3 School education

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

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

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

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

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

- year 4 and year 8 students achieving at or above the intermediate international level in science achievement, 2002-03
- year 4 and year 8 students achieving at or above the intermediate international level in mathematics achievement, 2002-03
- year 6 and year 10 civics and citizenship performance, 2004.

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

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

3.1 Profile of school education

Service overview

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

> … an establishment that satisfies all of the following criteria:
>
> - its major activity is the provision of full time day primary, secondary or special school education or primary or secondary distance education
> - it is headed by a principal (or equivalent) responsible for its internal operation
> - it is possible for students to enrol and be active in a course of study for a minimum of four continuous weeks (excluding breaks for school vacations) (ABS 2006).

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

Roles and responsibilities

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

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

Funding

Australian, State and Territory government recurrent expenditure on school education was $30.8 billion in 2004-05 (table 3.1). Expenditure on government schools was $24.2 billion, or 78.5 per cent of the total. Government schools account for most of the expenditure by State and Territory governments. These governments also contribute to the funding of non-government schools and provide services used by both government and non-government schools. More information, including Australian Government spending on Indigenous specific programs, can be found in tables 3A.6 and 3A.7.

Nationally, State and Territory governments provided 91.3 per cent of total government recurrent expenditure on government schools in 2004-05, and the Australian Government provided 8.7 per cent. In contrast, government expenditure on non-government schools in that year was mainly provided by the Australian Government (73.0 per cent), with State and Territory governments providing 27.0 per cent (table 3.1).

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

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

Table 3.1 **Government recurrent expenditure on school education, 2004-05 ($ million)[a, b, c, d]**

	NSW	*Vic*	*Qld*	*WA*	*SA*	*Tas*	*ACT*	*NT*	*Aust*
Government schools									
Australian	699	495	431	201	160	60	31	38	2 117
States and territories	7 451	4 724	4 289	2 565	1 651	587	408	403	22 078
Total	**8 150**	**5 220**	**4 720**	**2 767**	**1 811**	**647**	**439**	**441**	**24 194**
Non-government schools									
Australian	1 600	1 250	900	468	382	98	92	42	4 832
States and territories	668	320	394	202	104	36	36	29	1 788
Total	**2 268**	**1 570**	**1 293**	**670**	**486**	**134**	**128**	**71**	**6 621**
All schools									
Australian	2 300	1 745	1 331	669	542	158	124	80	6 949
States and territories	8 119	5 045	4 682	2 767	1 755	623	443	432	23 866
Total	**10 419**	**6 789**	**6 013**	**3 437**	**2 297**	**782**	**567**	**512**	**30 815**

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

Source: MCEETYA National Schools Statistics Collection (NSSC) (unpublished); Department of Education, Science and Training (DEST) (unpublished); Australian, State and Territory governments (unpublished); table 3A.9.

Some data are presented on government funding of non-government schools. Caution needs to be taken when comparing data on the relative efficiency of government and non-government schools because governments provide only part of the funding for non-government schools. Governments provided 57.3 per cent of non-government school funding in 2004, with the remaining 42.7 per cent sourced from private fees and fundraising (MCEETYA 2005d, statistical annex, p. 27).

Size and scope

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

Structure

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

education followed by five to six years of secondary school education, depending on the State or Territory (figure 3.1). All states and territories divide school education into compulsory and non-compulsory components based on age, not grade. School education was compulsory in all states and territories for people between 6 and 15 years of age in 2005 (extending to 16 years of age in SA and from 5 to 16 in Tasmania).

Figure 3.1 **Structure of primary and secondary schooling, 2005**

<table>
<tr><th>Level</th><th>NSW, Vic, Tas, ACT</th><th>WA, SA, NT[a]</th><th>Qld[b]</th></tr>
<tr><td>Year 12</td><td rowspan="6">SECONDARY</td><td rowspan="6">SECONDARY</td><td rowspan="6">SECONDARY</td></tr>
<tr><td>Year 11</td></tr>
<tr><td>Year 10</td></tr>
<tr><td>Year 9</td></tr>
<tr><td>Year 8</td></tr>
<tr><td>Year 7</td></tr>
<tr><td>Year 6</td><td rowspan="6">PRIMARY</td><td rowspan="7">PRIMARY</td><td rowspan="7">PRIMARY</td></tr>
<tr><td>Year 5</td></tr>
<tr><td>Year 4</td></tr>
<tr><td>Year 3</td></tr>
<tr><td>Year 2</td></tr>
<tr><td>Year 1</td></tr>
<tr><td>Pre-year 1</td><td>Kindergarten (NSW, ACT)
Preparatory (Vic, Tas)</td><td>Pre-primary (WA)
Reception (SA)[c]
Transition (NT)[d]</td></tr>
</table>

[a] In some places in the NT, secondary schooling begins at year 7. [b] Pre-Year 1 is not included in the pattern of study in Queensland. A preparatory year of schooling for pre-Year 1, which is being phased in over 2005 and 2006, will be available in all government schools and most non-government schools from 2007. [c] SA has an intake for each term. [d] The NT has an intake for terms 1–3 of its 4 terms.

Source: Adapted from ABS (2006).

Schools

At the beginning of August 2005, there were 9623 schools in Australia. The majority of schools were government owned and managed (72.0 per cent) (table 3.2). Settlement patterns (population dispersion), the age distribution of the population, and educational policy influence the distribution of schools by size and level in different jurisdictions. Nationally, 62.4 per cent of all secondary schools enrolled over 600 students (table 3A.16). A breakdown of primary and secondary schools by size for government, non-government and all schools is reported in tables 3A.14–16 respectively.

Student body

There were 3.4 million full time equivalent (FTE) student enrolments in primary and secondary schools in August 2005 (see section 3.6 for a definition of FTE student). Nationally, a higher proportion of FTE students was enrolled in primary schools (57.6 per cent) than in secondary schools (42.4 per cent) (table 3.3).

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

Nationally, the proportion of FTE students enrolled in government schools was 67.2 per cent. The proportion of female FTE students in all schools was 49.1 per cent. Of FTE students enrolled in government schools 60.8 per cent were enrolled in primary education and of FTE students enrolled in non-government schools 51.0 per cent were enrolled in primary education (table 3.3).

Table 3.2 **Summary of school characteristics, August 2005**

	NSW	*Vic*	*Qld*	*WA*	*SA*	*Tas*	*ACT*	*NT*	*Aust*
Government schools (no.)									
Primary	1 653	1 218	964	509	435	141	66	82	5 068
Secondary	370	260	180	99	74	39	22	11	1 055
Combined[a, b]	65	57	89	na	na	na	na	na	468
Special schools[b, c]	106	78	47	na	na	na	na	na	338
Combined and special schools[b]	..	..	..	169	96	33	8	58	..
Total	**2 194**	**1 613**	**1 280**	**777**	**605**	**213**	**96**	**151**	**6 929**
Non-government schools (no.)									
Primary	510	435	242	154	112	29	27	17	1 526
Secondary	152	102	82	39	20	7	5	6	413
Combined[a, b]	218	138	127	na	na	na	na	na	696
Special schools[b, c]	32	17	3	na	na	na	na	na	59
Combined and special schools[b]	..	..	..	98	68	30	12	12	..
Total	**912**	**692**	**454**	**291**	**200**	**66**	**44**	**35**	**2 694**
All schools (no.)									
Primary	2 163	1 653	1 206	663	547	170	93	99	6 594
Secondary	522	362	262	138	94	46	27	17	1 468
Combined[a, b]	283	195	216	na	na	na	na	na	1 164
Special schools[b, c]	138	95	50	na	na	na	na	na	397
Combined and special schools[b]	..	..	..	267	164	63	20	70	..
Total	**3 106**	**2 305**	**1 734**	**1 068**	**805**	**279**	**140**	**186**	**9 623**
Proportion of schools that are government schools (%)									
Primary	76.4	73.7	79.9	76.8	79.5	82.9	71.0	82.8	76.9
Secondary	70.9	71.8	68.7	71.7	78.7	84.8	81.5	64.7	71.9
Combined[a, b]	23.0	29.2	41.2	na	na	na	na	na	40.2
Special schools[b, c]	76.8	82.1	94.0	na	na	na	na	na	85.1
Combined and special schools[b]	..	..	..	63.3	58.5	52.4	40.0	82.9	..
All schools	70.6	70.0	73.8	72.8	75.2	76.3	68.6	81.2	72.0
Proportion of primary schools (%)									
Government	75.3	75.5	75.3	65.5	71.9	66.2	68.8	54.3	73.1
Non-government	55.9	62.9	53.3	52.9	56.0	43.9	61.4	48.6	56.6
All schools	69.6	71.7	69.6	62.1	68.0	60.9	66.4	53.2	68.5

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

Source: ABS (2006); tables 3A.1, 3A.2 and 3A.3.

Table 3.3 **FTE student enrolments, August 2005[a, b]**

	NSW	*Vic*	*Qld*	*WA*	*SA*	*Tas*	*ACT*	*NT*	*Aust*
Total FTE student enrolments at level of education ('000)									
Primary schools	622	455	390	207	157	46	31	25	1 934
Secondary schools	487	373	259	132	95	38	29	13	1 425
All schools	**1 109**	**828**	**649**	**339**	**253**	**84**	**60**	**38**	**3 359**
Proportion of FTE students who were enrolled in government schools (%)									
Primary schools	70.2	69.2	73.8	72.2	68.4	76.8	62.3	79.5	70.9
Secondary schools	62.6	59.9	63.7	60.5	63.0	70.0	55.9	71.0	62.1
All schools	**66.9**	**65.0**	**69.7**	**67.6**	**66.4**	**73.8**	**59.2**	**76.7**	**67.2**
Proportion of FTE students who were female (all schools) (%)									
Primary schools	48.7	48.6	48.7	48.2	48.6	48.5	49.0	48.1	48.6
Secondary schools	49.6	49.9	49.9	49.6	49.7	50.7	49.5	48.6	49.8
All schools	**49.1**	**49.2**	**49.2**	**48.8**	**49.0**	**49.5**	**49.2**	**48.3**	**49.1**
Proportion of FTE students who were enrolled in primary education (%)									
Government schools	58.9	58.5	63.5	65.2	64.2	57.4	54.9	68.7	60.8
Non-government schools	50.5	48.3	52.1	52.4	58.5	48.7	48.3	58.1	51.0
All schools	**56.1**	**54.9**	**60.1**	**61.1**	**62.3**	**55.1**	**52.2**	**66.2**	**57.6**

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

Source: ABS (2006); ABS Schools Australia (unpublished); tables 3A.1–3A.4.

Total full time student enrolments in schools in Australia were relatively stable over the five years to 2005, increasing by approximately 0.6 per cent each year between August 2001 and August 2005 (table 3A.18).

The proportion of full time students enrolled in non-government schools increased between 2001 and 2005 in all states and territories. Total non-government school enrolments expanded by an average of 2.0 per cent per year, while full time government school enrolments remained stable (table 3A.18). The expansion of full time enrolments in non-government schools, however, was from a lower base than that for government schools. In absolute terms, full time students in government schools decreased from 2 248 219 in 2001 to 2 246 087 in 2005. Full time students in non-government schools increased from 1 019 958 in 2001 to 1 102 052 in 2005 (table 3A.17).

Part time secondary students form a significant proportion of enrolments in some jurisdictions (table 3.4). Part time courses are available to secondary students, including mature age students attending colleges and those studying years 11 or 12 or short courses (lasting five to 22 weeks). The proportion of secondary school students who were enrolled part time in 2005 varied considerably across jurisdictions, partly because jurisdictions' education authorities have different policy and organisational arrangements for part time study, as well as different

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

Table 3.4 **Part time secondary school students in government schools**

	NSW	*Vic*	*Qld*	*WA*	*SA*	*Tas*	*ACT*	*NT*	*Aust*
Part time secondary school students in government schools (no.)[a]									
2001	2 809	2 827	3 930	4 948	6 932	2 853	3	1 006	25 308
2002	2 455	3 029	4 096	4 880	7 099	2 684	10	1 052	25 305
2003	2 647	3 093	3 786	2 583	6 623	2 578	48	888	22 246
2004	2 441	3 106	3 764	2 925	6 818	2 260	25	1 043	22 382
2005	2 404	2 898	3 836	2 824	6 435	1 870	36	1 084	21 387
Proportion of secondary school students in government schools who were part time students (%)[b]									
2001	0.9	1.3	2.5	5.7	10.6	10.0	0.0	11.3	2.8
2002	0.8	1.4	2.6	5.6	11.0	9.6	0.1	11.7	2.8
2003	0.9	1.4	2.3	3.1	10.3	9.3	0.3	9.6	2.5
2004	0.8	1.4	2.3	3.5	10.7	8.3	0.2	10.9	2.5
2005	0.8	1.3	2.3	3.4	10.1	6.9	0.2	11.2	2.4

[a] Absolute number of part time secondary students. [b] Absolute number of part time secondary students divided by absolute number of full time and part time secondary students. – Nil or rounded to zero.

Source: ABS (2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006); ABS Schools Australia (unpublished); table 3A.1.

Special needs groups

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

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

Government schools provide education for a high proportion of students from special needs groups. In 2005, 86.9 per cent of Indigenous students and 80.7 per cent of students with disabilities, for example, attended government schools (tables 3A.19 and 3A.21). This chapter reports on the proportions of Indigenous students, LBOTE students, students with disabilities and students who are geographically remote. Further information on student body mix is in tables 3A.22–24. Care needs to be taken in interpreting this information because some definitions of special needs students differ across states and territories.

Indigenous students

The proportion of full time Indigenous students in schools varies greatly across jurisdictions (table 3.5). Table 3A.19 provides additional information on Indigenous enrolments.

In all jurisdictions, the proportion of full time Indigenous students was higher in government schools than in non-government schools. Nationally, the proportion of full time Indigenous students was 5.2 per cent for government schools and 1.6 per cent for non-government schools in 2005 (table 3.5).

Table 3.5 **Indigenous students as a proportion of all students, 2005[a]**

	NSW	*Vic*	*Qld*	*WA*	*SA*	*Tas*	*ACT*	*NT*	*Aust*
Government schools	4.9	1.3	7.3	7.6	4.2	7.6	2.6	41.2	5.2
Non-government schools	1.1	0.3	2.6	3.3	1.0	2.6	0.7	28.3	1.6
All schools	3.6	0.9	5.9	6.2	3.1	6.3	1.8	38.1	4.0

a Absolute numbers of Indigenous and all full time students.

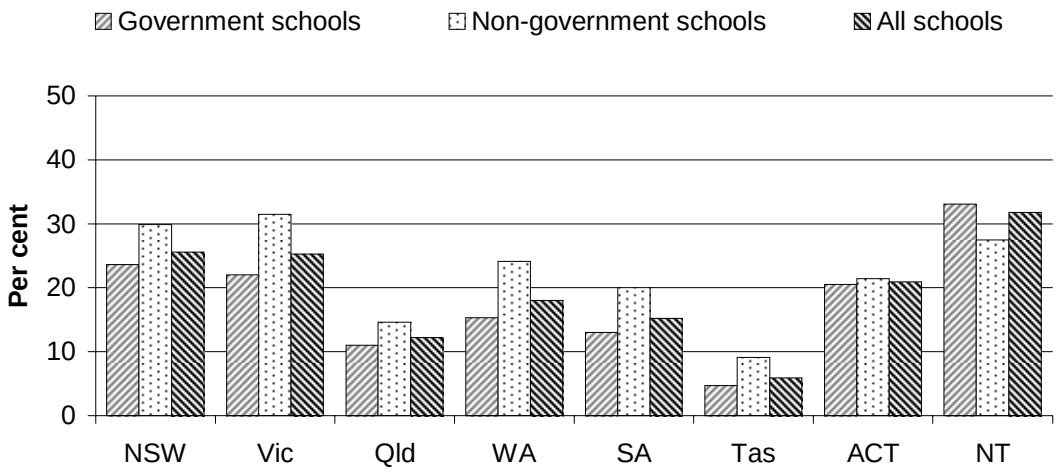
Source: ABS (2006); table 3A.19.

LBOTE students

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

Generally, non-government schools had a higher proportion of LBOTE students than government schools in 2001 (figure 3.2).

Figure 3.2 **Students from a language background other than English as a proportion of all students, 2001[a]**



a Absolute numbers of LBOTE and all students.

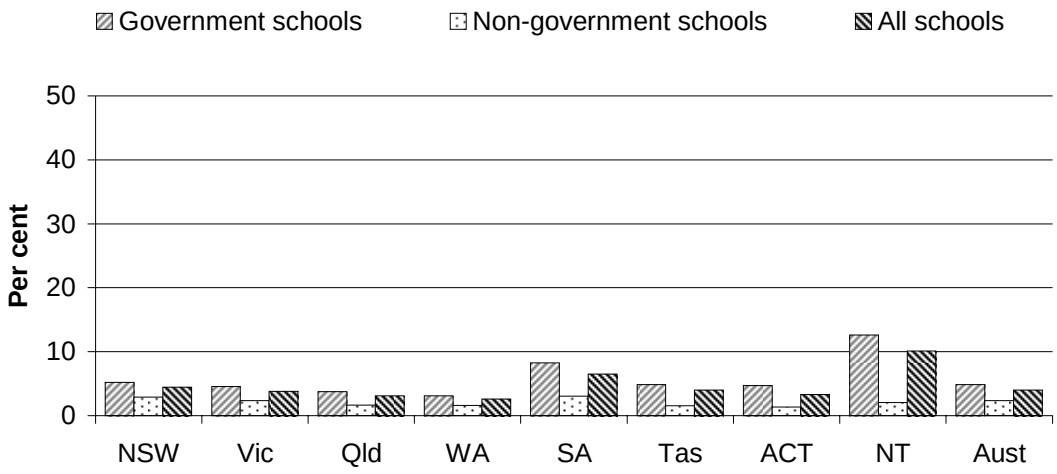
Source: DEST (unpublished) based on the ABS 2001 Census of Population and Housing; table 3A.20.

Students with disabilities

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

Nationally, the proportion of students with disabilities for all schools was 4.0 per cent and twice as high in government schools (4.8 per cent), compared with non-government schools (2.4 per cent) in 2005 (figure 3.3).

Figure 3.3 **Funded students with disabilities as a proportion of all students, 2005[a, b, c]**



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

Source: ABS (2006); DEST (unpublished); table 3A.21.

Geographically remote students

Identification of geographically remote students is based on the metropolitan zone, provincial zone, remote areas and very remote areas as defined in the MCEETYA agreed classification.[1] The proportion of students attending schools in remote areas varies greatly across jurisdictions (table 3.6).

Nationally, the proportion of students enrolled in schools in remote areas was 1.5 per cent and more than twice as high in government schools (1.8 per cent), compared with non-government schools (0.8 per cent) in 2005. Nationally, the

[1] To investigate the possibility that these data may understate the proportion of students in remote areas as a result of relying on school location rather than students' home location, the 2001 MCEETYA data were compared with data derived from the 2001 Census. The two data sets were found to be similar, except that Tasmania had about one third more remote area students in the Census data. This result may be indicative for the 2005 data.

proportion of students enrolled in schools in very remote areas was 0.9 per cent and four times as high in government schools (1.2 per cent), compared with non-government schools (0.3 per cent) in 2005 (table 3.6; table 3A.25).

Table 3A.25 includes data relating to metropolitan and provincial zones, as well as remote and very remote areas (see section 3.6 for a definition of the geographic classification used).

