.

Nationally, the proportion of assessed year 3 students who achieved the writing national minimum standard in 2008 was 95.2–95.6 per cent. The national proportion of students by equity group who achieved the year 3 writing national minimum standard in 2008 was:

- 96.9–97.3 per cent for female students, higher than the proportion for male students (93.4–94.0 per cent)
- 77.0–80.6 per cent for Indigenous students and 96.2–96.6 per cent for non-Indigenous students
- 93.0–94.2 per cent for LBOTE students (figure 4.29).

Figure 4.29 Proportion of year 3 students achieving the writing national minimum standard, by equity group, 2008<sup>a, b</sup>



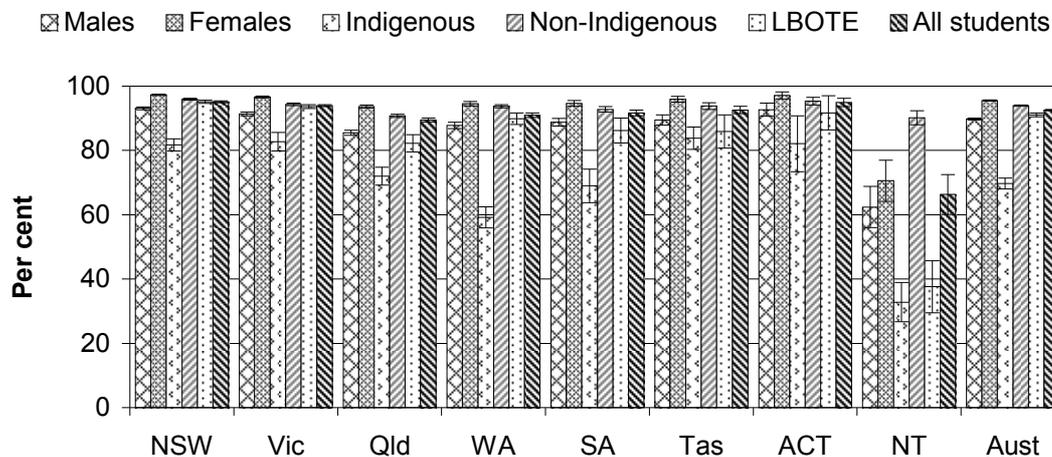
<sup>a</sup> Error bars represent the 95 per cent confidence interval associated with each point estimate. <sup>b</sup> For further information and caveats see table 4A.37.

Source: MCEETYA (2008) *2008 National Assessment Program — Literacy and Numeracy: Achievement in reading, writing, language conventions and numeracy*; table 4A.37

Nationally, the proportion of assessed year 5 students who achieved the writing national minimum standard in 2008 was 92.4–92.8 per cent. The national proportion of students by equity group who achieved the year 5 writing national minimum standard in 2008 was:

- 95.3–95.7 per cent for female students, higher than the proportion for male students (89.5–90.1 per cent)
- 68.0–71.4 per cent for Indigenous students and 93.7–94.1 per cent for non-Indigenous students
- 90.5–91.7 per cent for LBOTE students (figure 4.30).

**Figure 4.30 Proportion of year 5 students achieving the writing national minimum standard, by equity group, 2008<sup>a, b</sup>**



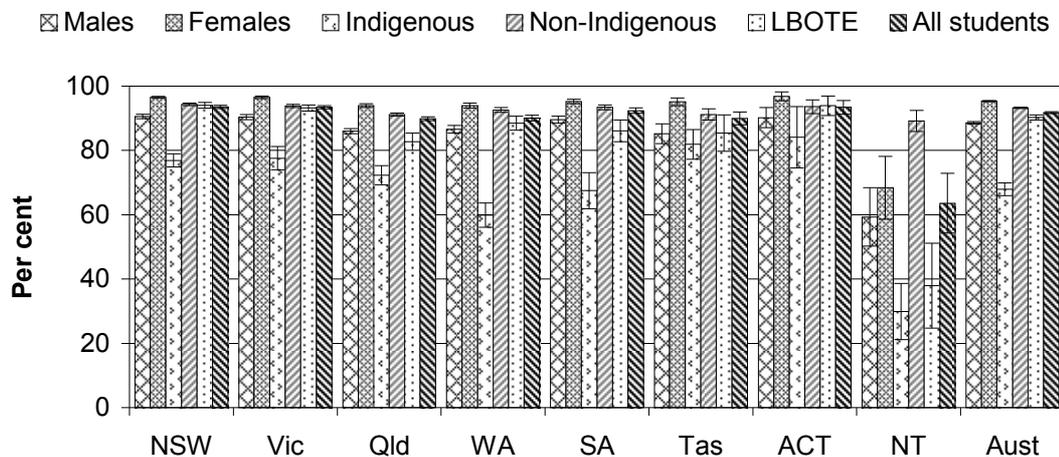
<sup>a</sup> Error bars represent the 95 per cent confidence interval associated with each point estimate. <sup>b</sup> For further information and caveats see tables 4A.38.

Source: MCEETYA (2008) *2008 National Assessment Program — Literacy and Numeracy: Achievement in reading, writing, language conventions and numeracy*; table 4A.38.

Nationally, the proportion of assessed year 7 students who achieved the writing national minimum standard in 2008 was 91.5–92.1 per cent. The national proportion of students by equity group who achieved the year 7 writing national minimum standard in 2008 was:

- 95.1–95.5 per cent for female students, higher than the proportion for male students (88.2–89.0 per cent)
- 65.9–69.9 per cent for Indigenous students and 93.0–93.4 per cent for non-Indigenous students
- 89.5–91.1 per cent for LBOTE students (figure 4.31).

Figure 4.31 Proportion of year 7 students achieving the writing national minimum standard, by equity group, 2008<sup>a, b</sup>



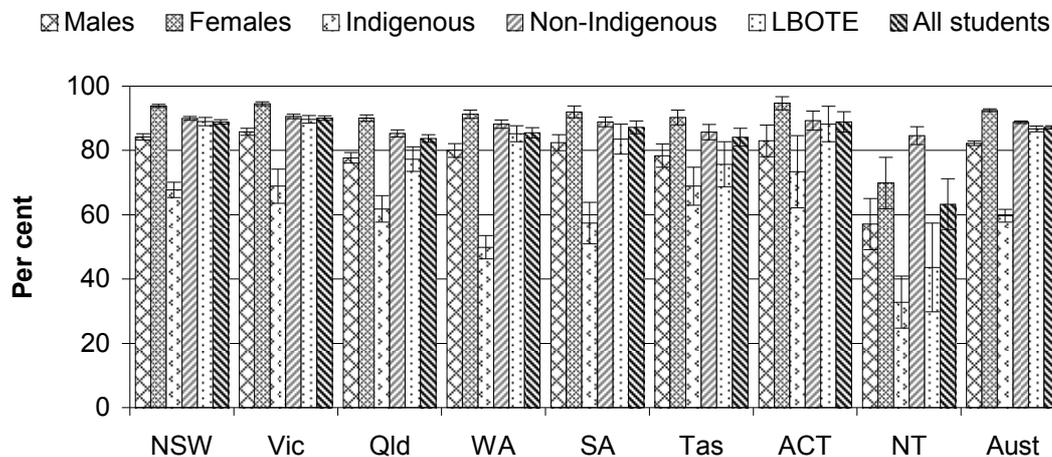
<sup>a</sup> Error bars represent the 95 per cent confidence interval associated with each point estimate. <sup>b</sup> For further information and caveats see tables 4A.39.

Source: MCEETYA (2008) *2008 National Assessment Program — Literacy and Numeracy: Achievement in reading, writing, language conventions and numeracy*; table 4A.39.

Nationally, the proportion of assessed year 9 students who achieved the writing national minimum standard in 2008 was 86.7–87.7 per cent. The national proportion of students by equity group who achieved the year 9 writing national minimum standard in 2008 was:

- 92.1–92.9 per cent for female students, higher than the proportion for male students (81.5–82.9 per cent)
- 57.7–61.7 per cent for Indigenous students and 88.4–89.2 per cent for non-Indigenous students
- 85.8–87.6 per cent for LBOTE students (figure 4.32).

**Figure 4.32 Proportion of year 9 students achieving the writing national minimum standard, by equity group, 2008<sup>a, b</sup>**



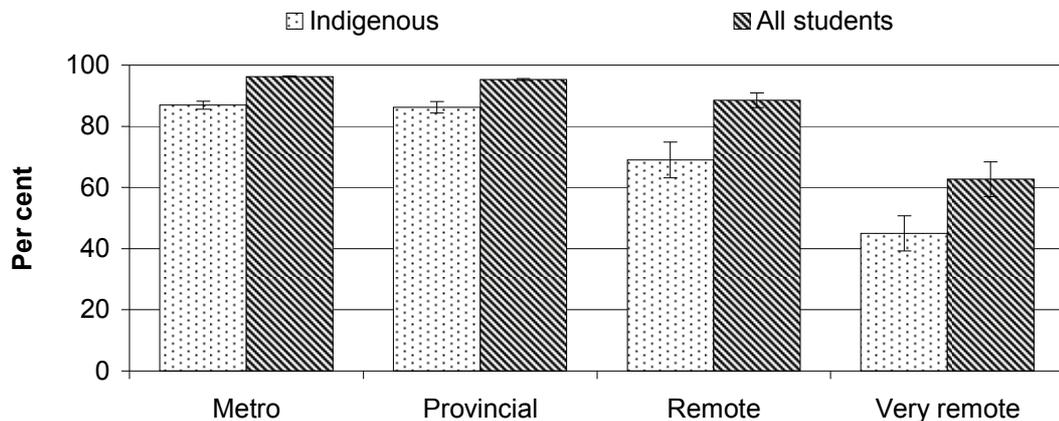
<sup>a</sup> Error bars represent the 95 per cent confidence interval associated with each point estimate. <sup>b</sup> For further information and caveats see table 4A.40.

Source: MCEETYA (2008) *2008 National Assessment Program — Literacy and Numeracy: Achievement in reading, writing, language conventions and numeracy*; table 4A.40.

Nationally, the proportion of assessed students who achieved the writing national minimum standard by geolocation in 2008 was:

- 96.0–96.4 per cent for all year 3 students in metropolitan areas, higher than the proportion for provincial students (95.0–95.6 per cent), remote students (86.1–90.9 per cent) and very remote students (57.0–68.4 per cent) (figure 4.33)
- 93.6–94.0 per cent for all year 5 students in metropolitan areas, higher than the proportion for provincial students (91.1–91.9 per cent), remote students (81.1–86.3 per cent) and very remote students (47.1–58.7 per cent) (table 4A.41)
- 93.0–93.6 per cent for all year 7 students in metropolitan areas, higher than the proportion for provincial students (89.9–90.9 per cent), remote students (77.5–84.5 per cent) and very remote students (41.6–54.6 per cent) (table 4A.41)
- 88.4–89.4 per cent for all year 9 students in metropolitan areas, higher than the proportion for provincial students (84.0–85.4 per cent), remote students (68.8–77.8 per cent) and very remote students (36.6–52.0 per cent) (table 4A.41).

Figure 4.33 **National proportion of year 3 students achieving the writing national minimum standard, by Indigenous status and geolocation, 2008<sup>a, b</sup>**



<sup>a</sup> Error bars represent the 95 per cent confidence interval associated with each point estimate. <sup>b</sup> Data for year 3 students are shown and may not be representative of students in years 5, 7 and 9 which are detailed in table 4A.41.

Source: MCEETYA (2008) *2008 National Assessment Program — Literacy and Numeracy: Achievement in reading, writing, language conventions and numeracy*, table 4A.41.

For all categories of remoteness across years 3, 5, 7 and 9, the writing outcomes for Indigenous students were lower than those for all students. As with all students, outcomes for Indigenous students declined as remoteness increased — furthermore, the gap in learning outcomes between Indigenous students and all students was greater in remote and very remote areas than in metropolitan and provincial areas.

