# 4 School education

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This chapter focuses on performance information for government‑funded school education in Australia.

Further information on the Report on Government Services including other reported service areas, the glossary and list of abbreviations is available at www.pc.gov.au/rogs/2018.

## 4.1 Profile of school education

### Service overview

Schooling aims to provide education for all young people. The structure of school education varies across states and territories.

#### Compulsory school education

Entry to school education is compulsory for all children in all states and territories, although the child age entry requirements vary by jurisdiction (ABS 2017). In 2016, minimum starting ages generally restrict enrolment to children aged between four‑and‑a‑half and five years (ABS 2017). (See chapter 3, table 3A.1, for more details.)

National mandatory requirements for schooling — as agreed in the National Youth Participation Requirement (NYPR) — came into effect through relevant State and Territory government legislation in 2010. Under the NYPR, all young people must participate in schooling until they complete year 10; and if they have completed year 10, in full time education, training or employment (or combination of these) until 17 years of age (ABS 2017).

#### Type and level of school education

Schools are the institutions within which organised school education takes place (see section 4.4 for a definition of ‘school’) and are differentiated by the type and level of education they provide:

* *Primary schools* provide education from the first year of primary school — known as the ‘foundation year’ in the Australian Curriculum (see section 4.4 for the naming conventions used in each State and Territory). Primary school education extends to year 6 (year 7 in SA). (Prior to 2015, primary school education also extended to year 7 in Queensland and WA.)
* *Secondary schools* provide education from the end of primary school to year 12.
* *Special schools* provide education for students that exhibit one or more of the following characteristics before enrolment: mental or physical disability or impairment; slow learning ability; social or emotional problems; or in custody, on remand or in hospital (ABS 2017).

#### Affiliation, ownership and management

Schools can also be differentiated by their affiliation, ownership and management, which are presented for two broad categories:

* *Government schools* are owned and managed by State and Territory governments
* *Non‑government schools*, including Catholic or Independent schools, are owned and managed by non‑government establishments.

### Roles and responsibilities

State and Territory governments are responsible for ensuring the delivery and regulation of schooling to all children of school age in their jurisdiction. State and Territory governments provide most of the school education funding in Australia, which is administered under their own legislation. They determine curricula, register schools, regulate school activities and are directly responsible for the administration of government schools. They also provide support services used by both government and non‑government schools. Non‑government schools operate under conditions determined by State and Territory government registration authorities.

From 1 January 2014, Australian Government funding for government and non‑government schools was through the Students First funding arrangements, as determined by the *Australian Education Act 2013* (the Act). State and Territory governments have discretion as to how to apply the funding to achieve the agreed outcomes. Detailed information on these funding arrangements can be found in box 4.7.

The Australian Government and State and Territory governments work together to progress and implement national policy priorities, such as: a national curriculum; national statistics and reporting; national testing; and, teaching standards (PM&C 2014). The Education Council — comprising the Australian, State and Territory education ministers and the New Zealand education minister (as a non‑decision‑making member) — is the principal forum for developing national priorities and strategies for schooling.

### Funding

Nationally in 2015‑16, government recurrent expenditure on school education was $55.7 billion, a 2.5 per cent real increase from 2014‑15 (table 4A.10). State and Territory governments provided the majority of funding (71.6 per cent) (figure 4.1).

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| Figure 4.1 Proportion of total school education government recurrent expenditure, 2015‑16**a** |
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| a See table 4A.10 for detailed footnotes and caveats. |
| *Source*: Education Council (unpublished) *National Schools Statistics Collection* (NSSC); Australian Government Department of Education and Training (unpublished); Australian, State and Territory governments (unpublished); table 4A.10. |
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Government schools accounted for $42.4 billion (76.1 per cent), with State and Territory governments the major funding source ($36.5 billion, or 86.2 per cent of government schools funding). Non‑government schoolsaccounted for $13.3 billion (23.9 per cent), with the Australian Government the major funding source ($10.0 billion, or 75.1 per cent of non‑government schools funding) (table 4A.10).

The share of government funding to government and non‑government schools varies across jurisdictions and over time according to jurisdictional approaches to funding schools (see box 4.7) and is affected by the characteristics of school structures and the student body in each state and territory.

This Report presents expenditure related to government funding only, not to the full cost to the community of providing school education. Caution should be taken when comparing expenditure data for government and non‑government schools, because governments provide only part of school funding. Government provided 57.2 per cent of non‑government school funding in 2016, with the remaining 42.8 per cent sourced from private fees and fund raising (Australian Government Department of Education and Training, unpublished).

### Size and scope

#### Schools

In 2016, there were 9414 schools in Australia (6233 primary schools, 1404 secondary schools, 1316 combined schools, and 461 special schools) (table 4A.1). The majority of schools were government owned and managed (70.5 per cent) (table 4A.1).

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. Detailed data on school size and level can be found in *Schools Australia, 2016* (ABS 2017).

#### Student body

There were 3.8 million full time equivalent (FTE) students enrolled in school nationally in 2016 (table 4A.3). Whilst the majority of students are full time, there were 19 570 part time students in 2016 (predominantly in secondary schools) (ABS 2017), which equated to 7760 FTE student enrolments (table 4A.3):

* *Government schools* had 2.5 million FTE students enrolled (65.3 per cent of all FTE students). This proportion has remained steady since 2012, following a decrease from 66.5 per cent in 2007.
* *Non‑government schools* had 1.3 million FTE students enrolled (34.7 per cent of all FTE students).
* Proportions differ across school levels, with proportions increasing for government schools in primary schooling and for non‑government schools in secondary schooling (table 4A.3).

A higher proportion of FTE students were enrolled in primary schools (57.5 per cent) than in secondary schools (42.5 per cent) (table 4A.3). SA has the highest proportion of students enrolled in primary school education (61.7 per cent) as it is the only jurisdiction that still includes year 7 in primary school.

The enrolment rate decreases as students exceed the maximum compulsory school age and complete their school education. Nationally in 2016, 98.2 per cent of Australian children aged 15 years were enrolled at school, declining to 93.9 per cent of 16 year olds and 77.3 per cent of 17 year olds. Data are available for 15–19 year olds by single year of age and totals in table 4A.4.

##### Special needs groups

Government schools have a higher proportion of students from selected special needs groups than non‑government schools, including for:

* Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students — in 2016, 7.0 per cent in government schools and 2.5 per cent in non‑government schools (table 4A.5)
* students with disability — in 2016, 6.3 per cent in government schools and 4.2 per cent in non‑government schools (table 4A.7)
* geographically remote and very remote students — in 2016, 2.5 per cent in government schools and 1.1 per cent in non‑government schools (table 4A.8).

Conversely, non‑government schools have a higher proportion of students that are:

* students with a language background other than English — in 2016, 24.2 per cent in government schools and 26.2 per cent in non‑government schools (table 4A.6).

