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# B Early childhood, education and training preface

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### **Attachment tables**

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

Education is a life-long activity, beginning with learning and development in the home through to more formal settings — including child care, preschool and the three sectors that comprise Australia's education and training system (the school education, vocational education and training (VET) and higher education sectors).

The following chapters of this Report cover child care (including outside school hours care) and preschools (chapter 3), school education (chapter 4), and VET (chapter 5). References are made to information contained in other parts of this Report, such as chapters and related attachment tables. Reference to specific figures, boxes, and tables are prefixed accordingly (for example 'Box 3.1' is in chapter 3, being the Children's services chapter, while 'Box B.1' is in this preface).

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Areas of government involvement in Early childhood, education and training (ECET) that are not covered in this Report include:

- universities (although some information is included in this preface where necessary to provide a complete picture)
- income support payments for students
- adult community education (except VET programs)
- VET activity delivered on a fee-for-service basis by private and community education providers.

Australia's ECET sector has a range of objectives, some of which are common across all sector components (for example, to increase knowledge and equip students with the skills for life-long learning) while others are more specific to a particular sector. The objectives listed here reflect the latest period concerned for this Report (2007-08 for children's services, 2006-07 for school education, and 2007 for VET).

- The objectives of children's services are to meet the care, education and development needs of children in a safe and nurturing environment, to provide support for families in caring for their children, and to provide these services in an equitable and efficient manner (box 3.2). Children's services have both education and care objectives and the Children's services chapter presents both of these.
- The objectives of school education services, as reflected in the national goals for schooling (box 4.1), include a focus on developing the capacities and talents of all young people so they have the necessary knowledge, understanding, skills and values for a productive and rewarding life.
- The objectives of VET services, as reflected in the national strategy for VET 2004–10 (box 5.3), include a focus on providing industry with a highly skilled workforce to support strong performance in the global economy; making employers and students the centre of VET; strengthening communities and regions economically and socially through learning and employment; and providing opportunities for Indigenous Australians to acquire skills to access viable employment.
- The objectives of higher education services, as reflected in the *Higher Education Support Act 2003*, include contributing to the development of cultural and intellectual life in Australia, and appropriately meeting Australia's social and economic needs for a highly educated and skilled population.

Australian governments view early childhood development, education and training as key means to improve economic and social outcomes, as well as to improve the

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equity of outcomes in society. The link between early childhood development and achievement at school is well established, as is the link between education and skills and workforce participation and productivity. Research indicates that early childhood, education, skills and workforce development policies could boost workforce participation by 0.7 percentage points, and productivity by up to 1.2 per cent by 2030 (PC 2006). This corresponds to an increase in gross domestic product (GDP) of around 2.2 per cent, or around \$25 billion in today's dollars.

In March 2008, the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) committed to a comprehensive new reform agenda, including a focus on improving productivity. The COAG Productivity Agenda includes early childhood development, schooling, and skills and workforce development (COAG 2008b). Developments under the COAG Productivity Agenda are discussed in more detail in the Future Directions section of this preface.

## **Profile of the sector**

### **Roles and responsibilities**

Different levels of government fulfil different roles with regard to ECET services. The roles and responsibilities of the Australian Government and State and Territory governments for 2007 are outlined in boxes B.1 and B.2 respectively.

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### **Box B.1 Australian Government's roles and responsibilities**

Australian Government's roles and responsibilities include:

- paying Child Care Benefit (CCB) to families using approved child care services or registered care
- paying Child Care Tax Rebate (CCTR) to eligible families using approved child care services
- funding the National Childcare Accreditation Council (NCAC) to administer quality assurance systems for child care services
- funding some providers of children's services and other organisations to provide information, support and training to providers of children's services
- providing funding to non-government schools and to State and Territory governments for government schools, to support agreed priorities and strategies
- providing funding to states and territories to support the delivery of VET programs and services, and support for VET infrastructure
- being the primary funding source for, and developer of policy related to, the higher education sector
- providing financial assistance for students.

### **Box B.2 State and Territory governments' roles and responsibilities**

State and Territory governments' roles and responsibilities include:

- general responsibility for preschool services
- standard setting, and licensing and monitoring children's services providers, including complaints management
- providing operational and capital funding to non-government providers of children's services
- delivering some children's services directly (especially preschool services)
- providing information, support, advice and/or training to providers of children's services, staff and parents
- planning to ensure the appropriate mix of services is available to meet the needs of the community.
- constitutional responsibility for the provision of schooling to all children of school age
- major financial responsibility for government school education, and contributing funds to non-government schools

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**Box B.2 (Continued)**

- providing the legislative framework in which child care services are provided
- regulating both government and non-government school activities and policies
- determining school curricula, course accreditation, student assessment and student awards for both government and non-government schools
- administering and delivering school education and VET in government schools
- administering and funding Technical and Further Education (TAFE) institutes for the delivery of VET programs and services
- funding other registered training organisations for the delivery of VET programs and services, including community education providers and private providers
- regulating the delivery of VET services, including conducting quality audits, coordinating the registration of training organisations and managing the accreditation of nationally recognised education and training programs
- responsibility for legislation relating to the establishment of universities and the accreditation of higher education courses.

## **Expenditure**

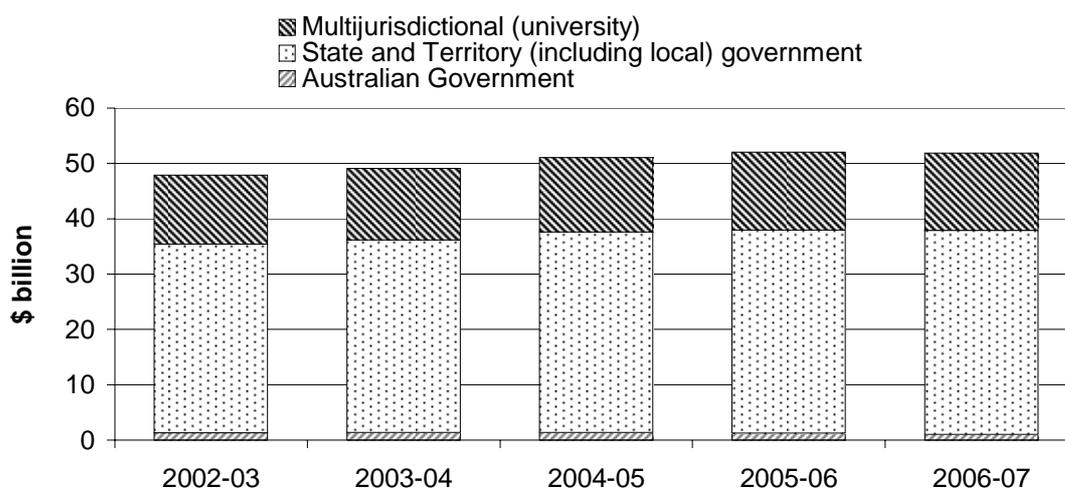
The Australian Government and State and Territory governments fund government and non-government providers to deliver child care, preschool, school education and VET services. Government providers include preschools, government schools (primary and secondary), TAFE institutes, and universities. Non-government providers include child care services, privately operated preschools and schools, private registered training organisations in the VET sector and private higher education institutions.

Government Finance Statistics (GFS) data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) are used in this section for all ECET services with the exception of child care services (GFS data are not separately available for child care). Child care expenditure data are sourced from the Children's services chapter in this Report, and are not directly comparable with the GFS data.

In 2006-07, total government operating expenses net of transfers (transfers or transactions between different levels of government) for preschool, school education, VET and higher education was \$51.9 billion for all governments (figure B.1), and total recurrent expenditure for child care services was \$2.5 billion (table BA.1).

In 2006-07, operating expenditure (net of transfers) for preschool, school education, VET and higher education was \$1.0 billion for the Australian Government, \$36.9 billion for State, Territory and local government and \$14.0 billion for multijurisdictional (university) (figure B.1).

**Figure B.1 Australian, State and Territory (including local) government real operating expenses, net of transfers for education and training (2006-07 dollars)<sup>a, b, c</sup>**



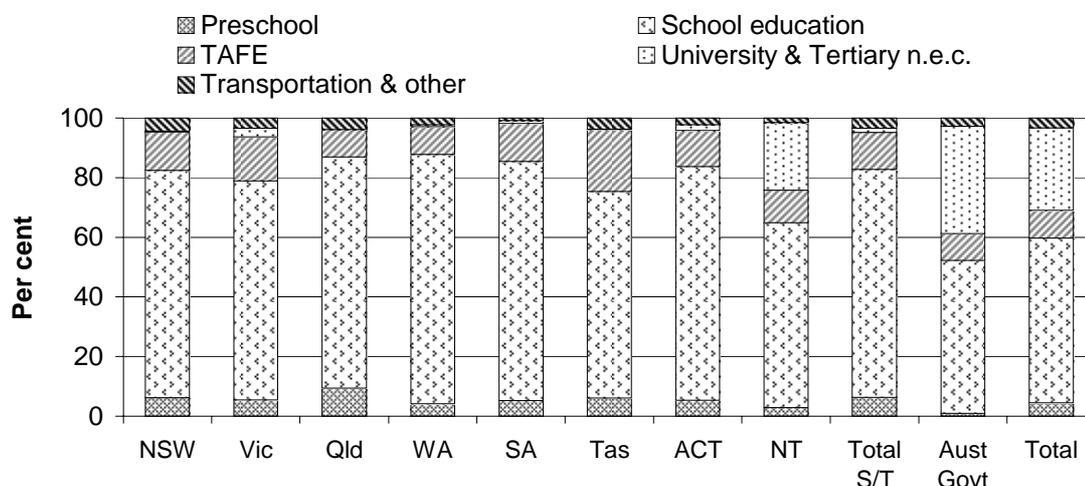
<sup>a</sup> Based on accrual operating expenses for education. <sup>b</sup> The ABS provided nominal figures. Real expenditure was calculated from these figures based on the ABS GDP price deflator (2006-07 = 100) (table AA.26).

<sup>c</sup> Excludes expenditure on child care services.

Source: ABS (2008d) unpublished Government Finance Statistics; State and Territory governments (unpublished); table BA.2.