Table 3.6 **Students attending schools in remote and very remote areas as a proportion of all students, all schools, 2005[a]**

	NSW	*Vic*[a]	*Qld*	*WA*	*SA*	*Tas*	*ACT*[a]	*NT*	*Aust*
Remote areas									
Government schools	0.6	0.1	2.2	5.9	4.0	1.0	..	18.7	1.8
Non-government schools	0.2	–	0.9	2.0	1.2	0.5	..	32.8	0.8
All schools	**0.5**	**0.1**	**1.8**	**4.6**	**3.0**	**0.9**	**..**	**22.0**	**1.5**
Very remote areas									
Government schools	0.1	..	1.8	3.3	1.1	0.5	..	27.3	1.2
Non-government schools	0.1	..	0.4	1.5	0.2	–	..	9.9	0.3
All schools	**0.1**	**..**	**1.3**	**2.7**	**0.8**	**0.4**	**..**	**23.2**	**0.9**

a Victoria has no very remote areas. The ACT has no remote or very remote areas. .. Not applicable. – Nil or rounded to zero.

Source: DEST (unpublished); table 3A.25.

3.2 Framework of performance indicators

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

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

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

Preamble

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

(Continued on next page)

Box 3.1 **(Continued)**

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

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

Goals

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

1.1 have the capacity for, and skills in, analysis and problem solving and the ability to communicate ideas and information, to plan and organise activities and to collaborate with others;

1.2 have qualities of self-confidence, optimism, high self-esteem, and a commitment to personal excellence as a basis for their potential life roles as family, community and workforce members;

1.3 have the capacity to exercise judgment and responsibility in matters of morality, ethics and social justice, and the capacity to make sense of their world, to think about how things got to be the way they are, to make rational and informed decisions about their own lives and to accept responsibility for their own actions;

1.4 be active and informed citizens with an understanding and appreciation of Australia's system of government and civic life;

1.5 have employment related skills and an understanding of the work environment, career options and pathways as a foundation for, and positive attitudes towards, vocational education and training, further education, employment and life-long learning;

1.6 be confident, creative and productive users of new technologies, particularly information and communication technologies, and understand the impact of those technologies on society;

1.7 have an understanding of, and concern for, stewardship of the natural environment, and the knowledge and skills to contribute to ecologically sustainable development; and

1.8 have the knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary to establish and maintain a healthy lifestyle, and for the creative and satisfying use of leisure time.

(Continued on next page)

Box 3.1 **(Continued)**

2. In terms of curriculum, students should have:

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

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

and the interrelationships between them;

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

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

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

3. Schooling should be socially just, so that:

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

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

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

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

(Continued on next page)

Box 3.1 **(Continued)**

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

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

Source: Adapted from MCEETYA (1999).

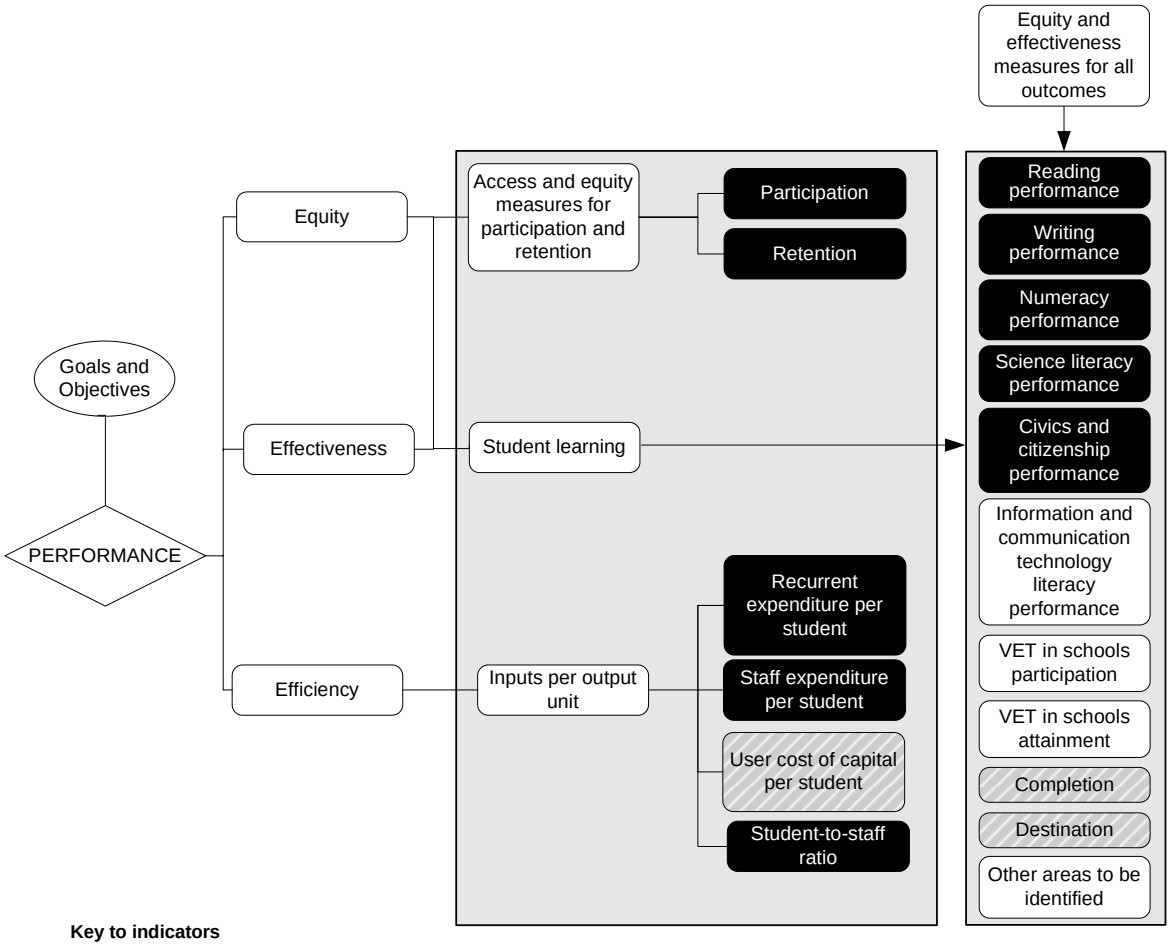
The performance of school education is reported against the indicator framework in figure 3.4. This framework is consistent with the national goals for schooling (box 3.1). The performance indicator framework shows which data are comparable in the 2007 Report. For data that are not considered directly comparable, the text includes relevant caveats and supporting commentary. Chapter 1 discusses data comparability from a Report-wide perspective (see section 1.6).

3.3 Key performance indicator results

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

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

Figure 3.4 **Performance indicators for all schools**



Outputs

Equity and effectiveness

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

Participation

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

Box 3.2 **Participation**

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

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

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

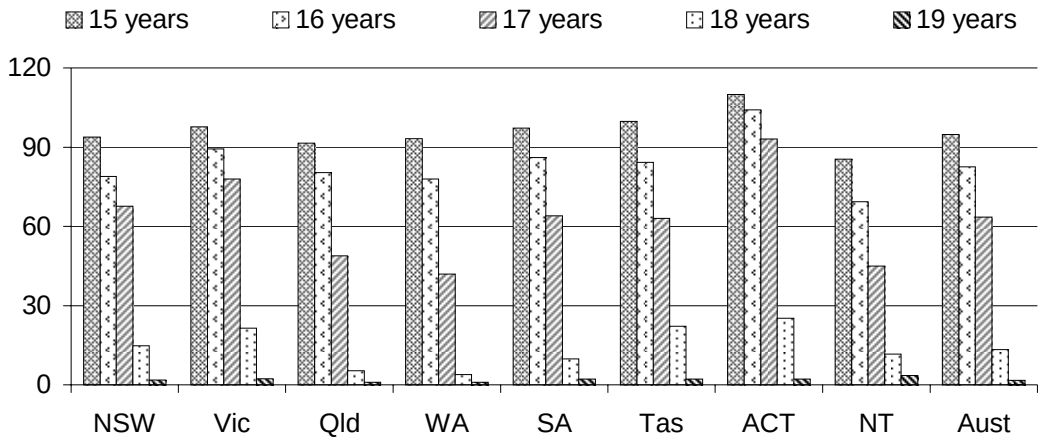
- enrolment policies across jurisdictions, which contribute to different age/grade structures
- school starting ages, year level at which secondary education commences (year 7 or year 8) and the age to which schooling is compulsory
- the extent of part time enrolment in schools (tables 3.4 and 3A.1–3).

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

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

Nationally, 51.0 per cent of 15–19 year olds were enrolled in schools in 2005 (table 3A.115). Participation rates varied by jurisdiction, age and gender. Participation rates for females (52.3 per cent) were 2.5 percentage points higher than those for males (49.8 per cent). Participation rates declined as students exceeded the maximum compulsory school age (figure 3.5).

Figure 3.5 **Participation rate of people aged 15–19 in school education, all schools, 2005[a, b, c, d]**



a Proportion of the population who were not of compulsory school age in some jurisdictions, but who were enrolled as full time students in August 2005. **b** School was compulsory for up to 16 year olds in SA and Tasmania in 2005. **c** Changes in the admissions policy for Tasmanian schools in 1993 resulted in an upward change in the age profile of students commencing school in that year and subsequent years, relative to the years prior to 1993. The changed age profile is now evident as a significant increase in the participation of 18 year olds in 2005. **d** Participation rates in the ACT exceed 100 per cent as a result of NSW residents from surrounding areas enrolling in ACT schools.

Source: ABS (2006); table 3A.115.

Retention

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

Box 3.3 **Retention**

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

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

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

(Continued on next page)

Box 3.3 **(Continued)**

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

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

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

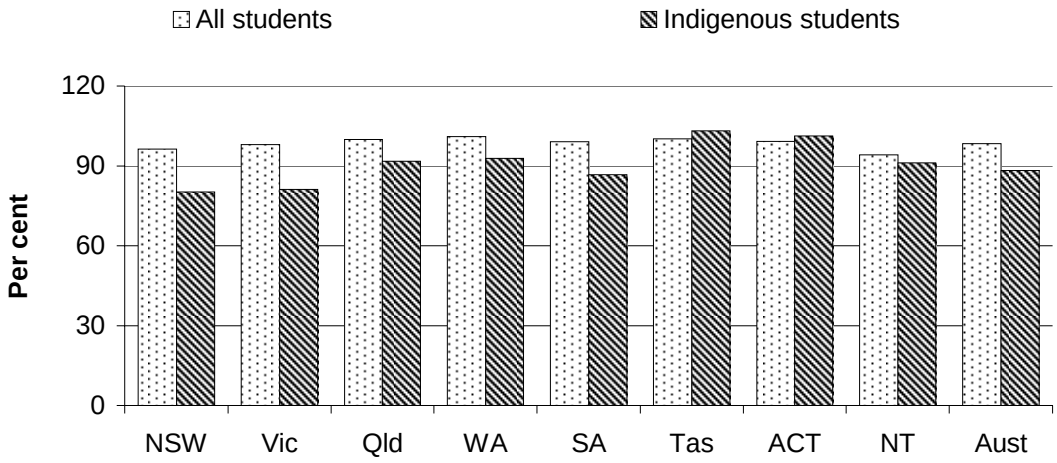
The indicator has been consistently reported over time, but does not reflect factors such as:

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

The apparent rate of retention from the commencement of secondary school at year 7 or 8 (figure 3.1 shows differences across jurisdictions) to year 10 provides one measure of the equity of outcomes for Indigenous students. Apparent retention rates for all students in most jurisdictions were 98–100 per cent in 2005 with a national proportion of 98.3 (figure 3.6). High rates are to be expected because normal year level progression means students in year 10 are generally of an age at which schooling is compulsory.

Rates for Indigenous students were considerably lower than those for all students in most jurisdictions. The national retention rate for Indigenous students was 88.3 per cent, or 10.0 percentage points lower than that for all students.

Figure 3.6 **Apparent retention rate from year 7 or 8 to year 10, full time secondary students, all schools, by Indigenous status 2005[a, b, c, d]**



a Apparent retention rates are affected by factors that vary across jurisdictions. For this reason, variations in apparent retention rates over time within jurisdictions may be more useful than comparisons across jurisdictions. **b** Retention rates can exceed 100 per cent for a variety of reasons, including student transfers between jurisdictions. **c** The exclusion of part time students from standard apparent retention rate calculations has implications for the interpretation of results for all jurisdictions, but particularly for SA, Tasmania and the NT where there are high proportions of part time students in government schools (table 3.4). **d** Ungraded students are not included in the calculation of apparent retention rates. This exclusion has particular implications for the NT, where 20.2 per cent of Indigenous secondary students are ungraded (compared with an average of 5.1 per cent for the rest of Australia), in 2005, and this should be considered when interpreting the data.

Source: ABS (2006); table 3A.117.

The apparent rate of retention from year 10 to year 12 has been derived by expressing the number of full time school students enrolled in year 12 in 2005 as a proportion of the number of full time school students enrolled in year 10 in 2003.

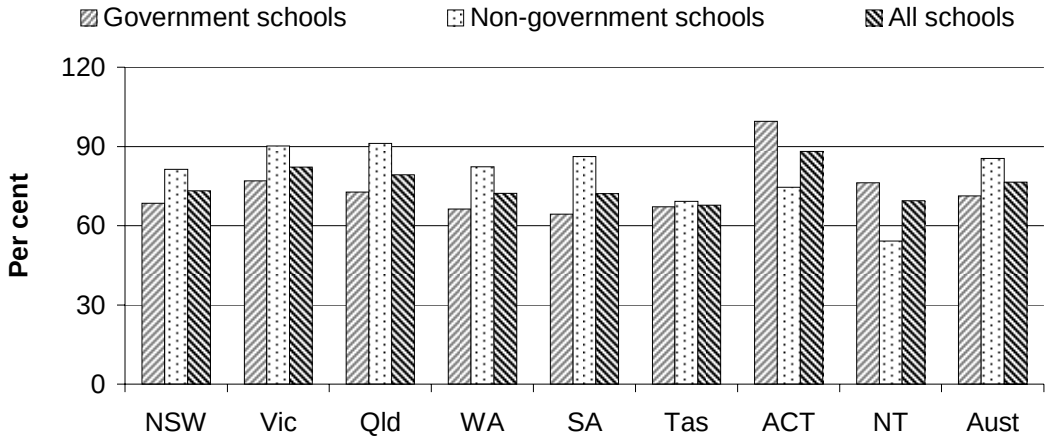
Factors affecting apparent retention can combine to result in a year 12 cohort that is substantially different in composition from the corresponding year 10 cohort — for example:

- in SA, if part time students are included in the 2005 year 12 total, then the apparent retention rate becomes 87.2 per cent, compared with 72.1 per cent for full time students only (table 3A.118)
- in some jurisdictions, young people may choose to complete their post-compulsory education in the TAFE system rather than continue at school. In NSW, for example, 3691 students aged 15–19 years undertook their Higher School Certificate or other tertiary preparation studies through TAFE institutes in 2005 (NSW Government unpublished).

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

Nationally, the apparent retention rate from year 10 to year 12 for all schools was 76.5 per cent in 2005. The apparent retention rate from year 10 to year 12 for government schools was 71.3 per cent, and for non-government schools was 85.4 per cent, in 2005. The apparent retention rates for both government schools and non-government schools varied across jurisdictions (figure 3.7).

Figure 3.7 **Apparent retention rate from year 10 to year 12, full time secondary students, by school type, 2005**[a, b, c]

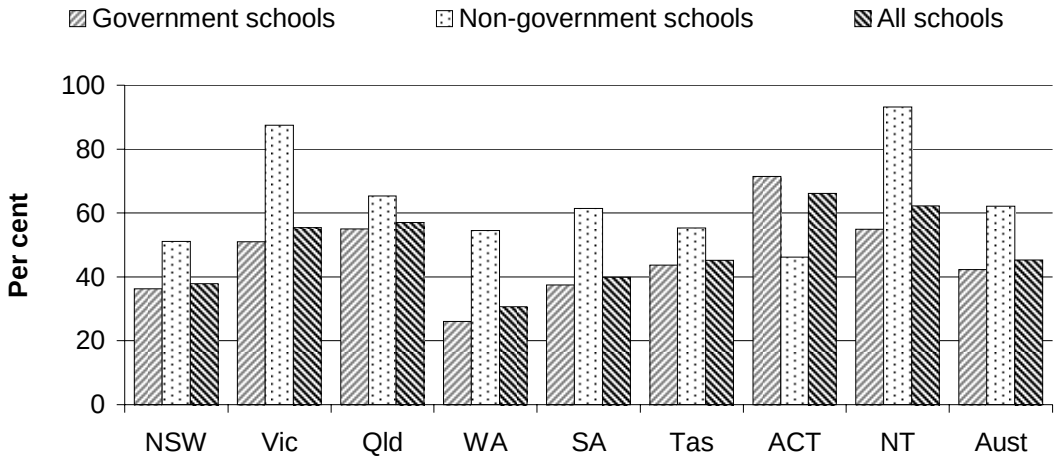


[a] Apparent retention rates are affected by factors that vary across jurisdictions. For this reason, variations in apparent retention rates over time within jurisdictions may be more useful than comparisons across jurisdictions. [b] Retention rates can exceed 100 per cent for a variety of reasons, including student transfers between jurisdictions and government and non-government schools after the base year. [c] The exclusion of part time students from standard apparent retention rate calculations has implications for the interpretation of results for all jurisdictions, but particularly for SA, Tasmania and the NT where there are high proportions of part time students in government schools (table 3.4).

Source: ABS (2006); table 3A.118.

For government and non-government schools, apparent rates of retention from year 10 to year 12 for Indigenous students in 2005 varied across jurisdictions (figure 3.8). In interpreting this indicator, note that between 10–20 per cent of Indigenous students leave school before year 10 (figure 3.6) so are not included in the base year for retention from year 10 to year 12. Further, Indigenous students as a proportion of all students was 5.2 per cent in government schools compared with 1.6 per cent in non-government schools and some jurisdictions have very low numbers of Indigenous students (table 3A.19). Nationally, Indigenous retention from year 10 to year 12 for all schools in 2005 was 45.3 per cent (figure 3.8), or 31.2 percentage points lower than the rate for all students.