#### School and Vocational Education and Training (VET)

School‑aged people may participate in VET by either participating in ‘VET in Schools’ (see section 4.4) or remain engaged in education through a Registered Training Organisation (chapter 5). Nationally in 2016, there were 243 300 VET in Schools students (NCVER 2017). Overall, 474 000 people aged 15–19 years successfully completed at least one unit of competency as part of a VET qualification at the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) Certificate II or above (at a school or Registered Training Organisation) (table 4A.9).

## 4.2 Framework of performance indicators

Box 4.1 describes the vision and objectives for the school education system. The vision and objectives align with the educational goals for young Australians in the Melbourne Declaration (MCEETYA 2008) and the National Education Agreement (COAG 2009). In addition, performance indicators in this chapter are aligned with school education indicators in the National Education Agreement, where relevant.

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| Box 4.1 Objectives for School education |
| Australian schooling aims for all young Australians to become successful learners, confident and creative individuals, and active and informed citizens positioning them to live fulfilling, productive and responsible lives. It aims for students to excel by international standards, while reducing educational disadvantage.  To meet this vision, the school education system aims to:   * engage all students and promote student participation * deliver high quality teaching with a world‑class curriculum.   Governments aim for school education services to meet these objectives in an equitable and efficient manner. |
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The performance indicator framework provides information on equity, effectiveness and efficiency and distinguishes the outputs and outcomes of school education services (figure 4.2).

| Figure 4.2 School education performance indicator framework |
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| | More details can be found within the text surrounding this image. | | --- | |
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The framework also shows which data are complete and comparable in the 2018 Report. For data that are not considered directly comparable, text includes relevant caveats and supporting commentary. Chapter 1 discusses data comparability, data completeness and information on data quality from a Report‑wide perspective. In addition to section 4.1, the Report’s Statistical context chapter (chapter 2) contains data that may assist in interpreting the performance indicators presented in this chapter. Chapters 1 and 2 are available from the website at www.pc.gov.au/rogs/2018.

Improvements to performance reporting for School education are ongoing and include identifying data sources to fill gaps in reporting for performance indicators and measures, and improving the comparability and completeness of data.

## 4.3 Key performance indicator results

Different delivery contexts and locations influence the equity, effectiveness and efficiency of school education services.

### Outputs

Outputs are the services delivered (while outcomes are the impact of these services on the status of an individual or group) (see chapter 1). Output information is also critical for equitable, efficient and effective management of government services.

### Equity

#### Access — Attendance and participation by target group

‘Attendance and participation by target group’ is an indicator of governments’ objective for school education services to be provided in an equitable manner (box 4.2).

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| Box 4.2 Attendance and participation by target group |
| ‘Attendance and participation by target group’ compares the attendance rate of those in the target group (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, students in remote/very remote areas) with the attendance rate of those outside the target group (non‑Indigenous students, students in major cities and regional areas).  Similar rates of attendance for those within and outside the target groups indicates equity of access. |
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| Box 4.2 (continued) |
| The student attendance rate is the number of actual full time equivalent student days attended by full time students as a percentage of the total number of possible student attendance days attended over the period.  Data reported for this measure are:   * not comparable across jurisdictions — NSW government school data are not yet collected on a comparable basis to other states and territories * complete for the current reporting period (subject to caveats). All required 2017 data are available for all jurisdictions. |
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Nationally in 2017, attendance rates across years 1–10 decreased as remoteness increased (figure 4.3), with the decrease greater for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students than for non‑Indigenous students. This pattern was similar for government and non‑government schools (table 4A.21).

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| Figure 4.3 Student attendance rate for years 1 to 10 combined, by remoteness, all schools, 2017**a, b** |
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| a See box 4.2 and table 4A.21 for detailed definitions, footnotes and caveats. b There are no very remote areas in Victoria. There are no major cities in Tasmania. There are no outer regional, remote or very remote areas in the ACT. There are no major cities or inner regional areas in the NT.  *Source*: ACARA (unpublished); table 4A.21. |
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Nationally in 2017, non‑Indigenous students in all schools had higher attendance rates than Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students across all year levels in all jurisdictions. This pattern was similar for government and non‑government schools (figure 4.4 and tables 4A.18–20).

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| Figure 4.4 Student attendance rate for years 1 to 6 combined to year 10, by Indigenous status, all schools, 2017**a, b** |
| |  | | --- | | More details can be found within the text surrounding this image. | |
| a The non‑Indigenous attendance rates includes the total area shaded for each year level. b See box 4.2 and table 4A.20 for detailed definitions, footnotes and caveats.  *Source*: ACARA (unpublished); table 4A.20. |
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The student attendance level is the proportion of full time students whose attendance rate is greater than or equal to 90 per cent over the period. Analysis of the attendance level can highlight ‘at risk’ populations (where a large proportion of individuals have had low attendance over the school year). Data on the student attendance level by Indigenous status and remoteness are in tables 4A.22–24, with patterns consistent with the student attendance rate data.

### Effectiveness

#### Access — Attendance and participation

‘Attendance and participation’ is an indicator of governments’ objective that school education services promotes student participation (box 4.3).

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| Box 4.3 Attendance and participation |
| ‘Attendance and participation’ is defined by the ‘student attendance rate’ — the number of actual full time equivalent student days attended by full time students as a percentage of the total number of possible student attendance days attended over the period.  Data reported for this measure are:   * not comparable across jurisdictions — NSW government school data are not yet collected on a comparable basis to other states and territories * complete for the current reporting period (subject to caveats). All required 2017 data are available for all jurisdictions. |
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Nationally in 2017, the attendance rate for all school students across year levels 1–6 was 93.4 per cent (table 4A.20). The year 1–6 attendance rates have remained steady since 2014 and are similar across most jurisdictions and within each State and Territory over time.

Nationally in 2017, across all schools attendance rates decreased from year 7 to year 10 — from 93.0 per cent to 89.4 per cent (table 4A.20). For years 7–10 combined, attendance rates are higher at non‑government schools (92.9 per cent) than government schools (89.6 per cent) (figure 4.5). However, this gap has narrowed between 2014 to 2017, due to a 0.6 percentage point decline in the attendance rate at non‑government schools, while the rate for government schools has remained stable (tables 4A.18–19).

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| Figure 4.5 Student attendance rates, years 7 to 10, by sector, 2017**a** |
| |  | | --- | | More details can be found within the text surrounding this image. | |
| a See box 4.3 and tables 4A.18–19 for detailed definitions, footnotes and caveats.  *Source*: ACARA (unpublished); tables 4A.18–19. |
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The student attendance level is the proportion of full time students whose attendance rate is greater than or equal to 90 per cent over the period. Analysis of the attendance level can highlight ‘at risk’ populations (where a large proportion of individuals have had low attendance over the school year). Data for the student attendance level are in   
tables 4A.22–24, with patterns consistent with the student attendance rate data.

#### Appropriateness — Student engagement

‘Student engagement’ is an indicator of governments’ objective that school education services engage all students (box 4.4).