Of the combined \$51.9 billion total government expenditure on ECET in 2006-07 (excluding child care), schools accounted for the highest proportion (55.2 per cent), followed by universities (27.5 per cent), TAFE institutes (9.4 per cent), and preschool (4.5 per cent) (figure B.2). School education (primary and secondary) received the largest proportion of State and Territory government expenditure (76.5 per cent), TAFE received 12.4 per cent, and preschool received 6.3 per cent (figure B.2).

Figure B.2 **Government expenditure on education and training, 2006-07<sup>a</sup>**



<sup>a</sup> Expenditure for TAFE from the ABS Government Finance Statistics excludes outlays on vocational training programs not provided by TAFE institutions (such as outlays on administration of apprenticeship schemes designed to facilitate workplace entry of people currently not employed or in need of retraining).

Source: ABS (2008d) *Government Finance Statistics, Education, 2006-07*. Cat. no. 5518.055.001; tables BA.3 and BA.4.

From 1 January 2009, reporting on expenditure may change due to the implementation of the new Specific Purpose Payments (SPPs) and National Partnerships (NPs). The most recent data in this preface are for 2006-07, and are therefore not affected by these changes.

## Size and scope

### *ECET services*

There is a distinction between the number of places provided in children's services, and the number of children who attend these services. Due to the sessional or episodic nature of some services, it is possible for one place to accommodate more than one child, and for one child to occupy more than one place over time (see chapter 3 for more information on children attending services).

In 2008, approximately 760 825 children aged 12 years or younger attended Australian Government approved child care services. An additional 109 037 children attended State and Territory funded and/or provided child care services, and 203 038 children attended State and Territory funded and/or provided preschool services (section 3.1 of chapter 3).

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In 2007, there were 3.4 million full time school students and 24 503 part time students attending 9579 schools in Australia, including 2.3 million students (full time and part time) attending 6851 government schools (table 4A.1, table 4A.3).

Of the 1.7 million people who undertook VET programs in 2007, 1.2 million students (71.9 per cent) participated in government recurrent funded programs (DEEWR 2008d). Government funded students completed over 307.4 million annual hours at 12 427 locations across Australia (that is, TAFE, government funded locations and the locations of all other registered training providers, including private providers, that receive government recurrent funding for VET delivery). Of these locations, 2523 were TAFE and other government provider locations (tables 5A.3-4).

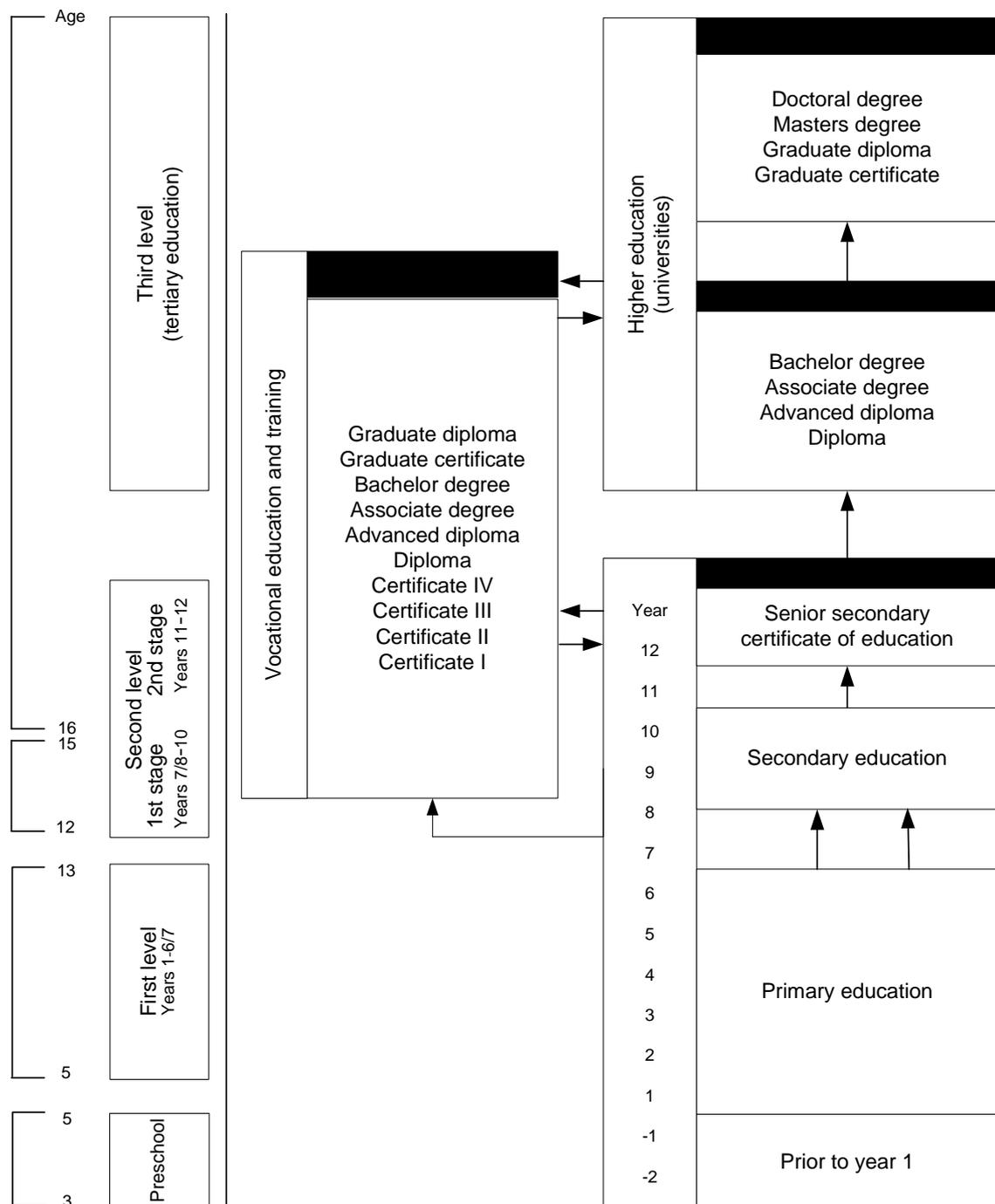
There were approximately 1.0 million students attending higher education institutions that received funding on behalf of the Australian Government in 2007, an increase of 4.7 per cent from 2006. These students undertook a variety of courses, ranging from diplomas to doctorates across a range of public and private providers. The most common course was the bachelor degree, which accounted for around two thirds of all students. The majority of students undertook their course on campus on a full time basis (DEEWR 2008b).

### *Learning pathways*

Preschools provide a range of educational and developmental programs (generally on a sessional basis) to children in the year immediately before they commence full time schooling and also, in some jurisdictions, to younger children. Depending on the State or Territory, the compulsory years of formal schooling in Australia in 2007 varied from 5 or 6 years of age, up to 15 or 16 years of age (see section 4.1 of the School education chapter for more details). Box B.3 illustrates the learning pathways from preschool through the years of compulsory schooling and beyond.

To encourage flexible learning pathways, Australian governments have implemented the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF). The AQF provides a comprehensive, nationally consistent framework for all qualifications in post-compulsory education and training. Under this framework, modules from VET certificates can be, for example, integrated with senior secondary certificates. Similarly, the VET sector recognises some higher education qualifications as credit toward VET qualifications, and some VET certificates may be achieved in schools and may contribute towards the senior secondary certificate of education.

### Box B.3 Outline of the Australian education and training system<sup>a, b</sup>



<sup>a</sup> There are different starting ages for school education across states and territories (see section 4.1 of the School education chapter). In addition, there are different starting ages for preschool (see table 3A.1 of the Children's services chapter attachment tables). <sup>b</sup> Providers deliver qualifications in more than one sector. Schools, for example, are delivering certificates I–II and in some cases certificate III, universities are delivering certificates II–IV, and VET providers are delivering undergraduate degrees, graduate certificates and graduate diplomas (higher education qualifications in some jurisdictions, but in others also VET), all subject to meeting the relevant quality assurance requirements.

Source: Adapted from National Office of Overseas Skills Recognition (2000).

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## Workforce

The latest data on the workforce for Australian Government approved child care services is for 2006. Nationally in 2006, there were 85 102 primary contact staff employed in Australian Government approved child care services (table 3A.14).<sup>1</sup> There were 16 392 primary contact staff employed in State and Territory government funded preschool services in 2006-07, excluding Tasmania for which data are not available <sup>2</sup> (tables 3A.40, 3A.47, 3A.54, 3A.61, 3A.68, 3A.75, 3A.82, 3A.89).

Nationally, government primary schools employed 121 289 teaching staff in 2007, and government secondary schools employed 95 392 teaching staff (table 4A.1).

The National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER) in 2004 reported a national estimate of 42 290 TAFE teachers for 2002, and indicated that there is 'no single accepted measure of employment levels' for the VET workforce (NCVER 2004, p 6). The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) estimated that there were 32 500 teachers working in all TAFE and other VET institutions nationally in 2006-07, and that 69 per cent were employed full time (ABS 2008c).

There were 28 970 teaching and research staff employed at Australian universities in 2007 (DEEWR 2008a).

## Measuring the performance of the sector

Individual performance indicator frameworks for the children's services, school education and VET sectors have been developed for the Report (figures 3.2, 4.4 and 5.4 in the respective chapters). There is significant interaction between children's services (particularly preschool) and school education, between school education and VET, and between schools/VET and the university sector. Outcomes are also related to socioeconomic factors, geographic location, age, Indigenous status, language background and the performance of other government agencies (particularly in the areas of health, housing and community services).

Selected education and training participation rates in this section are estimates derived from the annual ABS *Education and Work* survey. Survey data are subject

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<sup>1</sup> Data are not available for the majority of states and territories for primary contact staff employed by State and Territory government funded and/or managed child care. Available data are provided in the attachment tables to chapter 3 Children's services.

<sup>2</sup> Comparable data for Tasmania for 2007-08 indicate 197 primary contact staff.

