# 7 Education and training

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| Strategic areas for action |
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| Governance and leadership and culture |  | Early child development |  | Education and training |  | Healthy lives |  | Economic participation |  | Home environment |  | Safe and supportive communities |
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| 7.1 Year 1 to 10 attendance7.2 Teacher quality | 7.3 School engagement7.4 Transition from school to work |
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Education is a life‑long activity, beginning with learning and development in the home through to the more formal settings of school education, vocational education and training (VET) and higher education. Education and training aims to develop the capacities and talents of students, so they have the necessary knowledge, understanding, skills and values for a productive and rewarding life. Actions in this strategic area can help strengthen communities and regions both economically and socially, and there are strong links between higher levels of education and improved health outcomes.

The indicators in this strategic area for action focus on the key factors that contribute to positive education and training outcomes, as well as measures of the outcomes themselves:

* school attendance (section 7.1) — there is a direct relationship between days attending school and academic performance
* teacher quality (section 7.2) — the quality of teaching is a key determinant of student outcomes. However, defining and measuring teacher quality is difficult. This section discusses research into the determinants of teacher quality and identifies data that could be used for future reporting
* school engagement (section 7.3) — school attendance alone is unlikely to be enough to improve students’ educational outcomes. Although defining and measuring student engagement with schooling is complex, research suggests that relevant dimensions include positive self‑identity, belonging, participation, and attendance
* transition from school to work (section 7.4) — the transition from school to work is a critical period. Young people who are actively engaged in education and training, or employed, are at a lower risk of long term disadvantage.

Several COAG targets and headline indicators reflect the importance of education and training:

* early childhood education (section 4.3)
* reading, writing and numeracy (section 4.4)
* year 12 attainment (section 4.5)
* post‑secondary education — participation and attainment (section 4.7).

Other COAG targets and headline indicators can be directly influenced by education and training outcomes:

* employment (section 4.6)
* household and individual income (section 4.9).

Outcomes in the education and training area can be affected by outcomes in several other strategic areas, or can influence outcomes in other areas:

* governance, leadership and culture (governance capacity and skills) (chapter 5)
* early child development (basic skills for life and learning, ear health) (chapter 6)
* healthy lives (access to primary health care and fewer potentially preventable hospitalisations will affect education outcomes, while education outcomes can influence tobacco consumption and harm, and obesity and nutrition) (chapter 8)
* economic participation (employment and occupation, and home ownership) (chapter 9).

#### Attachment tables

Attachment tables for this chapter are identified in references throughout this chapter by an ‘A’ suffix (for example, table 7A.1.1). These tables can be found on the Review web page (www.pc.gov.au/gsp), or users can contact the Secretariat directly.

## 7.1 Year 1 to 10 attendance[[1]](#footnote-1)

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| Box 7.1.1 Key messages |
| * In May 2014, COAG agreed to a target to close the gap in school attendance between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and non‑Indigenous children within 5 years (COAG 2014). However, nationally comparable data were not available for this report.
* Years 5 and 10 have been selected to represent the middle (primary) and later (secondary) years of schooling.
* Within individual school sectors within a State or Territory in 2013, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students generally had lower attendance than non‑Indigenous students, and this difference was larger in year 10 compared to year 5 (tables 7A.1.1–21).
* From 2007 to 2013, attendance rates for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in year 5 were fairly stable in government schools, but decreased for year 10 (tables 7A.1.1–21). Attendance rates in Catholic and independent schools fluctuated over time with no clear trend.
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| Box 7.1.2 Measure of Year 1 to 10 attendance |
| There is one main measure for this indicator (aligned with the associated NIRA indicator). * *Student attendance* 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, for children enrolled full time in years 1 to 10. Data are sourced from the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) National Schools Attendance Collection, with the most recent available data for 2013 (State and Territory; school sector).

Data are of acceptable accuracy within individual school sectors within a State or Territory, but are currently not comparable across school sectors or states and territories, due to differences in collection and reporting processes. |
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COAG has identified student attendance as one of the progress measures for the Closing the Gap target of halving the gap in year 12 or equivalent attainment by 2020. In addition, as part of the 2014 Closing the Gap report release (Australian Government 2014), the Prime Minister proposed a new target to close the gap in school attendance within five years. This is to be accomplished by all schools achieving a minimum 90 per cent attendance rate, regardless of their proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. COAG agreed the new target in May 2014 (COAG 2014). However, detailed measures are yet to be determined.