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| Box 4.4 Student engagement |
| ‘Student engagement’ is defined as the engagement of students with schooling across the following three dimensions:   * *Behavioural engagement* — which may be measured by identifiable behaviours and by attendance, attainment and retention.   Attendance is sometimes seen as a proxy for student engagement with evidence of the relationship between poor attendance and poor student outcomes, particularly once patterns of non‑attendance are established (Hancock et al. 2013). However, measurement of attendance alone is not an adequate proxy for student engagement, as a student may attend school but not achieve their potential.   * *Emotional engagement* — which may be analysed by seeking students’ attitudes to learning and school. * *Cognitive engagement* — which has been less frequently measured in a classroom setting, but research studies have used measures such as students’ perception of intellectual challenge, effort or interest and motivation.   High or increasing levels of student engagement are desirable.  Data are not yet available for reporting against this indicator. |
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#### Appropriateness — Retention

‘Retention’ to the final years of schooling is an indicator of governments’ objective that the school education system aims to engage all students and promote student participation (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 year 10 that continue to year 12.  The term ‘apparent’ is used because the measures are derived from total numbers of students in each of year 10 and year 12, not by tracking the retention of individual students. Care needs be taken in interpreting the measures as they do 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.   These factors may lead to apparent retention rates that exceed 100 per cent.  This indicator does not include part time or ungraded students (which has implications for the interpretation of results for all jurisdictions) or provide information on students who pursue year 12 (or equivalent qualifications) through non‑school pathways.  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.  A higher or increasing rate is desirable as it suggests that a larger proportion of students are continuing in school, which may result in improved educational outcomes.  Data reported for this measure are:   * comparable (subject to caveats) across jurisdictions and over time * complete for the current reporting period (subject to caveats). All required 2016 data are available for all jurisdictions. |
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Nationally in 2016, the apparent retention rate from year 10 to year 12 was 82.9 per cent, an increase from 75.6 per cent in 2007 (table 4A.25). From 2007 to 2016, the rate for government schools has increased from 70.5 per cent to 79.5 per cent and for non‑government schools from 84.1 per cent to 87.9 per cent respectively (tables 4A.26–27).

For the period 2007–2016, the apparent retention from year 10 to year 12 increased for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students at a greater rate than for non‑Indigenous students, albeit off a lower base. Nationally in 2016, the rate for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanderstudents was 60.9 per cent (an increase of 12.4 percentage points from 2007) and for non‑Indigenous students was 84.0 per cent (an increase of 7.4 percentage points from 2007) (figure 4.6).

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| Figure 4.6 Apparent retention rates from year 10 to year 12, full time students, by Indigenous status, 2007 to 2016**a, b, c** |
| |  | | --- | | More details can be found within the text surrounding this image. | |
| a The non‑Indigenous retention rate is the total area shaded for each year. b In 2016, the ACT apparent retention rate for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students was higher than for non‑Indigenous students by 1 percentage point. c See box 4.5 and table 4A.25 for detailed definitions, footnotes and caveats.  *Source*: ABS (2017) *Schools Australia 2016*, Cat. no. 4221.0; table 4A.25. |
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Consistent with the NYPR mandatory requirement that all young people participate in schooling until they complete year 10, the apparent retention rate from the commencement of secondary school (at year 7 or 8) to year 10 has remained above 97 per cent in all jurisdictions (other than the NT) since 2007 (table 4A.25). The retention rate for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students was also near to 100 per cent (97.2 per cent), but lower than that of non‑Indigenous students, although this varies across jurisdictions (table 4A.25).

Data on retention rates for all full time and part time students and for students from year 7 or 8 to year 12 are available in tables 4A.25–27.

#### Quality — Quality teaching

‘Quality teaching’ is an indicator of governments’ objective that school education deliver high quality teaching with a world‑class curriculum (box 4.6). A good quality curriculum provides the structure for the provision of quality learning (UNESCO‑IBE 2016), while teachers are the single most important ‘in‑school’ influence on student achievement (Hattie 2009). Teacher quality can influence student educational outcomes both directly and indirectly, by fostering a positive, inclusive and safe learning environment (Boon 2011).

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| Box 4.6 Quality teaching |
| ‘Quality teaching’ is defined in relation to the teaching environment, including the quality of the curriculum and the effectiveness of the teachers. Teachers are considered effective where they:   * create an environment where all students are expected to learn successfully * have a deep understanding of the curriculum and subjects they teach * have a repertoire of effective teaching strategies to meet student needs * direct their teaching to student needs and readiness * provide continuous feedback to students about their learning * reflect on their own practice and strive for continuous improvement (PC 2012).   This indicator is anticipated to be measured by student responses to survey questions on their perceptions of the teaching environment including the curriculum. High or increasing proportions of students indicating positive responses to the teaching environment are desirable.  Data are not yet available for reporting against this indicator. |
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### Efficiency

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. This chapter does not report on non‑government sources of funding, and so does not compare the efficiency of government and non‑government schools. Box 4.7 provides further information on the data used to report on the efficiency measures in this Report.

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| Box 4.7 School expenditure data reported in this chapter |
| Efficiency indicators in this chapter are based on financial year recurrent expenditure on government and non‑government schools by the Australian Government and State and Territory governments. Capital expenditure is generally excluded, but as Students First funding cannot be separated into capital and recurrent expenditure, these payments are treated as recurrent expenditure in this chapter. Expenditure relating to funding sources other than government (such as parent contributions and fees) are excluded. |
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| Box 4.7 (continued) |
| Sources of data — government recurrent expenditure on government schools  Total recurrent expenditure on government schools is unpublished data sourced from the National Schools Statistics Collection (NSSC), under the auspices of the Education Council:   * Each State and Territory government reports to the Education Council on its expenditure on government schools. Expenditure on government schools comprises: employee costs (including salaries, superannuation, workers compensation, payroll tax, termination and long service leave, sick leave); capital costs (depreciation and user cost of capital [UCC]); umbrella departmental costs; and other costs (including rent and utilities). The Education Council provides unpublished data on the UCC for government schools, imputed as 8 per cent of the written down value of assets (table 4A.13). * The Australian Government reports its allocation to each State and Territory for government schools, consistent with Treasury Final Budget Outcomes — including the Students First funding and a range of National Partnership payments (table 4A.12). * To avoid double counting, Australian Government allocations are subtracted from the State and Territory expenditure to identify ‘net’ State and Territory government expenditure (table 4A.10).   Sources of data — government recurrent expenditure on non‑government schools  Total recurrent expenditure on non‑government schools is a combination of unpublished data from the NSSC and State and Territory governments, and comprises the following:   * Each State and Territory government provides unpublished data on its contributions to non‑government schools (table 4A.10). * The Australian Government reports its allocation to each State and Territory for non‑government schools, consistent with Treasury Final Budget Outcomes — including the Students First funding and National Partnership payments see (table 4A.12).   Allocation of funding  Students First funding — Australian Government  From 2014 to 2017, Australian Government recurrent funding for all schools is transitioning under the *Australian Education Act 2013* from levels under the previous funding arrangements towards the Schooling Resource Standard funding arrangement levels. Funding is calculated with reference to a base amount plus loadings to target student and school disadvantage including students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds, students with disability, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, students with low English proficiency, and school size and location. For most non‑government schools, the base amount is discounted by the anticipated capacity of their school community to financially contribute towards the school’s operating costs. Commonwealth recurrent funding is provided to approved authorities for the purpose of providing school education. Although calculated to reflect the need of each student and school, the approved authority for the school is not required to spend that funding on any particular student or group of students; approved authorities have the flexibility to allocate the funding for the purpose of providing school education that best meets the needs of their students, taking into account other revenue sources and budgetary restrictions. |
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| Box 4.7 (continued) |
| State and Territory governments  In general, State and Territory government schools systems are funded based on a variety of formulas to determine a school’s recurrent or base allocation, with weightings and multipliers added for students facing disadvantage. For non‑government schools, State and Territory governments also provide funding for recurrent and targeted purposes, usually through per capita allocations. Indexation of costs is normally applied to these funding arrangements for both the government and non‑government school sectors. Changes in overall funding by State and Territory governments across years is affected by all these factors, including enrolment numbers and school size, location and staffing profiles.  User cost of capital (UCC)  The UCC is defined as the notional costs to governments of the funds tied up in capital (for example, land and buildings owned by government schools) used to produce services. The notional UCC makes explicit the opportunity cost of using government funds to own assets for the provision of services rather than investing elsewhere or retiring debt.  UCC is only reported for government schools (*not* non‑government schools). It is estimated at 8 per cent of the value of non‑current physical assets, which are re‑valued over time. |
| *Source*: ACARA (2017a); Australian Government Department of Education and Training (unpublished). |
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#### Inputs per output unit — Recurrent expenditure per student