Figure 3.8 **Apparent retention rates from year 10 to year 12, Indigenous full time secondary students, 2005[a, b, c]**

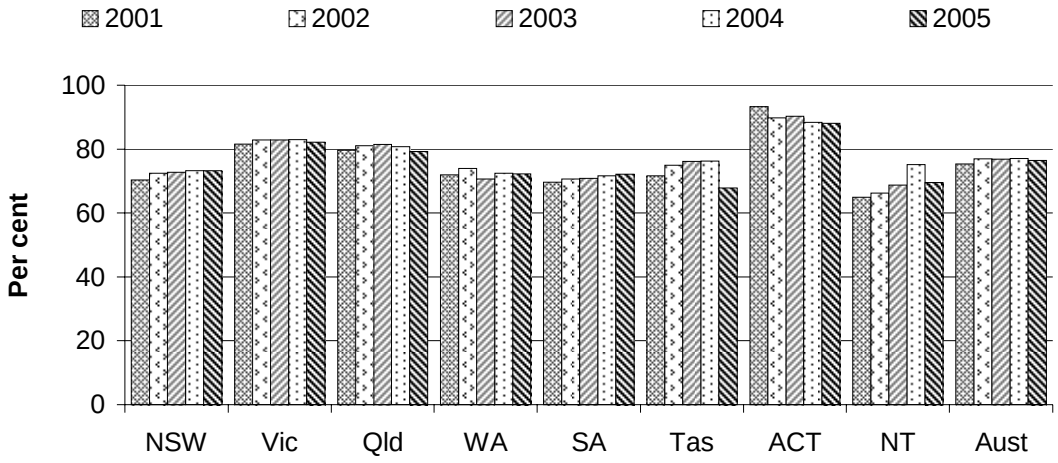


a Apparent retention rates are affected by factors that vary across jurisdictions. For this reason, variations in apparent retention rates over time within jurisdictions may be more useful than comparisons across jurisdictions. **b** The exclusion of part time students from standard apparent retention rate calculations has implications for the interpretation of results for all jurisdictions, but particularly for SA, Tasmania and the NT where there are high proportions of part time students in government schools (table 3.4). **c** Ungraded students are not included in the calculation of apparent retention rates. This exclusion has particular implications for the NT, where 20.2 per cent of Indigenous secondary students are ungraded (compared with an average of 5.1 per cent for the rest of Australia), in 2005, and this should be considered when interpreting the data.

Source: ABS (2006); table 3A.118.

Apparent rates of retention from year 10 to year 12 in all schools increased nationally by 1.1 percentage points, between 2001 and 2005 (figure 3.9).

Figure 3.9 **Apparent rates of retention from year 10 to year 12, full time secondary students, all schools[a, b, c]**



a Apparent retention rates are affected by factors that vary across jurisdictions. For this reason, variations in apparent retention rates over time within jurisdictions may be more useful than comparisons across jurisdictions. **b** The exclusion of part time students from standard apparent retention rate calculations has implications for the interpretation of results for all jurisdictions, but particularly for SA, Tasmania and the NT where there are high proportions of part time students in government schools (table 3.4). **c** Ungraded students are not included in the calculation of apparent retention rates. This exclusion has particular implications for the NT, where 20.2 per cent of Indigenous secondary students are ungraded (compared with an average of 5.1 per cent for the rest of Australia), in 2005, and this should be considered when interpreting the data.

Source: ABS (2004, 2006); table 3A.121.

Efficiency

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

Table 3A.12 shows information on the comparability of the source expenditure data for government schools used for this chapter.

Recurrent expenditure per student

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

Box 3.4 **Recurrent expenditure per student**

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

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

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

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

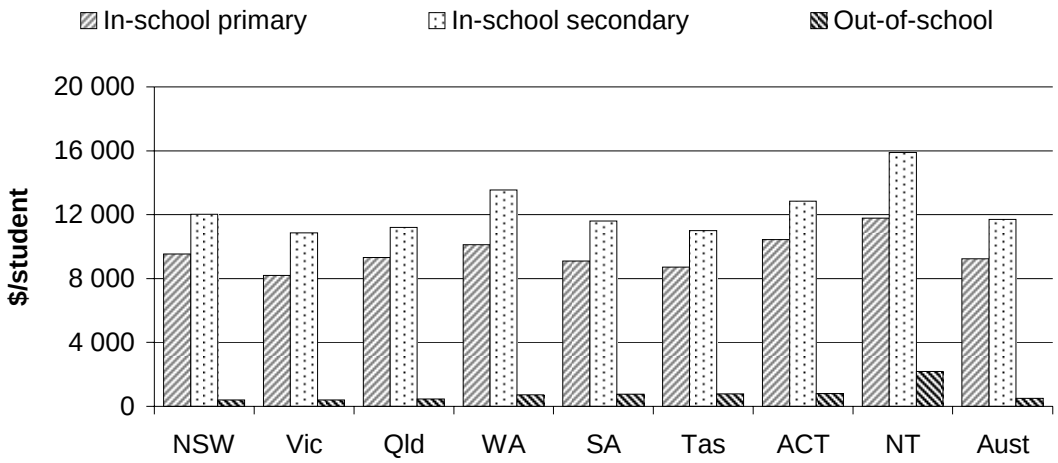
- influences beyond the control of governments, such as a high proportion of geographically remote students and/or a dispersed population, as well as migration between states and territories
- policy changes in education
- various approaches that education departments and schools apply in managing resources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

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

A proxy indicator of efficiency is the level of government inputs per unit of output (unit cost). Nationally, in-school government expenditure per FTE student in government primary schools was $9238 and in-school government expenditure per FTE student in government secondary schools was $11 713 in 2004-05.

Out-of-school government expenditure per FTE student in government schools was $510 in 2004-05 (figure 3.10).

Figure 3.10 **Government recurrent expenditure per FTE student, government schools, 2004-05[a, b]**

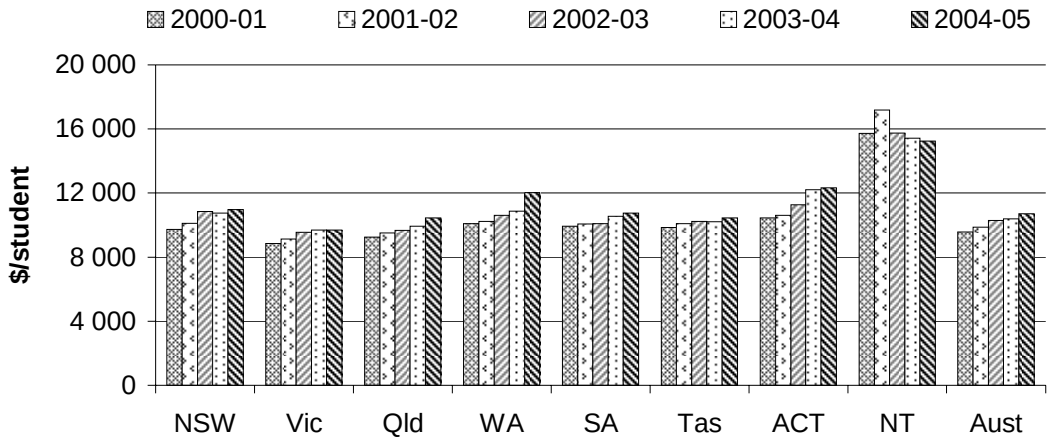


a See notes to tables 3A.7 and 3A.8 for definitions and data caveats. **b** Payroll tax estimates have been included for WA and the ACT for comparability reasons.

Source: ABS (2006); MCEETYA NSSC (unpublished); table 3A.8.

Nationally, government expenditure per FTE student in government schools was $10 715 in 2004-05. It increased (in average real terms) between 2000-01 and 2004-05 (figure 3.11) by 2.8 per cent per year (table 3A.9).

Figure 3.11 **Government real recurrent expenditure per FTE student, government schools (2004-05 dollars)[a, b, c]**

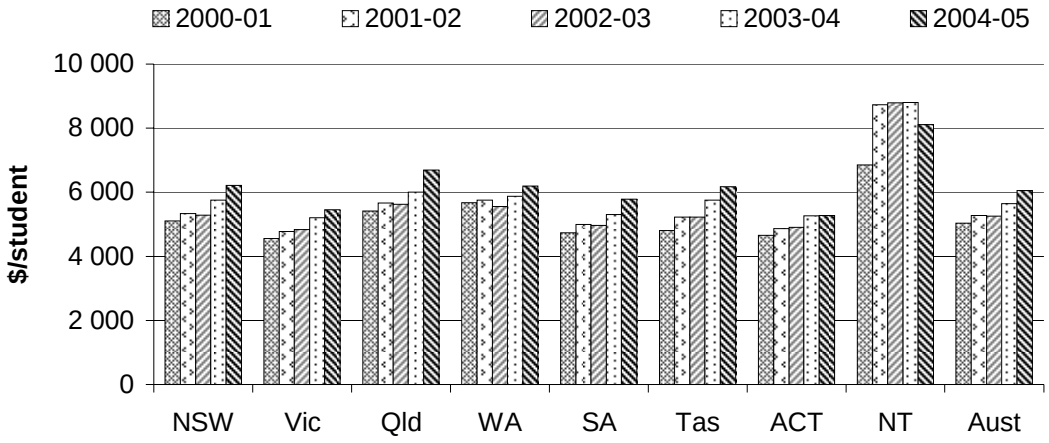


a See notes to tables 3A.7 and 3A.8 for definitions and data caveats. **b** Data for 2001-02 to 2003-04 have been adjusted to 2004-05 dollars using the gross domestic product (GDP) price deflator. **c** Payroll tax estimates have been included for WA and the ACT for comparability reasons.

Source: ABS (2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006); MCEETYA NSSC (unpublished); table 3A.9.

Nationally, government expenditure per FTE student in non-government schools was $6054 in 2004-05. It increased (in average real terms) between 2000-01 and 2004-05 (figure 3.12) by 4.7 per cent per year (table 3A.9).

Figure 3.12 **Government real recurrent expenditure per FTE student, non-government schools (2004-05 dollars)[a, b, c]**



a See notes to tables 3A.7–9 for definitions and data caveats. **b** Data for 2000-01 to 2004-05 have been adjusted to 2004-05 dollars using the gross domestic product (GDP) price deflator. **c** The sum of Australian Government specific purpose payments for non-government schools, and State and Territory government payments to non-government schools. Data on State and Territory government payments to non-government schools are not fully comparable across jurisdictions.

Source: ABS (2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006); DEST (unpublished); State and Territory governments (unpublished); table 3A.9.

Staff expenditure per student

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

Box 3.5 **Staff expenditure per student**

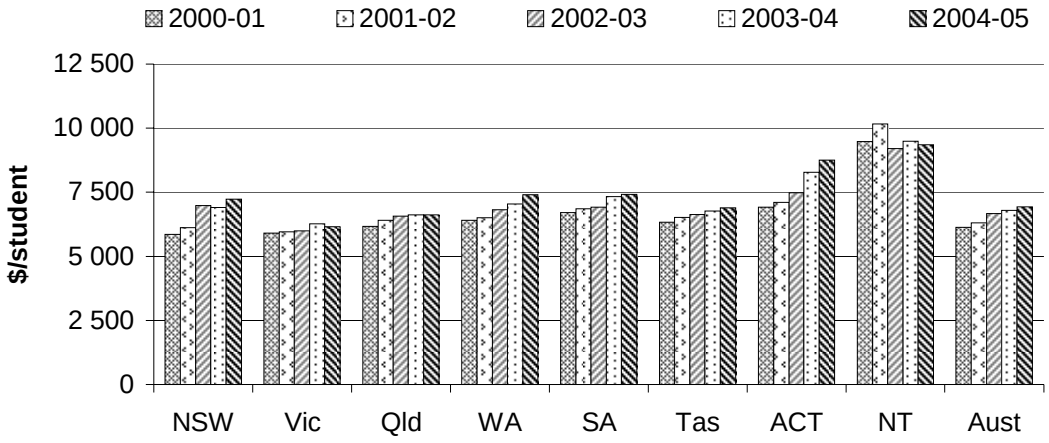
'Staff expenditure per student' (government recurrent expenditure on staff per student) is an output-efficiency indicator of governments' objective to provide education in an efficient manner.

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

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

Expenditure on staff is the major component of government recurrent expenditure on government schools ($15.6 billion), accounting for 64.6 per cent of the national total, in 2004-05. Of this expenditure, 79.9 per cent was on in-school teachers and 20.1 per cent was on other staff (table 3A.7). The average real increase in expenditure on staff per FTE student between 2000-01 and 2004-05 was 3.1 per cent per year (figure 3.13).

Figure 3.13 **Real government recurrent expenditure on staff per FTE student, government schools (2004-05 dollars)[a, b]**



a See notes to tables 3A.7 and 3A.8 for definitions and data caveats. **b** Data for 2000-01 to 2004-05 have been adjusted to 2004-05 dollars using the gross domestic product (GDP) price deflator.

Source: ABS (2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006); MCEETYA NSSC (unpublished); table 3A.8.

User cost of capital per student

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

Box 3.6 **User cost of capital per student**

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

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

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

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

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

(Continued on next page)

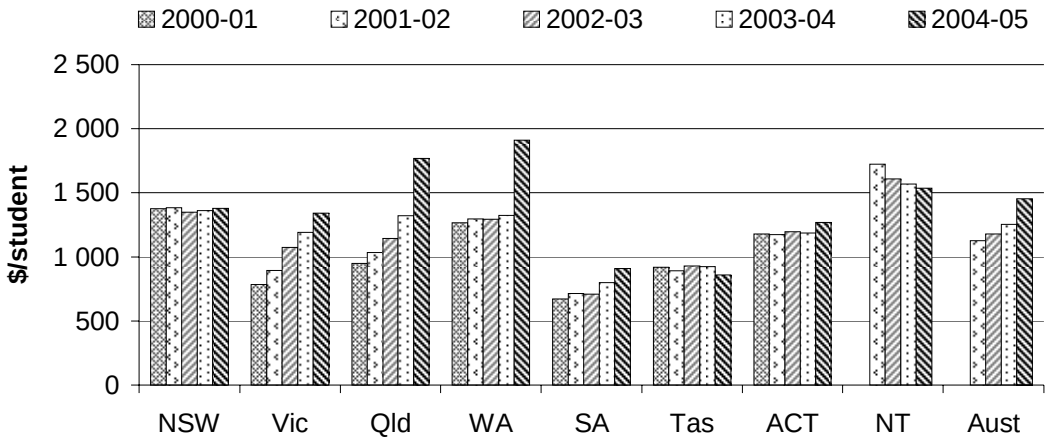
Box 3.6 **(Continued)**

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

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

The notional UCC per FTE government school student in 2004-05 averaged $1453 nationally (figure 3.14).

Figure 3.14 **Notional UCC per FTE student, government schools[a]**



a See notes to tables 3A.9-10 for definitions and data caveats.

Source: ABS (2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006); MCEETYA (unpublished); tables 3A.9-10.

Student-to-staff ratio

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

Box 3.7 **Student-to-staff ratio**

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

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

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

(Continued on next page)

Box 3.7 **(Continued)**

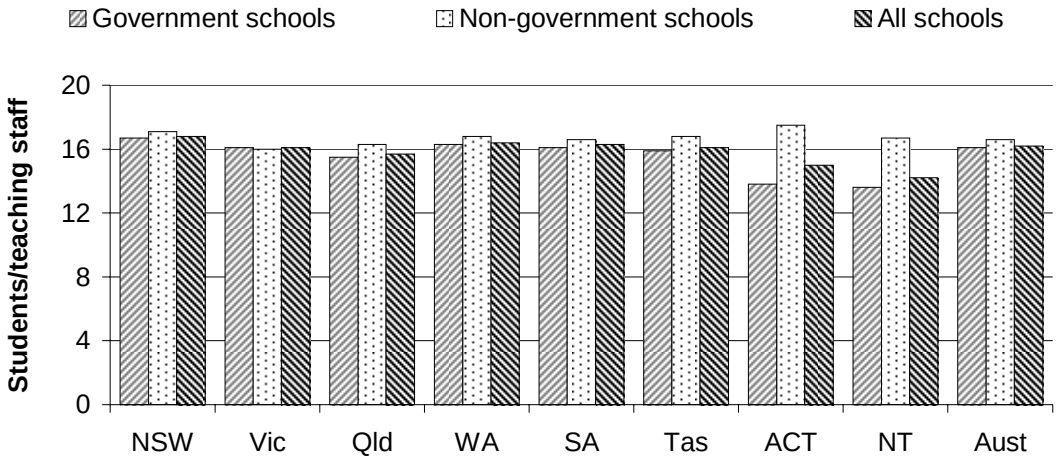
The ratio needs to be interpreted with care because it is aggregated across all subjects and year levels, so it does not reflect the fact that a lower ratio may be more important for certain subjects and/or year levels and it does not account for learning outcomes, teacher quality, experience and qualifications.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

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

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

Nationally, for government primary schools, the student-to-teacher ratio was 16.1 in 2005. For non-government primary schools, the student-to-teacher ratio was 16.6 in 2005. For all primary schools, the student-to-teacher ratio was 16.2 in 2005 (figure 3.15).

Figure 3.15 **Ratio of FTE students to FTE teaching staff, primary schools, 2005[a]**

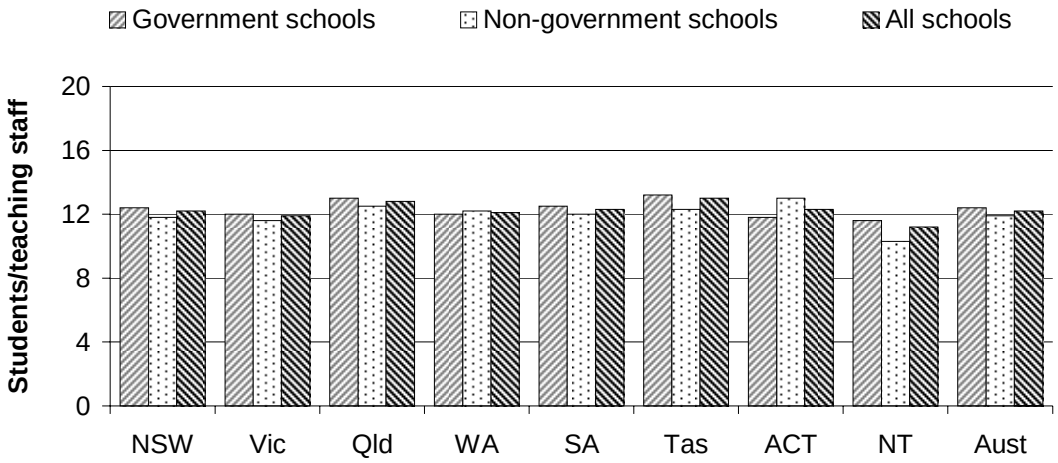


a See notes to table 3A.13 for definitions and data caveats.

Source: ABS (2006); table 3A.13.

Nationally, for government secondary schools, the student-to-teacher ratio was 12.4 in 2005. For non-government secondary schools, the student-to-teacher ratio was 11.9 in 2005. For all secondary schools, the student-to-teacher ratio was 12.2 in 2005 (figure 3.16).

Figure 3.16 **Ratio of FTE students to FTE teaching staff, secondary schools, 2005[a]**



a See notes to table 3A.13 for definitions and data caveats.

Source: ABS (2006); table 3A.13.

Nationally, for all government schools, the student-to-teacher ratio was 14.4 in 2005. For all non-government schools, the student-to-teacher ratio was 13.9 in 2005. For all schools, the student-to-teacher ratio was 14.2 in 2005 (table 3A.13).

Refer to table 3A.13 for further detail on student-to-staff ratios, including those for non-school staff and all staff, for all jurisdictions.

Outcomes

Nationally comparable learning outcomes

'Reading performance', 'writing performance', 'numeracy performance', 'science literacy performance', 'civics and citizenship performance', and 'information and communication technology performance' have been identified as indicators of learning outcomes (boxes 3.8–3.13) and are discussed in this section. Other outcomes, VET in schools participation and attainment, completion rates, and school leaver destination (boxes 3.14–3.17) are discussed in the following section.

Years 3, 5 and 7 nationally comparable learning outcomes data for reading, writing and numeracy performance for 2004 (and earlier years) are reported. Details of these learning outcomes data and accompanying information from the national collection are reported in tables 3A.26–91. Limitations of national learning outcomes data are detailed in the 2004 Report (box 3.1, pages 3.36-7).