Nationally, the proportion of assessed Indigenous students who achieved the writing national minimum standard by geolocation in 2008 was:

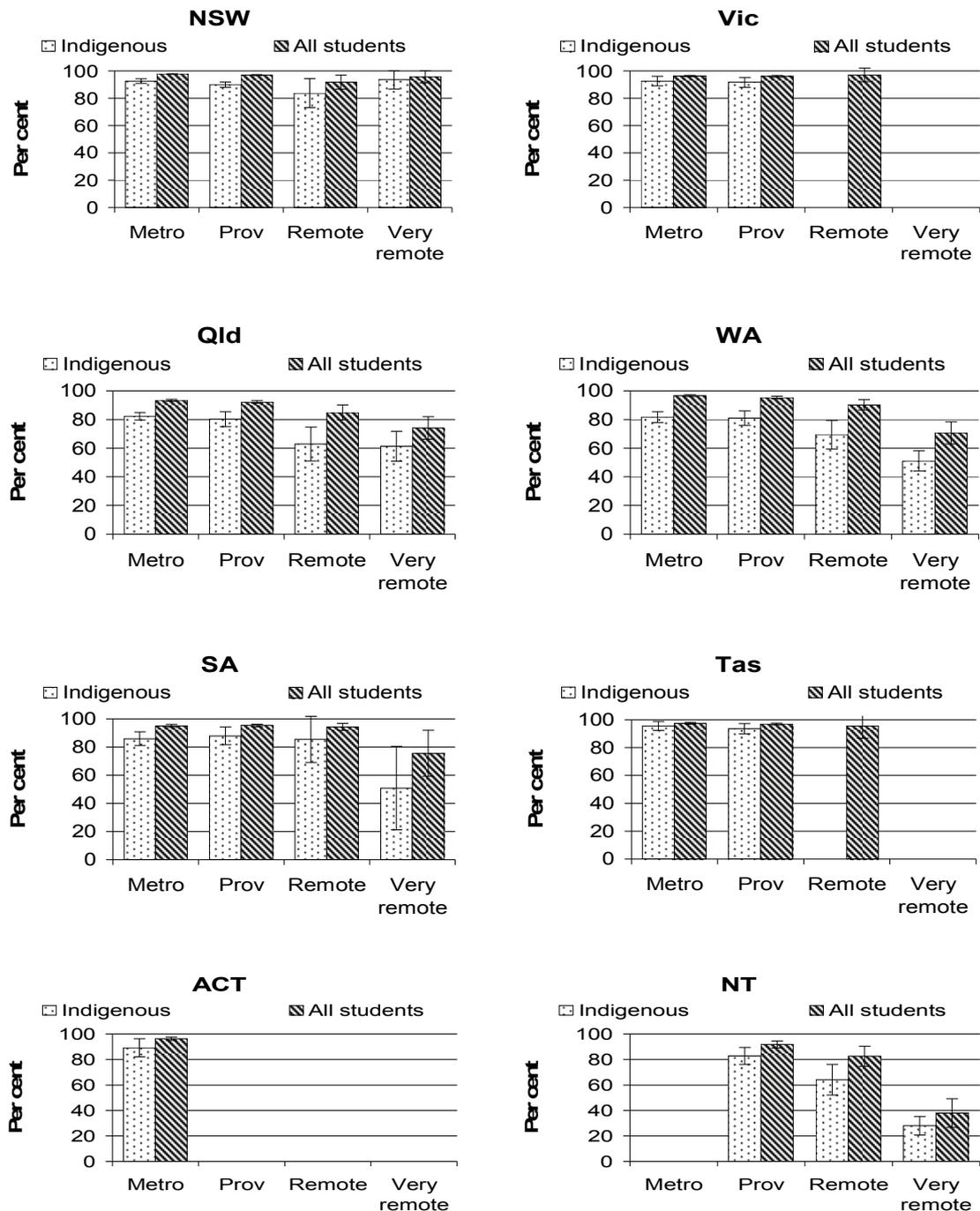
- 85.6–88.2 per cent for Indigenous year 3 students in metropolitan areas, no different to the proportion for provincial students (84.3–88.1 per cent). The proportion for remote students (63.2–74.8 per cent) was higher than for very remote students (39.3–50.7 per cent) (figure 4.33)
- 78.1–81.3 per cent for Indigenous year 5 students in metropolitan areas, higher than the proportion for provincial students (74.0–78.0 per cent), remote students (52.3–63.9 per cent) and very remote students (26.9–36.3 per cent) (table 4A.41)
- 77.0–80.4 per cent for Indigenous year 7 students in metropolitan areas, higher than the proportion of provincial students (71.9–75.7 per cent), remote students (46.2–61.8 per cent) and very remote students (22.6–34.4 per cent) (table 4A.41)

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- 65.2–70.6 per cent for Indigenous year 9 students in metropolitan areas, higher than the proportion of provincial students (60.3–64.9 per cent), remote students (36.4–52.4 per cent) and very remote students (17.8–29.8 per cent) (table 4A.41).

State and Territory results are presented for year 3 writing literacy in figure 4.34 (results for years 5, 7 and 9 writing literacy are in table 4A.41). Relatively large confidence intervals mean it is difficult to draw conclusions from these data. However, the general pattern in jurisdictions appears similar to the national results.

Data for exemptions, absent/withdrawn and participation by equity groups in writing testing in 2008 are provided in table 4A.42. Participation rates in writing testing for Indigenous students and all students are provided in table 4A.43. National data on achievement of the national minimum standard for writing by socio-economic status are provided in table 4A.44.

Figure 4.34 Proportion of year 3 students achieving the writing national minimum standard, by Indigenous status and geolocation, 2008<sup>a, b, c</sup>



<sup>a</sup> Error bars represent the 95 per cent confidence intervals associated with each point estimate. <sup>b</sup> Geolocation data are based on the MCEETYA Schools Geographic Location Classification and represent school location. <sup>c</sup> There are no very remote areas in Victoria. There are no provincial, remote or very remote areas in the ACT. There is no metropolitan zone in the NT.

Source: MCEETYA (2008) 2008 National Assessment Program — Literacy and Numeracy: Achievement in reading, writing, language conventions and numeracy; table 4A.41.

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### *Numeracy performance*

'Numeracy performance' (including mathematical literacy) is an indicator of governments' objective that all students should attain the skills of numeracy. It is an indicator of students' achievement in a key learning area of school education (box 4.12).

#### **Box 4.12 Numeracy performance**

'Numeracy performance' (or mathematical literacy) performance is defined by three measures:

- Percentage of students achieving at or above the national numeracy national minimum standard: The proportion of assessed years 3, 5, 7 and 9 students who achieve at or above the national minimum standard for a given year, reported by sex, Indigenous status, LBOTE, socioeconomic status and geolocation (section 4.2 identifies the profile of special needs groups in each State and Territory). The standard describes the nationally agreed minimum acceptable standard for numeracy performance at years 3, 5, 7 and 9.
  - Up to and including 2007, student performance has been measured by annual State and Territory-based testing programs which were equated through a national process designed to allow comparable reporting against the national numeracy benchmarks. Commencing in 2008, common national tests in literacy and numeracy were held for all students at years 3, 5, 7 and 9. These tests replace the former State and Territory-based assessments and report national minimum standards, representing a break in the time series. This Report includes the outcomes of 2008 common national testing programs only. Results of State and Territory-based testing programs are available in the 2009 Report (and previous issues)
- Percentage of students achieving at or above the proficient standard on the OECD PISA combined mathematical literacy scale in a triennial assessment: The proportion of assessed 15 year old students who achieve at or above the proficient standard (agreed by the MCEETYA to be level 3) on the OECD PISA combined mathematical literacy scale for a given year, reported by sex, Indigenous status, socioeconomic status and geolocation.
- Percentage of students achieving at or above the proficient standard on the TIMSS mathematical literacy scale in a quadrennial assessment: The proportion of assessed year 4 and year 8 students who achieve at or above the proficient standard on the TIMSS mathematical literacy scale for a given year. A national standard has yet to be developed for this measure.

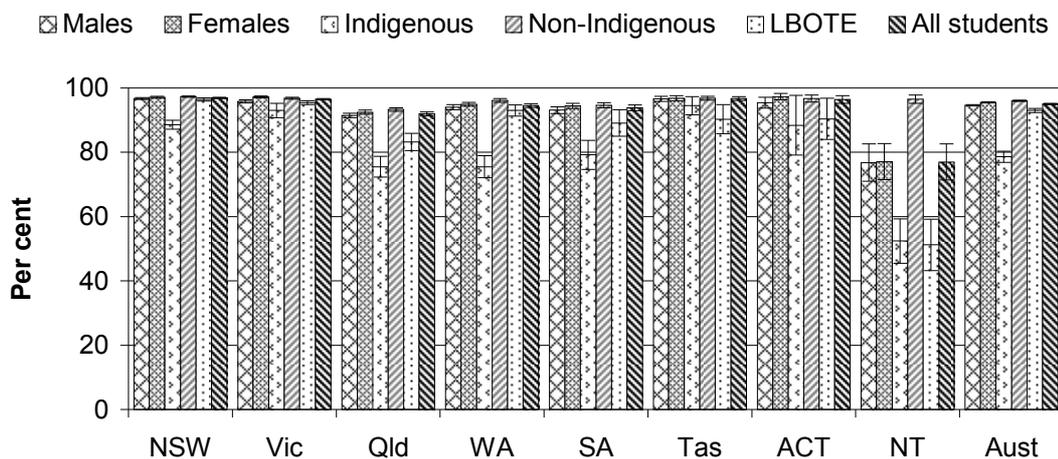
A high or increasing proportion of students achieving the national minimum standard or mathematical literacy proficient standard is desirable.

Data for this indicator are comparable.

Nationally, the proportion of assessed year 3 students who achieved the numeracy national minimum standard in 2008 was 94.8–95.2 per cent. The national proportion of students by equity group who achieved the year 3 numeracy national minimum standard in 2008 was:

- 95.3–95.7 per cent for female students, higher than the proportion for male students (94.4–94.8 per cent)
- 76.9–80.3 per cent for Indigenous students and 95.8–96.2 per cent for non-Indigenous students
- 92.4–93.6 per cent for LBOTE students (figure 4.35).

**Figure 4.35 Proportion of year 3 students achieving the numeracy national minimum standard, by equity group, 2008<sup>a, b</sup>**



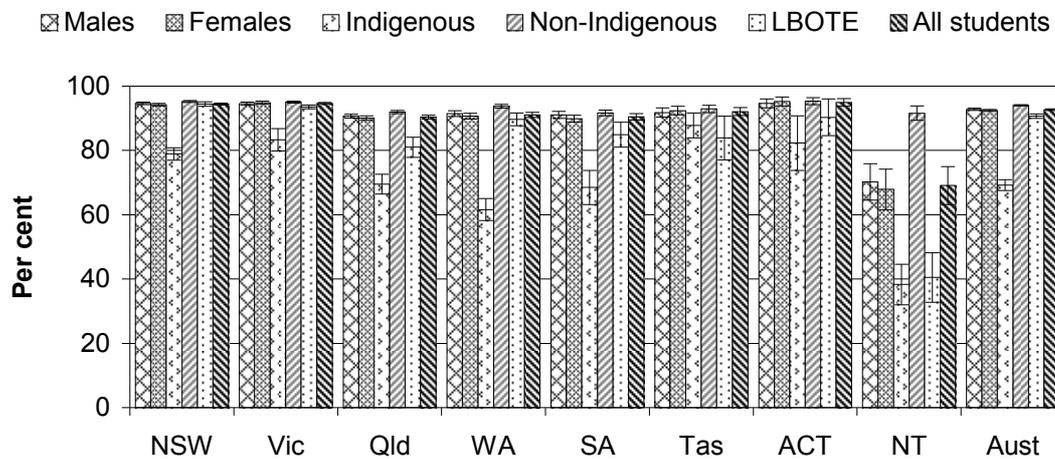
<sup>a</sup> Error bars represent the 95 per cent confidence interval associated with each point estimate. <sup>b</sup> For further information and caveats see table 4A.45.

Source: MCEETYA (2008) *2008 National Assessment Program — Literacy and Numeracy: Achievement in reading, writing, language conventions and numeracy*; table 4A.45.

Nationally, the proportion of assessed year 5 students who achieved the numeracy national minimum standard in 2008 was 92.5–92.9 per cent. The national proportion of students by equity group who achieved the year 5 numeracy national minimum standard in 2008 was:

- 92.2–92.8 per cent for female students, no different to the proportion for male students (92.5–93.1 per cent)
- 67.5–70.9 per cent for Indigenous students and 93.8–94.2 per cent for non-Indigenous students
- 90.0–91.4 per cent for LBOTE students (figure 4.36).

**Figure 4.36 Proportion of year 5 students achieving the numeracy national minimum standard, by equity group, 2008<sup>a, b</sup>**



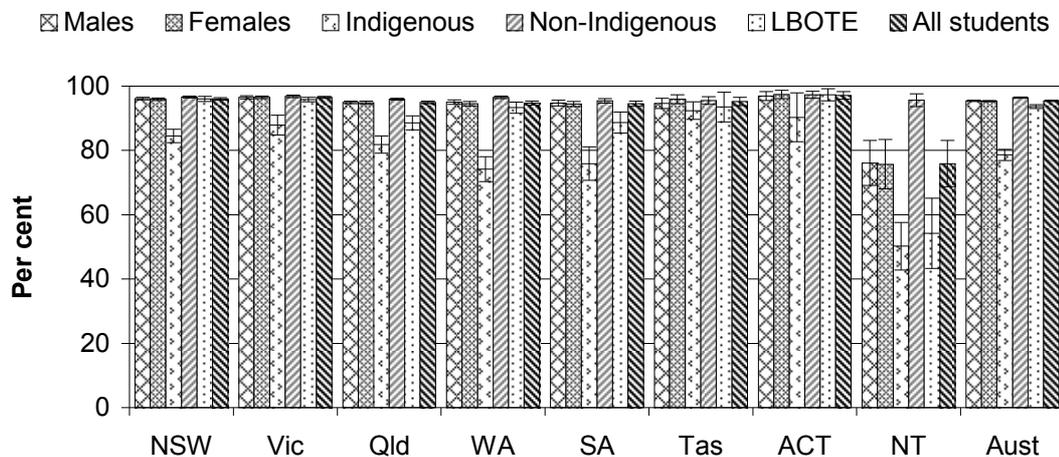
<sup>a</sup> Error bars represent the 95 per cent confidence interval associated with each point estimate. <sup>b</sup> For further information and caveats see table 4A.46.