National and international research identify that regular school attendance is important to achieving core skills, such as literacy and numeracy (Balfanz and Byrnes 2012; Purdie and Buckley 2010; UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre 2004). The Western Australian Aboriginal Child Health Survey 2000–2002 showed a direct relationship between the number of days absent from school and academic performance (Zubrick et al. 2006). A 2006 study found that school attendance was influenced by three main factors — parental insistence that children go to school, teacher quality and bullying and teasing (DEWR 2006; see also Taylor 2004) (teacher quality is discussed in section 7.2). Indigenous students are less likely to have parental support, such as help with homework, compared with non‑indigenous children (UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre 2004). Research highlights that attendance at school is necessary but it alone is not sufficient to achieve improved educational outcomes (Hancock et al. 2013; Mellor and Corrigan 2004), and other factors such as how engaged a student is at school is also important. Student engagement with schooling is discussed in more detail in section 7.3.

### Student attendance

In Australia in 2013, school attendance was compulsory for children from the age of 6 years (5 years in WA[[2]](#footnote-2) and Tasmania), although children may start school at an age younger than the compulsory age. Most children commence full time schooling in the grade preceding Year 1 (pre year 1).

As part of the Compact with Young Australians, COAG implemented a National Youth Participation Requirement, which commenced on 1 January 2010 (COAG 2009). Young people are required to:

* participate in schooling (or an approved equivalent) until they complete year 10
* following year 10, participate full time (at least 25 hours per week) in education, training or employment, or a combination of these activities, until 17 years of age.

Data on student attendance rates across all school sectors for the period 2007–2013 are available in tables 7A.1.1–21. Years 5 and 10 have been selected to represent the middle (primary) and later (secondary) years of schooling. Although attendance rates cannot be directly compared across jurisdictions or school sectors (government, independent or Catholic), some broad generalisations can be drawn from the data. Across each State and Territory and school sector in 2013:

* Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students generally had lower attendance rates than non‑Indigenous students, and this difference was larger in year 10 than in year 5
* attendance rates for both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and non‑Indigenous students generally declined from year 5 to year 10
* in government schools, from 2007 to 2013, there was little change in attendance rates for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in year 5 but the rates decreased for year 10 students (6 percentage points or less for each jurisdiction except the NT, which fell 13 percentage points). Attendance rates in Catholic and independent schools fluctuated over time with no clear trend.

Northern Territory attendance rates by geolocation are available for the first two terms of 2013. These data are not directly comparable to other data in this report. In Term 1, attendance rates for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students were highest in provincial locations (85 per cent), and lower in remote and very remote locations (75 per cent and 58 per cent respectively). The attendance rates for non‑Indigenous students were stable across remoteness locations (provincial 92 per cent, remote 90 per cent, and very remote 91 per cent). Term 2 data showed a similar pattern. (NT Department of Education 2014)

Data are reported by jurisdiction, by school sector, and for each year of schooling in tables 7A.1.1–21.

### Things that work

A literature review for the Closing the Gap Clearinghouse found very few high quality evaluations of programs that were aimed at increasing attendance (Purdie and Buckley 2010). However, the review found that a common feature of successful school attendance programs was collaboration between public agencies and the community in program design and decision‑making (often by engaging parents or community based organisations).

### Future directions in data

Data comparability issues across jurisdictions and school sectors limit the usefulness of the existing data. ACARA, in consultation with jurisdictions, has developed National Standards for Student Attendance Data Reporting (National Standards) which were endorsed by the Standing Council on School Education and Early Childhood (SCSEEC) in December 2012. The National Standards specify reporting by Indigenous status by geographic location (geographic location not available in current data). It is anticipated that data for all jurisdictions except NSW will be available for reporting according to the new standards from 2015. Data from NSW are expected to be available from 2016. Further work will be needed to determine whether amendments to the National Standards are required to address reporting requirements for the new COAG target.