‘Recurrent expenditure per student’ is an indicator of governments’ objective to provide school education services in an efficient manner (box 4.8).

| Box 4.8 Recurrent expenditure per student |
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| ‘Recurrent expenditure per student’ is defined as total government recurrent expenditure per FTE student, reported for government schools and for non‑government schools. Government recurrent expenditure per FTE student includes estimates for UCC for government schools (box 4.7). UCC is not included for non‑government schools.  FTE student numbers (table 4A.3) are drawn from the ABS publication *Schools Australia 2016* (ABS 2017) and averaged over two calendar years to match the financial year expenditure data.  Holding other factors constant, a low or decreasing government recurrent expenditure or staff expenditure per FTE student may represent better or improved efficiency.  Care should be taken in interpretation of efficiency data as:   * a number of factors beyond the control of governments, such as economies of scale, a high proportion of geographically remote students and/or a dispersed population, and migration across states and territories, may influence expenditure |
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| Box 4.8 (continued) |
| * while high or increasing expenditure per student may reflect deteriorating efficiency, it may also reflect changes in aspects of schooling (increasing school leaving age, improving outcomes for students with special needs, broader curricula or enhancing teacher quality), or the characteristics of the education environment (such as population dispersion).   Data reported for these measures are:   * comparable (subject to caveats) across jurisdictions and over time. (Note that as non‑government schools data do not account for UCC nor non‑government sources of funding, the data are *not comparable* for comparing the efficiency of government and non‑government schools) * complete for the current reporting period (subject to caveats). All required 2015‑16 data are available for all jurisdictions. |
| *Source*: ACARA (2017a); Australian Government Department of Education and Training (unpublished). |
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Nationally in 2015‑16, government recurrent expenditure per FTE student in all schools was $14 795. Between 2006‑07 and 2015‑16, real government expenditure per FTE student increased at an average rate of 1.6 per cent per year (table 4A.14).

##### Government schools

Nationally in 2015‑16, government recurrent expenditure (including UCC) was $17 275 per FTE student in government schools (excluding UCC this was $14 769). Between 2006‑07 and 2015‑16, real government expenditure (including UCC) per FTE student increased at an average rate of 1.5 per cent per year (figure 4.7).

In‑school expenditure per FTE student was higher for government secondary schools ($18 648 per FTE student) compared to government primary schools ($15 262 per FTE student). Out‑of‑school government expenditure per FTE student was substantially lower ($702 per FTE student) (table 4A.15).

##### Non‑government schools

Nationally in 2015‑16, government recurrent expenditure per FTE student in non‑government schools was $10 147 (does not include UCC). Between 2006‑07 and 2015‑16, real government expenditure per FTE student increased at an average rate of 2.4 per cent per year (figure 4.8).

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| Figure 4.7 Government real recurrent expenditure per FTE student (including UCC), government schools, 2006‑07 to 2015‑16 (2015‑16 dollars)**a** |
| |  | | --- | | More details can be found within the text surrounding this image. | |
| a See box 4.8 and table 4A.15 for detailed definitions, footnotes and caveats. |
| *Source*: ABS (2017) *Schools Australia 2016*, Cat. no. 4221.0; Education Council (unpublished) NSSC; table 4A.15. |
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| Figure 4.8 Government real recurrent expenditure per FTE student, non‑government schools, 2006‑07 to 2015‑16 (2015‑16 dollars)**a** |
| |  | | --- | | More details can be found within the text surrounding this image. | |
| a See box 4.8 and table 4A.14 for detailed definitions, footnotes and caveats. |
| *Source*: ABS (2017) *Schools Australia 2016*, Cat. no. 4221.0; Australian Government Department of Education and Training (unpublished); State and Territory governments (unpublished); table 4A.14. |
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##### Student‑to‑staff ratio

The student‑to‑staff ratio is the number of FTE students per FTE staff, for all staff and for teaching staff (see section 4.4 for definitions). (Note that the student‑to‑teacher ratio is not a measure of class size.)

Differences in the ‘student‑to‑staff ratio’ can provide some context to differences in the government recurrent expenditure per FTE student as a low or decreasing student‑to‑teacher ratio may lead to higher staff expenditure per student. However, additional teaching staff expenditure may also reflect differences in teacher salaries, the degree to which administrative work is undertaken by people classified as teachers (such as principals, deputy principals and senior teachers), or the level of other inputs to school education (for example, non‑teaching staff, computers, books and laboratory equipment).

Nationally in 2016, the student‑to‑teacher ratio at government schools (primary and secondary combined) was 14.0 students per teacher; for non‑government it was 13.2 (table 4A.17). The student‑to‑teacher ratio, for both government and non‑government schools, is generally lower for secondary schools than primary schools.

Nationally in 2016, the student to non‑teaching staff ratio at government schools (primary and secondary combined) was 34.2 students per staff member; for non‑government schools it was 28.5 students per staff member (table 4A.16). Non‑teaching staff (such as specialists, administrative and building operations staff) account for approximately 30 per cent of the FTE staff at schools (ABS 2017).

### Outcomes

Outcomes are the impact of services on the status of an individual or group (see chapter 1).