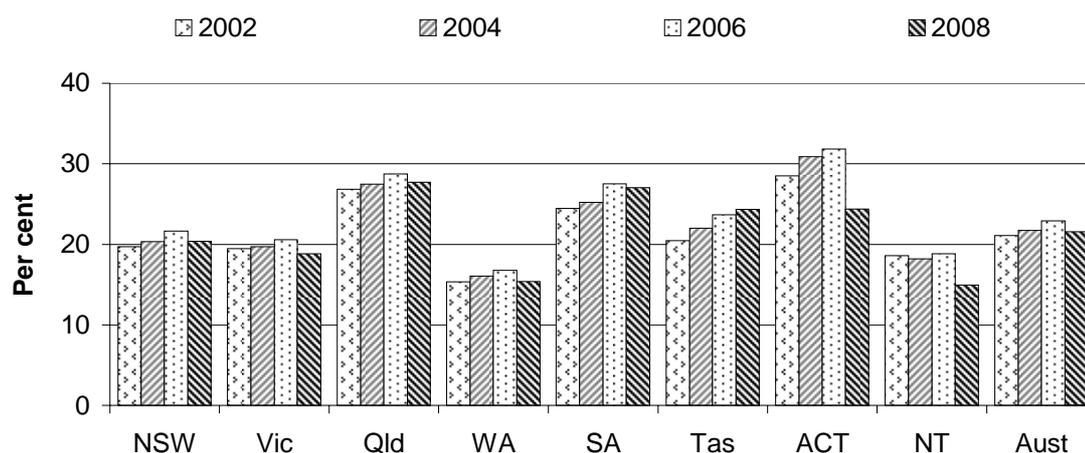
to sampling error, so to assist with interpreting data confidence intervals are reported (see appendix A for further details on interpreting confidence intervals).

## Selected equity and effectiveness indicators

### *Participation rates in child care, preschool, school and VET*

Nationally, 21.6 per cent of children aged 0–12 years attended Australian Government approved child care in 2008 (figure B.3). The majority of children attending Australian Government approved child care in 2008 (approximately 485 000, or 63.7 per cent) were aged 0–5 years (table 3A.11).

**Figure B.3 Proportion of children aged 0–12 years using Australian Government approved child care<sup>a, b, c, d, e, f</sup>**



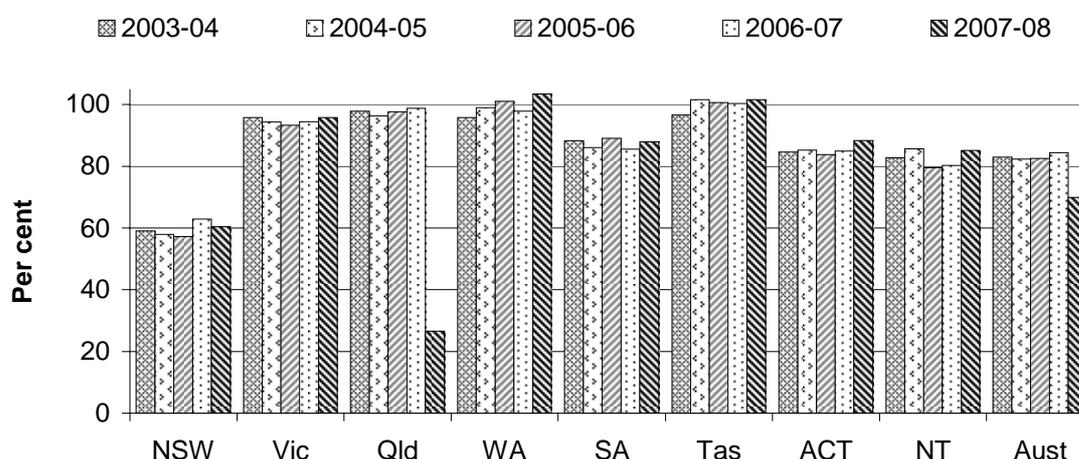
<sup>a</sup> Data for 2002, 2004 and 2006 are drawn from the respective AGCCCS, while data for 2008 are drawn from DEEWR administrative data collected through the CCB payments system. Data for 2008 are not directly comparable to previous years due to the change in the source for data collection. <sup>b</sup> Children attending approved services in 2002, 2004 and 2006 may be counted more than once if attending more than one service during the reference week. Children attending approved services in 2008 are counted once, even if attending more than one type of service during the reference week. <sup>c</sup> Attendance counted as the number of children attending approved care in all services except Vacation Care during the week 18–24 February 2008, 8–14 May 2006, 22–28 March 2004 and 13–19 May 2002. Vacation care attendance was measured during week 21–27 January 2008. For 2002, 2004 and 2006 the week in which vacation care attendance were measured varied due to different vacation care periods across Australia. <sup>d</sup> Population measure is the Estimated Resident Population as at 31 December. <sup>e</sup> The Australian total includes children in other territories. <sup>f</sup> Excludes children cared for in neighbourhood model services.

Source: DEEWR (unpublished); FaCSIA (unpublished), derived from *Australian Government Census of Child Care Services 2002 and 2004*; DEEWR (unpublished), derived from *Australian Government Census of Child Care Services 2006*; ABS (unpublished), derived from *Australian Demographic Statistics*, Cat. no. 3101.0; table 3A.11.

Nationally in 2007-08, an estimated 69.9 per cent of children in the year before commencement of full time schooling were enrolled in State and Territory government funded and/or provided preschools (figure B.4). Certain totals exceed 100 per cent due to double counting preschool enrolments and issues with synchronisation of data.

The national total for preschool enrolments in 2007-08 is not directly comparable to previous years due to the cessation of preschool and the introduction of a preparatory year in Queensland from 2007.

**Figure B.4 Proportion of children in year before commencement of full time schooling enrolled in State and Territory government funded preschool a, b, c, d, e, f, g**



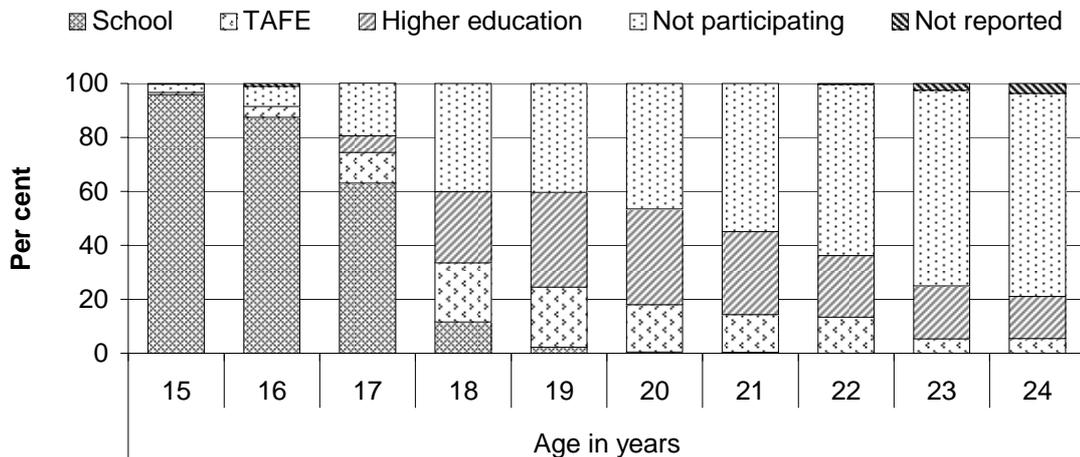
**a** The figure shows the proportion of 4 year old children (a proxy for 'children in the year before fulltime school') enrolled in preschool services using data collected from State and Territory enrolment figures. The enrolment figures are divided by the number of 4 year olds in each jurisdiction, using ABS estimated resident population. The two datasets are estimated at different times of the year, and may be out of sequence with each other. Some non-4 year olds may also be included in the enrolment figures. **b** There is some double counting of children in NSW, Qld (for the period 2003-04 to 2006-07) and WA because some children moved in and out of the preschool system throughout the year and some children accessed more than one sessional program. As a result, the number of children reported in preschool exceeds the number of children in the target population. **c** NSW data only covers children in licensed funded preschools — children attending unfunded preschools and preschool programs in other licensed children's services are not shown as these data cannot be discretely counted. NSW data for 2006-07 include for the first time preschools managed by the NSW Department of Education. NSW data do not include the non-government school sector in any of the years. The count for preschool attendance includes children aged from 4 to 5 years, 11 months attending funded child care services. **d** Victorian data include 9015 eligible four year old children attending funded preschool services conducted in centre-based long day care centres. **e** Data for Queensland in 2007-08 include Indigenous community pre-preparatory and crèche and kindergarten enrolments. Preparatory Year data are included in data on school children. **f** Data for SA include all children aged 4 years in State funded preschool services. Data in previous Reports included children aged 4 years and above in State funded preschool services, and data were revised for the 2009 Report. **g** NT preschool data for 2006-07 and 2007-08 include Catholic Mission Schools.

Source: State and Territory governments (unpublished); ABS (unpublished), derived from *Australian Demographic Statistics*, Cat. no. 3101.0; table 3A.12.

Generally, young people from the ages of 5-6 years to 15-16 years were required to attend school in 2007. However, from 2007 the ABS has reported school participation rates for 14 year olds, which shows that 1.6 per cent of 14 year olds are not participating in school (attachment table 4A.121 for the School education chapter).

Beyond the age of compulsory school education in 2007, the proportion of people participating in education and training declines. Nationally, the participation rate was 96.9 per cent for 15 year olds, decreasing with each year of age to 24.8 per cent for 24 year olds (figure B.5).

**Figure B.5 Participation in education and training of people aged 15 to 24 years, by sector, 2007<sup>a</sup>**



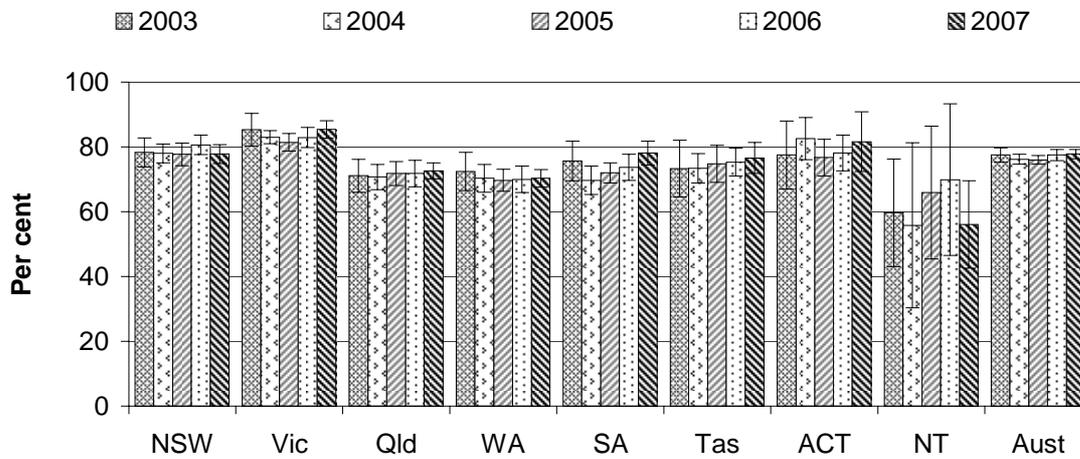
<sup>a</sup> Student participation is likely to be underestimated because data are for May, not for the whole year.