Years 4 and 8 Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) learning outcomes data for 2002-03 are also reported. TIMSS is an initiative of the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement. Australian students participated in both previous TIMSS, in 1994-95 and 1998-99. The TIMSS focuses on the mathematics and science curriculum, identifying what concepts and processes students have learned, what factors are linked to students' opportunity to learn, and how these factors influence students' achievements.

In 2002-03, students from 46 countries participated in the TIMSS. From Australia this included 10 030 students from 414 schools in the main sample. Detailed information about TIMSS 2002-03 is available in Thomson and Fleming (2004a, 2004b) and tables 3A.111–114.

Triennial year 6 science literacy performance data for 2003 are reported in tables 3A.92–94. Triennial Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) 2003 learning outcomes data for 15 year olds are reported across three domains: reading literacy, mathematical literacy and scientific literacy. Problem solving was

also assessed as a discrete test in 2003. Information and data on PISA 2000 and 2003 is available in Thomson et al. (2004a, 2004b) and tables 3A.94–110.

Interpreting learning outcomes data

To assist with making comparisons between jurisdictions, 95 per cent confidence intervals are presented in charts, calculated from the standard errors in accompanying tables (tables 3A.26–114). Confidence intervals are a standard way of expressing the degree of uncertainty associated with survey estimates or performance measurement. An estimate of 80 with a confidence interval of $\pm$ 2, for example, means that if another sample had been drawn, or if another combination of test items had been used, there is a 95 per cent chance that the result would lie between 78 and 82. The learning outcomes proportion for a jurisdiction, therefore, can be thought of in terms of a range. If one jurisdiction's rate ranges from 78–82 and another's from 77–81, then it is not possible to say with confidence that one differs from the other (because there is unlikely to be a statistically significant difference). Where ranges do not overlap, there is a high likelihood that there is a statistically significant difference. To say that there is a statistically significant difference means there is a high probability that there is an actual difference; it does not imply that the difference is necessarily large or important.

Reading performance

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

Box 3.8 **Reading performance**

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

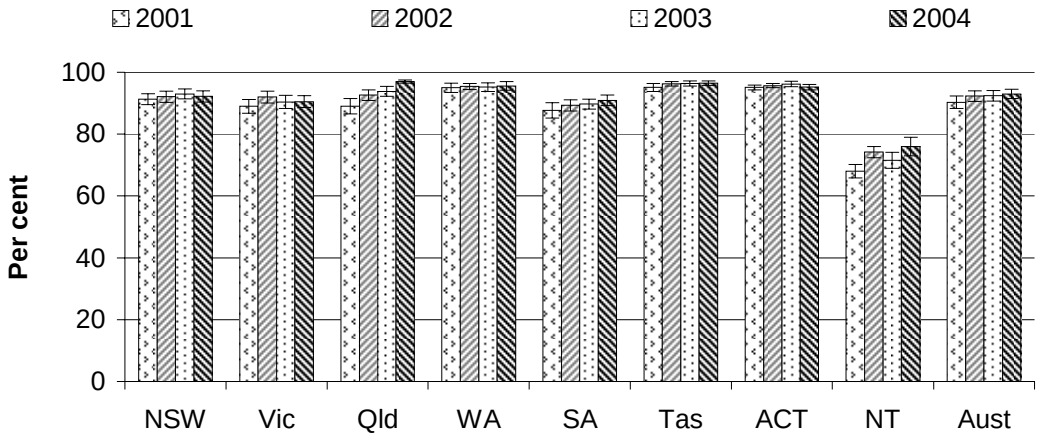
Reading performance is defined as the proportion of assessed years 3, 5 and 7 students who achieved the national reading benchmark for a given year, reported by sex, Indigenous status and LBOTE status. The benchmarks describe nationally agreed minimum acceptable standards for reading performance at years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

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

Nationally, the proportion of assessed year 3 students who achieved the reading benchmark in 2004 was 91.5–94.5 per cent (figure 3.17). The national proportion of students by equity group who achieved the year 3 reading benchmark in 2004 was:

- 93.4–95.8 per cent for female students, higher than the proportion for male students (89.7–93.3 per cent)
- 79.3–86.5 per cent for Indigenous students
- 88.2–91.8 per cent for LBOTE students (figure 3.18).

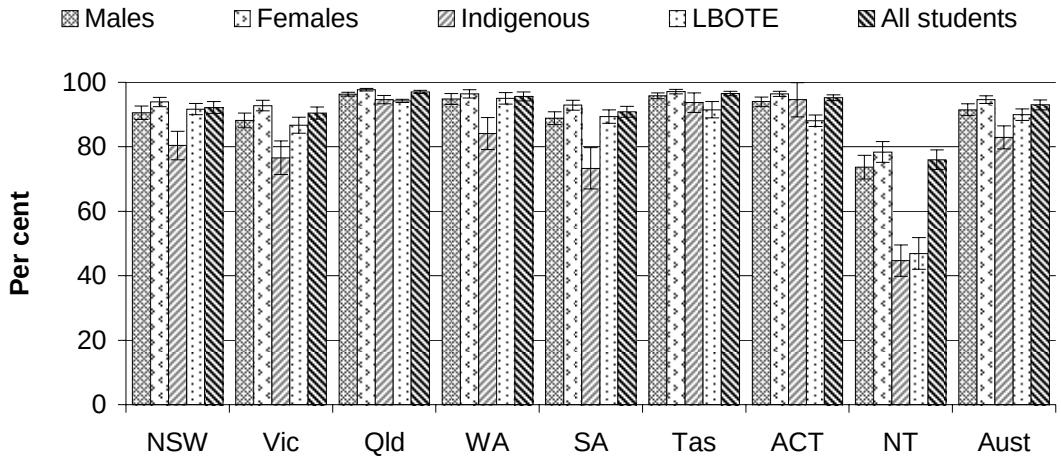
Figure 3.17 **Proportion of year 3 students achieving the reading benchmark[a, b]**



a Error bars represent the 95 per cent confidence interval associated with each point estimate. **b** For further information and caveats see tables 3A.29-30, 3A.44-45, 3A.60-61 and tables 3A.78-79.

Source: MCEETYA (2003, 2005b, 2005c, 2006a); tables 3A.26, 3A.41, 3A.56 and 3A.74.

Figure 3.18 **Proportion of year 3 students achieving the reading benchmark, by equity group, 2004[a, b]**



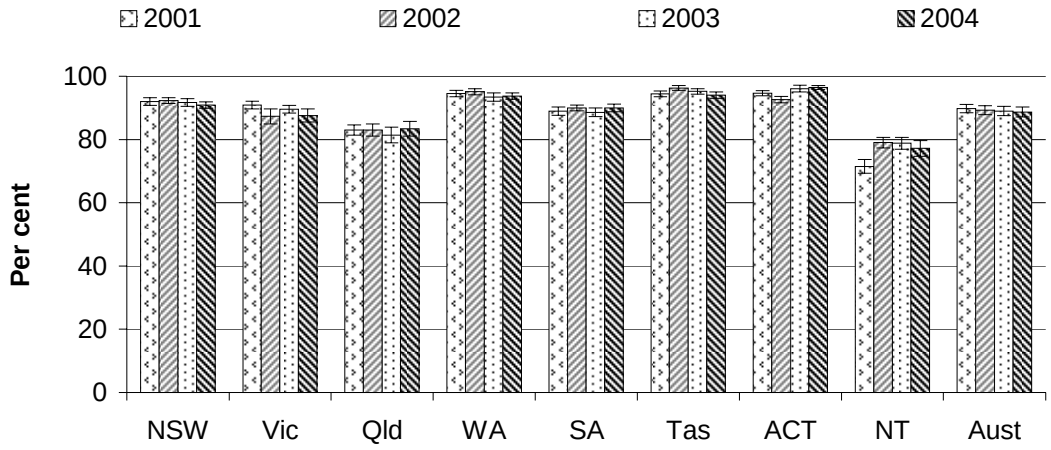
a Error bars represent the 95 per cent confidence interval associated with each point estimate. **b** For further information and caveats see tables 3A.78-79.

Source: MCEETYA (2006a); table 3A.74.

The proportion of assessed year 5 students who achieved the reading benchmark in 2004 was 87.1–90.3 per cent nationally (figure 3.19). The proportion of students by equity group who achieved the year 5 reading benchmark in 2004 was:

- 89.5–92.3 per cent for female students, higher than the proportion for male students (84.8–88.4 per cent)
- 65.6–73.2 per cent for Indigenous students
- 84.3–88.1 per cent for LBOTE students (figure 3.20).

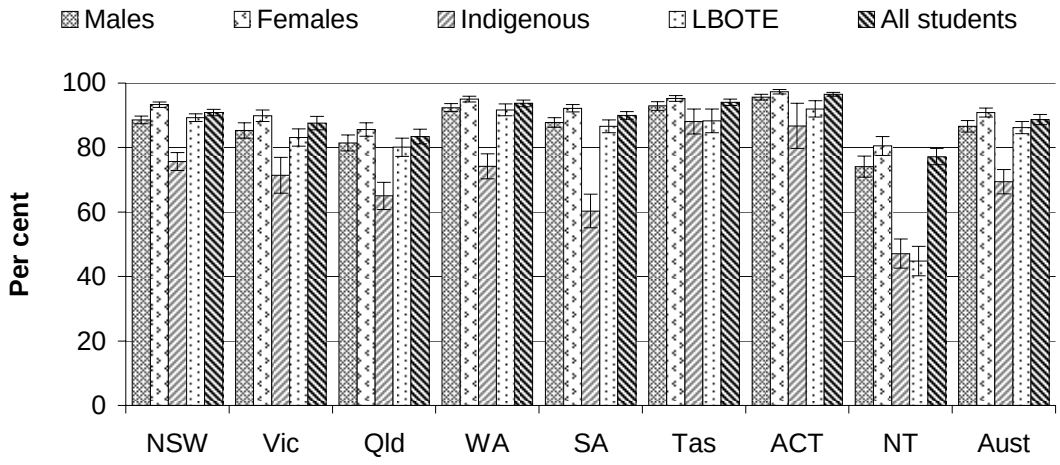
Figure 3.19 **Proportion of year 5 students achieving the reading benchmark[a, b]**



a Error bars represent the 95 per cent confidence interval associated with each point estimate. **b** For further information and caveats see tables 3A.29-30, 3A.44-45, 3A.60-61 and tables 3A.78-79.

Source: MCEETYA (2003, 2005b, 2005c, 2006a); tables 3A.27, 3A.42, 3A.57 and 3A.75.

Figure 3.20 **Proportion of year 5 students achieving the reading benchmark, by equity group, 2004[a, b]**



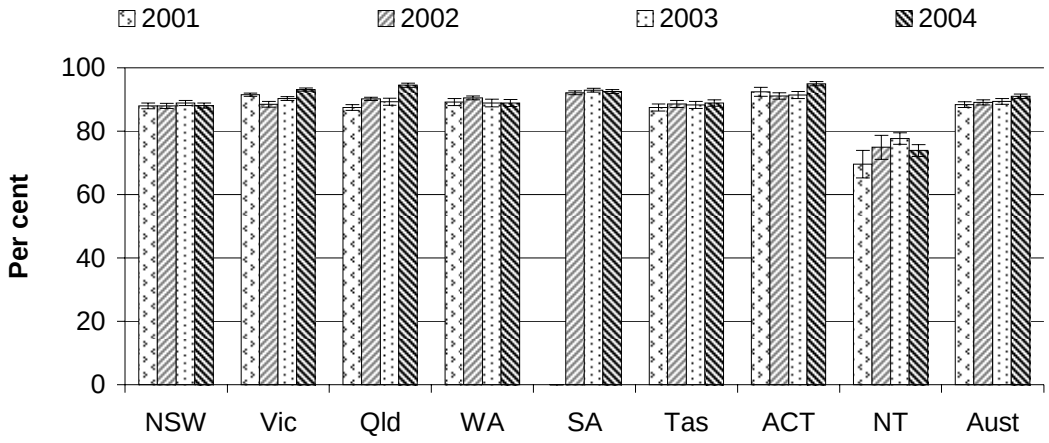
a Error bars represent the 95 per cent confidence interval associated with each point estimate. **b** For further information and caveats see tables 3A.78-79.

Source: MCEETYA (2006a); table 3A.75.

The proportion of assessed year 7 students who achieved the reading benchmark in 2004 was 90.3–91.7 per cent nationally (figure 3.21). The proportion of students by equity group who achieved the year 7 reading benchmark in 2004 was:

- 92.3–93.7 per cent for female students, higher than the proportion for male students (88.2–90.0 per cent)
- 68.2–73.8 per cent for Indigenous students
- 85.7–88.1 per cent for LBOTE students (figure 3.22).

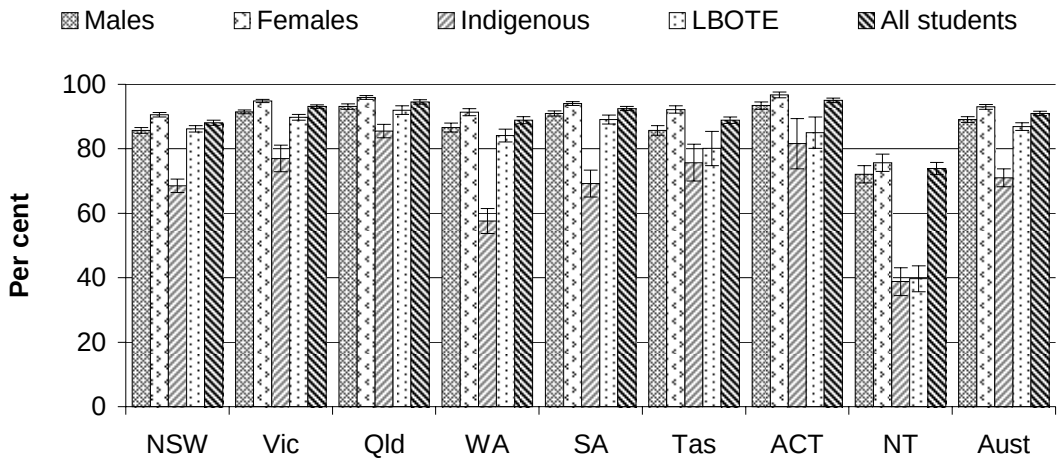
Figure 3.21 **Proportion of year 7 students achieving the reading benchmark[a, b, c]**



a Error bars represent the 95 per cent confidence interval associated with each point estimate. **b** SA 2001 data were not available. **c** For further information and caveats see tables 3A.29-30, 3A.44-45 and tables 3A.78-79.

Source: MCEETYA (2005a, 2005b, 2005c, 2006a); tables 3A.28, 3A.43, 3A.58 and 3A.76.

Figure 3.22 **Proportion of year 7 students achieving the reading benchmark, by equity group, 2004[a, b]**



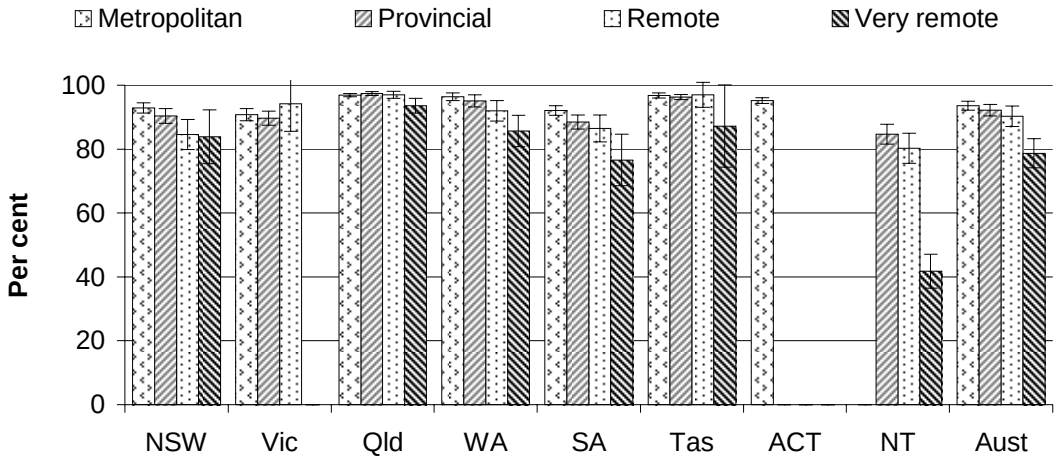
a Error bars represent the 95 per cent confidence interval associated with each point estimate. **b** For further information and caveats see tables 3A.78-79.

Source: MCEETYA (2006a); table 3A.76.

Nationally, the proportion of assessed students from metropolitan areas who achieved the reading benchmark in 2004 was:

- 92.2–95.0 per cent for year 3 students, no different to the proportion for provincial students (90.4–94.0 per cent), no different to the proportion for remote students (87.1–93.5 per cent), and above the proportion for very remote students (74.1–83.3 per cent) (figure 3.23)
- 88.2–91.2 per cent for year 5 students, no different to the proportion for provincial students (85.9–89.5 per cent), and above the proportion for remote (79.3–86.5 per cent) and very remote students (58.8–69.6 per cent) (table 3A.77)
- 91.2–92.6 per cent for year 7 students, above the proportion for provincial (89.2–91.0 per cent), remote (80.0–86.0 per cent) and very remote students (58.1–67.9 per cent) (table 3A.77).

Figure 3.23 **Proportion of year 3 students achieving the reading benchmark, by geolocation, 2004[a, b, c]**



a Error bars represent the 95 per cent confidence interval associated with each point estimate. **b** Data for year 3 students are shown and may not be representative of students in years 5 and 7 which are detailed in table 3A.77. **c** Insufficient or no students in an area of geographic classification are not included. There are no very remote areas in Victoria. There are no remote or very remote areas in the ACT. There is no metropolitan zone in the NT.

Source: MCEETYA (2006a); table 3A.77.

Writing performance

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

Box 3.9 **Writing performance**

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

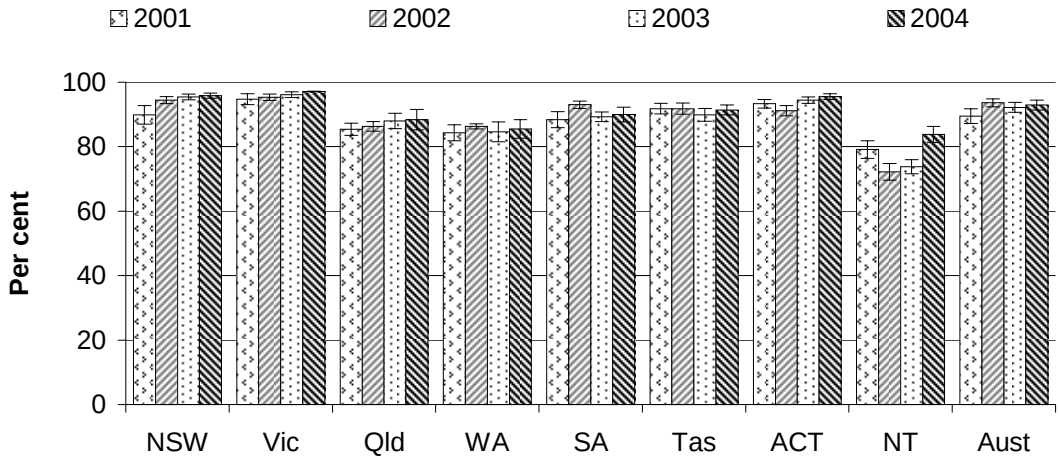
Writing performance is defined as the proportion of assessed years 3, 5 and 7 students who achieved the national writing benchmark for a given year, reported by sex, Indigenous status and LBOTE status. The benchmarks describe nationally agreed minimum acceptable standards for writing performance at years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

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

Nationally, the proportion of assessed year 3 students who achieved the writing benchmark in 2004 was 91.4–94.4 per cent (figure 3.24). The national proportion of students by equity group who achieved the year 3 writing benchmark in 2004 was:

- 93.8–96.2 per cent for female students, higher than the proportion for male students (89.1–92.7 per cent)
- 72.5–81.1 per cent for Indigenous students
- 91.3–93.7 per cent for LBOTE students (figure 3.25).