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## 7.2 Teacher quality[[3]](#footnote-3)

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| Box 7.2.1 Key message |
| * Teacher quality is considered the most important ‘in‑school’ influence on student educational outcomes. However, no measures or data are currently available for reporting against this indicator.
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While a lack of systematic evaluation makes it difficult to identify the most effective combination of measures to address educational disadvantage, it is clear that improving teacher quality overall is an important precondition (PC 2012). 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). However, student educational outcomes (including reading, writing and literacy, covered in section 4.4, and year 12 attainment, covered in section 4.5) are also affected by a range of other factors such as family life, student motivation and ability (Biddle and Cameron 2012), and school resourcing (Sullivan, Perry and McConney 2013).

Schools with higher proportions of disadvantaged students often report persistent difficulties in attracting and retaining teachers, leaders and support staff who have the skills, knowledge and capabilities to appropriately meet the learning needs of these students (PC 2012). Schools in disadvantaged areas often have a high proportion of teachers who are recent graduates, as well as a high staff turnover, which can impede student learning. The low quantity and quality of housing in disadvantaged areas, as well as the unpredictability of the social environment can contribute to the difficulties in attracting and retaining teachers. Such problems are particularly severe in remote Indigenous schools (Brasche and Harrington 2012).

Quality teachers work closely with their peers and other school workers, recognise the diverse ways that students learn, challenge them by setting high expectations, provide them with continuous feedback and bring to the classroom a deep knowledge of the subject matter (box 7.2.2).

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| Box 7.2.2 What makes for quality teaching |
| Fully understanding what constitutes quality teaching remains an ongoing policy challenge. This is partly due to the diverse ways that individual students learn. Mapping the professional dimensions (content and pedagogy) and personal capability dimensions of teaching is also complex. Even so, there are some recurring themes in the available evidence.In a synthesis of the research evidence, Professor Geoff Masters concluded that highly effective teachers are those who: * create an environment where all students are expected to learn successfully
* have a deep understanding of the subjects they teach
* 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.

The particular characteristics of quality teachers of Indigenous students can include cultural awareness, awareness of individual student needs and setting ambitious learning goals. |
| *Source*: PC 2012, *Schools Workforce - Productivity Commission Research Report*, http://www.pc.gov.au/projects/study/education-workforce/schools/report (accessed 18 February 2014). |
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Improving teacher quality is part of COAG’s strategy to close the gap in educational outcomes between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non‑Indigenous students (MCEECDYA 2010) and is a priority under the *National Education Agreement* (Council of Australian Governments 2012). The *National Partnership Agreement on Improving Teacher Quality* (which ended 31 December 2013) targeted a series of reforms aimed at improving teacher and school leader quality for all students, and in particular, for students in disadvantaged Indigenous, rural/remote and hard to staff schools (Council of Australian Governments 2009).

A significant outcome of the National Partnership was the *National Professional Standards* *for Teachers* (now known as the *Australian Professional Standards for Teachers*), which provide a nationally consistent basis to recognise teacher quality levels. The standards outline what teachers should know and be able to do and are grouped in to three domains of teaching: professional knowledge, professional practice, and professional engagement. These are then separated into descriptors at four professional career stages: Graduate, Proficient, Highly Accomplished and Lead which reflect the continuum of a teacher’s developing professional expertise. The standards require that all teachers demonstrate professional expertise when teaching Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students (AITSL 2011).

Data on teacher accreditation are not currently available. However, subject to data availability in the future, measures of initial accreditation and then progression through career stages may be considered for future reports.

The initial National Teacher Workforce Dataset (NTWD) collected data from mid-2012 to mid-2013, and may provide baseline data on qualification, registration and employment status of teachers. The initial NTWD includes some basic data on teachers’ Indigenous status, and found that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers were less likely than non-Indigenous teachers to have postgraduate qualifications, and that the conversion from graduate to teaching or applying for teaching is lower for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers than for non-Indigenous teachers (although the reasons for this are not currently known). However, for teachers with an education qualification (Bachelor, Graduate Diploma or Diploma in Education), the proportion going on to complete further qualifications is similar for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers and non‑Indigenous teachers (4 to 5 per cent) (Ernst and Young 2014).

### Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander school teachers

Increasing the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers could help foster student engagement and improve educational outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

In 2013, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians made up a much lower proportion of teachers (primary 1.1 per cent and secondary 0.8 per cent) than students (primary 5.1 per cent and secondary 4.5 per cent) (ABS 2013; MATSITI 2014; McKenzie et al. 2014; table 5A.6.1 in this report) Whilst these proportions were similar in 2010 (McKenzie et al. 2011), a notable area of growth since 2010 was among primary school leaders, where the proportion who identified as being of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander origin increased from near zero to 1.1 per cent in 2013 (McKenzie et al. 2014). Section 5.6 on Indigenous cultural studies contains further information on the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education workforce.

### Future directions in data

Under the (now ceased) National Partnership Agreement on Teacher Quality, two new data collections related to the teacher workforce were established.

* The National Teaching Workforce Dataset collected data on the Australian teaching workforce including qualifications, registration and employment status (data on professional development was generally not available). However, Indigenous status is unknown for over half the workforce covered by the dataset, largely driven by the extremely low proportion of teachers in Victoria declaring their Indigenous status (0.1 per cent).
* The first national results from the Longitudinal Teacher Education Workforce Study are anticipated to be available in late 2014. The study tracked a national cohort of teacher education graduates from 2011 to 2013 and collected data on the impact of pre‑service and in‑service education and experiences on teacher quality. However, data are not available by Indigenous status, due to the small number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teaches in the sample (17 teachers — 1 per cent of the sample).

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## 7.3 School engagement[[4]](#footnote-4)

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| Box 7.3.1 Key messages |
| * Student engagement with school and learning is key to achieving improved educational outcomes.
* There is no nationally agreed definition of school engagement. Further work is required to develop nationally agreed measures and data sources.
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While school attendance is important (see section 7.1), there is growing interest nationally and internationally, in looking beyond students’ physical presence at school to examine their relationships with school and learning (Fredericks and McCloskey (eds) 2012; Phan 2014; Social Inclusion Board 2007). Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students’ engagement with schooling is a key outcome in the 2010–2014 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Action Plan (MCEECDYA 2010) (and is also a key outcome for the general population as specified in the National Education Agreement).

Although evidence suggests a link between school engagement and improved educational attainment, the strength of this link remains unclear and varies by school (Lonsdale et al. 2011; OECD 2003). In addition, the concept of school engagement has proven to be difficult to define and measure (Axelson and Flick 2011; Fredericks and McCloskey (eds) 2012). In general, school engagement has been described using three main constructs:

* behavioural/participatory — such as following the rules and being present at school (attendance)
* emotional/affective — such as values and emotional responses toward school, subjects and learning (such as interest or anxiety)
* cognitive/academic — such as motivation and effort (Fredricks, Blumenfeld and Paris 2004; Lonsdale et al. 2011).

Research has shown that school engagement can be shaped by contextual factors such as:

* students’ experiences, needs and characteristics, including self‑identity and connectedness
* the school and classroom context, including teacher quality (see section 7.2), teacher support, school funding, attitudes of peers and culturally inclusive structures and practices in schools (see section 5.6)
* the wider environment, including socio‑economic circumstances, and parental and community involvement (Fredricks, Blumenfeld and Paris 2004; Helme and Lamb 2011; Munns, O’Rourke and Bodkin-Andrews 2013; Social Inclusion Board 2007).

Schools have been found to have higher levels of student engagement when there was a strong disciplinary climate, good student‑teacher relations and high expectations for student success (OECD 2003).

### School engagement and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students

Relatively few studies have considered how the concept of school engagement relates to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. As part of its evaluation of the Sporting Chance Program, the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) completed a literature review of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander school engagement (Lonsdale et al. 2011). Four key components were identified:

* positive self‑identity — including feelings about one’s self and culture
* belonging — including both broad cultural connectedness, and group connectedness (with peers), and is closely linked to self‑identity
* participation — including following rules and active involvement in learning tasks
* attendance — including being present at school. However, merely being present did not mean that a student was engaged in school, and conversely, absenteeism did not mean that a student was not engaged (for example, cultural reasons for absences could mean a student is engaged in learning that is important to their self‑identity and belonging).