Source: ABS (unpublished) *Survey of Education and Work*, 2007, Cat. no. 6227.0; table BA.5.

The level of participation in education and training varies across jurisdictions for many reasons. These include different age/grade structures, starting age at school, minimum leaving age, the number of compulsory years of schooling and the level of service provision. In addition, there are influences beyond the direct control of State and Territory governments, such as labour market changes, population movements, urbanisation, and socioeconomic status.

Nationally, the participation rate remained relatively constant between 2003 and 2007 for people aged 15–19 years (from 77.5 per cent to 77.8 per cent) and 20–24 years (from 37.5 per cent to 37.4 per cent) (figures B.6 and B.7 respectively). Further information on 25–29 and 15–64 year olds is available in attachment table BA.6).

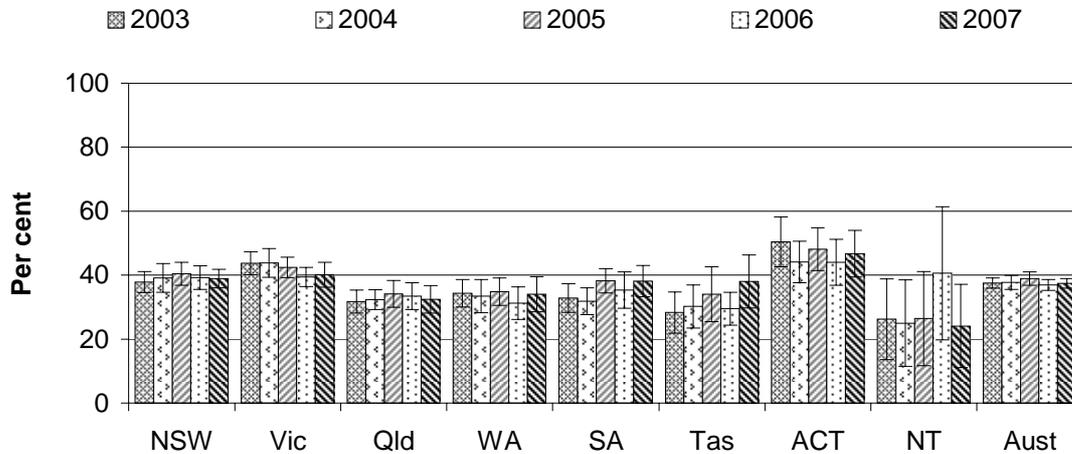
**Figure B.6 Participation in education and training (15–19 year olds)<sup>a</sup>**



<sup>a</sup> Error bars represent the 95 per cent confidence interval associated with each point estimate.

Source: ABS Survey of Education and Work, 2007, Cat. no. 6227.0; table BA.6.

**Figure B.7 Participation in education and training (20–24 year olds)<sup>a</sup>**



<sup>a</sup> Error bars represent the 95 per cent confidence interval associated with each point estimate.

Source: ABS Survey of Education and Work, 2007, Cat. no. 6227.0; table BA.6.

*School completion/non-completion, and school leaver destinations*

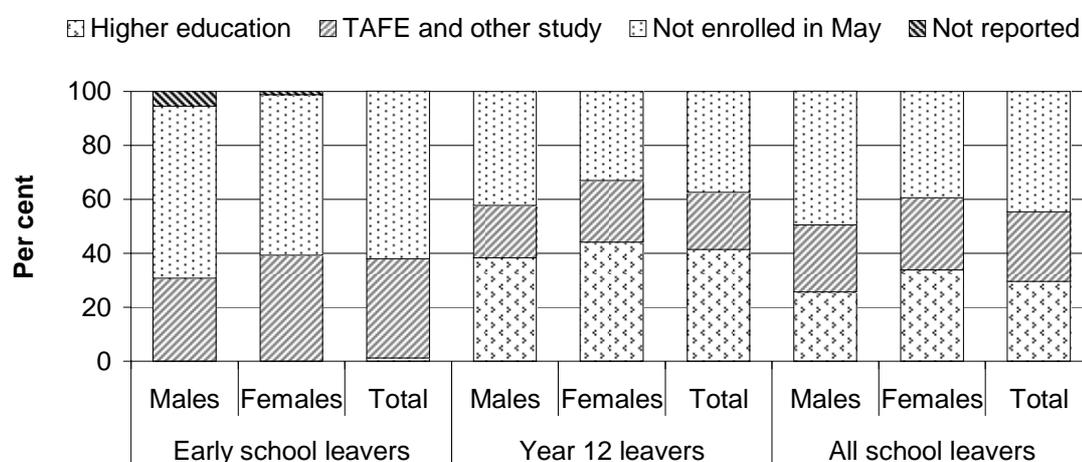
In 2007, 66 per cent of the estimated potential year 12 population completed the requirements of the year 12 certificate (or equivalent). This result varied between socioeconomic status (SES) deciles (from 59 per cent in low SES to 77 per cent in

high SES) and between geographic regions (from 68 per cent in metropolitan zones to 35 per cent in very remote zones) (chapter 4, figures 4.45 and 4.46).

Approximately 135 200 people aged 15–24 years who attended school in 2006 were not attending an educational institution in May 2007 (44.6 per cent of all school leavers). Of these students, 54 800, or 40.5 per cent, were early school leavers, with the remainder being year 12 leavers (59.5 per cent). Higher education institutions attracted 89 800 school leavers in 2007 (29.6 per cent of all school leavers). Institutes of TAFE attracted 64 800 school leavers (21.4 per cent of all school leavers) (table BA.8).

In 2007, females aged 15–24 years were more likely than their male counterparts to go on to further education if they had completed year 12 (67.0 per cent and 57.8 per cent respectively) or left school early (40.4 per cent and 36.3 per cent respectively) (figure B.8). Year 12 leavers were more likely to go onto further education than early school leavers (62.6 per cent compared to 38.0 per cent respectively).

Figure B.8 School leaver destination (15–24 year olds), 2007<sup>a, b, c</sup>



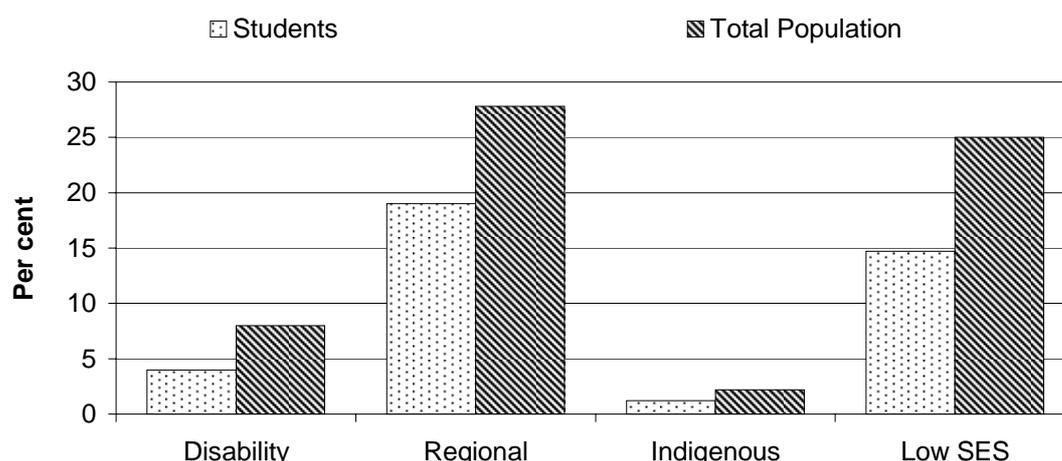
<sup>a</sup> Data for people who attended school in 2006 and were not attending school in May 2007. <sup>b</sup> Early school leavers are those who left school earlier than year 12. <sup>c</sup> 'Other study' includes business colleges, industry skills centres and other educational institutions.

Source: ABS (2007 and unpublished) *Survey of Education and Work, 2007*, Cat. no. 6227.0; table BA.8.

While most young people are making smooth transitions from school, some do not. Research has shown that students from groups that are less likely to complete year 12 are also those less likely to participate in higher education, and particularly those that show low levels of early school achievement (Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) 2003).

In higher education, there is an under-representation (compared to the proportion of the relative group in the community) among people from regional areas of Australia, people with a disability, those with disadvantaged/low socioeconomic backgrounds and Indigenous Australians (figure B.9). (Additional data for Indigenous students are presented later in this preface.)

**Figure B.9 Higher education participation by selected groups compared to share of total population, Australia 2006**



Source: DEEWR (2007) *Higher Education Student Statistics, 2006*; DEEWR (unpublished); table BA.23.

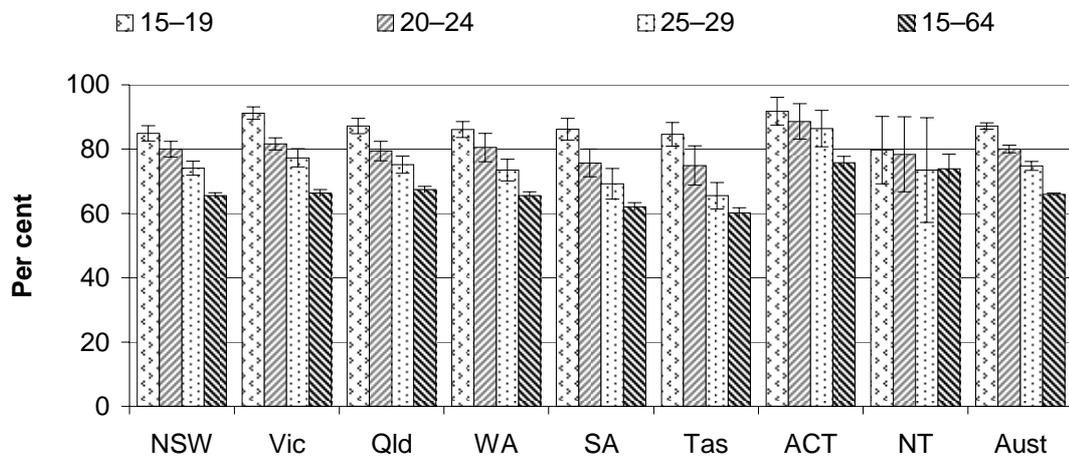
VET provides an alternative post school pathway to further education for students. As with higher education, there is lower participation in VET by those with low levels of school achievement and those from lower socioeconomic backgrounds (ACER 2002). Unlike participation in higher education, VET participation increases for people from ‘outer regional’ and ‘remote and very remote’ areas (figure 5.6 in chapter 5).