#### Student outcomes (national testing)

‘Student outcomes (national testing)’ is an indicator of governments’ objective that Australian schooling aims for all young Australians to become successful learners, confident and creative individuals, and active and informed citizens (box 4.9).

| Box 4.9 Student outcomes (national testing) |
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| ‘Student outcomes (national testing)’ is defined by measures drawn from the National Assessment Program — Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) and National Assessment Program (NAP) sample assessments.  All data are accompanied by confidence intervals. See section 4.4 for details on NAPLAN and NAP confidence intervals. |
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| Box 4.9 (continued) |
| National Assessment Program — Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN)  NAPLAN testing is undertaken by students in years 3, 5, 7 and 9. Measures are reported for the proportion of students at or above the national minimum standard in NAPLAN testing and mean scale score for reading, numeracy and writing.  Achieving (but not exceeding) the national minimum standard represents achievement of the basic elements of literacy or numeracy for the year level (ACARA 2017b). The mean scale score refers to a mean (average) score on a common national scale.  A high or increasing mean scale score or proportion of students achieving at or above the national minimum standard is desirable.  Data reported for these measures are:   * comparable (subject to caveats) across jurisdictions and over time * complete for the current reporting period (subject to caveats). All required 2017 data are available for all jurisdictions.   NAP Sample assessments  NAP national sample assessments are undertaken by students in year 6 and 10, on a triennial, rotating basis. Measures are reported for the proportion of students at or above the proficient standard in NAP assessments and mean scale score for:   * NAP civics and citizenship literacy * NAP Science literacy (testing undertaken by year 6 students only) * NAP information and communication technologies (ICT) literacy.   The proficient standards, which vary across the tests, are challenging but reasonable levels of performance, with students needing to demonstrate more than minimal or elementary skills expected at that year level to be regarded as reaching them.  A high or increasing mean scale score or proportion of students achieving at or above the proficiency standard is desirable.  Data reported for these measures are:   * comparable (subject to caveats) across jurisdictions and over time * complete for the most recent reporting period (subject to caveats). All required data are available for all jurisdictions for: 2016 (for NAP civics and citizenship literacy), 2015 (for NAP science literacy), and 2014 (for NAP ICT literacy). |
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In 2017, NAPLAN participation rates were at or above 90 per cent for most jurisdictions across testing domains and year levels. In all domains and year levels, a lower proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students than non‑Indigenous students participated in NAPLAN testing (ACARA 2017c). Students are counted as participating if they were assessed or deemed exempt (other students identified as absent or withdrawn are counted as not participating).

##### NAPLAN reading

Nationally in 2017, the proportion of students who achieved at or above the reading national minimum standard was:

* 94.9 (±0.2) for year 3 students
* 93.9 (±0.2) for year 5 students
* 94.0 (±0.3) for year 7 students
* 91.7 (±0.4) for year 9 students (figure 4.9)

The statistical significance of the difference in the proportion of students who achieved at or above the national minimum standard for reading in 2017, across states and territories, is provided in table 4A.28.

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| Figure 4.9 Proportion of students achieving at or above the reading national minimum standard, 2017**a, b** |
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| a Error bars represent the 95 per cent confidence interval associated with each NAPLAN point estimate (see section 4.4). b See box 4.9 and table 4A.28 for detailed definitions, footnotes and caveats. |
| *Source*: ACARA (2017) *NAPLAN Achievement in Reading, Writing, Language Conventions and Numeracy: National Report for 2017*; table 4A.28. |
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Nationally for year 3 and year 5 students, the proportion (and mean scale score) in 2017 was statistically significantly above that in 2008 but, there was no significant difference for years 7 or 9 (tables 4A.28–29).

###### Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students

In 2017, the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students who achieved at or above the national minimum standard for reading (and the mean scale score) was statistically significantly above 2008 for year levels 3 and 5 (no significant difference for years 7 and 9), but not statistically significantly different from 2016 (tables 4A.28–29).

Nationally in 2017, for all year levels, the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students that achieved the national minimum standard for reading (and the mean scale score) was significantly lower than for non‑Indigenous students, although results varied across jurisdictions (tables 4A.28–29). Figure 4.10 compares the 2017 NAPLAN reading results for year 5 students — the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students at or above the national minimum standard was 75.5 (±1.5) per cent, significantly lower than for non‑Indigenous students [95.1 (±0.2) per cent].

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| Figure 4.10 Proportion of year 5 students achieving at or above the reading national minimum standard, 2017**a, b** |
| | More details can be found within the text surrounding this image. | | --- | |
| a Error bars represent the 95 per cent confidence interval associated with each NAPLAN point estimate (see section 4.4). b See box 4.9 and table 4A.28 for detailed definitions, footnotes and caveats. |
| *Source*: ACARA (2017) *NAPLAN Achievement in Reading, Writing, Language Conventions and Numeracy: National Report for 2017*; table 4A.28. |
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###### Remoteness

Nationally in 2017, reading outcomes declined with remoteness. For example, in year 5 the proportion of students who achieved at or above the national minimum standard decreased from 95.0 (±0.2) per cent in major city areas to 52.7 (±5.8) per cent in very remote areas (table 4A.28). For Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students the decline is steeper, resulting in a widening of the gap in reading outcomes as remoteness increased.

###### Socioeconomic status

Data by parental education and parental occupation for 2017 are included in   
tables 4A.30–31. In general, reading outcomes were lower for students with parents with lower levels of parental education and parental occupation. Data for 2011–2016 are available in previous reports.

##### NAPLAN Numeracy

Nationally in 2017, the proportion of students who achieved at or above the numeracy national minimum standard was:

* 95.4 (±0.2) for year 3 students
* 95.4 (±0.2) for year 5 students
* 95.4 (±0.3) for year 7 students
* 95.8 (±0.3) for year 9 students(figure 4.11)

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| Figure 4.11 Proportion of students achieving at or above the numeracy national minimum standard, 2017**a, b** |
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| a Error bars represent the 95 per cent confidence interval associated with each NAPLAN point estimate (see section 4.4). b See box 4.9 and table 4A.36 for detailed definitions, footnotes and caveats. |
| *Source*: ACARA (2017) *NAPLAN Achievement in Reading, Writing, Language Conventions and Numeracy: National Report for 2017*; table 4A.36. |
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The statistical significance of the difference in the proportion of students who achieved at or above the national minimum standard for numeracy in 2017, across states and territories, is provided in table 4A.36.

Nationally for year 5 and year 9 students, the proportion (mean scale score for year 5) in 2017 was statistically significantly above that in 2008 but, there was no significant difference for years 3 and 7 (years 3, 7 and 9 for mean scale scores) (tables 4A.36–37).

###### Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students

In 2017, the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students achieving at or above the national minimum standard in numeracy was statistically above 2008 for years 5 and 9, but there was no significant change for years 3 and 7 (table 4A.36).

Nationally in 2017, for all year levels, the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students who achieved the national minimum standard (and mean scale score) was significantly lower than for non‑Indigenous students, although results varied across jurisdictions (table 4A.36).