De Bortoli and Thomson (2010) examined the influence of contextual factors on the results of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and non‑Indigenous students in the 2000 and 2006 Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) tests.[[5]](#footnote-5) For both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non‑Indigenous students, performance in maths and science was strongly associated with self‑efficacy, and positively correlated with self‑concept. On average, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students reported significantly lower levels of confidence in their abilities.

### Things that work

Whilst there is a lack of research and program evaluation on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander school engagement (Purdie and Buckley 2010), the ACER literature review (Lonsdale et al. 2011) identified several programs that use incentives and rewards to increase student attention and retention. Box 7.3.2 presents one program identified as increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students’ school engagement, and one promising program worth further consideration.

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| Box 7.3.2 Things that work – school engagement |
| The **Sporting Chance Program** is an Australian Government initiative that commenced operating in 2007. The Program aims to improve educational outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students through sport and recreation. In 2012, a total of 21 providers delivered 64 projects for up to 11 000 primary and secondary students across NSW, Victoria, WA and the NT. The Program has two elements:* School‑based Sports Academies for secondary school students, which provide sports‑focused learning and development opportunities to students before, during and after school
* Education Engagement Strategies (EES) for primary and secondary school students, which include school visits by high profile athletes at least twice per year. Visiting athletes stay in the community for 1–5 days and participate in mentoring and role‑modelling activities.

In December 2010, ACER was commissioned to evaluate the program. The evaluation method used a mix of surveys, interviews and small group discussions with Academy project providers, principals, staff, parents, students and community members and analysis of administrative data on enrolment, attendance and literacy and numeracy outcomes. Of the 143 schools contacted as part of the evaluation, 87 (61 per cent) participated. The evaluation found that school staff in both the Academies and ESS projects consider that the Program is having a moderate (positive) impact on school engagement (although the degree and nature of improvement varied between schools). The sustainability of this engagement was more evident in the Academies than in the EES projects. The evaluation did not include comparison results for schools and students not in the Program.Although it has not been formally evaluated, the Steering Committee has identified the **Students Hairdressing Integrating Education (SHINE) program** (Geraldton, WA) as a promising program worth further examination.The SHINE program, established in 2010, targets year 9 Aboriginal female students who have a history of low attendance and are significantly at risk of not completing school. The program provides a workplace simulation in a college classroom refurbished into a hair salon. The program is coordinated by a classroom teacher who is also a qualified hairdresser, beauty therapist and counsellor. Students attend the program in addition to completing normal school requirements.As at the end of 2013, over 140 girls had participated in the program. The program has improved attendance and behaviours at school, as well as the uptake of traineeships among program participants (PHAA 2013).The program has won the following awards:* 2011 Milton Thorne Award for WA Outstanding School Initiative for Aboriginal Education
* 2012 National Australia Bank Schools First Awards — WA State Impact Award
* 2013 PHAA WA award — Aboriginal health award.
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| Box 7.3.2 (continued)  |
| *Sources*: Lonsdale et al. 2011, *Evaluation of the Sporting Chance Program for Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations*, October, Australian Council for Educational Research, Camberwell, Victoria; WA Government (unpublished); PHAA (Population Health Association of Australia) 2013, *in touch in WA*, PHAA WA Branch Newsletter: December 2013. |
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### Future directions in data

Further work is required to determine the definitions, appropriateness and method of collating and reporting data on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students’ engagement with school. The ACER evaluation proposed measures against the four dimensions it identified as important to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students’ school engagement (table 7A.3.1). The suitability of these measures for national reporting should be assessed and, if found suitable, appropriate data sources identified.

Further work is also required to investigate the factors affecting the link between school engagement and learning outcomes.