Research published by the Foundation for Young Australians (FYA) and ACER suggests that young people who are not participating full time in education, training, work or some combination of these activities are more likely to have difficulty in making a transition to full time employment by their mid-20s (FYA 2008, ACER 2005a). A full time participation measure has been developed to monitor the proportion of the population that is at risk of marginal participation

(or non-participation) in the labour market. Young people are counted as participating full time if they are engaged in full time education or training, full time work, or a combination of both part time education or training and part time work.

Full time participation in education, training or work declines as people reach their late-20s (figure B.10). However, rates for 25–29 year olds are generally still higher than rates for the whole working age cohort (15–64 years).

Figure B.10 **Full time participation in education, training or work, 2007**  
(per cent)<sup>a, b</sup>



<sup>a</sup> Error bars represent the 95 per cent confidence interval associated with each point estimate. <sup>b</sup> Full time participation is defined as participation in full time education or training or full time work, or a combination of both part time education or training and part time work.

Source: ABS (2007 and unpublished) *Survey of Education and Work, 2007*, Cat. no. 6227.0; table BA.7.

## Selected efficiency indicators

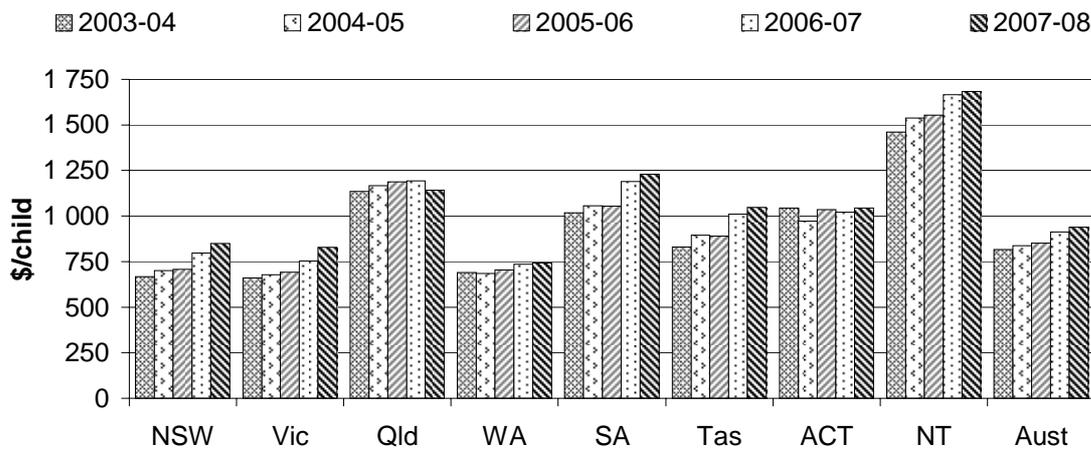
Comparing the unit costs of providing a particular service across jurisdictions can help to identify whether states and territories have scope to improve their efficiency. However, special characteristics within jurisdictions make it unlikely that all jurisdictions could achieve similar outcomes with the same level of unit costs.

Unit costs are not comparable across children’s services, school education and VET, due to the differing bases upon which they are calculated, and the differences between the sectors. Data are therefore shown separately for each area.

*Children's services, School education and VET recurrent unit costs*

Total government (Australian Government and State and Territory governments) real expenditure on children's services per child at a national level increased by 15.2 per cent between 2003-04 and 2007-08 (figure B.11).

**Figure B.11 Total government real recurrent expenditure on children's services per child aged 0–12 (2007-08 dollars)<sup>a, b</sup>**



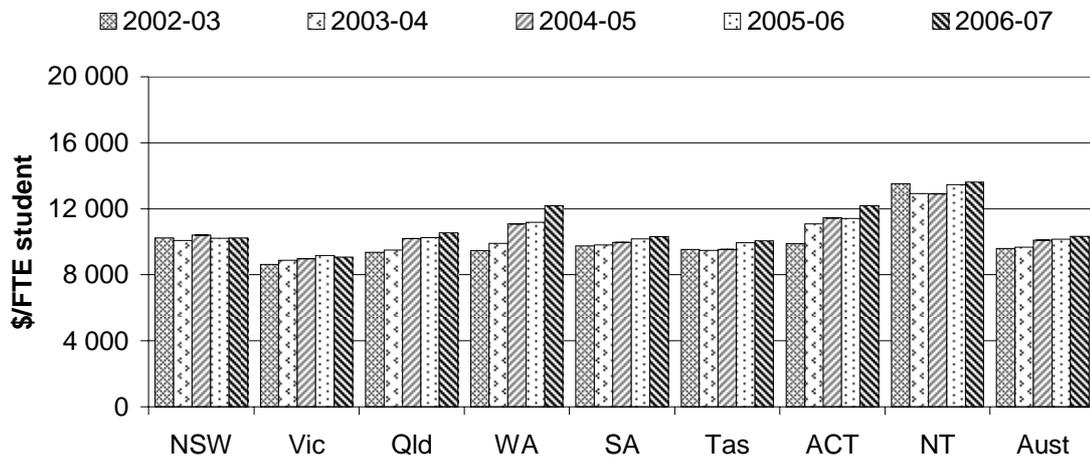
<sup>a</sup> Includes administration expenditure, other expenditure on service provision, financial support to families, and net capital expenditure on child care and preschool services from both Australian Government (for child care services only) and State and Territory governments (for child care services and preschool services).  
<sup>b</sup> See notes to figure 3.18 of chapter 3 for further detail on the Australian Government's and State and Territory governments' expenditure data.

Source: DEEWR (unpublished); State and Territory governments (unpublished); ABS (unpublished) derived from *Australian Demographic Statistics*, Cat. no. 3101.0; tables 3A.26 and 3A.27 of chapter 3.

Efficiency data for school education is presented in chapter 4 for all schools. However, it should be noted that this Report includes only government expenditure — non-government schools received 57.1 per cent of their funding from government sources (DEEWR unpublished, preliminary data).

Nationally in 2006-07, in-school Australian, State and Territory government expenditure on government primary schools was \$10 327 per full time equivalent (FTE) primary school student (figure B.12).

Figure B.12 **In-school government real recurrent expenditure on government primary schools per FTE student (2006-07 dollars)<sup>a, b, c, d</sup>**

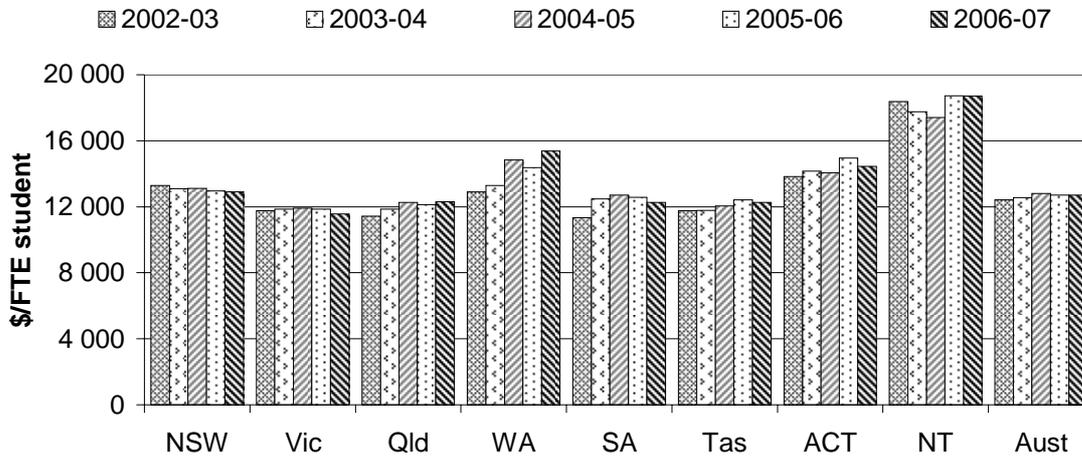


**FTE** = full time equivalent. <sup>a</sup> Data are derived from in-school government expenditure on government primary schools divided by two year average FTE student population. <sup>b</sup> Based on accrual data. <sup>c</sup> Schools data include payroll tax estimates for WA and the ACT to achieve greater comparability across jurisdictions. <sup>d</sup> Data for previous years have been adjusted to 2006-07 dollars using the ABS GDP price deflator (table AA.26).

Source: table BA.18.

Nationally, in 2006-07 in-school government expenditure on government secondary schools was \$12 704 per FTE secondary school student (figure B.13).

Figure B.13 **In-school government real recurrent expenditure on government secondary school education per FTE student (2006-07 dollars)<sup>a, b, c, d</sup>**

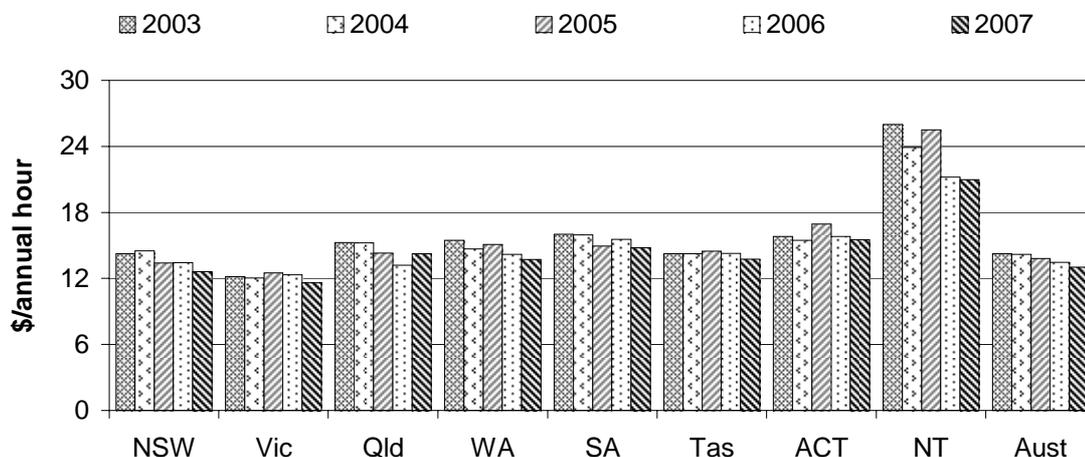


**FTE** = full time equivalent. **a** Data are derived from in-school government expenditure on government secondary schools divided by two year average FTE student population. **b** Based on accrual data. **c** Schools data include payroll tax estimates for WA and the ACT to achieve greater comparability across jurisdictions. **d** Data for previous years have been adjusted to 2006-07 dollars using the ABS GDP price deflator (table AA.26).