###### Remoteness

Nationally in 2017, numeracy outcomes declined with remoteness. For example, in year 5 the proportion of students who achieved at or above the national minimum standard decreased from 96.2 (±0.2) per cent in major cities to 60.7 (±5.3) per cent in very remote areas (table 4A.36).

For Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students the decline is steeper, resulting in a widening of the gap in numeracy outcomes as remoteness increased. Figure 4.12 shows the results for year 5 numeracy outcomes by Indigenous status and geolocation.

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| Figure 4.12 National proportion of year 5 students achieving at or above the numeracy national minimum standard, by Indigenous status and geolocation, 2017**a, b** |
| |  | | --- | | More details can be found within the text surrounding this image. | |
| a Error bars represent the 95 per cent confidence interval associated with each NAPLAN point estimate (see section 4.4). b See box 4.9 and table 4A.36 for detailed definitions, footnotes and caveats. |
| *Source*: ACARA (2017) *NAPLAN Achievement in Reading, Writing, Language Conventions and Numeracy: National Report for 2017*; table 4A.36. |
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###### Socioeconomic status

State and territory data on the proportions of students achieving at or above the national minimum standard and mean scale scores in numeracy assessment for years 3, 5, 7 and 9 by parental education and parental occupation for 2017 are included in tables 4A.38–39. Similar to NAPLAN reading outcomes, numeracy outcomes were generally lower for students with lower levels of parental education and parental occupation. Data for 2011–2016 were included in the previous Reports.

##### NAPLAN writing

Tables 4A.32–35 provide data on the mean scale scores and the proportions of year 3, 5, 7 and 9 students achieving at or above the national minimum standard for writing. Data comparing outcomes from 2011 and 2016 to 2017 by Indigenous status, for mean scale scores and for the proportion at and above the national minimum standard are included for each state and territory, and nationally in tables 4A.32–35.

##### NAP Civics and citizenship literacy assessment

Nationally in 2016, of year 6 students and year 10 students, 55 (±2.4) per cent and 38 (±2.7) per cent, respectively, achieved at the proficient standard or above for their year level (figure 4.13). The proportion of students that achieved the proficient standard or above was similar to previous assessments for year 6 students, but had declined for year 10 students from 2010 and 2013(table 4A.43).

Mean scale scores for NAP civics and citizenship literacy are in table 4A.44. Additional data by achievement level, sex, Indigenous status, parental occupation, geolocation and for students who speak languages other than English at home are included in table 4A.45.

| Figure 4.13 Proportion of students achieving at or above the proficient standard in civics and citizenship literacy, 2007, 2010, 2013 and 2016**a, b** |
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| | Year 6 Students  More details can be found within the text surrounding this image. Year 10 Students  More details can be found within the text surrounding this image. | | --- | |
| a Error bars represent the 95 per cent confidence interval associated with each NAP sample point estimate (see section 4.4). b See box 4.9 and table 4A.43 for detailed definitions, footnotes and caveats. |
| *Source*: ACARA (2017) *National Assessment Program Civics and Citizenship Report 2016,* Sydney; table 4A.43. |
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Mean scale scores for NAP civics and citizenship literacy are in table 4A.44. Additional data by achievement level, sex, Indigenous status, parental occupation, geolocation and for students who speak languages other than English at home are included in table 4A.45.

##### NAP Science literacy assessment

Nationally in 2015, 55.1 (±1.8) per cent of year 6 students achieved at or above the proficient standard, similar to previous years (figure 4.14).

| Figure 4.14 Proportion of year 6 students achieving at or above the proficient standard in science literacy, 2006, 2009, 2012 and 2015**a, b** |
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| | More details can be found within the text surrounding this image. | | --- | |
| a Error bars represent the 95 per cent confidence interval associated with each NAP point estimate (see section 4.4). b See box 4.9 and table 4A.40 for detailed definitions, footnotes and caveats. |
| *Source*: ACARA (2017) *National Assessment Program Science Year 6 Report 2015,* Sydney; table 4A.40. |
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Mean scale scores for NAP science literacy are in table 4A.41. Additional data by achievement level, sex, Indigenous status, geolocation and for students who speak languages other than English at home are included in table 4A.42.

##### NAP ICT literacy assessment

Nationally in 2014, the proportion of participating year 6 and year 10 students who achieved at or above the proficient standards in ICT literacy performance was 55 (±2.5) per cent and 52 (±2.5) per cent respectively (tables 4A.46–48).

#### Attainment

‘Attainment’ is an indicator of governments’ objective that Australian schooling aims for all young Australians to become successful learners, confident and creative individuals, and active and informed citizens (box 4.10).

| Box 4.10 Attainment |
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| ‘Attainment’ (attainment rate) is defined as 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 that could have attended year 12 that year, calculated as the estimated resident population aged 15–19 divided by five.  This indicator should be interpreted with caution as:   * assessment, reporting and criteria for obtaining a year 12 or equivalent certificate varies across jurisdictions * students completing their secondary education in technical and further education institutes are included in reporting for some jurisdictions and not in others * the aggregation of all postcode locations into three socioeconomic status categories (as a disaggregation for socioeconomic status) — high, medium and low — means there may be significant variation within the categories. The low category, for example, will include locations ranging from those of extreme disadvantage to those of moderate disadvantage.   A high or increasing completion rate is desirable.  Data reported for this measure are:   * comparable (subject to caveats) within some jurisdictions over time but are not comparable across jurisdictions. WA data for 2014 reflect a change to the pre‑year 1 entry age in 2002 resulting in approximately half the normal intake of students for that year level * complete for the current reporting period (subject to caveats). All required 2016 data are available for all jurisdictions. |
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Nationally in 2016, the year 12 certificate attainment rate for all students was 76 per cent (table 4A.55). The rates for students from low and medium socioeconomic backgrounds (73 per cent and 75 per cent, respectively) were below those for students from a high socioeconomic background (80 per cent) (figure 4.15). This pattern varied across jurisdictions.

Nationally in 2016, the attainment rate was similar across major cities, regional areas, and remote areas (77 per cent, 74 per cent, and 78 per cent, respectively), but was substantially lower in very remote areas (43 per cent) (table 4A.56). This pattern varied across jurisdictions.

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| Figure 4.15 Year 12 certificate attainment rates, by socioeconomic background, 2016**a** |
| |  | | --- | | More details can be found within the text surrounding this image. | |
| a See box 4.10 and table 4A.55 for detailed definitions, footnotes and caveats. |
| *Source*: Australian Government Department of Education and Training (unpublished); table 4A.55. |
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The Child care, education and training sector overview includes data on the proportions of the population aged 20–24 and 20–64 years having attained at least a year 12 or equivalent or AQF Certificate II or above (that is school and non‑school education and training to year 12 or above) (tables BA.9–10).

#### Equity of outcomes

‘Equity of outcomes’ is an indicator of governments’ objective that Australian schooling reduces educational disadvantage (box 4.11).