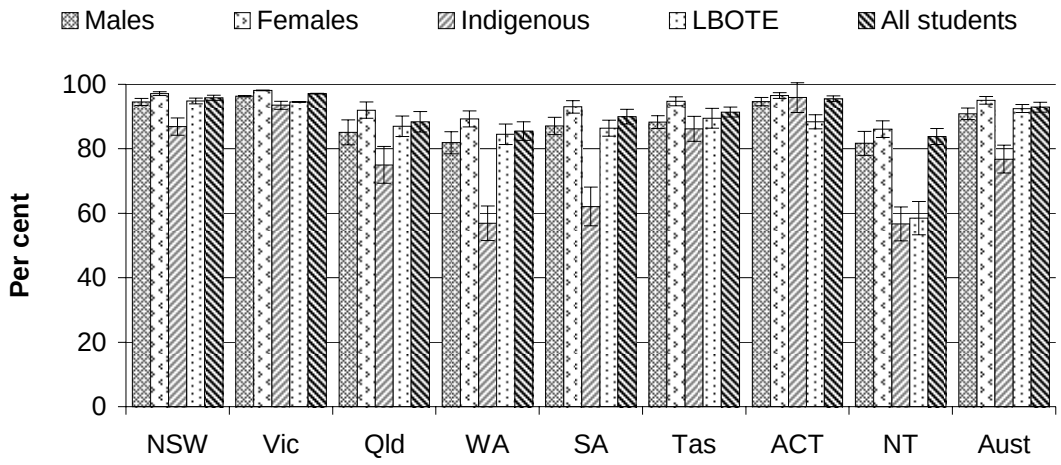
Figure 3.24 **Proportion of year 3 students achieving the writing benchmark[a, b]**



a Error bars represent the 95 per cent confidence interval associated with each point estimate. **b** For further information and caveats see tables 3A.34-35, 3A.49-50, 3A.66-67 and tables 3A.84-85.

Source: MCEETYA (2003, 2005b, 2005c, 2006a); tables 3A.31, 3A.46, 3A.62 and 3A.80.

Figure 3.25 **Proportion of year 3 students achieving the writing benchmark, by equity group, 2004[a, b]**



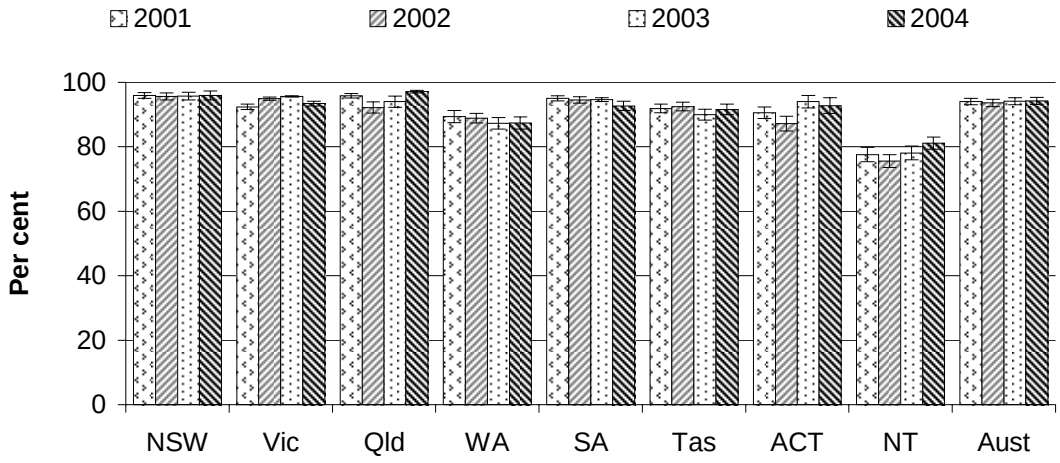
a Error bars represent the 95 per cent confidence interval associated with each point estimate. **b** For further information and caveats see tables 3A.84-85.

Source: MCEETYA (2006a); table 3A.80.

Nationally, the proportion of assessed year 5 students who achieved the writing benchmark in 2004 was 93.1–95.3 per cent (figure 3.26). The national proportion of students by equity group who achieved the year 5 writing benchmark in 2004 was:

- 95.4–97.0 per cent for female students, higher than the proportion for male students (90.9–93.7 per cent)
- 78.2–85.2 per cent for Indigenous students
- 91.3–93.9 per cent for LBOTE students (figure 3.27).

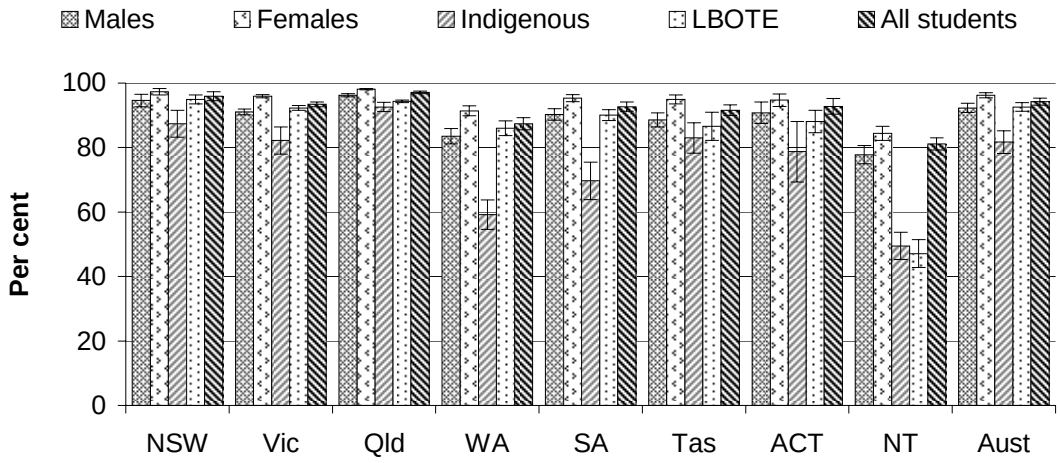
Figure 3.26 **Proportion of year 5 students achieving the writing benchmark[a, b]**



a Error bars represent the 95 per cent confidence interval associated with each point estimate. **b** For further information and caveats see tables 3A.34-35, 3A.49-50, 3A.66-67 and tables 3A.84-85.

Source: MCEETYA (2003, 2005b, 2005c, 2006a); tables 3A.32, 3A.47, 3A.63 and 3A.81.

Figure 3.27 **Proportion of year 5 students achieving the writing benchmark, by equity group, 2004[a, b]**



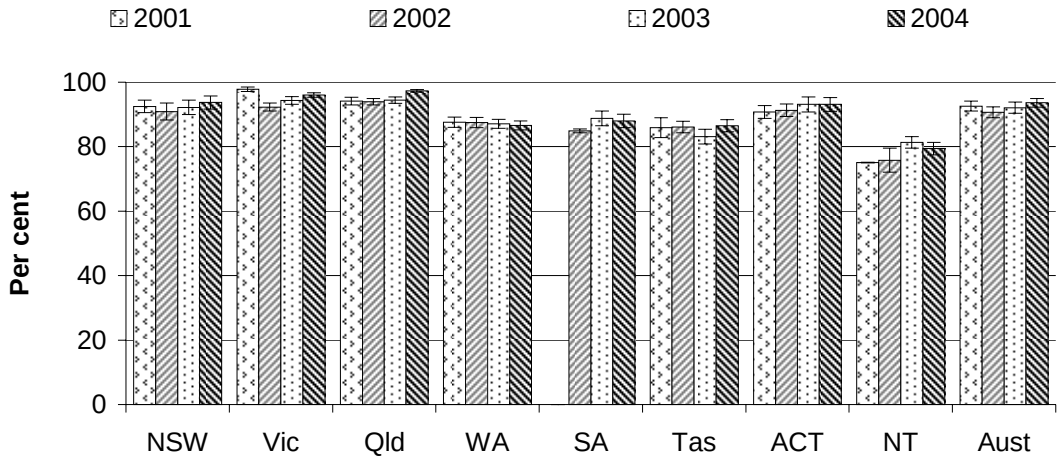
a Error bars represent the 95 per cent confidence interval associated with each point estimate. **b** For further information and caveats see tables 3A.84-85.

Source: MCEETYA (2006a); table 3A.81.

Nationally, the proportion of assessed year 7 students who achieved the writing benchmark in 2004 was 92.3–94.9 per cent (figure 3.28). The national proportion of students by equity group who achieved the year 7 writing benchmark in 2004 was:

- 95.0–96.8 per cent for female students, higher than the proportion for male students (89.6–93.0 per cent)
- 75.0–82.6 per cent for Indigenous students
- 90.5–94.1 per cent for LBOTE students (figure 3.29).

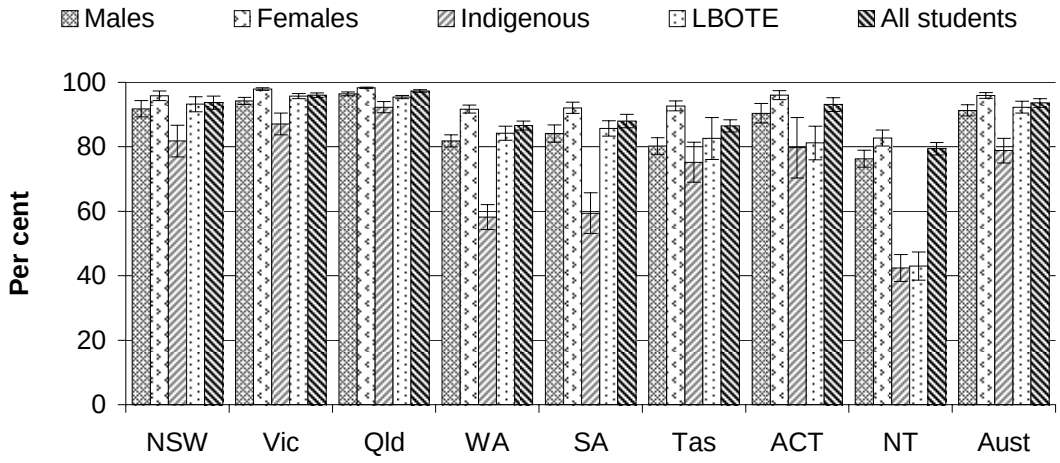
Figure 3.28 **Proportion of year 7 students achieving the writing benchmark[a, b, c]**



a Error bars represent the 95 per cent confidence interval associated with each point estimate. **b** SA 2001 data were not available. **c** For further information and caveats see tables 3A.34-35, 3A.49-50, 3A.66-67 and tables 3A.84-85.

Source: MCEETYA (2005a, 2005b, 2005c, 2006a); tables 3A.33, 3A.48, 3A.64 and 3A.82.

Figure 3.29 **Proportion of year 7 students achieving the writing benchmark, by equity group, 2004[a, b]**



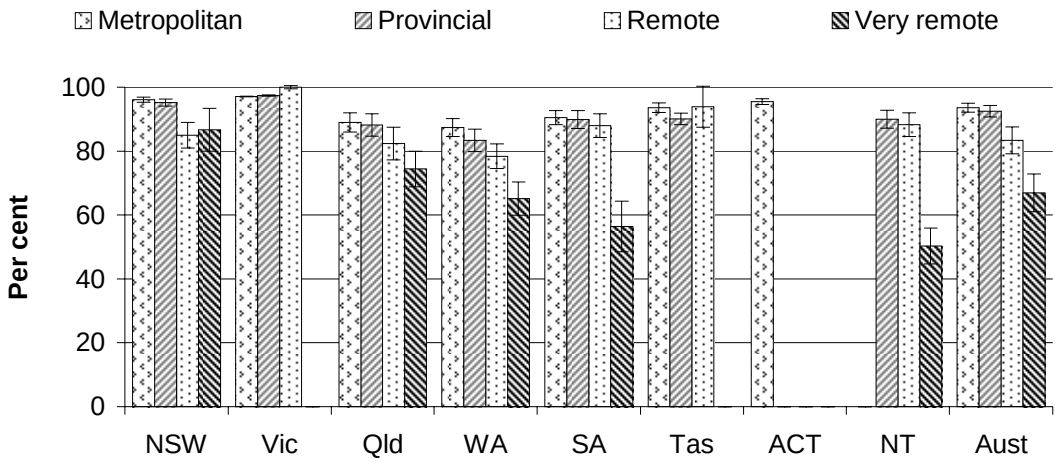
a Error bars represent the 95 per cent confidence interval associated with each point estimate. **b** For further information and caveats see tables 3A.84-85.

Source: MCEETYA (2006a); table 3A.82.

Nationally, the proportion of assessed students from metropolitan areas who achieved the writing benchmark in 2004 was:

- 92.2–95.0 per cent for year 3 students, no different to the proportion for provincial students (90.7–94.3 per cent), and above the proportion for remote (79.2–87.6 per cent) and very remote students (61.0–72.8 per cent) (figure 3.30)
- 93.9–96.1 per cent for year 5 students, no different to the proportion for provincial students (92.6–95.2 per cent), and above the proportion for remote (84.7–90.9 per cent) and very remote students (65.6–74.8 per cent) (table 3A.83)
- 93.2–95.6 per cent for year 7 students, no different to the proportion for provincial students (91.3–94.3 per cent), and above the proportion for remote (80.9–87.9 per cent) and very remote students (60.8–70.8 per cent) (table 3A.83).

Figure 3.30 **Proportion of year 3 students achieving the writing benchmark, by geolocation, 2004[a, b, c]**



a Error bars represent the 95 per cent confidence interval associated with each point estimate. **b** Data for year 3 students are shown and may not be representative of students in years 5 and 7 which are detailed in table 3A.83. **c** Insufficient or no students in an area of geographic classification are not included. There are no very remote areas in Victoria. There are no remote or very remote areas in the ACT. There is no metropolitan zone in the NT.

Source: MCEETYA (2006a); table 3A.83.

Numeracy performance

'Numeracy performance' is an outcome indicator (box 3.10).

Box 3.10 **Numeracy performance**

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

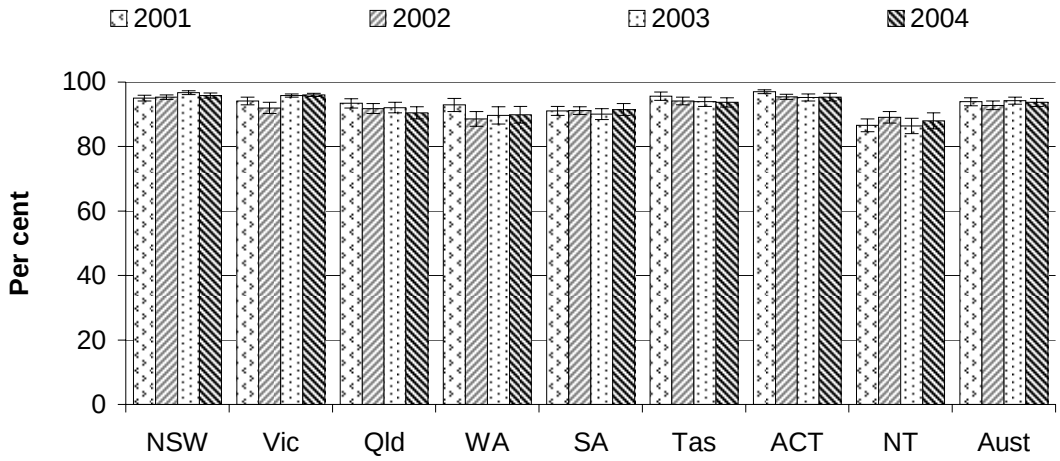
Numeracy performance is defined as the proportion of assessed years 3, 5 and 7 students who achieved the national numeracy benchmark for a given year, reported by sex, Indigenous status and LBOTE status. The benchmarks describe nationally agreed minimum acceptable standards for numeracy performance at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

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

Nationally, the proportion of assessed year 3 students who achieved the numeracy benchmark in 2004 was 92.5–94.9 per cent (figure 3.31). The national proportion of students by equity group who achieved the year 3 numeracy benchmark in 2004 was:

- 92.8–95.4 per cent for female students, no different to the proportion for male students (92.1–94.5 per cent)
- 75.1–83.3 per cent for Indigenous students
- 91.1–93.5 per cent for LBOTE students (figure 3.32).

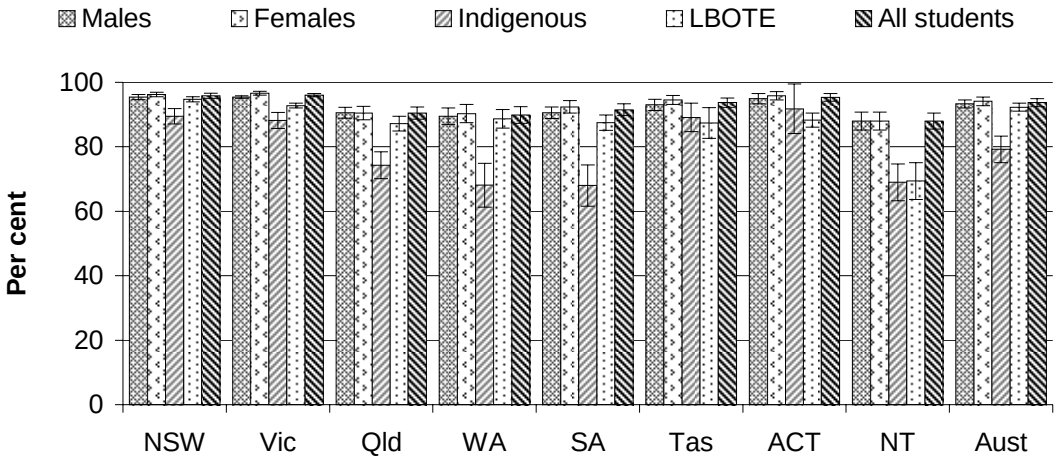
Figure 3.31 **Proportion of year 3 students achieving the numeracy benchmark[a, b]**



a Error bars represent the 95 per cent confidence interval associated with each point estimate. **b** For further information and caveats see tables 3A.39-40, 3A.54-55, 3A.72-73 and tables 3A.90-91.

Source: MCEETYA (2003, 2005b, 2005c, 2006a); tables 3A.36, 3A.51, 3A.68 and 3A.86.