Source: table BA.18.

Total government recurrent expenditure on VET in 2007 was \$13.03 per annual hour (figure B.14).

Figure B.14 **Total government real expenditure on VET per annual hour (2007 dollars)<sup>a, b, c</sup>**



<sup>a</sup> The ACT is the only jurisdiction not to levy payroll tax on its VET employees. A payroll tax estimate based on the ACT payroll tax rate has been included in the expenditure data for the ACT. <sup>b</sup> Data for Australia exclude the ACT payroll tax estimate. <sup>c</sup> Historical data have been adjusted to 2007 dollars using the GDP chain price index (table 5A.76).

Source: table BA.19.

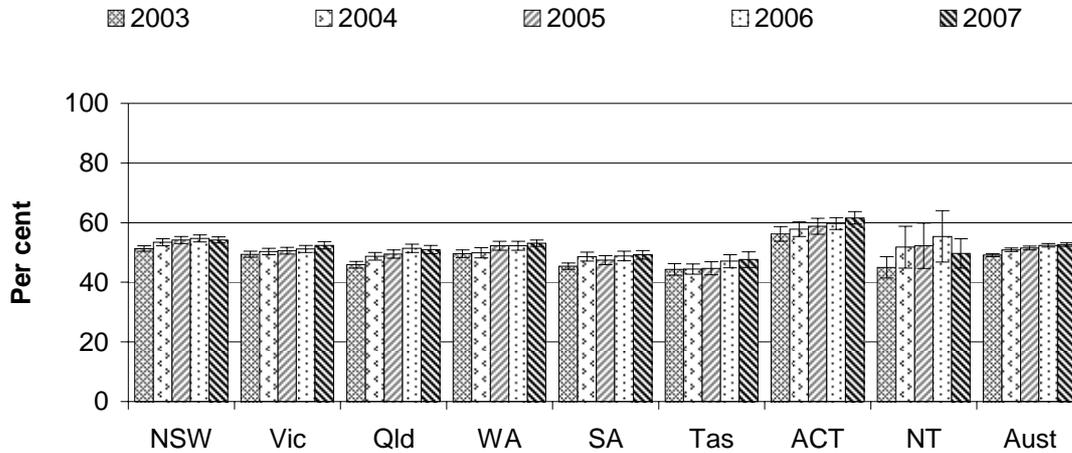
## Selected outcome indicators

### *Educational attainment*

An important objective of the education system is to add to the skill base of the population, with the benefits of improving employment, worker productivity and economic growth. Educational attainment of the labour force is used as a proxy indicator for the stock of skills. However, it understates the skill base because it does not capture skills acquired through partially completed courses, courses not leading to a formal qualification, or training and experience gained at work.

In 2007, 52.6 per cent of people aged 15–64 years had a non-school qualification (7.2 million people) compared to 49.1 per cent (6.4 million people) in 2003 (figure B.15). Of the 7.2 million people with a non-school qualification, 39.5 per cent had a postgraduate degree, graduate diploma/graduate certificate or bachelor degree as their highest non-school qualification (table BA.12). Of the 6.5 million people in the 15–64 year age group without non-school qualifications, 37.6 per cent had completed the highest level of secondary school (table BA.13).

**Figure B.15 Proportion of 15–64 year olds with a non-school qualification as their highest level of qualification<sup>a</sup>**

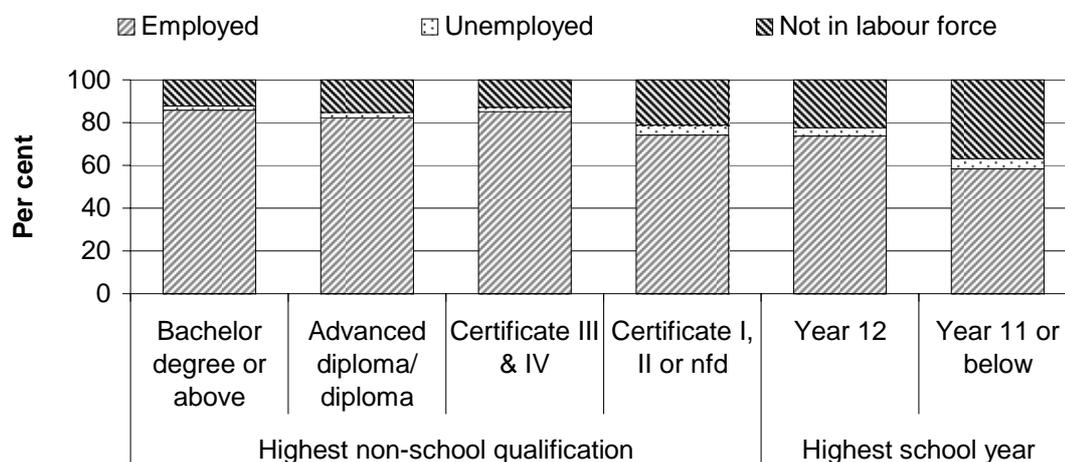


<sup>a</sup> The levels of highest non-school qualifications are not necessarily higher than a school qualification (that is, Certificate I, II or NFD are not necessarily higher than year 12).

Source: ABS Survey of Education and Work, 2007, Cat. no. 6227.0; table BA.12.

There were 6.0 million employed people who had a non-school qualification in 2007, representing 59.0 per cent of employed people aged 15–64 years (table BA.13). People whose highest non-school qualification was a bachelor degree or above were most likely to be employed (85.8 per cent), while people who did not complete secondary school were the least likely to be employed (58.3 per cent) (figure B.16).

Figure B.16 **Level of highest non-school qualification, or school year completed for those without a non-school qualification, by labour force status, (15–64 year olds), May 2007<sup>a, b</sup>**

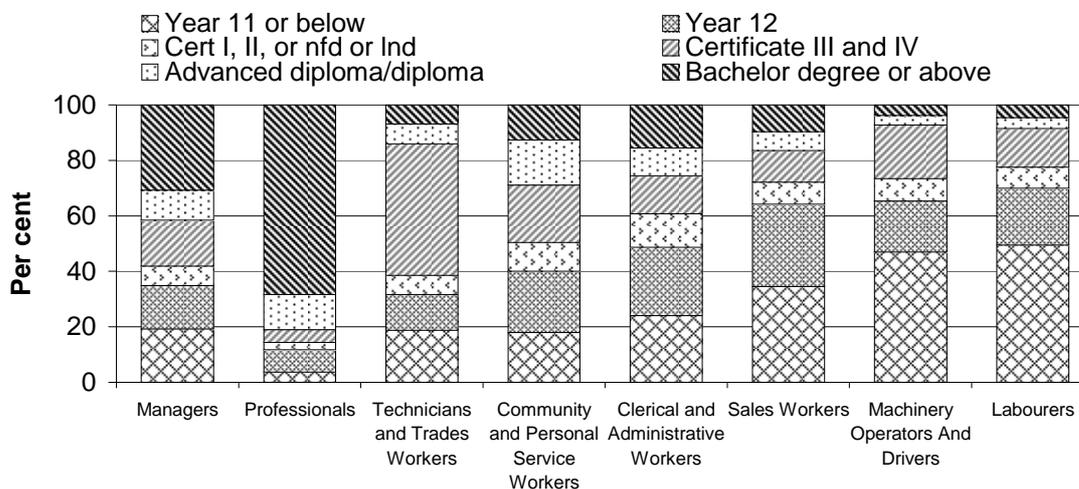


nfd = Not further defined. <sup>a</sup> The levels of qualifications are not necessarily listed in order from highest to lowest (that is, 'Certificate I, II or nfd' are not necessarily higher than year 12). <sup>b</sup> The denominator for proportion of persons with a non-school qualification is level of education attained, and the denominator for persons without a non-school qualification is the highest year of schooling completed.

Source: ABS Survey of Education and Work, 2007, Cat. no. 6227.0; table BA.13.

People employed as professionals were most likely to have completed a bachelor or higher degree as their level of highest non-school qualification (68.3 per cent in 2007), while the level of highest non-school qualification for the majority of technicians and trades workers was a certificate III or IV (47.4 per cent) (table BA.14). People employed as sales workers, machinery operators and drivers, and labourers were most likely to be without a non-school qualification (greater than 60 per cent) (figure B.17).

**Figure B.17 Occupation of employed people, by level of highest non-school qualification or school year completed for those without a non-school qualification, (15–64 year olds), May 2007<sup>a, b</sup>**



<sup>a</sup> The levels of qualifications are not necessarily listed in order from highest to lowest (that is, 'Certificate I, II or nfd' are not necessarily higher than year 12). <sup>b</sup> Occupation categories have changed for this Report.

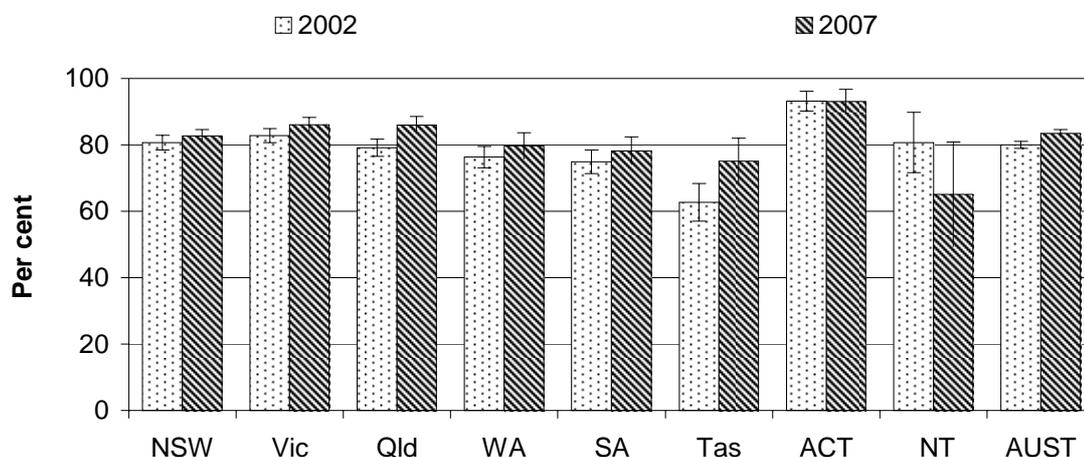
Source: ABS (2007); ABS (unpublished) *Survey of Education and Work, 2007*, Cat. no. 6227.0; table BA.14.