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## 7.4 Transition from school to work[[6]](#footnote-6)

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| Box 7.4.1 Key messages |
| * Young people who do not successfully make the transition from education to work are at risk of long-term disadvantage.
* Between 2002 and 2011–13, there was an increase in the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander 17–24 year olds who were participating in post-school education or training or were employed (from 32.4 per cent in 2002 to 40.3 per cent in 2011–13). The non‑Indigenous rate remained around 75 per cent, leading to a narrowing of the gap (from 42.8 percentage points in 2002 to 35.2 percentage points in 2011–13) (figure 7.4.2).
* In 2011, the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians fully engaged in work, study or training decreased as the location became more remote (50.5 per cent in major cities, 17.9 per cent in very remote areas) (figure 7.4.3).
* Among people aged 18–64 years, labour force participation and employment‑to‑population ratios for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians were lower than those for non‑Indigenous Australians for all levels of non‑school qualification except ‘Bachelor Degree or higher’, where the rates where similar (table 7.4.1).
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| Box 7.4.2 Measures of transition from school to work |
| There are two main measures for this indicator:* *Successful transition from school* is defined as the proportion of young people aged 17–24 years who are participating in post-school education or training or are employed.
* *Labour force status and employment‑to‑population ratio of people aged 18 to 64 years who have achieved a qualification of Certificate level III or above* is defined as the proportion of people aged 18–64 years with a qualification of Certificate level III or above who are (a) in the labour force and (b) employed.

Data for both measures are sourced from the ABS Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Survey (AATSIHS)/National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey (NATSISS), with the most recent available data for 2012‑13 (engagement by remoteness: employment status by sex; remoteness; jurisdiction). Comparable data for the non‑Indigenous population are available from the ABS National Health Survey, with the most recent available data for 2011‑12. Indicators using both AATSIHS (2012‑13) and AHS (2011‑12) data are referenced as 2011–13.Supplementary data are also reported from the ABS Census of Population and Housing (Census), with the most recent available data for 2011 (remoteness; all jurisdictions). Survey and Census data are not directly comparable. |
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Young people who do not successfully make the transition from education to work are at risk of long-term disadvantage. Levels of education are key contributors to labour market success. School leavers without a formal school qualification may have few opportunities for work, and as time passes, their chances of gaining employment or re‑entering full time education are likely to decline further (AIHW 2013; Marks 2008; McMillan and Marks 2003).

The transition from study to work is generally smoother for university and TAFE graduates, who also tend to earn significantly more than those who enter the workforce directly from school (Lamb and McKenzie 2001; Lamb 2001). Data on employment and training outcomes for VET graduates are obtained from the National Centre for Vocational Education Research’s Student Outcomes Survey, and are reported in the Report on Government Services on an annual basis (SCRGSP 2014). For university bachelor degree graduates, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander graduates, work participation and salary outcomes have been shown to continue to improve for at least five years after graduation (Coates and Edwards 2009).

Section 4.5 contains more information on secondary school attainment for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. Unemployment and labour force participation for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians aged 15–64 years are discussed in section 4.6. More information on employment undertaken by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians — including employment by full time and part time status, sector, industry and skill level — is in section 9.1.

Additional factors that may affect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander school‑leavers in the transition to employment include ‘entrenched disadvantage’, social exclusion factors such as labour market discrimination, and the relatively higher cost of education to those of lower socioeconomic status (Hunter 2010). Section 5.1 includes information on levels of trust, perceptions of prejudice and experience of discrimination.

Some people are not working or studying because of carer responsibilities. In 2012, the birth rate of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females aged 19 years was around five times as high as that for non‑Indigenous females (68 babies per 1000 females, and 13 babies per 1000 females, respectively) (table 6A.3.1). Teenage birth rates are examined in more detail in section 6.3.

### Young people who havesuccessfully transitioned from school

Young people who are participating in study benefit from the additional returns to further education. Those participating in employment benefit from employment experience, the development of work skills and familiarity with new technologies.

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| Figure 7.4.1 Proportion of 17–24 year olds who are fully engaged in post‑school education and/or training or employment, 2011–13**a,b,c** |
| Figure 7.4.1 Proportion of 17-24 year olds who are fully engaged in post-school education and/or training or employement, 2011-13  More details can be found within the text surrounding this image. |
| a Data exclude people enrolled in secondary school. b Error bars represent 95 per cent confidence intervals around each estimate. c The 2011–13 reference year includes data for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians from the 2012-13 AATSIHS. Data for non‑Indigenous Australians are from the 2011–13 AHS (for the period 2011-12). |
| *Sources*: ABS (unpublished) Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Survey, 2012‑13 (Core component); ABS (unpublished) Australian Health Survey 2011–13 (2011‑12 Core component); table 7A.4.1. |
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Nationally in 2011–13, 40.3 per cent of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians aged 17–24 years were participating in post-school education or training or were employed, compared with 75.5 per cent of non‑Indigenous 17–24 year olds. Larger proportions of non‑Indigenous young people than Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people were engaged in ‘full time study’ (32.7 per cent compared with 11.6 per cent) and ‘full time employment’(34.7 per cent compared with 23.1 per cent), while the rates were similar between the ‘full time study and full time employment’, and ‘part time study and part time employment’ categories (figure 7.4.1). These data are also reported by remoteness in table 7A.4.1.