Source: MCEETYA (2008) *2008 National Assessment Program — Literacy and Numeracy: Achievement in reading, writing, language conventions and numeracy*; table 4A.46.

Nationally, the proportion of assessed year 7 students who achieved the numeracy national minimum standard in 2008 was 95.2–95.6 per cent. The proportion of students by equity group who achieved the year 7 numeracy national minimum standard in 2008 was:

- 95.1–95.5 per cent for female students, no different to the proportion for male students (95.2–95.6 per cent)
- 76.9–80.3 per cent for Indigenous students and 96.2–96.6 per cent for non-Indigenous students
- 93.0–94.2 per cent for LBOTE students (figure 4.37).

Figure 4.37 Proportion of year 7 students achieving the numeracy national minimum standard, by equity group, 2008<sup>a, b</sup>



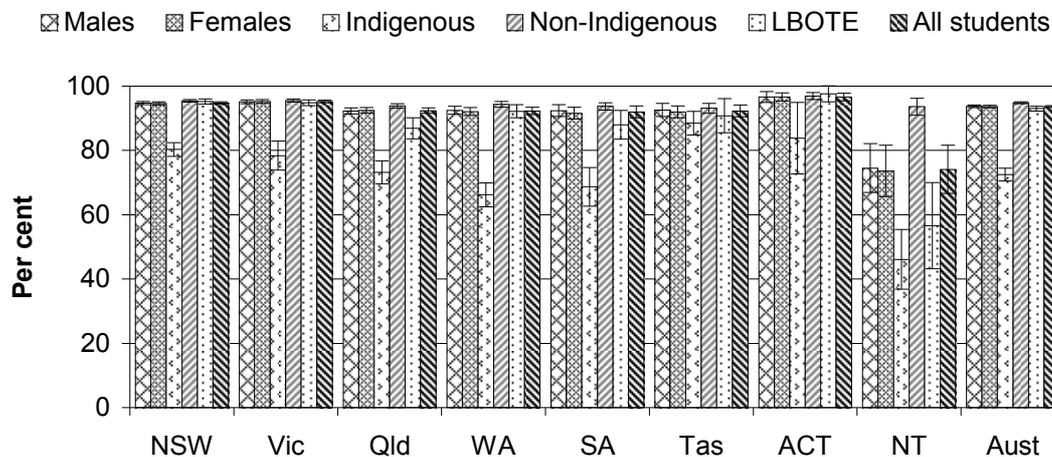
<sup>a</sup> Error bars represent the 95 per cent confidence interval associated with each point estimate. <sup>b</sup> For further information and caveats see table 4A.47.

Source: MCEETYA (2008) *2008 National Assessment Program — Literacy and Numeracy: Achievement in reading, writing, language conventions and numeracy*; table 4A.47.

Nationally, the proportion of assessed year 9 students who achieved the numeracy national minimum standard in 2008 was 93.3–93.9 per cent. The proportion of students by equity group who achieved the year 9 numeracy national minimum standard in 2008 was:

- 93.2–94.0 per cent for female students, no different to the proportion for male students (93.3–94.1 per cent)
- 70.5–74.5 per cent for Indigenous students and 94.5–95.1 per cent for non-Indigenous students
- 92.3–93.7 per cent for LBOTE students (figure 4.38).

**Figure 4.38 Proportion of year 9 students achieving the numeracy national minimum standard, by equity group, 2008<sup>a, b</sup>**



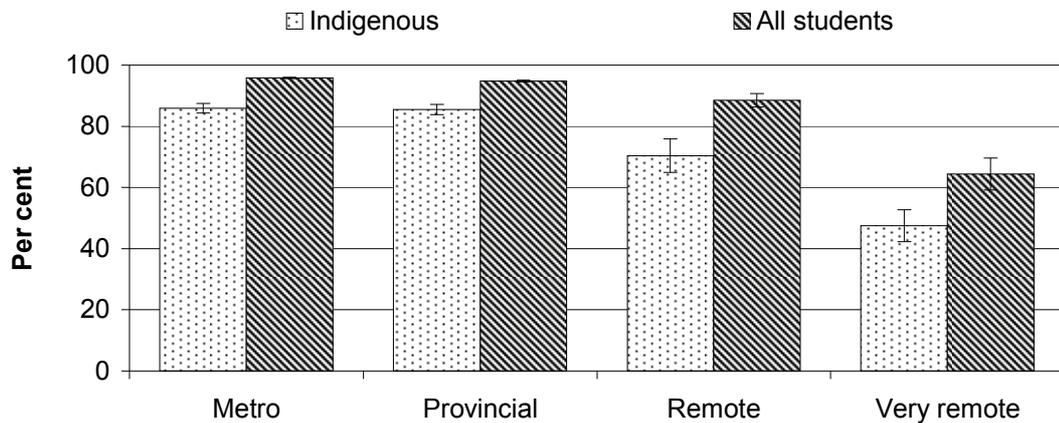
<sup>a</sup> Error bars represent the 95 per cent confidence interval associated with each point estimate. <sup>b</sup> For further information and caveats see table 4A.48.

Source: MCEETYA (2008) *2008 National Assessment Program — Literacy and Numeracy: Achievement in reading, writing, language conventions and numeracy*; table 4A.48.

Nationally, the proportion of assessed students who achieved the numeracy national minimum standard by geolocation in 2008 was:

- 95.6–96.0 per cent for all year 3 students in metropolitan areas, higher than the proportion for provincial students (94.5–95.1 per cent), remote students (86.3–90.7 per cent) and very remote students (59.2–69.6 per cent) (figure 4.39)
- 93.5–94.1 per cent for all year 5 students in metropolitan areas, higher than the proportion for provincial students (91.5–92.3 per cent), remote students (80.8–86.0 per cent) and very remote students (48.7–59.9 per cent) (table 4A.49)
- 96.0–96.4 per cent for all year 7 students in metropolitan areas, higher than the proportion for provincial students (94.8–95.4 per cent), remote students (85.7–91.1 per cent) and very remote students (56.5–67.9 per cent) (table 4A.49)
- 94.0–94.8 per cent for all year 9 students in metropolitan areas, higher than the proportion for provincial students (92.4–93.4 per cent), remote students (80.4–87.8 per cent) and very remote students (49.8–65.8 per cent) (table 4A.49).

Figure 4.39 National proportion of year 3 students achieving the numeracy national minimum standard, by Indigenous status and geolocation, 2008<sup>a, b</sup>



<sup>a</sup> Error bars represent the 95 per cent confidence interval associated with each point estimate. <sup>b</sup> Data for year 3 students are shown and may not be representative of students in years 5, 7 and 9 which are detailed in table 4A.49.

Source: MCEETYA (2008) *2008 National Assessment Program — Literacy and Numeracy: Achievement in reading, writing, language conventions and numeracy*, table 4A.49.

For all categories of remoteness across years 3, 5, 7 and 9, the numeracy outcomes for Indigenous students were lower than those for all students. As with all students, outcomes for Indigenous students declined as remoteness increased — furthermore the gap in learning outcomes between Indigenous students and all students was greater in remote and very remote areas than in metropolitan and provincial areas.

Nationally, the proportion of assessed Indigenous students who achieved the numeracy national minimum standard in 2008 was:

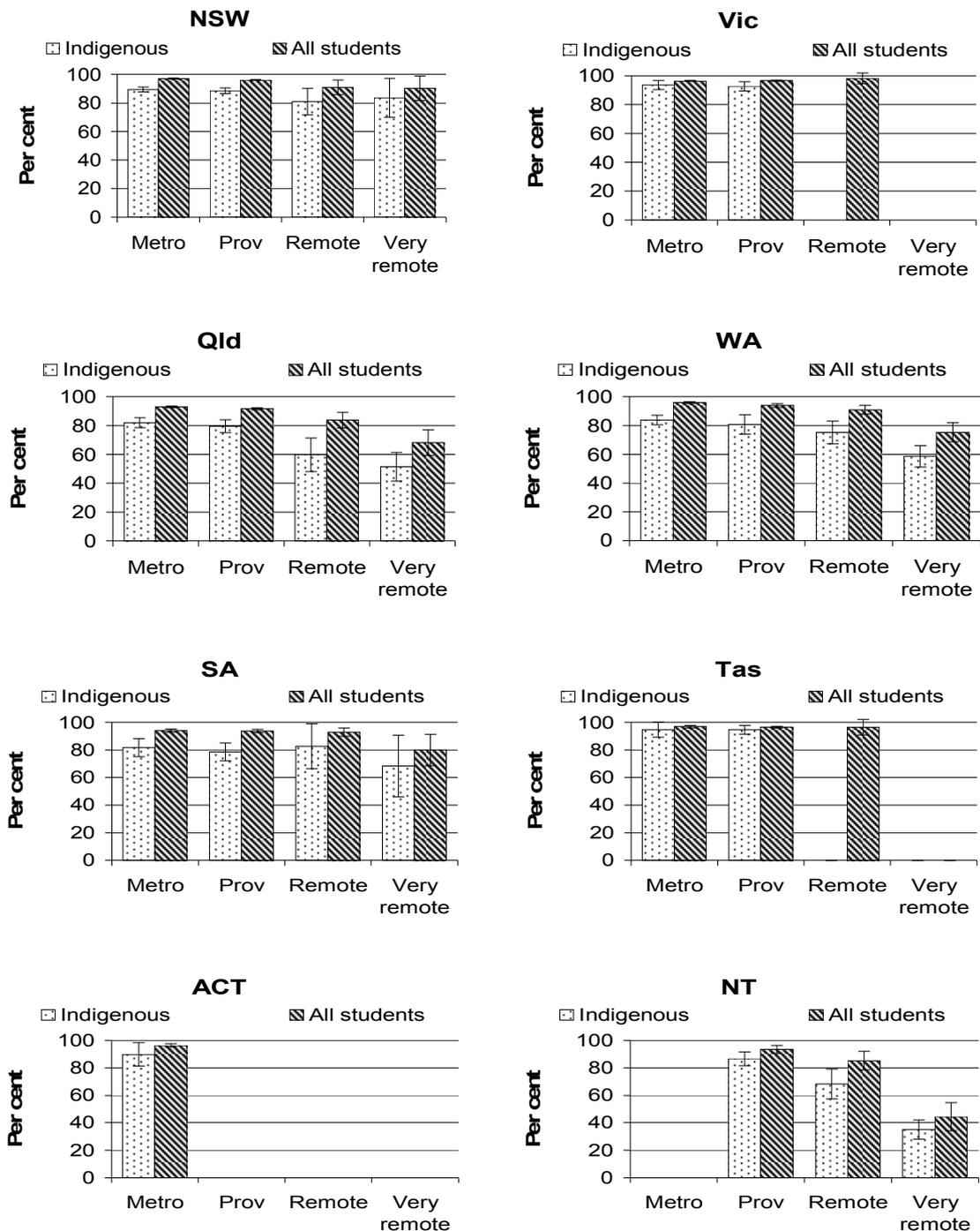
- 84.3–87.5 per cent for Indigenous year 3 students in metropolitan areas, no different to the proportion for provincial students (83.8–87.2 per cent). The proportion for remote students (64.9–75.9 per cent) was higher than for very remote students (42.3–52.7 per cent) (figure 4.39)
- 76.8–80.2 per cent for Indigenous year 5 students in metropolitan areas, no different to the proportion for provincial students (73.6–77.8 per cent). The proportion for remote students (50.5–62.1 per cent) was higher than for very remote students (28.6–37.2 per cent) (table 4A.49)
- 85.6–88.4 per cent for Indigenous year 7 students in metropolitan areas, higher than the proportion of provincial students (82.3–85.5 per cent), remote students (61.1–74.5 per cent) and very remote students (40.8–52.0 per cent) (table 4A.49)

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- 76.4–81.4 per cent for Indigenous year 9 students in metropolitan areas, no different to the proportion of provincial students (74.0–78.4 per cent). The proportion for remote students (52.3–68.5 per cent) was higher than for very remote students (31.0–45.4 per cent) (table 4A.49).

State and Territory results are presented for year 3 numeracy outcomes in figure 4.40 (results for years 5, 7 and 9 numeracy outcomes are in table 4A.49). Relatively large confidence intervals mean it is difficult to draw conclusions from these data. However, the general pattern in jurisdictions appears similar to the national results.