Achieving year 12 (or equivalent) improves employment and earning outcomes for young people (ACER 2000). However, Australia is in the bottom half of OECD countries for the proportion of the population of post compulsory school age attaining year 12 or equivalent — the proportion of 25–34 year olds that attained this level<sup>3</sup> in 2006 (80.0 per cent) ranked 18<sup>th</sup> out of 29 OECD countries (OECD 2008).

Nationally, the proportion of 20–24 year olds in 2007 who had completed year 12 or equivalent or gained a qualification at AQF level II or above was 83.5 per cent, increasing from 80.0 per cent in 2002. The overall proportions varied across jurisdictions (figure B.18).

<sup>3</sup> The classification of 'upper secondary' differs both across and between countries.

**Figure B.18 Proportion of 20–24 year olds who completed year 12 or equivalent, or gained a qualification at AQF level II or above<sup>a</sup>**

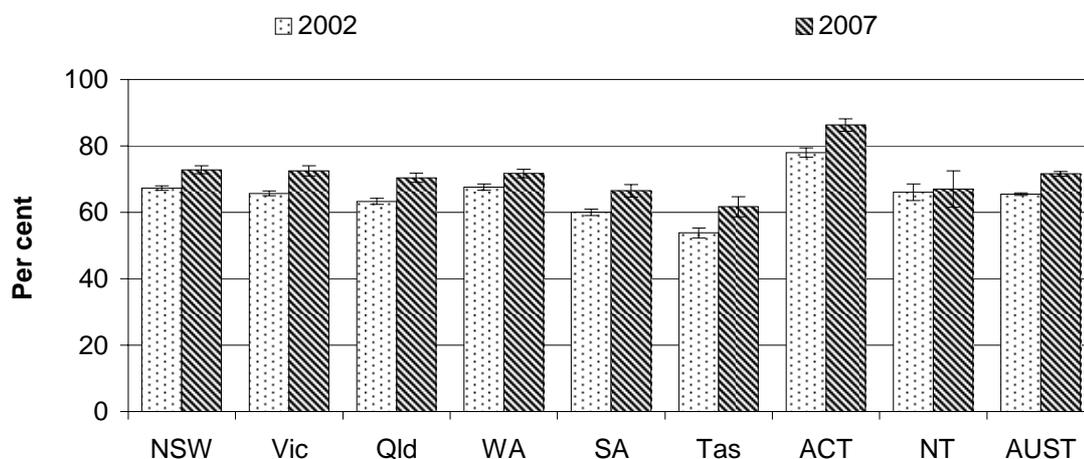


<sup>a</sup> Error bars represent the 95 per cent confidence interval associated with each point estimate.

Source: ABS (unpublished) *Survey of Education and Work*, 2007, Cat. no. 6227.0; table BA.15.

Nationally, the proportion of 25–64 year olds who had completed year 12 or equivalent or gained a qualification at AQF level II or above was 65.5 per cent in 2002 and 71.6 per cent in 2007. The proportion of 25–64 year olds who had completed year 12 or equivalent or gained a qualification at AQF level II or above also varied across jurisdictions (figure B.19).

**Figure B.19 Proportion of 25–64 year olds who completed year 12 or equivalent or gained a qualification at AQF level II or above<sup>a</sup>**



<sup>a</sup> Error bars represent the 95 per cent confidence interval associated with each point estimate.

Source: ABS (unpublished) *Survey of Education and Work*, 2007, Cat. no. 6227.0; table BA.16.

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The VET chapter (chapter 5) presents additional data on participation in government funded VET programs at the certificate III level or higher by selected age groups, including data for 20–24 year olds and 25–64 year olds.

### *Adult literacy and numeracy skills*

This section provides data indicating the skill level of the working age population in 2006. Data are sourced from the *Adult Literacy and Life Skills (ALLS) Survey* (ABS 2008a), and includes information on:

- *prose literacy*: the ability to understand and use information from various kinds of texts, including newspapers, magazines and brochures
- *document literacy*: the knowledge and skills required to locate and use information contained in various formats including job applications, payroll forms, transportation schedules, maps, tables and charts
- *numeracy*: the knowledge and skills required to effectively manage and respond to the mathematical demands of diverse situations.

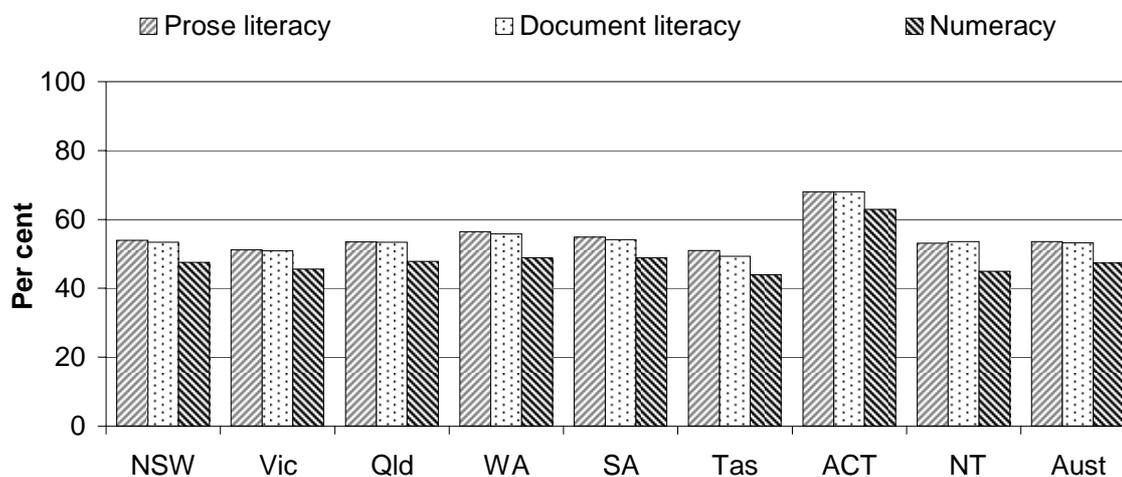
Skills were ranked on a scale from level 1 (lowest skill) to level 5 (highest skill), with level 3 considered the minimum level required for individuals to meet the demands of everyday life and work in an increasingly knowledge-based economy.

Nationally in 2006, the proportions of people aged 15–74 years that scored level 3 or above were:

- 53.6 per cent for prose literacy (compared with 52.5 per cent in 1996) (table BA.21)
- 53.2 per cent for document literacy (compared with 52.0 per cent in 1996) (table BA.21)
- 47.4 per cent for numeracy skills (comparative data are not available for numeracy skills for 1996) (table BA.20).

The proportions of people aged 15–74 years who achieved at or above level 3 by State and Territory in 2006 are presented in figure B.20.

Figure B.20 Proportion of 15–74 year olds who achieved at skill level 3 or above, 2006<sup>a</sup>



<sup>a</sup> The ALLS sample does not include persons from Very Remote (ARIA) areas, and is not designed to be representative of the Indigenous population. Consequently, data for the NT should be treated with caution as the proportion of the population in Very Remote areas of the NT is greater than in other states and territories.

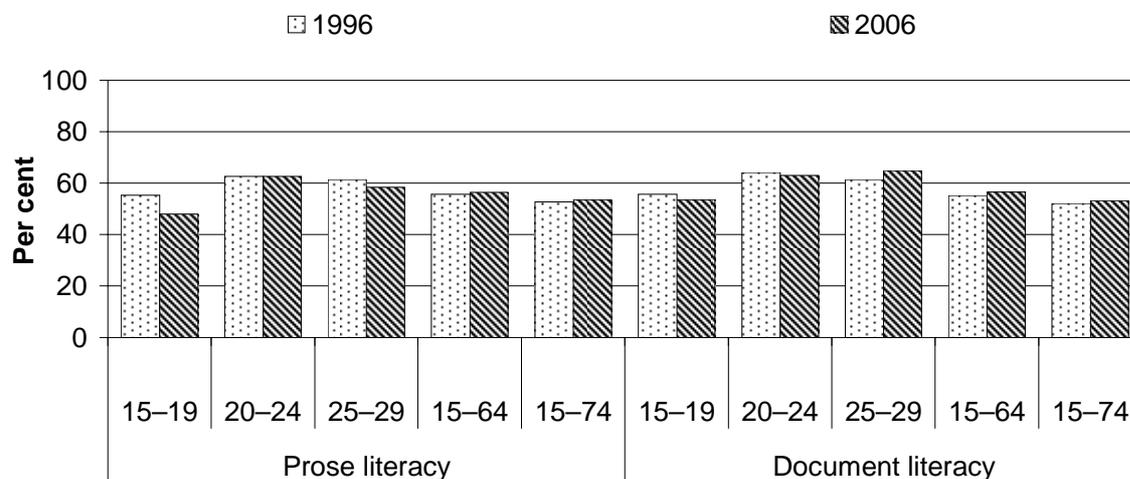
Source: ABS (2008a) *Adult Literacy and Life Skills Survey 2006*, Cat. no. 4228.0; table BA.20.

The ALLS survey identified a number of factors that are related to literacy skills, including educational attainment, whether English is a person’s first language, and age. In 2006, people who either did not complete schooling to year 12 (or equivalent) or spoke English as a second language comprised 83 per cent of those who did not have the minimum level of prose literacy skills to adequately meet the demands of everyday life (ABS 2008a).

In 2006, people aged 15–74 (excluding those still at school) who had not completed schooling to year 12 (or equivalent) were more than twice as likely to have prose literacy skills below level 3 than those who had completed schooling to year 12 (63 per cent compared with 29 per cent nationally). The ALLS survey (ABS 2008e, p.100) found that ‘on average, literacy skills increase with each additional year of school completed’.