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| Figure 7.4.2 Proportion of 17–24 year olds who are fully engaged in post‑school education and/or training or employment, 2002, 2004‑05, 2008 and 2011–13**a,b,c** |
| Figure 7.4.2 Proportion of 17-24 year olds who are fully engaged in post-school education and/or traning or employment, 2002, 2004-05, 2008 and 2011-13  More details can be found within the text surrounding this image. |
| a Data exclude people enrolled in secondary school. b Relative standard errors and 95 per cent confidence intervals should be considered when interpreting these data, and are available in table 7A.4.2. c The 2011–13 reference year includes data for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians from the 2012‑13 AATSIHS. Data for non-Indigenous Australians are from the 2011–13 AHS (for the period 2011‑12). |
| *Sources*: ABS (unpublished) National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey, 2002; ABS (unpublished) General Social Survey 2002; ABS (unpublished) National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Survey 2004‑05; ABS (unpublished) National Health Survey, 2004‑05; ABS (unpublished) National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey 2008; ABS (unpublished) National Health Survey 2007‑08; ABS (unpublished) Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Survey 2012‑13 (Core component); ABS (unpublished) Australian Health Survey 2011–13 (2011‑12 Core component); table 7A.4.2. |
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Between 2002 and 2011–13, there was an increase in the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians aged 17–24 years who were fully engaged and participating in post-school education or training or were employed (from 32.4 per cent in 2002 to 40.3 per cent in 2011–13). The rate for non-Indigenous Australians remained constant over this period (75.2 per cent in 2002 and 75.5 per cent in 2011–13), leading to a narrowing of the gap (from 42.8 percentage points in 2002 to 35.2 percentage points in 2011–13) (figure 7.4.2). These data are also reported by remoteness in table 7A.4.2.

Although not directly comparable, data from the Census show similar trends to the survey data. Census data show that the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander
17–24 year olds who were fully engaged in post­school education, training or employment increased from 33.8 per cent in 2001 to 39.4 per cent in 2011. Over the same period, the rate for non‑Indigenous Australians increased from 71.8 per cent in 2001 to 73.9 per cent, leading to a narrowing of the gap from 38.0 percentage points to 34.5 percentage points (table 7A.4.6).

Figure 7.4.3 shows Census data by remoteness (survey data for very remote areas are not available for non‑Indigenous Australians for 2008 and 2011–13).

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| Figure 7.4.3 Proportion of 17–24 year olds who are fully engaged in post­school education and/or training or employment, by remoteness, 2011**a** |
| Figure 7.4.3 Proportion of 17-24 year olds who are fully engaged in post-school education and/or traning or employment, by remoteness, 2011  More details can be found within the text surrounding this image. |
| a See table 7A.4.6 for more information on caveats to this data. |
| *Source*: ABS (unpublished) 2011 Census of Population and Housing; table 7A.4.6.  |
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Nationally, in 2011, the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians aged 17–24 years fully engaged in work, study or training decreased as the location became more remote (50.5 per cent in major cities, 17.9 per cent in very remote areas). This trend differed for non‑Indigenous Australians, where the proportion was higher in major cities (76.2 per cent) compared to outer regional areas (66.6 per cent) but was highest in very remote areas (78.4 per cent) (figure 7.4.3).

Census data disaggregated by State and Territory, and remoteness area for people aged
17–24 years who were not employed or studying for 2001, 2006 and 2011 are included in tables 7A.4.6–7.

### Outcomes from education — labour force participation and employment status by educational attainment

This measure examines the labour force status of people with different levels of educational qualifications. Certificate level III is usually considered the minimum qualification necessary to substantially improve a person’s employment outcomes (see section 4.7 for more information on post‑secondary education, participation and attainment).