Figure 3.32 **Proportion of year 3 students achieving the numeracy benchmark, by equity group, 2004[a, b]**



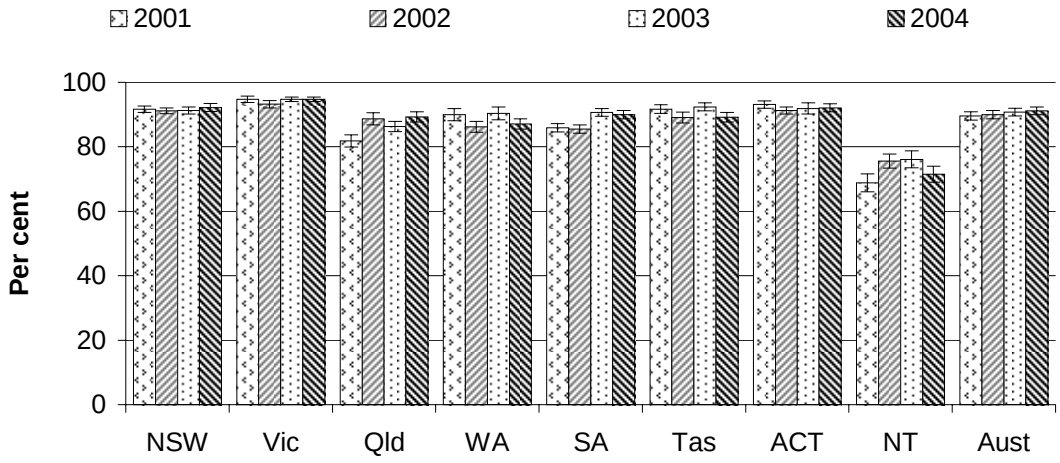
a Error bars represent the 95 per cent confidence interval associated with each point estimate. **b** For further information and caveats see tables 3A.90-91.

Source: MCEETYA (2006a); tables 3A.86.

Nationally, the proportion of assessed year 5 students who achieved the numeracy benchmark in 2004 was 90.0–92.4 per cent (figure 3.33). The national proportion of students by equity group who achieved the year 5 numeracy benchmark in 2004 was:

- 90.2–92.8 per cent for female students, no different to the proportion for male students (89.8–92.2 per cent)
- 65.5–73.3 per cent for Indigenous students
- 87.9–90.7 per cent for LBOTE students (figure 3.34).

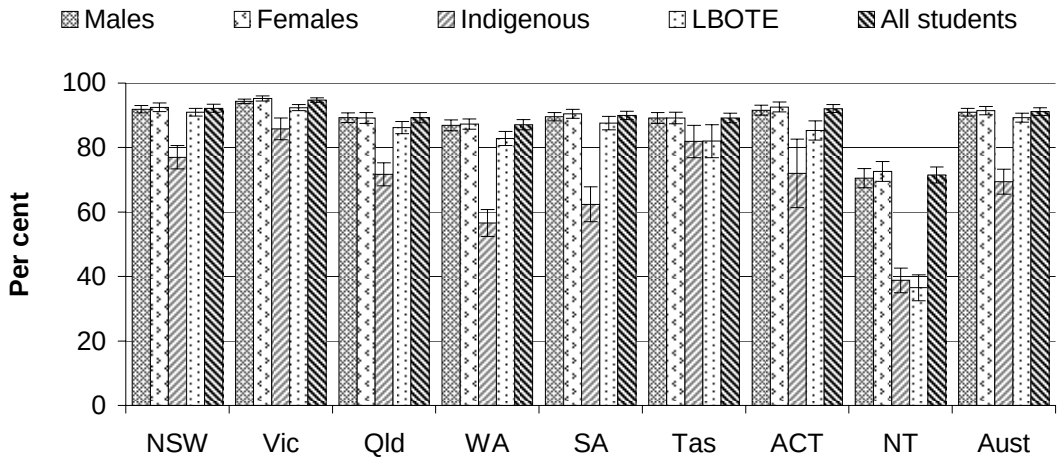
Figure 3.33 **Proportion of year 5 students achieving the numeracy benchmark[a, b]**



a Error bars represent the 95 per cent confidence interval associated with each point estimate. **b** For further information and caveats see tables 3A.39-40, 3A.54-55, 3A.72-73 and tables 3A.90-91.

Source: MCEETYA (2003, 2005b, 2005c, 2006a); tables 3A.37, 3A.52, 3A.69 and 3A.87.

Figure 3.34 **Proportion of year 5 students achieving the numeracy benchmark, by equity group, 2004[a, b]**



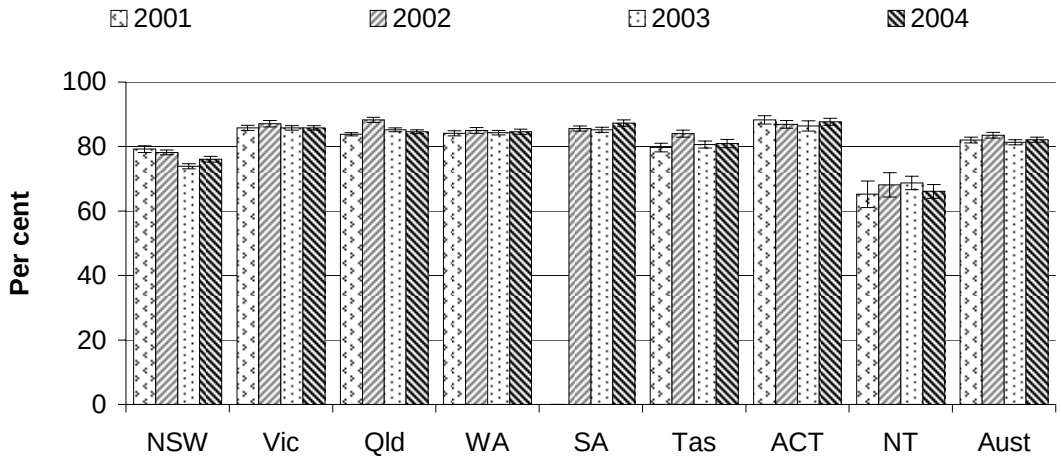
a Error bars represent the 95 per cent confidence interval associated with each point estimate. **b** For further information and caveats see tables 3A.89-90.

Source: MCEETYA (2006a); table 3A.87.

Nationally, the proportion of assessed year 7 students who achieved the numeracy benchmark in 2004 was 81.3–82.9 per cent (figure 3.35). The national proportion of students by equity group who achieved the year 7 numeracy benchmark in 2004 was:

- 81.4–83.2 per cent for female students, no different to the proportion for male students (81.0–82.8 per cent)
- 49.1–54.7 per cent for Indigenous students
- 76.6–79.2 per cent for LBOTE students (figure 3.36).

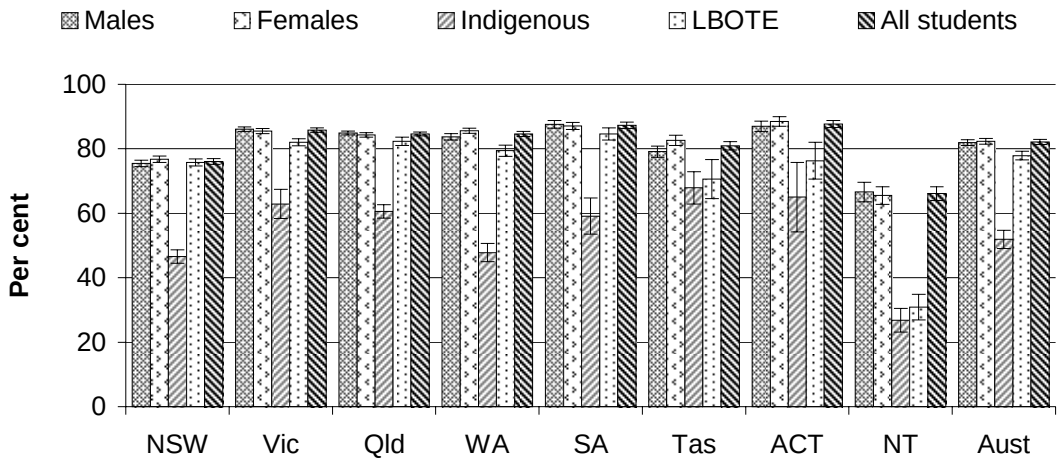
Figure 3.35 **Proportion of year 7 students achieving the numeracy benchmark[a, b, c]**



a Error bars represent the 95 per cent confidence interval associated with each point estimate. **b** SA 2001 data were not available. **c** For further information and caveats see tables 3A.39-40, 3A.54-55, 3A.72-73 and tables 3A.90-91.

Source: MCEETYA (2005a, 2005b, 2005c, 2006a); tables 3A.38, 3A.53, 3A.70 and 3A.88.

Figure 3.36 **Proportion of year 7 students achieving the numeracy benchmark, by equity group, 2004[a, b]**



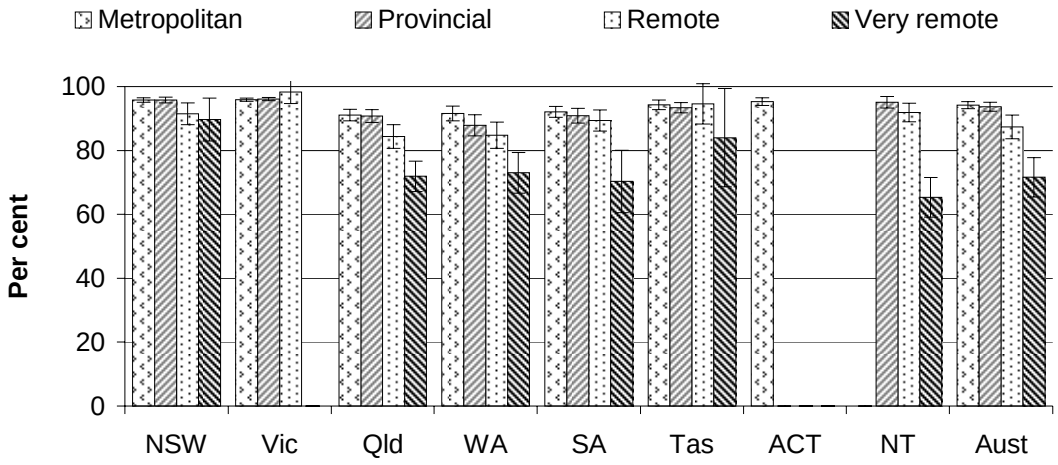
a Error bars represent the 95 per cent confidence interval associated with each point estimate. **b** For further information and caveats see tables 3A.90-91.

Source: MCEETYA (2006a); table 3A.88.

Nationally, the proportion of assessed students from metropolitan areas who achieved the numeracy benchmark in 2004 was:

- 93.1–95.3 per cent for year 3 students, no different to the proportion for provincial students (92.3–95.1 per cent), and above the proportion for remote (83.7–91.1 per cent) and very remote students (65.4–77.8 per cent) (figure 3.37)
- 91.0–93.2 per cent for year 5 students, no different to the proportion for provincial students (89.1–92.1 per cent), and above the proportion for remote (78.3–85.7 per cent) and very remote students (54.2–64.0 per cent) (table 3A.89)
- 82.6–84.2 per cent for year 7 students, above the proportion for provincial (79.1–81.3 per cent), remote (69.9–76.7 per cent) and very remote students (45.9–55.7 per cent) (table 3A.89).

Figure 3.37 **Proportion of year 3 students achieving the numeracy benchmark, by geolocation, 2004[a, b, c]**



a Error bars represent the 95 per cent confidence interval associated with each point estimate. **b** Data for year 3 students are shown and may not be representative of students in years 5 and 7 which are detailed in table 3A.89. **c** Insufficient or no students in an area of geographic classification are not included. There are no very remote areas in Victoria. There are no remote or very remote areas in the ACT. There is no metropolitan zone in the NT.

Source: MCEETYA (2006a); table 3A.89.

Science literacy performance

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

Box 3.11 **Science literacy performance**

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

Science literacy performance is defined as the proportion of sampled year 6 primary students achieving at or above the proficient standard in scientific literacy, reported by sex, Indigenous status, LBOTE status and geolocation (national data only for subgroups). The proficient standard for year 6 scientific literacy is set at proficiency level 3.2 (of levels 1 to 4 or above). This is a level of performance based on what 'well advanced' or 'expert' students should know and be able to do by the end of year 6. It differs from the literacy and numeracy benchmark standards where the focus is on identifying the minimum skill and knowledge requirements students would be expected to demonstrate to progress to the next level of schooling (MCEETYA 2004). Student performance is measured (or assessed) by a national sample assessment program resulting in comparable reporting against the standard.

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

Data collections for the science literacy performance indicator have been developed. Data for 2006 are anticipated to be available for the 2009 Report.

The National Year 6 Science Assessment measures the scientific literacy of a sample of students and was conducted for the first time in 2003, and will be conducted triennially (MCEETYA 2004). Results from the 2003 national science literacy sample assessment are included in tables 3A.92–94 and are discussed in more detail in the 2006 Report (SCRGSP 2006, pages 3.59–62).

Civics and citizenship performance

'Civics and citizenship performance' is an outcome indicator (box 3.12).

Box 3.12 **Civics and citizenship performance**

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

Civics and citizenship performance is defined as the proportion of sampled year 6 and year 10 students achieving at or above the proficient standard in civic knowledge and understanding, reported by sex, Indigenous status, LBOTE status and geolocation (national data only for subgroups). The proficient standard for civics and citizenship performance is set at proficiency level 2 for year 6, and at level 3 for year 10, (of levels 1 to 5). This is a challenging level of performance where students needed to demonstrate more than minimal or elementary skills expected of a student at that year level to be regarded as having reached the proficient standard. It differs from the literacy and numeracy benchmark standards where the focus is on identifying the minimum skill and knowledge requirements students would be expected to demonstrate to progress to the next level of schooling (MCEETYA 2006b). Student performance is measured (or assessed) by a national sample assessment program resulting in comparable reporting against the standard.

Holding other factors equal, a high proportion of students achieving at or above the applicable proficient standard in civics and citizenship performance is desirable.

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

The National Years 6 and 10 Civics and Citizenship Assessment measures civics and citizenship performance and was conducted for the first time in 2004, and will be conducted triennially. The sample was drawn from all states and territories and both government and non-government schools participated. In 2004, 10 712 year 6 students from 318 government and non-government schools and 9536 year 10 students in 249 government and non-government schools across states and territories, participated in the national civics and citizenship assessment (MCEETYA 2006b).

Years 6 and 10 civics and citizenship performance 2004 results are reported as the proportion of Australian students from the sampled students (years 6 and 10 enrolled in participating schools) who achieved at the proficient standard or above. Nationally, the proportion of participating students who achieved at the proficient standard or above in civics and citizenship performance was 47.0–53.0 per cent for year 6 students and 36.5–42.1 per cent for year 10 students (figure 3.38).

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

- 50.1–56.7 per cent for female students, higher than the proportion for male students (43.0–50.0 per cent)
- 17.1–30.5 per cent for Indigenous students
- 42.1–52.1 per cent for LBOTE students (table 3A.97).

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

- 39.8–47.6 per cent for female students, higher than the proportion for male students (31.5–37.9 per cent)
- 14.2–30.6 per cent for Indigenous students
- 32.9–39.3 per cent for LBOTE students (table 3A.97).

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

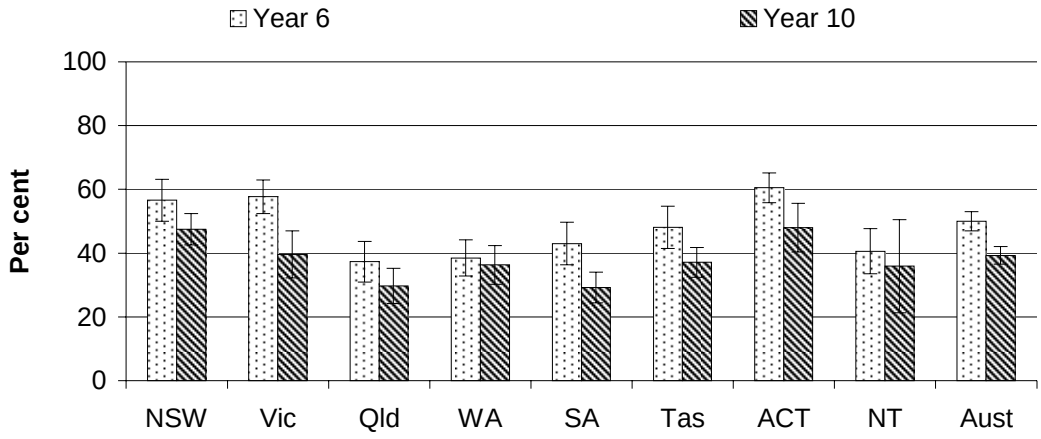
- 51.6–55.4 per cent for metropolitan students
- 39.9–44.7 per cent for provincial students
- 31.3–53.1 per cent for remote students (table 3A.96).

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

- 38.3–42.1 per cent for metropolitan students
- 34.6–40.2 per cent for provincial students
- 14.7–36.5 per cent for remote students (table 3A.96).

Civics and citizenship performance by parental occupation and parental educational attainment are reported in MCEETYA (2006b).

Figure 3.38 **Proportion of year 6 and 10 students achieving at the proficient standard or above, civics and citizenship performance, 2004[a, b]**



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

Source: MCEETYA (2006b); table 3A.95.

Information and communication technology literacy performance

'Information and communication technology literacy performance' is an outcome indicator (box 3.13).

Box 3.13 **Information and communication technology literacy performance**

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

Information and communication technology literacy performance is a measure of the proportion of years 6 and 10 students achieving the applicable proficient standard.

Data collections for information and communication technology indicators have been developed (see section 3.4 for details). Data for 2005 are anticipated to be available for the 2008 Report.

Other outcomes

Vocational education and training (VET) in schools participation

'VET in schools participation' is an outcome indicator (box 3.14).

Box 3.14 **VET in schools participation**

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

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

Holding other factors constant, a higher or increasing VET in schools participation rate may suggest an improvement in educational outcomes, through greater access to alternate pathways than traditional school education.

Data collections for the VET in schools participation indicator has been developed (see section 3.4 for details). Data for 2005 are anticipated to be available for the 2008 Report.

Vocational education and training (VET) in schools attainment

'VET in schools attainment' is an outcome indicator (box 3.15).

Box 3.15 **VET in schools attainment**

'VET in schools' attainment is an outcome indicator of governments' objective to provide vocational education and training in schools to assist all young people to secure their own futures by enhancing their transition to a broad range of post-school options and pathways.

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

Holding other factors constant, a higher or increasing VET in schools attainment rate, suggests a positive educational outcome.

Data collections for the VET in schools attainment indicator has been developed (see section 3.4 for details). Data for 2005 are anticipated to be available for the 2008 Report.

Completion

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

Box 3.16 **Completion**

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

The completion 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 potential year 12 population. The potential year 12 population is an estimate of a single year age group which could have attended year 12 that year, calculated as the estimated resident population aged 15–19 divided by five. The criteria for obtaining a year 12 or equivalent certificate vary across jurisdictions. The completion rate is reported by socioeconomic status, location and gender. Geographic isolation is determined using the agreed MCEETYA Geographic Location Classification. Socioeconomic status is determined according to the ABS Index of Disadvantage on the basis of postcode of students' home addresses. Low socioeconomic status is the average of the three lowest deciles, medium socioeconomic status is the average of the four medium deciles and high socioeconomic status is the average of the three highest deciles.