Data for exemptions, absent/withdrawn and participation by equity groups in numeracy testing in 2008 are provided in table 4A.50. Participation rates in numeracy testing for Indigenous students and all students are provided in table 4A.51. National data on achievement of the national minimum standard for numeracy by socio-economic status are provided in table 4A.52.

Figure 4.40 Proportion of year 3 students achieving the numeracy national minimum standard, by Indigenous status and geolocation, 2008<sup>a, b, c</sup>



<sup>a</sup> Error bars represent the 95 per cent confidence intervals associated with each point estimate. <sup>b</sup> Geolocation data are based on the MCEETYA Schools Geographic Location Classification and represent school location. <sup>c</sup> There are no very remote areas in Victoria. There are no provincial, remote or very remote areas in the ACT. There is no metropolitan zone in the NT.

Source: MCEETYA (2008) 2008 National Assessment Program — Literacy and Numeracy: Achievement in reading, writing, language conventions and numeracy; table 4A.49.

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Table 4A.67 includes data on achievement on the PISA mathematics literacy scale, by socio-economic status (national data only).

### *Science literacy performance*

‘Science literacy performance’ is an indicator of governments’ objective that all students should attain high standards of knowledge, skill and understanding in agreed key learning areas (box 4.13).

#### **Box 4.13 Science literacy performance**

‘Science literacy performance’ is defined by three measures:

- Percentage of students achieving at or above the proficient standard on the scientific literacy scale: This is the proportion of assessed year 6 students who achieve at or above the proficient standard for scientific literacy, reported by sex, Indigenous status, and geolocation for 2003 and 2006 (and for LBOTE and socioeconomic status for 2003). The proficient standard for performance in scientific literacy is set at proficiency level 3.2 (of levels 1 to 4 or above) for year 6 (MCEETYA 2004, 2008b). This is a challenging but reasonable level of performance where to be regarded as having reached the proficient standard, students need to demonstrate more than the minimal or elementary skills expected of a student at that year level (MCEETYA Performance Measurement and Reporting Taskforce [PMRT] unpublished).
- Percentage of students achieving at or above the proficient standard on the OECD PISA combined scientific literacy scale in a triennial international assessment: This is the proportion of assessed 15 year old students who achieve at or above the proficient standard on the OECD PISA combined scientific literacy scale for a given year, reported by sex, Indigenous status, socioeconomic status and geolocation. A national standard of level 3 has been agreed for this measure.
- Percentage of students achieving at or above the proficient standard on the TIMSS science literacy scale in a quadrennial assessment: This is the proportion of assessed year 4 and year 8 students who achieve at or above the proficient standard on the TIMSS science literacy scale for a given year. A national standard has yet to be developed for this measure.

A high or increasing proportion of students achieving at or above the scientific literacy national minimum standard/proficient standard is desirable.

Data for this indicator are comparable.

The National Assessment Program — Science Literacy, Year 6 assessment measures the scientific literacy of a sample of students and is conducted triennially. It was first conducted in 2003, and for a second time in 2006. Results from the 2003 national science literacy sample assessment were discussed in detail in the 2006

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Report (SCRGSP 2006, pages 3.59–62), with available rescaled data (based on the 2006 sample) presented in tables 4A.53–55. Results from the 2006 national science literacy sample assessment are reported below.

Approximately 5 per cent of the total Australian 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 2006, 12 911 students from 621 government and non-government schools participated in the national science literacy assessment (MCEETYA 2008b).

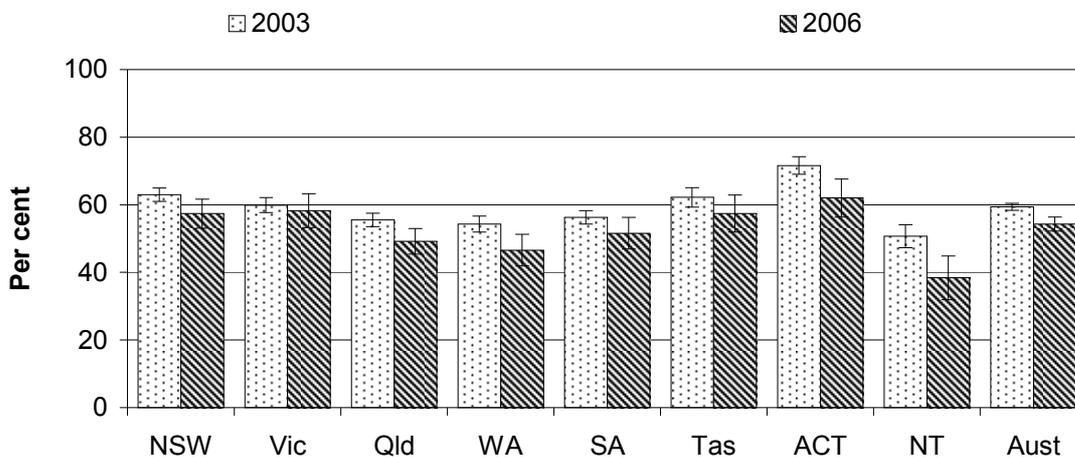
Year 6 scientific literacy 2006 results are reported as the proportion of Australian students from the sampled students (year 6 enrolled in participating schools) who achieved at the proficient standard or above. Nationally, 52.2–56.4 per cent of participating year 6 students achieved at the proficient standard or above in scientific literacy (figure 4.41) (down from 58.4–60.4 per cent in 2003). The national proportion of students by equity group who achieved at the proficient standard or above in scientific literacy was:

- 51.4–56.0 per cent for female students, no different than the proportion for male students (52.4–57.4 per cent)
- 15.5–35.5 per cent for Indigenous students (table 4A.55).

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

- 52.1–58.5 per cent for metropolitan zone capital city students, no different to major urban statistical districts (51.1–60.9 per cent), provincial city statistical districts (45.6–57.6 per cent) or inner and outer provincial areas (50.0–58.6 per cent)
- 26.3–44.7 per cent for remote and very remote zones (table 4A.54).

**Figure 4.41 Proportion of year 6 students achieving at the proficient standard or above, scientific literacy<sup>a, b, c</sup>**



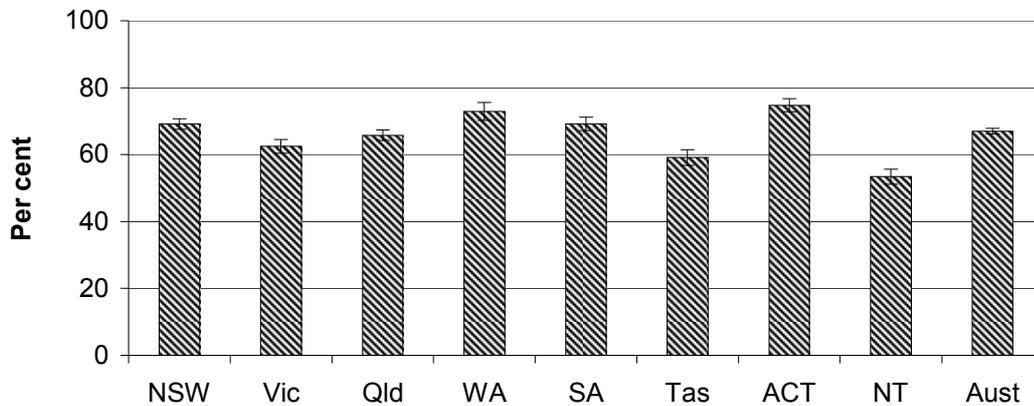
<sup>a</sup> Error bars represent the 95 per cent confidence intervals associated with each point estimate. <sup>b</sup> Minimum standards like the national minimum standards in literacy and numeracy have not been set for scientific literacy. The standard for scientific literacy is set at proficiency 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. <sup>c</sup> Data for 2003 have been rescaled to 2006, and are directly comparable with 2006 data.

Source: MCEETYA (2008) *National Assessment Program — Science Literacy Year 6 Report, 2006*; table 4A.53.

Scientific literacy was a domain tested in the PISA 2006 survey. In PISA 2006 the proportion of 15 year old students who achieved at level 3 or above in scientific literacy was:

- 65.3–68.7 per cent for all Australian students (figure 4.42)
- 64.1–68.9 per cent for male students, no different to 65.5–69.5 per cent for female students
- 28.7–39.9 per cent for Indigenous students, compared to 66.2–69.8 per cent for non-Indigenous students
- 34.9–60.7 per cent for geographically remote students
- 48.5–53.1 per cent for students from low socioeconomic status families (table 4A.71).

Figure 4.42 Proportion of 15 year old students achieving level 3 or above, overall scientific literacy scale, 2006<sup>a, b</sup>



<sup>a</sup> Error bars represent the 95 per cent confidence intervals associated with each point estimate. <sup>b</sup> The PISA overall scientific literacy scale has six defined proficiency levels, from level 6 (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. 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: ACER (unpublished); table 4A.70.

Table 4A.72 includes data on achievement on the PISA scientific literacy scale, by socio-economic status (national data only).

### *Civics and citizenship performance*

Civics and citizenship performance is an indicator of governments' objective that all students be active and informed citizens with an understanding and appreciation of Australia's system of government and civic life (box 4.14).

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#### **Box 4.14 Civics and citizenship performance**

Civics and citizenship performance is defined as the proportion of sampled year 6 and year 10 students achieving at or above the proficient standard in civic knowledge and understanding, reported by sex, Indigenous status, LBOTE status and geolocation (national data only for subgroups).

The proficient standard for civics and citizenship performance is set at proficiency level 2 for year 6, and at level 3 for year 10, (of levels 1 to 5). Proficiency standards represent points on the proficiency scale that represent a 'challenging but reasonable' expectation for typical Year 6 and 10 students to have reached by the end of each of those years of study. Thus the students need to demonstrate more than minimal or elementary skills to be regarded as having reached the standard appropriate to their year level. A proficient standard is not the same as a minimum benchmark standard because the latter refers to the basic level needed to function at that year level whereas the former refers to what is expected of a student at that year level (MCEETYA 2009). The two Year 6 and Year 10 Civics and Citizenship Proficient Standards were set in 2004. 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 applicable proficient standard in civics and citizenship performance is desirable.

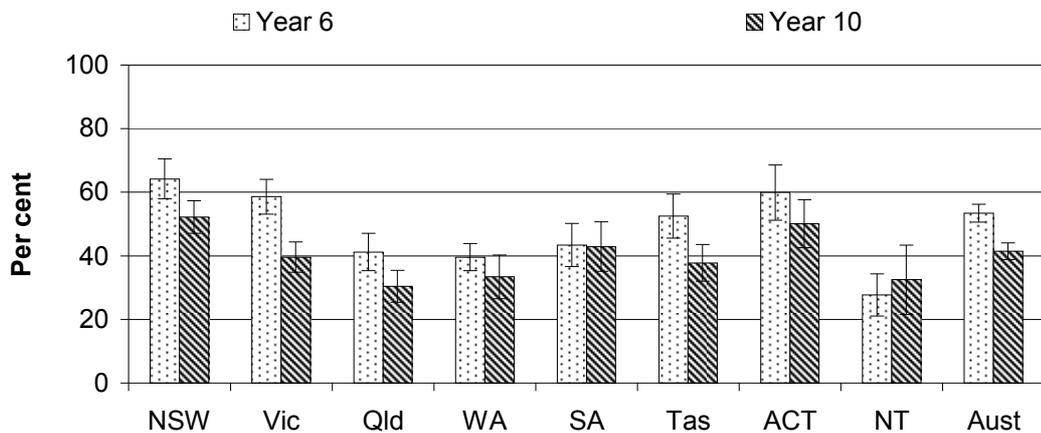
This indicator is affected by socioeconomic circumstances, age, length of time spent in schooling, and LBOTE and Indigenous status.

Data for this indicator are comparable.

The National Years 6 and 10 Civics and Citizenship Assessment measures civics and citizenship performance and was conducted for the first time in 2004, and is conducted triennially. The 2007 sample was drawn from all states and territories and both government and non government schools participated. In 2007, 7059 year 6 students from 349 government and non-government schools and 5506 year 10 students from 269 government and non-government schools participated in the national civics and citizenship assessment (MCEETYA 2009).

Nationally, the proportion of participating students who achieved at the proficient standard or above in civics and citizenship performance in 2007 was 50.6–56.2 per cent for year 6 students and 38.9–44.1 per cent for year 10 students (figure 4.43).

Figure 4.43 **Proportion of year 6 and 10 students achieving at the proficient standard or above, civics and citizenship performance, 2007<sup>a, b</sup>**



<sup>a</sup> Error bars represent the 95 per cent confidence intervals associated with each point estimate. <sup>b</sup> National minimum standards like the benchmarks in literacy and numeracy have not been set for civics and citizenship performance. The standard for civics and citizenship performance is set at proficiency level 2 for year 6 and level 3 for year 10 (of levels 1 to 5 or above) a challenging level of performance, with students needing to demonstrate more than minimal or elementary skills expected at that year level to be regarded as reaching it. Data represent the proportion of students at or above the proficient standard.