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| Table 7.4.1 Level of highest non‑school qualification and employment status, 2002 and 2011–13**a,b,c,d** |
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|  | 2002 | 2011–13 |
|  | Indigenous | Non‑Indigenous | Indigenous | Non‑Indigenous |
| *Labour force participation as a proportion of the population aged 18–64 years (%)* |
| Certificate III and higher | 83.9 | 87.2 | 78.1 | 86.8 |
|  Certificate III to advanced diploma | 81.9 | 85.6 | 76.7 | 85.8 |
|  Bachelor degree or higher | 90.8 | 89.2 | 86.0 | 87.9 |
| Other | 59.5 | 72.5 | 54.3 | 73.8 |
| **Total** | **64.5** | **79.1** | **62.7** | **81.6** |
| *Employed people as a proportion of the population aged 18–64 years (%)* |
| Certificate III and higher | 74.3 | 84.4 | 69.7 | 84.6 |
|  Certificate III to advanced diploma | 72.6 | 82.4 | 67.4 |  83.2 |
|  Bachelor degree or higher | 80.4 | 86.9 | 81.8 |  86.3 |
| Other | 46.1 | 66.7 | 40.5 | 69.4 |
| **Total** | **51.4** | **74.5** | **50.7** | **78.6** |

 |
| a Excludes people enrolled in secondary school. b Relative standard errors and 95 per cent confidence intervals should be considered when interpreting these data, and are available in table 7A.4.3. c The 2011–13 reference year includes data for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians from the 2012‑13 AATSIHS. Data for non‑Indigenous Australians are from the 2011–13 AHS (for the period 2011‑12).d See table 7A.4.3 for detailed footnotes.  |
| *Sources*: ABS (unpublished) National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey 2002; ABS (unpublished) General Social Survey 2002; ABS (unpublished) Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Survey 2012‑13 (2012‑13 Core component); ABS (unpublished) Australian Health Survey 2011–13 (2011‑12 Core component); table 7A.4.3. |
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Nationally, for people aged 18–64 years:

* in 2011–13, among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians, those with a Bachelor Degree or higher had the highest labour force participation rate (86.0 per cent) and employment‑to‑population ratio (81.8 per cent), similar to that for non‑Indigenous Australians with the same level of qualifications. For all other categories, rates for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians were lower than for non‑Indigenous Australians
* the labour force participation rate for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians decreased for all qualification categories between 2002 and
2011–13, except for those with a Bachelor Degree or higher, whose labour force participation was stable over time. Employment‑to‑population ratios for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians were stable over time for those with Certificate III and higher, but fell for those with Certificate II or lower (‘other’)
* the non‑Indigenous labour force participation rate and employment‑to‑population ratios were higher than their Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander counterparts in all categories except for those with a Bachelor Degree or higher, where the rates were similar (table 7.4.1).

Tables 7A4.3–5 provide data on the level of highest non‑school qualification and labour force status by sex, remoteness, and jurisdiction.

### Future directions in data

The ABS program of ongoing Indigenous-specific household surveys will continue to provide a range of education and labour force data on a three‑yearly cycle. Data on this topic are also available from the Census.

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1. The Steering Committee notes its appreciation to Dr Gawaian Bodkin-Andrews, Macquarie University, who reviewed a draft of this section of the report. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. The compulsory starting age for WA changed from 6 to 5 years of age starting from 2013. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. The Steering Committee notes its appreciation to Dr Gawaian Bodkin-Andrews, Macquarie University, who reviewed a draft of this section of the report. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. The Steering Committee notes its appreciation to Dr Gawaian Bodkin-Andrews, Macquarie University, who reviewed a draft of this section of the report. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. PISA is a triennial international survey which aims to evaluate education systems worldwide by testing the skills and knowledge of 15-year-old students. In Australia, PISA is a key part of the National Assessment Program (NAP) and complements other NAP assessments, such as the National Assessment Program — Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN). [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. The Steering Committee notes its appreciation to Dr Gawaian Bodkin-Andrews, Macquarie University, who reviewed a draft of this section of the report. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)