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

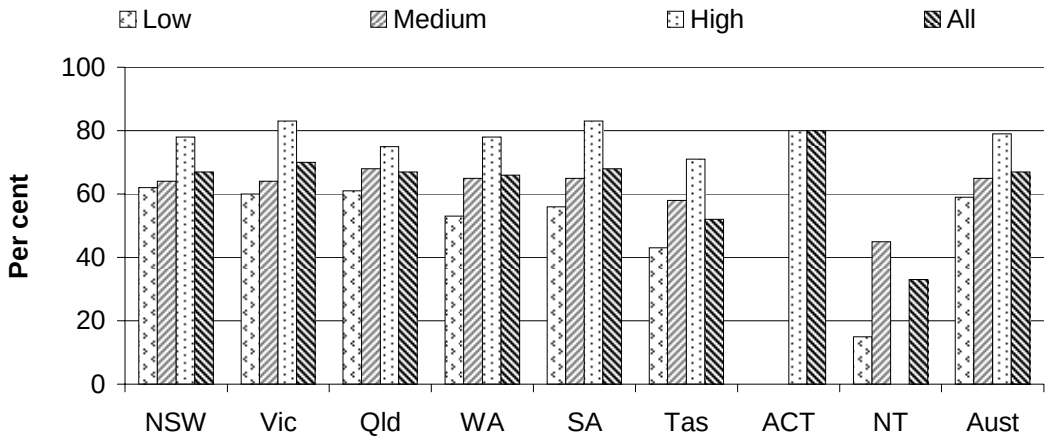
Completion rates are primarily used as indicators of trends and are used, in part, because information on participation and retention rates is generally not available by socioeconomic background or geographic location. Comparisons across jurisdictions are not recommended and need to be made with care,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

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

Nationally, the year 12 completion rate for all students was 67 per cent in 2005. The completion rate for male students was 61 per cent compared with 73 per cent for females (figures 3.39-40, tables 3A.122-123).

Nationally, year 12 completion rates for students from low (59 per cent) and medium socioeconomic backgrounds (65 per cent) were 20 percentage points and 14 percentage points respectively below those for students from a high (79 per cent) socioeconomic background in 2005 (figure 3.39). Completion rates were higher for female students than for male students in all socioeconomic categories (table 3A.122).

Figure 3.39 **Completion rates, year 12, by socioeconomic status, 2005 (per cent)**[a, b, c, d, e]



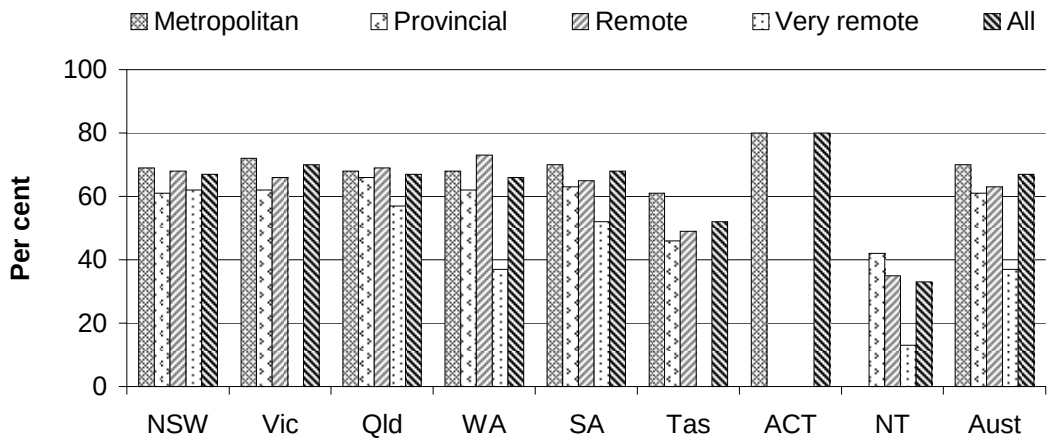
a Completion rates are estimated by calculating the number of students who meet the requirements of a year 12 certificate or equivalent expressed as a percentage of the potential year 12 population. The potential year 12 population is an estimate of a single year age group which could have attended year 12 that year, calculated as the estimated resident population aged 15–19 divided by five. **b** The ABS Index of Disadvantage has been used to calculate socioeconomic status on the basis of postcode of students' home addresses. **c** Low socioeconomic status is the average of the three lowest deciles, medium socioeconomic status is the average of the four middle deciles and high socioeconomic status is the average of the three highest deciles. **d** A common total for socio-economic status and geolocation is selected for reporting all students' rates and this may mean totals for socioeconomic status differ slightly to those in other publications. **e** The populations in the high socioeconomic deciles of the NT and the low and medium socioeconomic deciles of the ACT are too small to produce meaningful results. Consequently the high socioeconomic deciles of the NT have been combined in the medium and the low and medium socioeconomic deciles of the ACT have been combined in the high. **np** Not published.

Source: DEST (unpublished); table 3A.122.

Nationally, the completion rate was higher in the metropolitan zone (70 per cent) than in all areas (67 per cent). The completion rate was lower in the provincial zone (61 per cent), remote areas (63 per cent) and very remote areas (37 per cent), than for all areas (figure 3.40).

Gender differences are also evident with completion rates higher for females for all localities. In the metropolitan zone, the female completion rate was 75 per cent compared with 65 per cent for males. In the remote zone, the female completion rate was 75 per cent compared with 53 per cent for males (table 3A.123). Time series data on national completion rates are shown in tables 3A.122 and 3A.123.

Figure 3.40 **Completion rates, year 12, by geolocation, 2005 (per cent)[a, b, c, d, e]**



a Completion rates are estimated by calculating the number of students who meet the requirements of a year 12 certificate or equivalent expressed as a percentage of the potential year 12 population. The potential year 12 population is an estimate of a single year age group which could have attended year 12 that year, calculated as the estimated resident population aged 15–19 divided by five. **b** Definitions are based on the agreed MCEETYA Geographic Location Classification. **c** The ACT is included in the metropolitan zone. **d** Darwin is included in the provincial zone. **e** There are no very remote areas in Victoria and the ACT. The very remote population in Tasmania is too small to give meaningful results and has been combined with the remote. .. Not applicable. **np** Not published.

Source: DEST (unpublished); table 3A.123

Destination

'Destination' is an outcome indicator (box 3.17).

Box 3.17 **Destination**

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

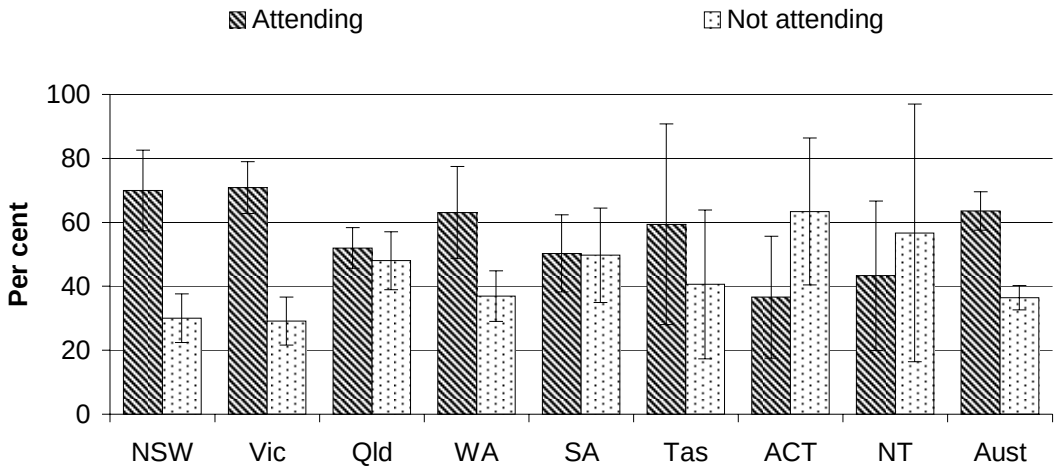
School leaver destination is defined as the number of school leavers who attend post school education and training as a percentage of all school leavers. It is reported by highest level of schooling completed (year 12 or year 11 and below).

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

School leaver destination data disaggregated by jurisdiction need to be used with caution, especially for the smaller jurisdictions, due to the large confidence intervals associated with these survey data. Nationally, 63.6 per cent of year 12 school leavers were enrolled in further study, with 38.3 per cent attending higher education and 25.2 per cent attending TAFE courses or other study (figure 3.41, table 3A.124). For year 11 and below school leavers, 33.7 per cent were attending further education (table 3A.124).

Of the 36.4 per cent of year 12 school leavers who were not attending further education, 16.6 per cent were employed full time and 19.8 per cent were either employed part time, unemployed or not in the labour force (table 3A.124). Detailed information relating to year 12, year 11 and below and all school leavers across jurisdictions is in table 3A.124.

Figure 3.41 **Destination of year 12 students, 2005**[a, b, c, d]



[a] Data are for year 12 students who left school in 2004. [b] Error bars represent the 95 per cent confidence interval associated with each point estimate. [c] The categories for employment and enrolment are not exclusive. That is, for example, people enrolled may also be employed. [d] 'Not attending' includes people in full time employment and 'other', which includes part time workers, unemployed people and people not in the labour force.

Source: ABS survey of Education and Work (unpublished); table 3A.124

The Education preface of this Report includes 2005 destination data of 2004 year 12 and year 11 and below school leavers at the national level, and examines the proportions of male and female students attending other educational institutions in 2005 after leaving school in the previous year (see table B.7).

The school leaver destination survey results reported below are from three jurisdictions' State specific surveys, using different research methods and data collection instruments. The individual jurisdictional surveys were developed for various jurisdictional specific purposes, such as to assist with operational, strategic and planning functions, as distinct from being designed for comparative national reporting. These data are presented as supplementary information to the national ABS data, providing some context, until nationally comparable data may become available (box 3.18).

Box 3.18 School leaver destination survey results

Victoria

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

The 2006 On Track Survey contacted 32 239 (71 per cent) of the eligible 2005 Year 12 or equivalent cohort from both government and non-government schools. Of these students, 75.7 per cent were in further education and training (46.1 per cent were enrolled at university, 20.4 per cent were TAFE enrolled and 9.2 per cent had taken up apprenticeships or traineeships). Of the 24.3 per cent who were not in further education and training, 13.0 per cent were in full or part time employment, 8.0 per cent had deferred a tertiary place and 3.3 per cent were looking for work.

Queensland

Queensland's Next Step destination survey was first commissioned in 2005. The annual survey targets all students who completed Year 12 in both government and non-government schools. Responses are collected by telephone interview between March and May in the year after completion of Year 12.

In 2006, its second year, the survey was completed by 30 989 Year 12 completers (77.5 per cent) from 407 schools. The results showed that 65.3 per cent of respondents continued in some recognised form of education and training in the year after they left school. The most likely destination was university degree programs (36.7 per cent), followed by VET (28.6 percent), which included apprenticeships (9. per cent) and traineeships (6.1 per cent). One in three Year 12 completers (34.7 per cent) did not enter post-school education or training, but were either employed (27.3 per cent), seeking work (5.7 per cent) or neither studying nor in the labour force (1.7 per cent).

WA

The WA School Leaver Destinations survey has been conducted annually since 1996. This telephone survey is designed to collect destinations data from government school year 12 completers and year 10 and 11 early leavers. The 2006 collection resulted in destinations being obtained for 9978 (90.9 per cent) of the 10 978 eligible Year 12 government school students.

The majority of students 7116 (71.3 per cent) were in either education or training. Of these students, 3250 (32.6 per cent) were enrolled in university studies, 2466 (24.7 per cent) were enrolled in TAFE studies and 1105 (11.1 per cent) had taken up either an apprenticeship or a traineeship. The remainder were either repeating year 12 studies or engaged in other training. Of the students in neither education nor training, 1155 (11.6 per cent) were in full time, and 755 (7.6 per cent) were in part time employment, 353 (3.5 per cent) were looking for a work or a study opportunity, 253 (2.5 per cent) were neither working nor seeking work and 346 (3.5 per cent) declined to participate.

Source: State and Territory governments (unpublished).

3.4 Future directions in performance reporting

Participation, retention and completion rates

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

Nationally comparable reporting of learning outcomes

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

Enhanced literacy and numeracy measures

Education ministers have agreed to pursue a broadening of the national reporting framework to enhance reporting of literacy and numeracy outcomes. From 2008, Year 9 students will be included along with years 3, 5 and 7 students in a national assessment program which uses a common set of national tests for literacy and numeracy. A trial of the national literacy and numeracy tests occurred in May 2006, and a report was to be provided to ministers in December 2006.

The Council of Australian Governments' (COAG) National Reform Agenda Human Capital Stream includes indicative outcomes and performance measures about education and training including literacy measures. The Steering Committee will monitor the implementation of the National Reform Agenda, including any data developments that are relevant to school education.

Information and communication technology

Education ministers have agreed to a national information and communication technology assessment of students at years 6 and 10 every three years. The PMRT has developed a definition of information and communication technology literacy, and the first assessment was undertaken in 2005, with further assessments to be undertaken at three year intervals. Years 6 and 10 information and communication

technology literacy data are expected to be available in 2007 and will be included in the 2008 Report.

VET in schools participation and attainment

Education ministers have endorsed two new indicators for VET in schools, replacing five measures previously approved or noted. Participation and attainment data for VET in schools have been collected annually from 2005 and are expected to be included in future Reports. These new indicators are detailed in boxes 3.14 and 3.15.

Attendance measures

The Steering Committee has identified school attendance as an important area for future reporting. Attendance at school has a significant impact on later academic success and if attendance is erratic then children are unable to reach educational benchmarks (SCRGSP 2005b). The COAG also made a commitment to improved attendance data in 2006. The PMRT is working on developing key performance measures for attendance which may be ready for implementation in 2007.

Nationally consistent definitions

The collection of nationally comparable data — against which educational achievement and outcomes can be reported — involves, among other factors, the collection of nationally consistent information on student group background characteristics. National definitions have been developed and agreed for gender, Indigenous status, LBOTE students, geographic location and socioeconomic status. The nationally agreed definitions will be applied to all new student enrolments from 2006 for all national reporting requirements on student outcomes. The PMRT is working on developing an appropriate measure to enable reporting on educational outcomes for students with disabilities.

3.5 Jurisdictions' comments

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

Australian Government comments

“The Australian Government provides significant funding to enhance the learning outcomes of all school students. Targeted funding is provided to improve the learning outcomes of students with special needs, including Indigenous students, students with disabilities, those from a language background other than English, low socioeconomic status or who are geographically isolated.

The Australian Government substantially increased its funding allocations for Indigenous education for the 2005–2008 quadrennium, emphasising that Indigenous education remains a major priority. A significant restructure of programmes was undertaken in order to redirect funding to initiatives that have been demonstrated to work, such as the National Accelerated Literacy Programme, to put greater weighting of funding towards Indigenous students of greatest disadvantage — those in remote areas of the country, and to make mainstream programmes work harder for Indigenous students.

Assistance for all young Australians to make the transition from school to further education and training or work is also funded by the Australian Government. Career Advice Australia is an Australian Government initiative committed to supporting young people aged 13–19 years through this transition via a range of programmes and services. Under the Career Advice Australia network, the successful Career and Transition pilot has been progressed as the Career and Transition Support programme facilitated by Local Community Partnerships. The Partnership Outreach Education Model pilot will also be progressed as a mainstream programme and have national coverage through 60 service regions across Australia from 2007. In 2005, the Australian Government also introduced Australian Technical Colleges, an initiative which adds to the ways young people can start an apprenticeship while attending school.

The Investing in Our Schools Programme, which provides $1 billion over the 2005–2008 quadrennium, commenced in 2005. Its objective is to deliver much needed school infrastructure to meet priorities identified by government and non-government school communities.

Performance targets for year 3 were extended in 2005 to include students in years 5 and 7. Each child’s performance against the national literacy and numeracy benchmarks for years 3, 5 and 7 were reported to parents by education authorities and schools.

Some 6200 students nationally were assisted through the pilot Tutorial Voucher Initiative which provided $700 worth of one-to-one reading tuition to parents or caregivers of students who were below the year 3 national reading benchmark in 2003.

The Australian Government is committed to improving the quality of teaching and school leadership. Teaching Australia was established in November 2005 with the aim of raising the status, quality and professionalism of teachers and school leaders throughout Australia.”

New South Wales Government comments

“ The NSW Education and training budget for 2006-07 will reach $10.7 billion. This includes funding for a range of initiatives specifically targeting improved student learning and performance.

The excellent results achieved by NSW students in state and national testing are a testimony to the high quality teaching and support services in our schools. The NSW Government is committed to further improvements and has undertaken a major review of assessment programs in NSW schools in the context of national tests in years 3, 5, 7 and 9.

NSW is addressing the performance gap between Aboriginal students and all students. Following a major review of Aboriginal Education, a number of initiatives are being implemented, including personalised learning plans for Aboriginal students and the Schools in Partnership program. Under this initiative selected school communities with high proportions of Aboriginal students develop targets and strategies to improving outcomes for Aboriginal students. Some $65 million will be invested in this program over four years.

In 2005 NSW established the NSW Institute of Teachers to retain and support high quality teachers and promote professional development. Other NSW strategies focussing on improving student outcomes include:

- Reducing class sizes in the early school years. In 2006, kindergarten classes were reduced to a statewide average of 19.3 students and year 1 classes were reduced to a statewide average of 21.3 students.
- Increasing focus on literacy and numeracy. Over the next four years, over $616 million will be allocated to the new NSW State Literacy and Numeracy Plans. In addition, NSW is actively participating in the Human Capital stream of the COAG National Reform Agenda, a key element of which is to increase the proportion of young people meeting basic literacy and numeracy standards, and to improve overall levels of achievement.
- $15.6 million allocated to strengthen support to students in special schools and special classes by providing 660 additional teachers aides positions by 2007.
- Developing foundation statements for primary schools which clearly define how much time should be spent on each topic, with 45–55 per cent devoted to literacy and numeracy.
- Establishing 21 new preschools in NSW Government primary schools, taking the total number of departmental preschools to 100. ”

Victorian Government comments

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

The Government's continued investment in school education has had a positive effect on class size. Prep to year 2 class sizes continue to drop. In 2006 the average class size was 20.8 students, maintaining 2005's lowest class sizes on record since 1973. Increasing the participation rates in all stages of education is a key goal of the Government. Retention rates remain strong with high numbers of students staying on to Year 12. The February apparent retention rate from year 7 to year 12 has increased from 81.2 per cent in 1999 to 84.4 per cent in 2006. The number of Year 10 students staying at school until year 12 increased from 78.7 per cent to 82.2 per cent between August 1999 and August 2005.

The proportion of young people completing year 12 or equivalent remains strong. The number of 20–24 year olds who had completed Year 12 or equivalent in 2005 was 85 per cent, nearly 3 percentage points higher than the Australian average.

Key initiatives from the Blueprint for Government Schools continue to be implemented by the Government. The Blueprint outlines the reform agenda for a highly effective government school system for Victoria. The Victorian Essential Learning Standards, a key Blueprint initiative, were validated and implemented during 2006. The Standards will ensure that students finish their compulsory years of schooling equipped with the knowledge, skills and personal qualities needed for further education, work and life.

New plain English Student report cards for both primary and secondary schools, including a focus on past performance and future development needs, A–E assessment and progress against the Standards, are being introduced with widespread support.

The Education and Training Reform Bill was passed by the Victorian Parliament in May 2006. The Act emerged from a legislative review that included an extensive public consultation process and includes a set of overarching principles upon which the practice of education and training will be based.