Source: MCEETYA (2009): *National Assessment Program Civics and Citizenship Years 6 and 10 Report 2007*; table 4A.56.

The national proportion of year 6 students by equity group who achieved at the proficient standard or above in civics and citizenship performance in 2007 was:

- 53.8–60.6 per cent for female students, higher than the proportion for male students (46.6–53.2 per cent)
- 12.4–40.0 per cent for Indigenous students, lower than the proportion for non-Indigenous students (50.6–56.8 per cent)
- 41.1–56.7 per cent for LBOTE students (table 4A.58).

The national proportion of year 10 students by equity group who achieved at the proficient standard or above in civics and citizenship performance in 2007 was:

- 41.7–48.5 per cent for female students, higher than the proportion for male students (34.2–41.6 per cent)
- 10.4–26.6 per cent for Indigenous students, lower than the proportion for non-Indigenous students (39.7–44.9 per cent)
- 33.8–45.0 per cent for LBOTE students (table 4A.58).

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The national proportion of year 6 students by geolocation who achieved at the proficient standard or above in civics and citizenship performance in 2007 was:

- 53.3–59.9 per cent for metropolitan students
- 42.0–53.8 per cent for provincial students
- 16.7–39.9 per cent for remote students (table 4A.57).

The national proportion of year 10 students by geolocation who achieved at the proficient standard or above in civics and citizenship performance in 2007 was:

- 40.1–46.5 per cent for metropolitan students
- 29.9–44.1 per cent for provincial students
- 11.4–35.6 per cent for remote students (table 4A.57).

Civics and citizenship performance by socio-economic status (parental occupation and parental educational attainment) are reported in MCEETYA (2009).

### *Other outcomes*

#### *Vocational education and training (VET) in schools attainment*

‘VET in schools attainment’ is an indicator of governments’ objective to provide vocational education and training in schools to assist all young people to secure their own futures by enhancing their transition to a broad range of post-school options and pathways. It is an indicator of students’ achievement of VET competency as part of their senior secondary schooling (box 4.15).

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#### **Box 4.15 VET in schools attainment**

'VET in schools attainment' (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.

Holding other factors constant, a higher or increasing VET in schools attainment rate suggests greater access to, and/or better preparation for, a range of post-school pathways.

Care needs to be taken in interpreting this indicator as it may be influenced by a number of factors which differ across states and territories, such as:

- definition of VET in schools
- senior secondary certificate requirements
- access to VET in schools prior to year 11
- number of VET in schools options and pathways available to students, particularly those in rural and remote areas.

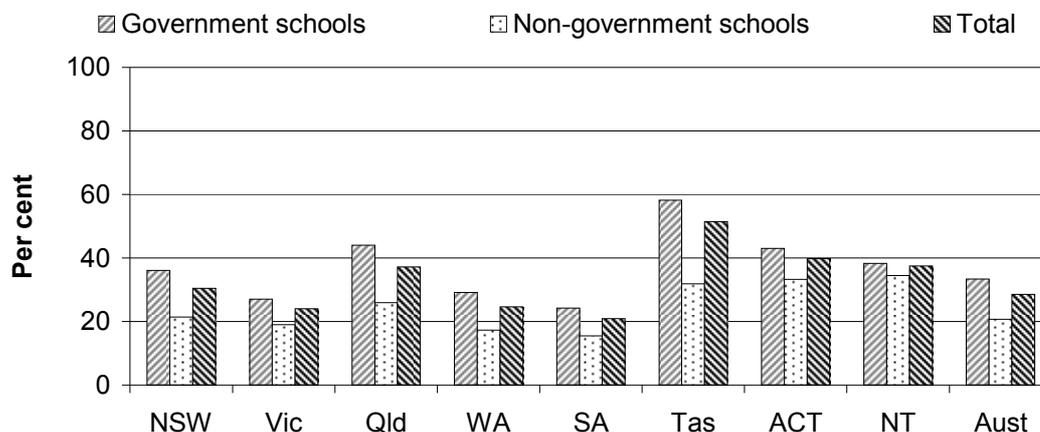
A new arrangement for the national reporting of VET in Schools statistics was implemented for 2005 data. Due to this break in series, data for 2005 and onwards should not be compared with data from other arrangements in previous years. Data on 2006 and 2007 VET in Schools activity should also not be compared with 2005 VET in Schools activity because of data quality issues with 2005 data. The 2006 and 2007 VET in Schools statistics are also subject to some data quality issues. These issues include differences in definition and compilation practices used by states and territories to populate some fields, resulting in anomalies between states and territories. For example, the number of school students undertaking a senior secondary certificate is not comparable across states and territories due to different definitions of a senior secondary certificate.

Data for this indicator are not directly comparable.

From 2005, the MCEETYA agreed that the AVETMISS is the standard for reporting VET in Schools activity in Australia. The MCEETYA further agreed that these data would be collected by the senior secondary assessment authority in each State and Territory and reported through State Training Authorities to the national VET database compiled by the NCVET.

In 2007, while 33.4 per cent of students undertaking a senior secondary school certificate were enrolled in at least one unit of competency/module (table 4A.93), only 28.6 per cent of students undertaking a senior secondary school certificate successfully completed at least one unit of competency/module of VET in schools (figure 4.44). These proportions varied across jurisdictions.

**Figure 4.44 Proportion of school students enrolled in a senior secondary school certificate who successfully completed at least one VET unit of competency/module, 2007<sup>a, b</sup>**



<sup>a</sup> Total includes other providers such as TAFE, community education, Australian Technical Colleges and students with more than one school type. Due to small numbers these are not presented separately. <sup>b</sup> The 2007 VET in Schools statistics are subject to some data quality issues and should be interpreted with caution. These issues include that secondary data sources used are not sufficiently reliable or comparable to the AVETMISS-compliant data and some data are not captured in enrolment processes.

Source: NCVET (2009) *VET in Schools 2007*; MCEETYA (unpublished) *VET In Schools* collection; table 4A.94.

Data for 2006 are also included in this Report for the first time (table 4A.94).

### Completion

‘Completion’ is an indicator of governments’ objectives that all students have access to high quality education and training to year 12 or equivalent, that provides clear and recognised pathways to further education, training and employment (box 4.16).

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### Box 4.16 Completion

'Completion' (completion rate) is defined by two measures

- the number of students who meet the requirements of a year 12 certificate or equivalent expressed as a percentage of the estimated potential year 12 population. The estimated potential year 12 population is an estimate of a single year age group which could have attended year 12 that year, calculated as the estimated resident population aged 15–19 divided by five. The completion rate is reported by socioeconomic status, geolocation and sex.
  - The criteria for obtaining a year 12 or equivalent certificate vary across jurisdictions. The aggregation of all postcode locations into three socioeconomic status categories — high, medium and low deciles — 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.
  - Data for this measure are not directly comparable.
- the number of people aged 17–19 years who have completed year 10 or above, divided by the total population aged 17–19 years. Data are reported for all students, Indigenous students and non-Indigenous students.
  - Data for this measure are comparable.

Holding other factors constant, a higher or increasing completion rate suggests an improvement in educational outcomes.

#### *Year 12 completion rate*

Completion rates are primarily used as indicators of trends and are used, in part, because information on participation and retention rates is generally not available by socioeconomic background or geographic location. 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 or equivalent 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

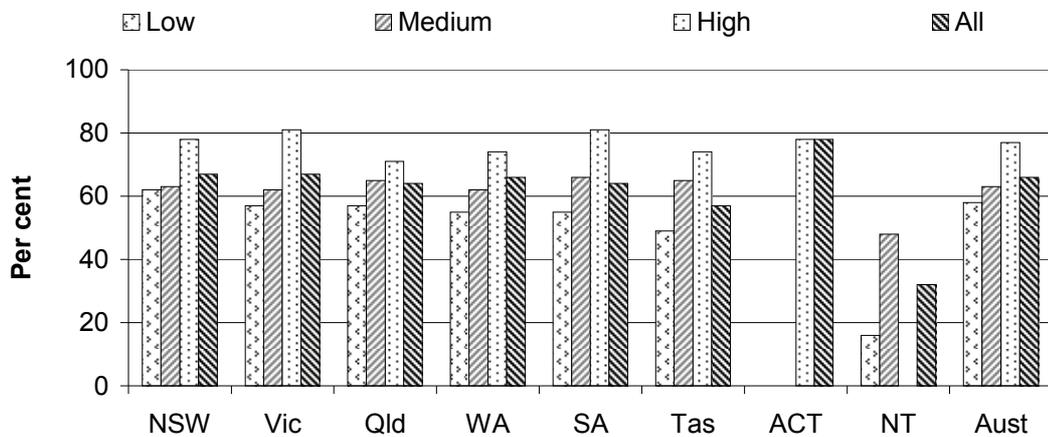
- 
- students completing their secondary education in TAFE institutes are included in reporting for some jurisdictions and not in others, and the proportion of these students also varies across jurisdictions.

Nationally, the year 12 completion rate for all students was 66 per cent in 2008. The completion rate for male students was 59 per cent compared with 72 per cent for females (table 4A.88).

Socioeconomic status is determined according to the ABS Postal Area Index of Relative Socio-economic Disadvantage on the basis of postcode of students' home addresses. Low socioeconomic status is the average of the 3 lowest deciles, medium socioeconomic status is the average of the 4 middle deciles and high socioeconomic status is the average of the 3 highest deciles.

Nationally, year 12 completion rates for students from low (58 per cent) and medium socioeconomic backgrounds (63 per cent) were 19 percentage points and 14 percentage points respectively below those for students from a high (77 per cent) socioeconomic background in 2008 (figure 4.45). Completion rates were higher for female students than for male students in all socioeconomic categories (table 4A.88).

Figure 4.45 **Completion rates, year 12, by socioeconomic status, 2008**  
(per cent)<sup>a, b, c, d, e</sup>



<sup>a</sup> Completion rates are estimated by calculating the number of students who meet the requirements of a year 12 certificate or equivalent expressed as a percentage of the potential year 12 population. The potential year 12 population is an estimate of a single year age group which could have attended year 12 that year, calculated as the estimated resident population aged 15–19 divided by 5. <sup>b</sup> The ABS Postal Area Index of Relative Socio-economic Disadvantage has been used to calculate socioeconomic status on the basis of postcode of students' home addresses. <sup>c</sup> Low socioeconomic status is the average of the 3 lowest deciles, medium socioeconomic status is the average of the 4 middle deciles and high socioeconomic status is the average of the 3 highest deciles. <sup>d</sup> A common total for socioeconomic status and geolocation is selected for reporting all students' rates and this may mean totals for socioeconomic status differ slightly to those in other publications. <sup>e</sup> The populations for the low and medium socioeconomic status deciles in the ACT and the high socioeconomic status deciles in the NT are not published due to small numbers.

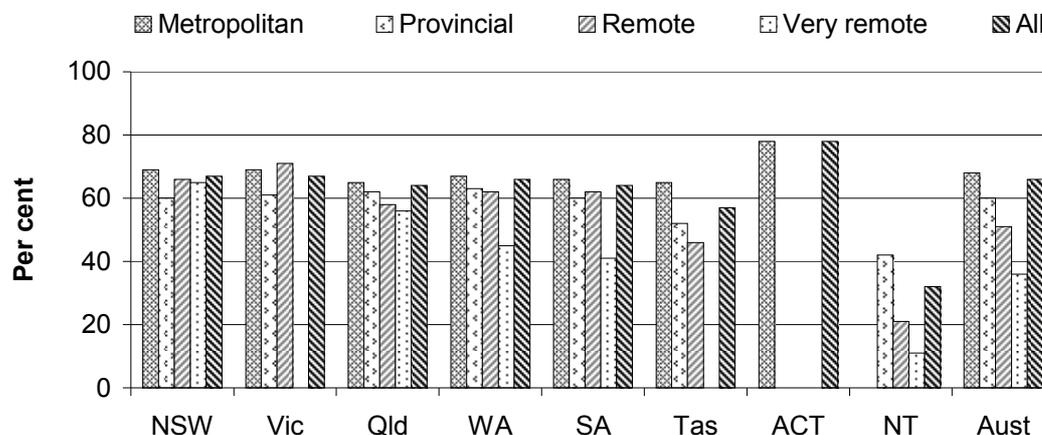
Source: DEEWR (unpublished); table 4A.88.

Geographic isolation is determined using the agreed MCEETYA Geographic Location Classification.

Nationally, the completion rate was higher in the metropolitan zone (68 per cent) than in all areas (66 per cent). The completion rate was lower in the provincial zone (60 per cent), remote areas (51 per cent) and very remote areas (36 per cent), than for all areas (figure 4.46).

Gender differences are also evident with completion rates higher for females for all localities. In the metropolitan zone, the female completion rate was 74 per cent compared with 62 per cent for males. In the remote zone, the female completion rate was 60 per cent compared with 43 per cent for males (table 4A.89). Time series data on national completion rates are shown in tables 4A.88-89.