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| Box 4.11 Equity of outcomes |
| ‘Equity of outcomes’ is defined as the difference in the scores for students at the median and the lower end of national testing for literacy and numeracy.  The test score difference between students undertaking standardised tests (such as NAPLAN or Programme for International Student Assessment [PISA]) can be used to measure the relative performance gap between students at the median and the lower end of achievement. (For example, see Bruckauf, Zlata; Chzhen, Yekaterina (2016).)  A low or decreasing gap between poor performing students and the median performers (and median score not reducing over time) is desirable.  Data are not yet available for reporting against this indicator. |
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#### Student outcomes (international testing)

‘Student outcomes (international testing)’ is an indicator of governments’ objective that Australian schooling aims for students to excel by international standards (box 4.12).

| Box 4.12 Student outcomes (international testing) |
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| ‘Student outcomes (international testing)’ is defined by Australia’s participation in three international tests:   * Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) — conducted by the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA) as a quinquennial international assessment — measures the proportion of sampled year 4 students achieving at or above the IEA intermediate international benchmark, the national proficient standard in Australia for reading. * Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) — conducted by the Organisation for Economic Co‑operation and Development as a triennial international assessment — measures the proportion of sampled 15 year old students achieving at or above the national proficient standard (set to level 3) on the PISA combined scales for reading, mathematical and scientific literacy. * Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) — conducted by the IEA as a quadrennial international assessment — measures the proportion of sampled year 4 and year 8 students achieving at or above the IEA intermediate international benchmark, the national proficient standard in Australia for maths and science.   A high or increasing proportion of students achieving at or above the national proficient standard, or a high or increasing mean scale score is desirable.  Data reported for these measures are:   * comparable (subject to caveats) across jurisdictions and over time * complete for the current reporting period (subject to caveats). All required 2016 and 2015 data are available for all jurisdictions. |
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##### Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS)

Nationally in 2016, the proportion of year 4 students that achieved at or above the intermediate international benchmark (Australian national proficient standard) for reading literacy was 80.9 (±2.0) per cent, a significant increase from 2011 although results vary by jurisdiction (figure 4.16 and table 4A.54).

Of the countries that participated in thePIRLS assessment, Australian year 4 students:

* significantly outperformed students from 24 other counties
* were significantly outperformed by students from 13 other countries (ACER 2017a).

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| Figure 4.16 Proportion of year 4 students achieving at or above the intermediate international benchmark in PIRLS assessments, 2011 and 2016**a, b** |
| | More details can be found within the text surrounding this image. | | --- | |
| a Error bars represent the 95 per cent confidence interval associated with each point estimate. b See box 4.12 and table 4A.54 for detailed definitions, footnotes and caveats. |
| *Source*: ACER (2017) *PIRLS 2016: Reporting Australia’s results*, ACER, Melbourne; table 4A.54. |
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##### Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA)

Nationally in 2015, the proportion of Australian 15 year old students who achieved ‘level 3’ or above (the national proficient standard for Australia) in:

* reading literacy was 60.6 (±1.4) per cent (table 4A.49)
* mathematical literacy was 55.4 (±1.6) per cent (table 4A.50)
* scientific literacy was 60.8 (±1.2) per cent (table 4A.51).

Across the three testing domains, the proportions of Australian 15 year old students who achieved at or above the national proficient standard in 2015 were significantly lower than the proportions achieved in the last major domain cycle (2009 for reading, 2012 for mathematics, and 2006 for science).

Detailed outcomes of the 2015 PISA assessment are available in *PISA 2015: Reporting Australia’s results* (ACER 2017b).

##### Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS)

Nationally in 2015, the proportion of students that achieved at or above the intermediate international benchmark (the national proficient standard for Australia) for the TIMSS:

* mathematics assessment was 70.2 (±2.6) per cent for year 4 students and 64.4 (±3.1) per cent for year 8 students (table 4A.52)
* science assessment was 75.4 (±2.7) per cent for year 4 students and 68.8 (±2.6) per cent for year 8 students (table 4A.53).

Nationally in 2015, a similar proportion of students achieved at or above the intermediate international benchmark in 2015 compared to previous assessments, other than for the year 4 science assessment, where a significantly higher the proportion of students achieved the benchmark compared to 2011. Results varied across jurisdictions (tables 4A.52–53).

Detailed outcomes of the 2015 TIMSS assessment are available in *TIMSS 2015: Reporting Australia’s results* (ACER 2017c).

#### Destination

‘Destination’ is an indicator of governments’ objective that Australian schooling aims for all young Australians to become active and informed citizens positioning them to live fulfilling, productive and responsible lives (box 4.13).

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| Box 4.13 Destination |
| ‘Destination’ is defined as the proportion of school leavers aged 15–24 years who left school in the previous year, who are participating in further education, training and/or employment. Data are reported for school leavers whose highest level of school completed was year 12, or year 11 and below.  A higher or increasing proportion of school leavers participating in further education, training and/or employment is desirable.  Data are sourced from the Survey of Education and Work and for this indicator relate to the jurisdiction in which the young person was resident the year of the survey and not necessarily the jurisdiction in which they attended school.  Data reported for this measure are:   * comparable (subject to caveats) across jurisdictions and within jurisdictions over time * complete for the current reporting period. All required 2016 data are available for all jurisdictions. |
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The proportion of all school leavers aged 15–24 years who left school in 2016 and who in 2017 were fully engaged in work or study was 69.3 (±4.5) per cent (table 4A.57). Proportions were higher for year 12 completers (73.2 [±5.3] per cent), compared to those who completed year 11 or below (56.0 [±3.8] per cent) (figure 4.17).

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| Figure 4.17 Proportion of school leavers fully engaged in education or work (15–24 year olds), 2017**a, b** |
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| a See box 4.13 and table 4A.57 for detailed definitions, footnotes and caveats. b Data with relative standard errors above 50 per cent are considered unreliable. Data have not been published for year 11 and below school leavers for Tasmania, the ACT and the NT. |
| *Source*: ABS (2017) *Education and Work, 2017*, TableBuilder; table 4A.57. |
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The Child care, education and training sector overview includes additional data on the participation of school leavers aged 17–24 years in work and study, including data on the Indigenous status of school leavers (tables BA.2–4).

Table 4A.58 summarises school leaver destination survey results from six jurisdictions. Each jurisdiction uses different research methods and data collection instruments, and the surveys are not designed for comparative national reporting. These data provide supplementary information to the measures above.