An independent review of VET arrangements in Victoria was released in February 2006. This was followed in March by the Ministerial Statement Maintaining the Advantage: Skilled Victorians. This investment represents the largest injection of funds ever made into the VET sector in Victoria.

The Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL) provides an alternative pathway to the Victorian Certificate of Education for students in Years 11 and 12. In 2005, 10 675 students enrolled in the VCAL with 380 providers, an increase from 8125 students and 322 providers in 2004. ”

Queensland Government comments

“ Through the Department of Education, Training and the Arts, the Queensland Government is creating a State where knowledge, creativity, innovation and skills will stimulate enduring economic growth and social development. A key element in the Government's vision of a clever and creative Queensland is a modern, responsive education system. (From 1 October 2006 Training has been integrated within the new Department of Education, Training and the Arts).

The introduction of the new *Education (General Provisions) Act 2006* will provide for the introduction of a universal preparatory year from 2007, exchange of student information across all schools, recognition of home education as a legitimate alternative to education at school, and improved reporting by schools to the community and parents.

The Schools Reporting reforms provide for a range of information to be made available to parents about the achievements of students, and for schools to publish performance information on their websites. Annually, parents will be provided with two written student reports and the opportunity for at least two parent-teacher interviews. The publication by schools of destinations of their students who completed year 12 is accompanied by a state-wide perspective in the *Next Step Report 2006*, which publishes destination data based on the responses of 78 per cent of students who completed year 12 in 2005.

The Queensland Government is continuing its commitment to improving standards, quality and comparability of reporting through trials of the Smarter Learning: Queensland Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Framework. Furthermore, senior students who graduate in 2008 will receive a Queensland Certificate of Education which will recognise student achievement in a wider range of learning areas.

To improve student outcomes, the Government has prioritised the allocation of $84 million for the Smart Classrooms Strategy for the integration of new technologies into teaching and learning. A further $1 billion has been injected through the Tomorrow's Schools — Providing for a Smarter Future, a comprehensive five year school rebuilding and renewal program to revitalise Queensland schools. Through the Smart State strategy, $45.8 million has been committed over four years for two new Smart Academies for Queensland's best and brightest maths, science and technology and creative arts students in years 10 and 11 commencing in 2007.

An additional $3.5 million per annum recurrent funding and $9.2 million in capital funding for projects will be provided under the Bound for Success initiative to assist Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in remote communities transition from home to school and from primary to secondary schools in urban locations.

To further strengthen school discipline and promote positive student behaviour, a code of behaviour for all government schools was introduced as part of the Government's Better Behaviour, Better Learning $28.6m initiative. ”

Western Australian Government comments

“ Beginning in 2006, all young people in WA must now attend school full time or undertake a range of other approved education, training or employment options until the end of the year in which they turn 16. From 2008, the same conditions will apply to those turning 17.

The Department of Education and Training is committed to the delivery of motivating and engaging educational programs in public schools. Students who would otherwise have left school now participate in meaningful and flexible programs that suit their particular learning needs and interests including schooling, vocational education and training, apprenticeships or traineeships, employment or combinations of these.

The extension of outcomes and standards education to Years 11 and 12 has begun, completing the process that started in 1999, when public schools were required to introduce the Curriculum Framework in Kindergarten to Year 10.

The phased introduction of the new courses of study for Year 11 and 12 continues. Four new courses will be introduced in Year 11 in 2007. Teacher Development Centres are being established in public senior high schools to support teachers and schools, with host schools and staff being selected by a competitive process.

The Department continues to focus on improving literacy and numeracy standards, which are vital to progress in all learning areas. The Getting it Right (GiR) strategy has trained and placed over 300 specialist teachers in selected primary and district high schools and the government has committed additional funding over the next four years to extend the GiR model to public secondary schools.

There is a strong emphasis on improving the educational outcomes of Indigenous students. The Aboriginal Literacy Strategy is a highly-structured program that aims to close the performance gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students. Introduced into remote schools in 2005, the strategy was extended in 2006 to other public schools with large Indigenous enrolments.

The Follow the Dream Aboriginal Tertiary Aspirations Strategy targets high-achieving students as they begin their secondary education. In 2005, some 650 students were provided with academic extension activities after school hours to enable them to aim to complete Year 12 and enter tertiary studies.

The Department’s Behaviour and Management and Discipline strategy continues to support schools to manage student behaviour problems more effectively. Eighty-two per cent of schools aiming to improve student behaviour reported gains in student attendance, student social and self-management skills, increased teacher confidence and reductions in bullying. ”

South Australian Government comments

“ The long term approach towards supporting the education and care of young people and their families continued in 2005 and 2006.

Student data demonstrated the continuing improvement of school retention rates. Between January 2004 and September 2006, a total of 7335 young people have participated in School Retention Action Plan programs or activities. In addition, 2128 young people have had once off contact with programs or activities. This includes the Innovative Community Action Networks where communities were challenged to achieve improved youth participation and retention in education, training and employment.

There were noteworthy improvements in the areas of student literacy and numeracy. Based upon the latest figures released for 2005 over 90 per cent of year 3 and year 5 children are now achieving the reading, writing and numeracy benchmarks.

Staff learning and skill development continued as a priority. The launch of the Leaders' Framework saw around 100 leaders and aspiring leaders participate in foundations programs. Beginning teachers were supported through networking conferences. More staff graduated from nationally accredited programs offered through the Department, including qualifications such as the Certificate III in Children's Services and the Graduate Certificate in Public Sector Management.

The “Success for All: Ministerial Review of Senior Secondary Education in South Australia” prepared by the South Australian Certificate for Education (SACE) Review Panel, was released during the election campaign in February/March 2006. The report contained 26 recommendations for reviewing and reforming the SACE. Core work at present is centred on the investigation of key recommendations, particularly those identified in the final report as requiring further exploration.

Announced as part of the 2006-07 budget, the “Education Works” program is aimed at ensuring all children and students have access to broad and diverse curriculum pathways for future training and employment and healthy, safe environments in which to learn. Community forums will invite local communities to look at what is best for their community and their children's futures. Education Works initially will: deliver 6 brand new schools, establish 10 Trade Schools for the Future, create 20 Children's Centres, and as part of the Enterprise Bargaining process, provide an extra 100 teachers over four years to help create smaller Year 3 class sizes.

In 2007, the Department of Education and Children's Services will focus on the following priorities — the early years, senior secondary education, Aboriginal young people and employees, achievements in literacy, numeracy, and science, supported by quality teaching with a focus on achievement, engagement and wellbeing, high performing and accountable leadership, and effective community engagement and governance. ”

Tasmanian Government comments

“This year, the department continued to focus on ensuring that all Tasmanians have the opportunity to participate in quality learning at all stages of life — in the early years, at schools and as adults. Schools and colleges continued to work to meet the individual learning needs of all students, and through the Guaranteeing Futures strategy, supporting them on their journey from school to further education, training and employment.

In the 2006-07 Tasmanian Budget the Tasmanian Government funded a range of new initiatives which were announced during the election campaign in March 2006. Included in the major initiatives were:

- A Launching into Learning initiative to build on the Government's Early Years Strategy to better target children and families at risk in a Tasmanian community and help give children the best possible start in life. Programs will be provided to support reading, numeracy and other early learning activities in family friendly settings to ensure that young children are ready for school and parents are provided with the necessary skills to give their children a strong foundation for effective learning.
- Extending the Government's previous initiative to reduce class sizes in prep and year 1 by also reducing class sizes in years 2 to 7.
- Provision of increased funding to schools to enhance learning support for students with high and/or additional needs.

In July 2006 ‘The Student at the Centre: Supporting Improving Schools’ Plan was announced. This initiative plans to better link the full expertise and resources of the Department of Education with our schools and students. By doing this, we can better support Tasmanian public schools and colleges to further improve both the educational experience and the results of the students. Resources allocated to centralised functions will be reallocated closer to schools to support teachers and schools to improve student achievement and retention.

Student at the Centre strongly supports the values, purposes, and main components of our curriculum framework with emphasis on school improvement and on quality learning, particularly in literacy and numeracy. In response to parents and school teachers a report was commissioned in 2006 to detail proposed refinements of our curriculum. The existing underlying principles, values and purposes, and the learning, teaching and assessment principles developed through the Essential Learnings will remain the foundation of the refined Tasmanian Curriculum.”

Australian Capital Territory Government comments

“ The ACT Government works in partnership with the community to deliver a sustainable, world class education and training system that will significantly add to the economic, social and cultural well-being of the people of the ACT. Departmental services include: the provision of early intervention education programs; government school education at preschool, primary school, high school and senior secondary college levels; registration of non-government schools and home education; and the planning and coordination of vocational education and training.

A key Government initiative is Towards 2020: Renewing Our Schools, which will provide over four years, $90 million for school infrastructure upgrades and $20 million to ensure ACT students have greater access to the most modern information and communication technology.

In 2006, 29 ACT Department of Education and Training schools completed the first three-year cycle of school review and development and underwent an external validation process. The primary focus of the school's self-assessment of its performance is around student performance and growth, and the school's achievements in the four domains of Teaching and Learning, Student Environment, Leadership and Management and Community Involvement.

In July 2006, the phase 2 draft of the new ACT curriculum framework for preschool to year 10 was released for trial and consultation. The new curriculum framework will be implemented from 2008 and drive change in pedagogy, curriculum and assessment in all ACT P–10 government and non-government schools.

An action plan has been developed to implement the recommendations in the Government Secondary Colleges In the ACT Challenge, Opportunity and Renewal (2005) report.

To further progress its student health and wellbeing agenda, the Department has implemented a school canteen accreditation program focusing on a whole school approach to healthy nutrition. Five schools achieved accreditation in 2006 under this program which is part of the new School Canteen Policy for ACT Government Schools.

The Department continued its commitment to enhance knowledge and understanding of the Disability Standards for Education by conducting workshops for classroom teachers. A DVD for use in individual schools for ongoing training around the Standards was produced and distributed to all schools. ”

Northern Territory Government comments

“The Department of Employment, Education and Training (DEET) is committed to the improving education and training outcomes for students of all ages and to creating pathways between school, training and employment so all Territorians have the opportunity to actively participate in the future of the Territory.

Significant highlights for the Northern Territory include:

The planning and implementation of the Government endorsed middle years approach in NT Schools continues to be key strategic priority for the Department. The most compelling reason for the reform was the need to improve educational outcomes, student retention rates and to better prepare students for their senior years of education. From 2007, year 10 students will form part of the senior years of schooling and will be located in senior colleges. In 2008, year 7 students will join years 8 and 9 in dedicated middle schools, which will deliver programs designed to meet the learning and development needs of those students. In Alice Springs and Tennant Creek the changes will take effect in 2007.

A record 927 year 12 students achieved their Northern Territory Certificate of Education in 2005. This is an increase of 71 students compared with 2004, including a record 25 from the Territory’s six remote community education centres that are accredited to provide senior secondary programs (up from four students in 2004 and three students in 2003).

Implementation of a new world-class distance learning service to deliver education to remote Territory students has commenced. The Northern Territory Distance Learning Service will draw the existing NT Open Education Centre, Katherine School of the Air and the Alice Springs School of the Air together under one policy and strategic framework, enabling the schools to work closely with one another. Another leading-edge element will be the trialling of a ‘virtual school’, in which new technology will enable teachers to deliver lessons in real-time and online to students across the Territory.

The Indigenous Education Strategic Plan 2006-2009, was launched in 2006. It articulates DEET’s key statement to drive major improvements in Indigenous education outcomes, to build a strong, relevant education system that delivers results for Indigenous Territorians.

The Australian and Northern Territory Government funded National Accelerated Literacy Program (NALP) continues to be expanded with 27 schools, 3293 students participating in 2005 and 50 schools, 4749 students participating in 2006. Building the workforce capacity has been a priority for the project with 220 teachers in 2005 and 442 teachers in 2006 receiving professional development to support the delivery of the accelerated literacy methodology in the NALP schools.”

3.6 Definitions of key terms and indicators

Apparent retention rates

The number of full time students in a designated year of schooling, expressed as a percentage of their respective cohort group at an earlier base year. The rate is calculated by dividing the total number of full time students in year 12 in 2005 by the total number of full time students in year 10 in 2003.

Full time equivalent student

The FTE of a full time student is 1.0. The method of converting part time student numbers into FTEs should be based on the student's workload compared with the workload usually undertaken by a full time student. The FTE of part time primary students was included for the first time for 2001.

Full time student

A person who satisfies the definition of a student and undertakes a workload equivalent to, or greater than, that usually undertaken by a student of that year level. The definition of full time student varies across jurisdictions.

Geographic classification

Geographic categorisation is based on the agreed MCEETYA Geographic Location Classification which, at the highest level, divides Australia into three zones (the metropolitan, provincial and remote zones). A further disaggregation comprises five categories: metropolitan and provincial zones each subdivided into two categories, and the remote zone. Further subdivisions of the two provincial zone categories and the remote zone category provide additional, more detailed, classification options. When data permit, a separate very remote zone can be reported along with the metropolitan, provincial and remote zones, as follows.

A. Metropolitan zone

1. Mainland State capital city regions statistical divisions: Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane, Adelaide and Perth statistical divisions.
2. Major urban statistical districts (100 000 or more population): ACT–Queanbeyan, Cairns, Gold Coast–Tweed, Geelong, Hobart, Newcastle, Sunshine Coast, Townsville, Wollongong.

B. Provincial zone (non-remote)

3. Provincial city statistical districts plus Darwin statistical division.

   Provincial city statistical districts and Darwin statistical division (50 000–99 999 population): Albury–Wodonga, Ballarat, Bathurst–Orange, Burnie-Devonport, Bundaberg, Bendigo, Darwin, Launceston, La Trobe Valley, Mackay, Rockhampton, Toowoomba, Wagga Wagga.

   Provincial City Statistical Districts (25 000–49 999 population): Bunbury, Coffs Harbour, Dubbo, Geraldton, Gladstone, Shepparton, Hervey Bay, Kalgoorlie–Boulder, Lismore, Mandurah, Mildura, Nowra–Bomaderry, Port Macquarie, Tamworth, Warrnambool.

4. Other provincial areas (CD ARIA Plus score $\leq$ 5.92)

Inner provincial areas (CD ARIA Plus score < 2.4)

Outer provincial areas (CD ARIA Plus score > 2.4 and < 5.92)

C. Remote zone

5. Remote zone (CD ARIA Plus score > 5.92)

Remote areas (CD ARIA Plus score > 5.92 and $\leq$ 10.53)

Very remote areas (CD ARIA Plus score > 10.53)

Government recurrent expenditure per full time equivalent student

Total government recurrent expenditure divided by the total number of FTE students. Expenditure is based on the National School Statistics Collection (MCEETYA unpublished), with adjustments for notional UCC charges and payroll tax. Notional UCC is included for all jurisdictions and payroll tax estimates are included for those jurisdictions not subject to it (WA and the ACT). Expenditure figures are in financial years and student numbers are in calendar years, so the total number of students is taken as the average of two years. When calculating the 2004-05 average expenditure per student, for example, the total expenditure figure is at 2004-05 but the total student number figure is the average of student numbers from 2004 and 2005.

Indigenous student

A student of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander origin who identifies as being an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander or from an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander background. Administrative processes for determining Indigenous status vary across jurisdictions.

In-school costs

Costs relating directly to schools. Staff, for example, are categorised as being either in-school or out-of-school. They are categorised as in-school if they usually spend more than half of their time actively engaged in duties at one or more schools or ancillary education establishments. In-school employee related expenses, for example, represent all salaries, wages awards, allowances and related on costs paid to in-school staff.

Language background other than English (LBOTE) student

A status that is determined by administrative processes that vary across jurisdictions.

Out-of-school costs

Costs relating indirectly to schools. Staff, for example, are categorised as being either in-school or out-of-school. They are categorised as out-of-school if they do not usually spend more than half of their time actively engaged in duties at one or more schools or ancillary education establishments. Out-of-school employee related expenses, for example, represent all salaries, wages awards, allowances and related on costs paid to out-of-school staff.

Part time student

A student undertaking a workload that is less than that specified as being full time in the jurisdiction.

Participation rate

The number of full time school students of a particular age, expressed as a proportion of the estimated resident population of the same age at June.

Potential year 12 population

An estimate of a single-year age group that could have participated in year 12 that year, defined as the estimated resident population aged 15–19 years, divided by 5.

Real expenditure

Nominal expenditure adjusted for changes in prices, using the GDP price deflator and expressed in terms of final year prices.

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 per footnotes to table 3A.122, which provide definitions specific to each table. Elsewhere in the Report, socioeconomic status data are presented that are not fully comparable across jurisdictions because administrative processes for determining socioeconomic status vary across jurisdictions.
Source of income	In this chapter, income from either the Australian Government or State and Territory governments. Australian Government expenditure is derived from specific purpose payments (current and capital) for schools. This funding indicates the level of monies allocated, not necessarily the level of expenditure incurred in any given financial year. The data provide, therefore, only a broad indication of the level of Australian Government funding.
Student-to-staff ratios	The number of FTE students per FTE teaching and non-teaching staff. Students at special schools are allocated to primary and secondary. The FTE of staff includes those who are generally active in schools and ancillary education establishments.
Student	A person who is formally (officially) enrolled or registered at a school, and is also active in a primary, secondary or special education program at that school. Students at special schools are allocated to primary and secondary on the basis of their actual grade (if assigned); whether or not they are receiving primary or secondary curriculum instruction; or, as a last resort, whether they are of primary or secondary school age.
Student, primary	A student in primary education, which covers pre-year 1 to year 6 in NSW, Victoria, Tasmania and the ACT, pre-year 1 to year 7 in WA, SA and the NT, and year 1 to year 7 in Queensland.
Student, secondary	A student in secondary education, which commences at year 7 in NSW, Victoria, Tasmania and the ACT, and at year 8 in Queensland, SA, WA and the NT.
Students with disabilities	Students included in the annual system reports to DEST. The definitions of students with disabilities are based on individual State and Territory criteria, so data are not comparable across jurisdictions.
Teacher	Teaching staff have teaching duties (that is, they are engaged to impart the school curriculum) and spend the majority of their time in contact with students. They support students, either by direct class contact or on an individual basis. Teaching staff include principals, deputy principals and senior teachers mainly involved in administrative duties, but not specialist support staff (who may spend the majority of their time in contact with students but are not engaged to impart the school curriculum) (MCEETYA 2002).
Ungraded student	A student in ungraded classes who cannot readily be allocated to a year of education. These students are included as either ungraded primary or ungraded secondary, according to the typical age level in each jurisdiction.

3.7 Supporting tables

The files containing the supporting tables are provided in Microsoft Excel format as \Publications\Reports\2007\Attach3A.xls and in Adobe PDF format as \Publications\Reports\2007\Attach3A.pdf. The files containing the supporting tables can also be found on the Review web page (www.pc.gov.au/gsp). Users without access to the CD-ROM or Internet can contact the Secretariat to obtain the supporting tables (see contact details on the inside front cover of the Report).

Table 3A.1	Government schools: students, staff and school numbers
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Table 3A.3	All schools: students, staff and school numbers
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Table 3A.20	Students from language backgrounds other than English as a proportion of all students (per cent)
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Table 3A.22	Student body mix, government schools (per cent)
Table 3A.23	Student body mix, non-government schools (per cent)
Table 3A.24	Student body mix, all schools (per cent)
Table 3A.25	Proportion of students attending schools in metropolitan, provincial and remote zones, 2005 (per cent)

3.8 References

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