**Figure 4.46 Completion rates, year 12, by geolocation, 2008 (per cent)<sup>a, b, c, d, e</sup>**



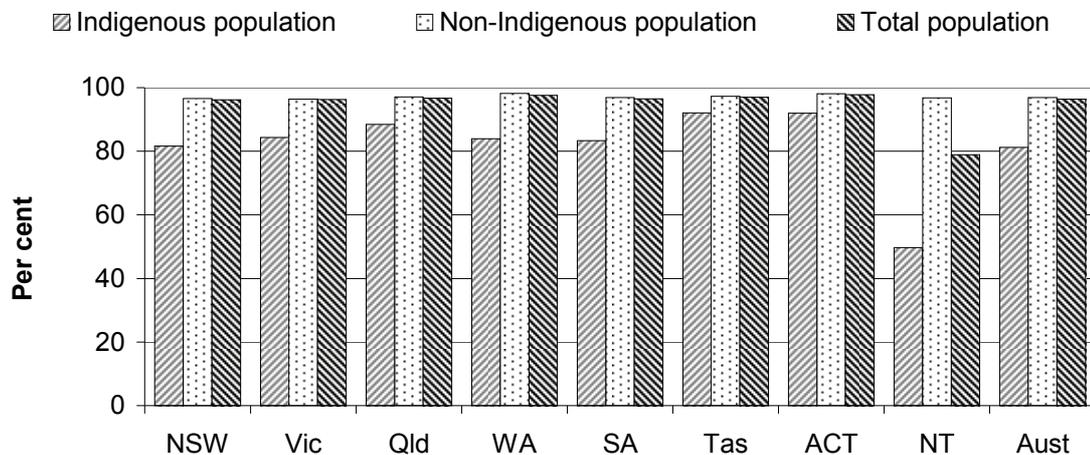
<sup>a</sup> Completion rates are estimated by calculating the number of students who meet the requirements of a year 12 certificate or equivalent expressed as a percentage of the potential year 12 population. The potential year 12 population is an estimate of a single year age group which could have attended year 12 that year, calculated as the estimated resident population aged 15–19 divided by 5. <sup>b</sup> Definitions are based on the agreed MCEETYA Geographic Location Classification. <sup>c</sup> The ACT is included in the metropolitan zone. <sup>d</sup> There are no metropolitan areas in the NT. <sup>e</sup> There are no very remote areas in Victoria and the ACT.

Source: DEEWR (unpublished); table 4A.89.

### *Year 10 or above completion rate*

The proportion of the 17–19 year old population who had completed year 10 or above in 2006 was 96.4 per cent nationally. Completion rates for the non-Indigenous population were higher than the Indigenous population nationally (96.9 per cent and 81.2 per cent respectively) and across all jurisdictions (figure 4.47). These rates varied across jurisdictions.

Figure 4.47 Proportion of 17–19 year old population having completed year 10 or above, by Indigenous status, 2006<sup>a, b, c, d, e</sup>



<sup>a</sup> Australia includes 'Other Territories' <sup>b</sup> Persons aged 17–19 years who have identified as having attained year 10 or above (includes Certificate I/II nfd, but excludes Certificate I, Certificate nfd and persons whose level of non-school qualification could not be determined). Ungraded students are excluded. <sup>c</sup> Total population of all persons aged 17–19 years, excluding persons whose highest year of school completed was not stated. <sup>d</sup> 'Total population' includes those for whom Indigenous status is unknown. <sup>e</sup> The school commencing age varies across jurisdictions, and may impact on the proportions presented in this table. For more detail, see section 4.1 of the School education chapter.

Source: ABS (unpublished) 2006 Census of Population and Housing; table 4A.90.

Year 10 completion data for the 15–19 year old population are in table 4A.90.

The Early childhood, education and training (ECET) preface includes data relating to the proportion of the 19 year old and the 20–24 year old populations having attained at least a year 12 or equivalent or AQF Certificate II; and the proportion of the 19 year old and the 20–24 year old Indigenous and low SES populations having attained at least a year 12 or equivalent or AQF Certificate II (tables BA.20–22).

### *Destination*

'Destination' is an indicator of governments' objective of ensuring that school leavers make successful transitions from school and continue to improve their skills through further post-school education, training and/or employment. It is an indicator of students' post-school transitions into education, training and employment (box 4.17).

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**Box 4.17 Destination**

'Destination' (school leaver destination rate) is defined as the estimated number of school students who left school in a given year and who, in May the following year, were participating in post-school education, training or full time employment, as a percentage of the estimated number of all school leavers in that given year. It is reported by highest level of schooling completed (year 12 or year 11 and below).

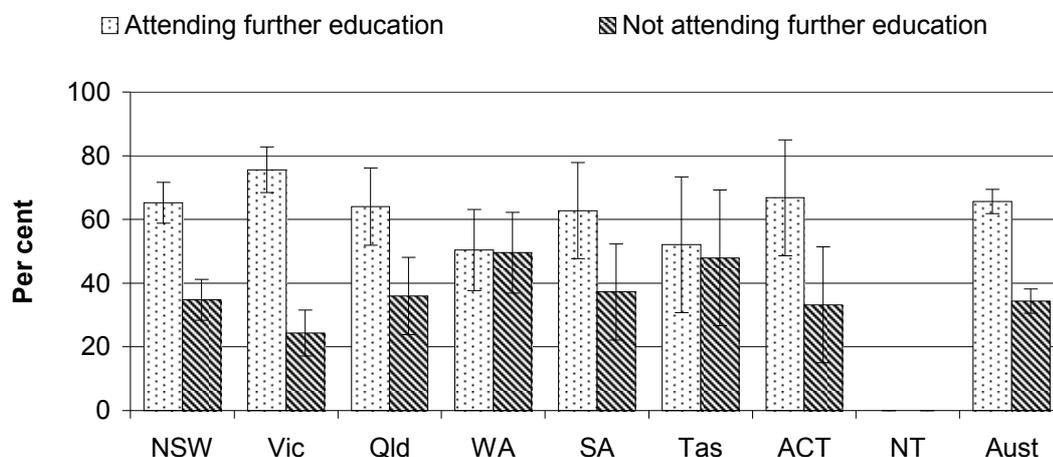
Holding other factors constant, a higher or increasing estimated proportion of school leavers participating in further education, training or full time employment is likely to result in improved educational and employment outcomes in the longer term.

The data reported for this indicator relate to the jurisdiction in which the young person was resident the year after they left school and not necessarily the jurisdiction in which they attended school. The small number of young people included in this sample survey also means that disaggregation of destination estimates by jurisdiction can be unreliable, particularly for the smaller states and territories.

Data for this indicator are not directly comparable.

School leaver destination data disaggregated by jurisdiction need to be used with caution, especially for the smaller jurisdictions, due to the large confidence intervals associated with these survey data. Nationally, in 2008, 65.6 per cent of year 12 school leavers were enrolled in further study, with 40.8 per cent attending higher education and 24.9 per cent attending TAFE courses or other study (figure 4.48 and table 4A.91). For year 11 and below school leavers, 36.9 per cent were attending further education, almost all in TAFE or other study (table 4A.91).

Figure 4.48 Destination of year 12 students, 2008<sup>a, b, c, d, e</sup>



<sup>a</sup> Data are for year 12 students who left school in 2007. <sup>b</sup> Error bars represent the 95 per cent confidence interval associated with each point estimate. <sup>c</sup> The categories for employment and enrolment are not exclusive. That is, for example, people enrolled may also be employed. <sup>d</sup> 'Not attending' includes people in full time employment and 'other', which includes part time workers, unemployed people and people not in the labour force. <sup>e</sup> The NT estimate for 'attending further education' has a relative standard error greater than 50 per cent. Therefore NT data are not included in this figure, as this estimate is considered too unreliable for general use. These data are in table 4A.91.

Source: ABS (unpublished) *Survey of Education and Work, Australia*; table 4A.91.

Of the 34.4 per cent of year 12 school leavers who were not attending further education, 15.1 per cent were employed full time and 19.2 per cent were either employed part time, unemployed or not in the labour force (table 4A.94). Detailed information relating to year 12, year 11 and below and all school leavers across jurisdictions is in table 4A.91.

The Early childhood, education and training preface of this Report includes 2008 destination data for 2007 year 12 and year 11 and below school leavers at the national level, and examines the proportions of male and female students attending other educational institutions in 2008 after leaving school in the previous year (table BA.11).

The school leaver destination survey results reported in box 4.18 are from five jurisdictions' state/territory-specific surveys, using different research methods and data collection instruments. The individual jurisdictional surveys were developed for various purposes, such as to assist with operational, strategic and planning functions, as distinct from being designed for comparative national reporting. These data are presented as supplementary information to the national ABS data, providing some context, until nationally comparable data become available (box 4.18).

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## **Box 4.18 School leaver destination survey results**

### **Victoria**

In Victoria, a survey of post-school destinations (On Track) has been conducted annually since 2003. Consenting year 12 or equivalent completers and early leavers (from years 10, 11 and 12) from all Victorian schools participate in a telephone survey early in the year after they leave school.

The 2009 On Track Survey contacted 36 022 (71.0 per cent) of the eligible 2008 year 12 or equivalent cohort comprising 548 schools, both government and non-government, as well as TAFE and ACE providers. Of these students, 71.7 per cent were in further education and training (45.6 per cent were enrolled at university, 18.1 per cent were TAFE enrolled and 8.0 per cent had taken up apprenticeships or traineeships). Of the 28.3 per cent who were not in further education and training, 12.4 per cent were in full or part time employment, 12.1 per cent had deferred a tertiary place and 3.8 per cent were looking for work.

### **Queensland**

The annual Queensland Next Step destination survey, first conducted in 2005, targets all students who completed year 12 in government and non-government schools. Responses are collected (predominately by computer-assisted telephone interview) in the year after completion of year 12.

The 2009 Next Step survey collected responses from 34 902 year 12 graduates (82.4 per cent). The results showed that 89.9 per cent of all Year 12 completers were studying or in paid employment at the time of the survey. This includes 59.6 per cent of respondents who continued in some recognised form of education or training in the year after they left school. The most likely destination was university studies (35.1 per cent), followed by VET (24.5 per cent), which includes apprenticeships (7.6 per cent) and traineeships (4.1 per cent). Of year 12 completers, 40.4 per cent did not enter post-school education or training, but were either employed (30.3 per cent), seeking work (8.1 per cent) or neither studying nor in the labour force (1.9 per cent).

Young people who deferred a university offer represented 7.5 per cent of the total cohort, most of whom were working (85.6 per cent).

### **WA**

The WA School Leaver Destinations survey has been conducted annually since 1996. This telephone survey is designed to collect destinations data from public school year 12 completers. The 2009 collection resulted in destinations being obtained for 7611 (78.3 per cent) of the 9717 eligible year 12 public school students.

(Continued on next page)

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**Box 4.18 (Continued)**

The majority of the 4240 students (55.7 per cent) were in either education or training, with 2051 (26.9 per cent) enrolled in university studies, 1097 (14.4 per cent) in TAFE studies and 849 (11.2 per cent) having taken up either an apprenticeship or a traineeship. The remainder were either repeating year 12 studies or engaged in other training, with 1285 (16.9 per cent) engaged in full time employment and 1198 (15.7 per cent) in part time employment, 715 (9.4 per cent) looking for a work or a study opportunity, 173 (2.3 per cent) neither working nor seeking work. There were 467 students who declined to participate and contact was lost with a further 1639 students.

**Tasmania**

A destination study of education and training destinations post-senior secondary was completed in 2004 for the cohort completing year 10 in 2001. Over half the cohort was not in education and training, with about 35 per cent of the participating cohort (about 16 per cent of the complete cohort) at university (full- or part-time); 31 per cent in apprenticeships or traineeships and 17 per cent in other VET.

Since 2007, all Year 10 students lodge a participation plan with the Tasmanian Qualifications Authority in the year they complete this final year of compulsory school. Students are required to be in an eligible option (education, training or employment) until they turn 17. Of the cohort of 6599 Year 10 students in 2008, 83 per cent continued with education and training the following year while 8 per cent gave their intended destination as employment. Of the 2007 year 10 cohort, 58 per cent were still participating in education and training in 2009.

**ACT**

An annual telephone-based survey of government and non-government school students who successfully completed year 12 has been conducted since 2007. Conducted in the year following completion of their studies, the survey seeks information on the destinations and satisfaction responses of these students. Each year responses are received from about 75 per cent of the 2900 students contacted.

Amongst the 2007 graduates, 92 per cent were employed or studying in 2008, and overall 96 per cent were satisfied with their college experience. Students who speak a language other than English at home were more likely (over 60 per cent) to be studying than those who did not.

Students who undertook a VET course at school were more likely to be employed (84 per cent) compared with 80 per cent of students who did not undertake a VET course. Of the 50 per cent of 2007 graduates who were studying in 2008, more than half (60 per cent) reported that they were studying at a Bachelor level or higher, 15 per cent at Certificate III level, 9 per cent at Diploma or Associate Diploma level, 8 per cent at Certificate IV level, and 8 per cent at other levels.