## 4.4 Definitions of key terms

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| Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students | Students are considered to be Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander origin if they identify 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. |
| Comparability | Data are considered comparable if (subject to caveats) they can be used to inform an assessment of comparative performance. Typically, data are considered comparable when they are collected in the same way and in accordance with the same definitions. For comparable indicators or measures, significant differences in reported results allow an assessment of differences in performance, rather than being the result of anomalies in the data. |
| Completeness | Data are considered complete if all required data are available for all jurisdictions that provide the service. |
| Confidence interval | A confidence interval is a specified interval, with the sample statistic at the centre, within which the corresponding population value can be said to lie with a given level of confidence (chapter 1). |
| Confidence intervals (for NAPLAN and NAP sample) | The NAPLAN and NAP sample confidence intervals are calculated by ACARA and take into account two factors:   * *Sampling error* — The sampling error accounts for adjustments for non‑response and measures the variance across students. * *Measurement error* — The NAPLAN assessments can only sample a small part of the literacy or numeracy curriculum so as not to place too much burden on each students’ time. Consequently, the result of the NAPLAN assessments will contain some uncertainty *for each student*. This uncertainty is referred to as measurement error.   Estimates of sampling and measurement errors are combined to obtain final standard errors and confidence intervals to determine statistical significance of mean differences and percentage differences in NAPLAN and NAP sample performance *within a report year*.  For analysing difference across years, a further source of error needs to be accounted for:   * *Equating error* — The equating error measures the variance related to the impact of changes to the NAPLAN secure equating tests between years. That is, how closely the equating tests align between years.   To evaluate statistical significance of mean and percentage differences between years, ACARA tests the change between years taking into account the equating, sampling and measurement errors. However, the equating error is not represented within the reported confidence interval. |
| Foundation year (pre‑year 1) | The first year of primary school.  Naming conventions for the foundation year differ between each State and Territory. Foundation year is known as:   * Kindergarten in New South Wales and the Australian Capital Territory * Preparatory in Victoria, Queensland and Tasmania * Reception in South Australia * Pre‑primary in Western Australia * Transition in the Northern Territory, and * Foundation year in the Australian Curriculum. |
| Full time equivalent student | 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. |
| Full time student | A person who satisfies the definition of a student and undertakes a workload equivalent to, or greater than, that usually undertaken by a student of that year level. The definition of full time student varies across jurisdictions. |
| Geographic classification (ASGS) | From 2016, Student remoteness is based on the Australian Statistical Geography Standard (ASGS) Remoteness Structure. The extended version of the Accessibility/Remoteness Index of Australia (ARIA+), developed by the University of Adelaide’s Australian Population and Migration Research Centre, is the standard ABS‑endorsed measure of remoteness on ABS postal areas. Student remoteness (ARIA+) regions use the same ARIA+ ranges as the ABS remoteness areas and are therefore an approximation of the ABS remoteness areas. For more details of ARIA+ refer to <www.abs.gov.au/websitedbs/d3310114.nsf/home/remoteness+structure>.  The remoteness categories are:   * Major cities of Australia * Inner regional areas of Australia * Outer regional areas of Australia * Remote areas of Australia * Very remote areas of Australia. |
| ASGS  (continued) | Geographic classifications prior to 2016 are based on the MCEECDYA standard. Data are not directly comparable. (The exception is Census and survey data which were already using the ASGS, and prior to that the Australian Standard Geographic Classification). |
| Geographic classification (Ministerial Council for Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs [MCEECDYA]) | Prior to 2016, Geographic categorisation is based on the agreed MCEECDYA 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.   * *Metropolitan zone*: Mainland State capital city regions and Major urban Statistical Districts (100 000 or more population). * *Provincial zone*: Provincial city statistical districts and Darwin statistical division (25 000–99 999 population); and Other provincial areas (Collection District [CD] ARIA+ score < 5.92). * Inner provincial areas (CD ARIA+ score < 2.4) * Outer provincial areas (CD ARIA+ score > 2.4 and < 5.92) * *Remote zone*: Remote zone (CD ARIA+ score > 5.92) * Remote areas (CD ARIA+ score > 5.92 and < 10.53) * Very remote areas (CD ARIA+ score > 10.53) |
| In‑school expenditure | Costs relating directly to schools. Staff, for example, are categorised as being either in‑school or out‑of‑school. They are categorised as in‑school if they usually spend more than half of their time actively engaged in duties at one or more schools or ancillary education establishments. In‑school employee related expenses, for example, represent all salaries, wages awards, allowances and related on costs paid to in‑school staff. |
| Language background other than English student | A status that is determined by administrative processes that vary across jurisdictions. For NAPLAN data, a student is considered to have a ‘Language background other than English’ if either the student or parents/guardians speak a language other than English at home. Separately, data are also sourced from the 2011 Census of Population and Housing. |
| Out‑of‑school expenditure | Costs relating indirectly to schools. (See in‑school expenditure) |
| Pre‑year 1 | See ‘foundation year’. |
| Part time student | A student undertaking a workload that is less than that specified as being full time in the jurisdiction. |
| Real expenditure | Nominal expenditure adjusted for changes in prices, using the General Government Final Consumption Expenditure chain price deflator and expressed in terms of final year prices. |
| **School** | A school is an establishment that satisfies all of the following criteria:   * Its major activity is the provision of full time day primary or secondary education or the provision of primary or secondary distance education. * It is headed by a principal (or equivalent) responsible for its internal operation. * It is possible for students to enrol for a minimum of four continuous weeks, excluding breaks for school vacations. |
| Science literacy | 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. |
| Socioeconomic status | As identified in footnotes to specific tables. |
| Source of income | In this chapter, income from either the Australian Government or State and Territory governments. Australian Government expenditure is derived from specific purpose payments (current and capital) for schools. This funding indicates the level of monies allocated, not necessarily the level of expenditure incurred in any given financial year. The data therefore provide only a broad indication of the level of Australian Government funding. |
| Special school | A special school satisfies the definition of a school and requires one or more of the following characteristics to be exhibited by the student before enrolment is allowed:   * mental or physical disability or impairment * slow learning ability * social or emotional problems * in custody, on remand or in hospital (ABS 2017). |
| Student‑to‑staff ratios | 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. |
| Student | A person who is formally (officially) enrolled or registered at a school, and is also active in a primary, secondary or special education program at that school. Students at special schools are allocated to primary and secondary on the basis of their actual grade (if assigned); whether or not they are receiving primary or secondary curriculum instruction; or, as a last resort, whether they are of primary or secondary school age. |
| Students with disability | Students included in the annual system reports to the Department of Education and Training. The definitions of students with disabilities are based on individual State and Territory criteria, so data are not comparable across jurisdictions. |
| Teaching staff | 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). For the NT, Assistant Teachers in Homeland Learning Centres and community school are included as teaching staff. |
| Ungraded student | A student in ungraded classes who cannot readily be allocated to a year of education. These students are included as either ungraded primary or ungraded secondary, according to the typical age level in each jurisdiction. |
| VET in Schools | VET in Schools refers to nationally recognised VET qualifications or accredited courses undertaken by school students as part of the senior secondary certificate. The training that students receive reflects specific industry competency standards and is delivered by an external Registered Training Organisation (RTO), the school or school sector as an RTO and/or the school in partnership with an RTO. VET courses may require structured work placements and may be undertaken as a school‑based apprenticeship or traineeship. |

## 4.5 References

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