*Source:* State and Territory governments (unpublished).

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## **4.4 Future directions in performance reporting**

### **COAG developments**

#### *Report on Government Services alignment with National Agreement reporting*

Further alignment between the Report and NA indicators might occur in future reports as a result of developments in NA and National Partnership reporting, and MCEECDYA's review of its Key Performance Measurement Framework relating to the Melbourne Declaration and COAG agreed measures.

#### *Outcomes from review of Report on Government Services*

COAG agreed to Terms of Reference for a Heads of Treasuries/Senior Officials review of the Report in November 2008, to report to COAG by end-September 2009. The review examined the ongoing usefulness of the Report in the context of new national reporting under the Intergovernmental Agreement on Federal Financial Relations.

No significant changes from this review are reflected the 2010 Report. Any COAG endorsed recommendations from the review are likely to be implemented for the 2011 Report.

### **Completion rates, and Participation and retention rates**

The year 12 completion rate included in this Report is expected to be reviewed and a nationally comparable measure included in future Reports.

The participation rate for 14–19 year olds includes part time students. However, the traditional year 7/8 to year 12 apparent retention rate, and the year 10–12 apparent retention rate, are based on full time school students only. These measures are under examination, and supplementary participation measures are reported in the ECET preface.

### **Nationally comparable reporting of learning outcomes**

The National Summary Report of results from the 2009 NAPLAN was released on 11 September 2009 (MCEECDYA 2009b). Results from a second report with more

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detailed information (including disaggregation by Indigenous status and geolocation) will be included in the 2011 Report.

### *VET in schools*

Participation and attainment data for VET in schools are collected annually. Although data for 2006 and 2007 are included in this Report, there are still a number of issues affecting consistency and comparability that require resolution.

During the period 2006–2009 a range of persistent, complex issues around quality and national consistency and comparability of VET in schools data have been considered. These issues continue to prevent meaningful reporting against the existing VET in schools participation and attainment performance measures, and further development work is underway to improve VET in Schools measures. These will be included in future Reports.

### *Nationally consistent definitions*

Nationally consistent definitions of student background characteristics have been adopted for nationally comparable reporting on students' educational achievement and outcomes. Ministers have endorsed standard definitions of sex, Indigenous status, socioeconomic background, language background and geographic location.

Student background information collected from parents through the enrolment process using the agreed data collection specifications and methodology is linked to student assessment results from full cohort literacy and numeracy testing, and to the results of sample assessments in science literacy, civics and citizenship, and information and communication technology literacy.

A definition of students with disabilities for nationally comparable reporting on students' outcomes has not yet been developed. However, all jurisdictions have agreed to report on their policies and practices for maximising the participation of students with disabilities in the national literacy and numeracy assessments.

### *Other areas to be identified*

Additional indicators may be added to the school education performance indicator framework as further developments occur.

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## **4.5 Jurisdictions' comments**

This section provides comments from each jurisdiction on the services covered in this chapter.

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## Australian Government comments

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The Australian Government provides educational leadership and works in partnership with State and Territory governments and non-government school authorities, parents, educators and other organisations to provide high-quality teaching and learning to all Australian school-age children.

This includes the development of a world-class national curriculum. The Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) was established to oversee the development of the national curriculum, and is also responsible for assessment and reporting at a national level including the publication of comparable information about schools across Australia. ACARA's work to develop the national curriculum is well underway in the four initial learning areas of English, mathematics, science and history.

On 1 January 2009, the new funding framework for the Commonwealth's financial relations with the states and territories, agreed to by the Council of Australian Governments (COAG), came into effect. The Australian Government's contribution to government school funding is now provided under the National Education Agreement (NEA), giving State and Territory governments the flexibility to allocate Commonwealth funding to areas which they believe will produce the best outcomes for their students. The NEA defines Commonwealth, State and Territory roles and responsibilities, objectives, outcomes, performance benchmarks and indicators for schooling. It provides \$18 billion over 2008-09 to 2012-13 including estimated additional funding of \$635 million for government primary schools, acknowledging the importance of the early years of schooling for students' future educational success. The Schools Assistance Act 2008, consistent with the framework of the NEA, received Royal Assent in December 2008 and confirms the Government's election commitment to maintain existing arrangements for non-government school funding until 2012.

The Australian Government is providing \$2.59 billion in additional funding through the new 'Smarter Schools' National Partnerships (NPs) to improve teacher quality, boost literacy and numeracy and raise achievement in disadvantaged school communities. NPs are a new way of funding education reform and provide payments to states and territories to introduce reforms in these three key areas that make a difference to students. The Smarter Schools NPs are complemented by the other NPs established under the Education Revolution: the Digital Education Revolution; the Trade Training Centres in Schools Program; Building the Education Revolution, announced in February 2009; and the NP Agreement on Youth Attainment and Transitions. NP funding is provided to both government and non-government schools.

The Australian Government is committed to redressing the educational disadvantage of Indigenous Australians and is working with State and Territory governments, through COAG, to close the gaps between the outcomes for Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians in critical areas for education achievement: literacy and numeracy, and Year 12 or equivalent attainment.

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### **New South Wales Government comments**

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The NSW State Plan is aligned to the COAG targets and provides the overall direction and priorities for education and training in NSW. These include:

- increasing levels of attainment for all students, including increasing the number of students exceeding the national minimum standards in literacy and numeracy
- more students completing Year 12 or recognised vocational training
- closing the performance gap between Indigenous students and all students.

A record budget of \$9.9 billion has been allocated for school education services in NSW in 2009-10 to assist in meeting these targets.

The results of the first national literacy and numeracy tests held in 2008 confirm that NSW students are among the best in Australia, achieving among the top three performing jurisdictions in reading and numeracy at every year level tested. Across all year levels, both the proportion of NSW students performing at or above the national minimum standard and the proportion of students who achieved in the top two bands was above the national average.

Following a major review of Indigenous education, a number of initiatives are being implemented, including:

- a system of personalised learning plans which focus on building partnerships beyond the school that support learning achievements and enhance the wellbeing of Indigenous students. Over 21 000 plans are already in place
- effective transition to school programs and resources to focus on language, literacy and numeracy development for Indigenous students in their first years of schooling
- support for Regions to deliver quality teaching and relevant programs to improve literacy and numeracy outcomes
- strategies to identify gifted and talented Indigenous students and provide them with opportunities to apply and extend their abilities or talents
- culturally appropriate teaching and learning materials.

2009 saw the passage of legislation to increase the school leaving age so that from January 2010 all students will have to complete school to year 10 and then to continue in either education or training, full-time paid employment, or a combination of these until at least age 17.

Other initiatives to improve year 12 completion or recognised vocational training qualifications include the expansion of vocational education and training subjects in years 9 and 10 to retain the interest of students in lower secondary and networking schools via information and communication technology and distance education to create greater curriculum choice.

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## Victorian Government comments

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The Victorian Government is committed to improving the learning, development, health and wellbeing of all young Victorians and their families. Through the work of the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, Victoria continued to develop and implement its education and early childhood reform agenda during 2009.

Launched in September 2008, the *Blueprint for Education and Early Childhood Development* continued to be implemented in 2009. Key achievements included the appointment of 70 regional network leaders (RNLs) to provide schools with on-the-ground leadership and support. RNLs will lead and manage a network of Victorian government schools and improve the quality of education and the performance of all students. RNLs will be responsible for implementing strategic plans for school networks and professional learning strategies to boost school results and student performance.

The Victorian Government has strengthened school responsibility for monitoring young people's pathways through expanded accountability requirements. In late 2008, all Victorian schools received the newly published *Effective Strategies to Increase School Completion* Report and the companion *Guide to Help Schools Increase School Completion*. These publications, to be used in conjunction with the Student Mapping Tool provide schools with information on how to implement successful intervention strategies to improve student engagement and increase rates of school completion. Victoria's efforts in this area are paying dividends. The 2008 data indicate that 88.7 per cent of 20–24 year olds completed year 12 or equivalent, the highest of any State.

The Department continued to implement Wannik, *Learning Together — Journey to Our Future* the education strategy for Koorie students in Victoria. Key initiatives during 2009 included the development of four new Koorie Pathway Schools, 15 new literacy coaches, and 23 Wannik education scholarships to assist students in their senior secondary years. Recent (December 2008) Indigenous NAPLAN data indicate that Victoria is performing at the top of the group for reading at year 3 with more than 88 per cent of students meeting the national minimum standard compared to around 68 per cent nationally and in year 5, 83 per cent compared to around 63 per cent nationally.

The Victorian Government is delivering on its infrastructure commitments. During 2009, funding under the Victorian Schools Plan (VSP), to rebuild, renovate or extend schools increased from \$555.2 million in 2007-08 to \$595.8 million in 2008-09. This includes funding of \$171.3 million for a new public-private partnership arrangement, as part of the Partnerships Victoria in Schools project. Announced in December 2008, this partnership will allow for 11 new schools to be designed, built, and maintained for the next 25 years. The VSP is complementing the introduction of the Australian Government's Building the Education Revolution (BER) initiative. These programs are being implemented in an integrated manner to provide a single strategy for enhancing school infrastructure in Victoria.

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## Queensland Government comments

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Queensland's key educational priorities and continuing reforms aim to equip every child and young person with the fundamentals for success in life.

Improved participation, retention, completion and achievement rates of Indigenous students remain key priorities through implementation of Queensland's *Closing the Gap* Education Strategy.

Literacy, numeracy and science were key priorities in 2009. This included developing quality curriculum leadership, engaging school communities and providing professional development for teachers in literacy and numeracy through the *Literacy and Numeracy National Partnership*. Queensland invested \$72.3 million over 3 years to employ literacy and numeracy coaches, offer summer school programs, and deliver intensive teaching for students in years 3 and 5 who are in the most need of extra help.

While a national curriculum is being developed, Queensland is continuing to implement the Queensland Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Framework, particularly the development and implementation of the Queensland Comparable Assessment Tasks in science, mathematics and english in years 4, 6 and 9. These will be used by schools as a tool to monitor student progress over time.

Queensland is implementing innovative measures to improve student learning outcomes in schools with high numbers of disadvantaged students through the *Low Socio-Economic Status School Communities National Partnership*. School-based initiatives funded by the partnership include parenting programs, homework clubs, teacher induction programs, behaviour support programs and student wellbeing centres.

Queensland continues to build on its Education and Training Reforms for the Future by participating in the *Youth Attainment and Transitions National Partnership* to contribute to the national year 12 or equivalent attainment rate of 90 per cent by 2015.

In partnership with universities, the Catholic and independent sectors and principals' associations, Queensland is establishing the Queensland Education Leadership Institute (QELI). Opening in mid-2010, QELI will develop the skills, knowledge and behaviour of current and aspiring school leaders and provide ongoing leadership support to bring about school improvement and reform.

The 2009-10 State budget allocated a record budget of more than \$2 billion to continue to modernise and build schools across Queensland. This included \$1.16 billion for school infrastructure under the Australian Government's *Building the Education Revolution*.

These priorities support the Department's commitment to achieving goals set by the Queensland Government's *Toward Q2: Tomorrow's Queensland strategy*.

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### Western Australian Government comments

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The Western Australian Government supports a strong school education system that continues to respond to challenges arising from changes in the social, economic and education environment. The Department's strategies to meet these challenges are developed and implemented within the context of community expectations of standards in literacy and numeracy, the quality and conduct of the workforce, and opportunities for a range of diverse groups including Aboriginal and senior students.

In 2008, for the first time, students were required to remain in full time education until the end of the year in which they turn 17 years, or participate in meaningful and flexible programs to suit their learning needs and interests. These include full time or part time schooling, vocational education and training, apprenticeships or traineeships, employment, full time home education or combinations of these. Approximately 100 staff across education districts brokered services to support 15 to 17 year olds 'at risk' of not engaging in education, training or employment. In 2009, overall retention in full time schooling from years 8–12 increased to a high of 72.5 per cent. For Aboriginal students the rate was 39.6 per cent, a slight decrease on 2008 but considerably higher than the average for the 5 years previous to 2008 of 28.5 per cent.

The focus on literacy and numeracy continued. In 2008, \$25.8 million was allocated to programs to improve the achievement of students 'at risk' of not achieving successful outcomes in literacy and numeracy and to support the *National Literacy and Numeracy Plan*. The *Getting it Right* strategy funded 347 specialist literacy and numeracy teachers to work in 289 primary and district high schools, and 44 specialist teachers in 42 secondary schools.

In May 2008, the literacy and numeracy performance of years 3, 5, 7 and 9 students was assessed for the first time using common national tests through the *National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy* (NAPLAN). The results for public school students showed that, for all year groups, in all the content areas assessed, the performance of Aboriginal students, unlike that of non-Aboriginal students, declined with increasing remoteness.

WA is committed to improving the educational outcomes of Aboriginal students. The *Aboriginal Literacy Strategy* (ALS) provides services to schools in the four remote education districts of the Kimberley, Pilbara, Mid West and Goldfields. It focuses on consistency and sustainability over time, to counteract negative effects of student absenteeism, mobility and changes to staff. In 2008, the ALS operated at 52 school sites and involved approximately 350 staff. The *Follow the Dream* strategy supported 634 students in 58 schools across years 7–12 to achieve academic excellence.

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### **South Australian Government comments**

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The Government of South Australia, through the Department of Education and Children’s Services (DECS), is committed to making it possible for every child and student in South Australia to reach the highest possible level of their learning and wellbeing.

South Australia is continuing with legislation reform of education and children’s services. The aim of this reform is to support the coordination and integration of services for children and families. Development of the South Australian legislation is being undertaken in concert with the national regulatory reforms developed under the Council of Australian Governments’ (COAG) Productivity Agenda.

In November 2008 COAG agreed to the three new ‘Smarter Schools’ National Partnership agreements. Under these NPs the three schooling sectors (public, Independent and Catholic) are required to collaborate in the planning, delivery and evaluation of evidence-based reforms and interventions to achieve agreed outcomes, targets and indicators. To facilitate this collaboration DECS participates in a cross-sectoral Ministerial Advisory Council, the SA National Partnerships Council.

Responsiveness to the needs of students is a priority for the National Partnerships for South Australia. This will be provided through individualised student support, including case management, mentoring and support for students in alternative learning pathways, particularly those at risk of disengaging from school.

As a key strategy under the National Partnerships, Innovative Community Action Networks (ICANs) will be expanded over 3 years to support re-engagement in learning for significantly disengaged young people across the State. ICANs will also be able to provide targeted support for complex years 6–7 students through the provision of some individual case management and customised learning programs supported through strong school and community partnerships.

The DECS Literacy Secretariat has been established as a core element of the reform agenda, to coordinate and facilitate a more focused approach to literacy improvement. The Secretariat will oversee a number of initiatives, including expansion of a program that provides 31 schools with the targeted support of a literacy and/or numeracy coach.

From 2010, the South Australian government is mandating teaching times in literacy, mathematics and science of up to 12 hours each week collectively as our top priorities in all primary schools. Every teacher from reception to year 7 will receive specialist training in science and mathematics. In 2009, schools received a one-off \$7.8m primary skills grant.

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## Tasmanian Government comments

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The Department of Education’s strategic priorities — early years, literacy and numeracy, retention and building a knowledge-based society — aim to provide quality learning opportunities for all Tasmanians at every stage of their life and to nurture a culturally rich and economically productive community.

There continues to be a significant emphasis on literacy and numeracy improvement for all students. The \$2 million provided by the Australian government, and \$8 million provided by the State government, will extend the *Raising the Bar and Closing the Gap* literacy initiative which supports students in schools where there is the highest learning need.

The \$12 million *Launching into Learning* initiative which helps schools support young children and their families before children formally start school has now benefited over 100 schools statewide. As part of the National Partnership Agreement on Early Childhood Education with the Australian Government, funding has been provided for Achieving Universal Access to Early Childhood Education. This will enable the department to progressively implement a strategy to provide all Tasmanian children with access to at least 15 hours of kindergarten by 2013.

The strategic developments of the Tasmania *Tomorrow* post-year 10 education initiative have been implemented with the Tasmanian Academy and the Tasmanian Polytechnic currently operating around the State.

Capital investment funding of \$76.1 million has been allocated for up to 30 Child and Family Centres in Tasmania. The centres will play a vital role in strengthening local communities and helping to prepare the youngest Tasmanians for a healthy lifestyle and success at school. This funding is on top of the \$207.4 million that has been made available in 2009-10 to Tasmanian schools through the Australian Government’s Nation Building – Economic Stimulus Plan.

From funding totalling \$11.1 million, the construction of the first of five new Learning Information Network Centres (LINC)s will commence in 2009-10.

The 2009-10 Budget also provides increased funding to important initiatives:

- the Early Childhood Reform
- Early Years Literacy
- reducing class sizes from years 2 to 7
- Secondary School Renewal Program
- Sustainability Learning Centre — in partnership with Catholic Education (Tasmania), the Association of Independent Schools (Tas), the CSIRO and Greening Australia
- Teacher Learning Centre — in partnership with the University of Tasmania — to mentor and develop high performing graduates in the classroom.

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### **Australian Capital Territory Government comments**

“ The strategic direction of the ACT Department of Education and Training continues to be influenced by *The Canberra Plan* and the *Canberra Social Plan* ‘to ensure all Canberrans are able to reap the benefits of a high quality education supported by a culture of excellence in teaching’.

This strategic direction was supported by the introduction of the Quality Teaching model in ACT public schools. The Quality Teaching model describes an evidence-based professional development approach to pedagogy that applies from preschool to year 12, across all learning areas.

An overarching Literacy and Numeracy Strategy 2009–13 targeted action in leadership, teaching, student learning and evidence-based practice. System targets were set and school plans will include their own targets and strategies for literacy and numeracy performance. The 2008-09 ACT Budget provided almost \$1 million over 4 years to build the skills of teachers in teaching literacy and numeracy.

The ACT Government allocated resources to recruit 70 extra teachers to reduce average class sizes to 21 in primary schools and high schools and to 19 in colleges from 2010.

Negotiation of bilateral agreements to implement COAG reforms were progressed, ensuring these aligned with ACT Government priorities. These provide \$105 million in Australian Government funding over 5 years.

An updated School Improvement Framework was agreed and provides a program for operational improvement using self-assessment tools, school planning, external validation and reporting that enables all schools to transparently account for their performance and achievement.

Close cooperation between ACT Government agencies and the private sector continued on a range of industry-specific projects to address skills shortages. Phase II of the Commonwealth’s Productivity Places Program (PPP) was implemented with ACT Health to facilitate training in health services.

The Schools Renewal program continued with the opening of four new early childhood schools at the beginning of 2009.

The ACT Government Schools Infrastructure Refurbishment Program also continued, with major projects including two new gymnasias, a performing arts centre, improvements to older school buildings, preschool upgrades, amalgamation of schools and school sustainability projects.

A working group was established to develop a Reconciliation Action Plan incorporating specific measurable targets that can be reviewed annually and linked to the broader COAG targets in this area. An additional Literacy and Numeracy Officer was appointed to support transition of Indigenous students from years 6-7, building on a previous initiative that engaged five Literacy and Numeracy Officers to support Indigenous students in kindergarten to year 4.

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## Northern Territory Government comments

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The role of the Northern Territory Department of Education and Training is to improve education and training options and outcomes for Territorians from their early years to adulthood.

The department has been developing implementation plans and negotiating bilateral agreements with the Australian Government to align with the National Partnership agreements on Early Childhood Reform, Smarter Schools and the Productivity Places Program. These National Partnerships will provide a significant injection of funds to further the agreed strategic goals in education and training in the NT.

The NT led the country in capturing the data on the developmental progress of 5 year olds as part of the Australian Early Development Index surveys, a national measure of children's development as they enter school. All government and non-government schools participated in this survey.

Working in collaboration with remote school communities continues to be a priority for the department. Finalising and implementing Remote Learning Partnership Agreements will support the Territory Growth Towns component of the NT Government's *Working Future* initiative.

The department is partnering with the Australian Government Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs in a regional youth education coordination project. The focus is on disengaged youth and middle years students at risk of disengagement in 13 remote communities in Central Australia.

In 2008, there were 45 students from 12 very remote communities throughout the NT who completed their year 12 Northern Territory Certificate of Education (NTCE). This included 7 students who were the first ever to complete their NTCE at a homelands school (a small remote site delivering education services via a visiting teacher).

The *Closing the Gap of Indigenous Disadvantage* funding, together with other departmental funding, has led to more than \$6 million being invested in 2008-09 to improve student attendance and engagement.

NT Government schools have received approval for \$118 million in funding from the Australian Government under the Building the Education Revolution (BER) initiative. Primary Schools for the 21st Century provided refurbishments of school infrastructure in 81 schools.

Approval under the Science and Language Centres for 21st Century Secondary Schools included five science centres and one language centre to be built at very remote schools, and one science centre and one language centre at remote schools, worth a combined total of \$15.76 million.

A total of 150 NT Government schools received funding under the National School Pride element of the BER program.

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## 4.6 Definitions of key terms and indicators

<b>Apparent retention rates</b>	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 year 12 retention rate is calculated by dividing the total number of full time students in year 12 in the target year by the total number of full time students in year 10 two years before the target year.
<b>Full time equivalent student</b>	The FTE of a full time student is 1.0. The method of converting part time student numbers into FTEs is based on the student's workload compared with the workload usually undertaken by a full time student.
<b>Full time student</b>	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.
<b>Geographic classification</b>	<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>A. Metropolitan zone</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Mainland State capital city regions (Statistical Divisions (SDs)): Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane, Adelaide and Perth SDs.</li><li>• Major urban Statistical Districts (100 000 or more population): ACT–Queanbeyan, Cairns, Gold Coast–Tweed, Geelong, Hobart, Newcastle, Sunshine Coast, Townsville, Wollongong.</li></ul> <p>B. Provincial zone (non-remote)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Provincial city Statistical Districts plus Darwin SD.<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 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.</li><li>• 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.</li></ul></li><li>• Other provincial areas (CD ARIA Plus score <math>\leq</math> 5.92)<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Inner provincial areas (CD ARIA Plus score <math>\leq</math> 2.4)</li><li>• Outer provincial areas (CD ARIA Plus score <math>&gt;</math> 2.4 and <math>\leq</math> 5.92)</li></ul></li></ul> <p>C. Remote zone</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Remote zone (CD ARIA Plus score <math>&gt;</math> 5.92)<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Remote areas (CD ARIA Plus score <math>&gt;</math> 5.92 and <math>\leq</math> 10.53)</li><li>• Very remote areas (CD ARIA Plus score <math>&gt;</math> 10.53)</li></ul></li></ul>

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<b>Government recurrent expenditure per full time equivalent student</b>	Total government recurrent expenditure divided by the total number of FTE students. Expenditure is based on the National School Statistics Collection (MCEETYA unpublished), 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 the two years spanned by the calendar year. When calculating the 2007-08 average expenditure per student, for example, the total expenditure figure is at 2007-08 but the total student number figure is the average of student numbers from 2007 and 2008.
<b>Indigenous student</b>	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. For NAPLAN data, a student is considered to be 'Indigenous' if he or she identifies as being of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander origin.
<b>In-school costs</b>	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.
<b>Language background other than English (LBOTE) student</b>	A status that is determined by administrative processes that vary across jurisdictions. For NAPLAN data, a student is considered to be 'LBOTE' if either the student or parents/guardians speak a language other than English at home.
<b>Out-of-school costs</b>	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.
<b>Part time student</b>	A student undertaking a workload that is less than that specified as being full time in the jurisdiction
<b>Participation rate</b>	The number of full time and part time school students of a particular age (as at 1 July), expressed as a proportion of the estimated resident population of the same age (as at 30 June).
<b>Potential year 12 population</b>	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.
<b>Real expenditure</b>	Nominal expenditure adjusted for changes in prices, using the GDP price deflator and expressed in terms of final year prices.
<b>Science literacy</b>	Science 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.

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<b>Socioeconomic status</b>	As per footnotes to table 4A.92, which provide definitions specific to that 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.
<b>Source of income</b>	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 therefore provide only a broad indication of the level of Australian Government funding.
<b>Student-to-staff ratios</b>	The number of FTE students per FTE teaching staff. Students at special schools are allocated to primary and secondary (see below). The FTE of staff includes those who are generally active in schools and ancillary education establishments.
<b>Student</b>	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.
<b>Student, primary</b>	A student in primary education, which covers pre-year 1 to year 6 in NSW, Victoria, Tasmania, ACT and the NT, pre-year 1 to year 7 in Qld, WA and SA.
<b>Student, secondary</b>	A student in secondary education, which commences at year 7 in NSW, Victoria, Tasmania, ACT and the NT, and at year 8 in Queensland, WA, and SA.
<b>Students with a disability</b>	Students included in the annual system reports to DEEWR. The definitions of students with disabilities are based on individual State and Territory criteria, so data are not comparable across jurisdictions.
<b>Teacher</b>	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).
<b>Ungraded student</b>	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.
<b>VET in Schools</b>	VET in Schools is a program which allows students to combine vocational studies with their general education curriculum. Students participating in VET in Schools continue to work towards their senior secondary school certificate, while the VET component of their studies gives them credit towards a nationally recognised VET qualification. The program may involve structured work placements and includes the options of a school-based apprenticeship and traineeship or VET subjects and courses.

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## 4.7 Attachment tables

Attachment tables are identified in references throughout this chapter by an ‘4A’ suffix (for example, table 4A.3). Attachment tables are provided on the CD-ROM enclosed with the Report and on the Review website ([www.pc.gov.au/gsp](http://www.pc.gov.au/gsp)). Users without access to the CD-ROM or the website can contact the Secretariat to obtain the attachment tables (see contact details on the inside front cover of the Report).

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