Literacy levels tended to decrease with age, with lower proportions of people in the older age groups attaining level 3 or higher. The exception to this was the 15–19 years age group, which had lower levels of literacy than the 20–24 years age group in both the 1996 and 2006 surveys (figure B.21).

**Figure B.21 Proportion of 15–74 year olds at level 3 or above for prose and document literacy skills, by age**

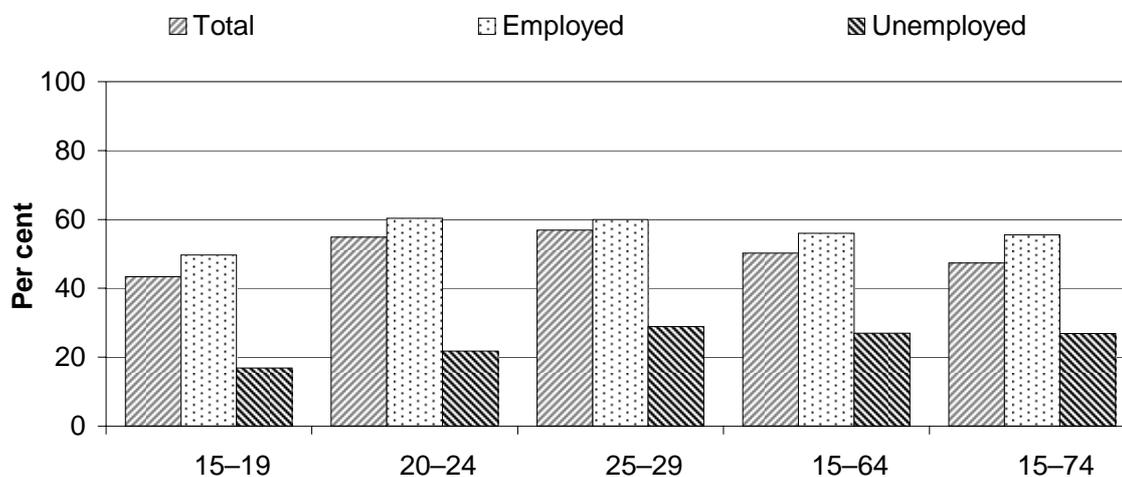


Source: ABS (2008a) *Adult Literacy and Life Skills Survey 2006*, Cat. no. 4228.0; table BA.21.

In an environment where globalisation and technological advances are increasing the numeracy demands of employees (NCVER 2007), there are indications that numeracy skills have a greater impact on workplace participation than prose and document literacy skills. NCVER (NCVER 2005, p.13) cites research that explains that the unemployment consequences of poor numeracy skills is increasingly due to the growth of new low-wage jobs in the service sector (that require computer and numeracy skills) being more rapid than growth in more traditional low-skill (manual) jobs.

In 2006, fewer than half of 15–19 year olds (43.3 per cent) had the necessary numeracy skills to meet the demands of everyday life (figure B.22). For unemployed people aged between 15–74 years, just over a quarter (26.9 per cent) had the necessary numeracy skills to meet the demands of everyday life, while for employed people this proportion was 55.5 per cent. The difference between the numeracy skill of the employed and unemployed was greatest amongst 20–24 year olds (figure B.22).

**Figure B.22 Proportion of 15–74 year olds at level 3 or above for numeracy literacy, by age and employment status, 2006**



Source: ABS (2008a) *Adult Literacy and Life Skills Survey 2006*, Cat. no. 4228.0; table BA.22.

The consequence of low literacy and numeracy skills are particularly severe for adults with skill levels so low that they are unable to embark on (or successfully progress with) vocational training that is necessary for maintaining or entering employment, because of the foundation skills required.

### Indigenous Australians and ECET

The particular needs of Indigenous Australians for services in the ECET sector was reflected in the endorsement of Indigenous-specific targets by COAG in 2008 (COAG 2008a). These include increasing access to quality early childhood education for four year olds in remote communities, reducing the gap in literacy skills for school-age children, and increasing year 12 (or equivalent) attainment.

Attachment table 3A.21 in the Children’s services chapter of the 2008 Report (SCRGSP 2008) includes data on the representation of Indigenous children aged 0–5 years and 6–12 years among users of Australian Government supported child care in 2006 — the latest available data for Indigenous children. At a national level, Indigenous children from both age groups participated in child care at a lower rate than their representation in the community. In the 0–5 age group, 1.8 per cent of children were represented in child care, compared to 4.4 per cent represented in the community. In the 6–12 age group these representations were 1.6 per cent compared to 4.3 per cent, respectively.

Data on children aged 3–5 years in government funded preschools are provided in table 3.2 in the Children’s services chapter of the current Report for 2007-08.

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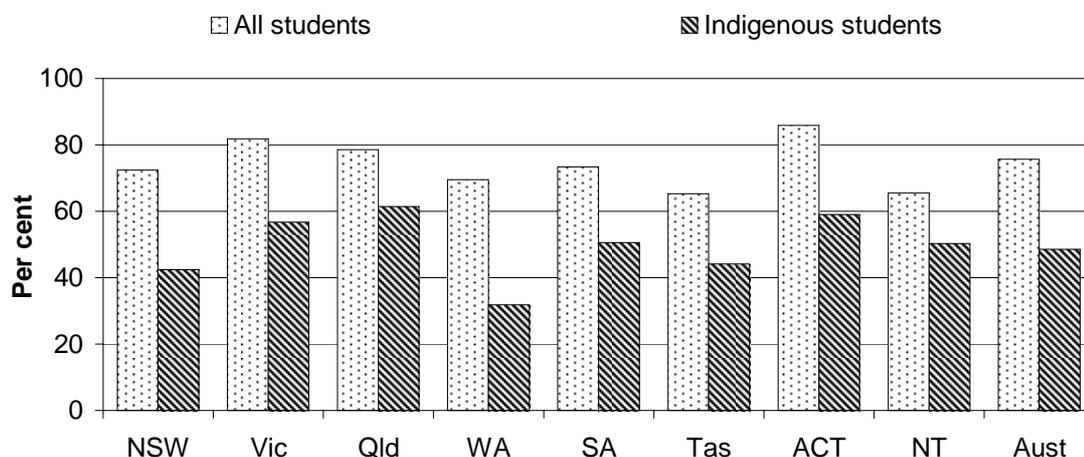
Nationally, the representation of Indigenous children in preschools was a similar proportion (4.9 per cent) to their representation in the community (4.5 per cent).

The *National Report to Parliament on Indigenous Education and Training, 2006* reported that the proportion of Indigenous students in government preschools who were assessed as being literacy ready to start school had increased from 64.9 per cent nationally in 2002 to 65.3 per cent in 2006, and the proportion assessed as numeracy ready increased from 64.4 per cent in 2002 to 67.7 per cent in 2006 (DEEWR 2008c). However, the disparity in academic performance between Indigenous students and non-Indigenous students increases as students progress through school (SCRGSP 2007 p. 7.18). Longitudinal data for student outcomes are not currently collected.

Research has shown that achievement in years 5 and 7 literacy and numeracy is a key determinant of whether students continue to year 12 and entry into higher education (ACER 2004).

Nationally, the apparent retention rate of Indigenous students from year 10 to year 12 was 48.5 per cent in 2007, compared to 75.6 per cent for all students (figure B.23). In interpreting this indicator, note that nationally 9.5 per cent of Indigenous students left school before year 10 — compared to 0.9 per cent of all students — so are not included in the base year for retention from year 10 to year 12. This baseline varies across jurisdictions.

Figure B.23 **Apparent retention rates from year 10 to year 12, full time secondary students, 2007<sup>a, b, c</sup>**



<sup>a</sup> Apparent retention rates are affected by factors that vary across jurisdictions. For this reason, variations in apparent retention rates over time within jurisdictions may be more useful than comparisons across jurisdictions. <sup>b</sup> The 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 4.4 in chapter 4). <sup>c</sup> Ungraded students are not included in the calculation of apparent retention rates. This exclusion has particular implications for the NT, where 10.9 per cent of Indigenous secondary students are ungraded (compared with an average of 4.2 per cent for the rest of Australia), in 2007, and this should be considered when interpreting the data.

Source: ABS (2008) *Schools Australia 2007*, Cat. No. 4221.0; table 4A.124.

In 2006, 32 per cent of the year 12 Indigenous student cohort undertook a senior secondary certificate course aimed at gaining university entrance, compared to 78 per cent of the non-Indigenous student cohort. Of these students, 11 per cent attained a score that would gain them university entrance, compared to 47 per cent of non-Indigenous students (DEEWR 2008c).

Indigenous students in senior secondary school were more likely to participate in 'VET in Schools' activities. Nationally in 2005, Indigenous students comprised 3.0 per cent of students participating in VET in Schools, although they made up only 2.2 per cent of all students (NCVER 2008). Similarly, Indigenous students made up a higher proportion of VET students than their proportion in the population (VET attachment table 5A.14 of this Report).

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## **Cross-cutting issues**

The link between early childhood development and achievement at school is well established, as is the link between education, skills, workforce participation and productivity. Information in the earlier sections of this preface has pointed to some of these relationships.

This section provides a brief discussion of other ‘cross-cutting’ issues at a strategic level within the ECET sector.

### **Workforce participation and the availability of child care services**

In March 2008, COAG committed to provide all Australian children with access to a quality preschool program for 15 hours a week, for 40 weeks in the year before formal schooling (COAG 2008a). This was part of the COAG Productivity Agenda measures that address the workforce participation needs of parents, with the intended outcome being that ‘quality early childhood education and care supports the workforce participation choices of parents with children in the year before formal schooling’.

The Children’s services chapter in this Report includes a new measure of ‘family needs’, defined as the proportion of all children in formal care, whose parents were seeking additional formal care for work related reasons. This measure addresses the need for families to participate in the labour force without child care being a barrier to this participation (box 3.19).

### **VET in Schools**

‘VET in Schools’ is an arrangement whereby school students may undertake vocational education and training as part of their senior secondary school certificate. The provision of VET subjects in schools gives increased choice for students who stay on to year 12, including students who are at risk of leaving school early.

The VET in Schools arrangement offers two main options. Students can undertake ‘school-based apprenticeships and traineeships’ (SATs), or VET subjects and courses (‘other VET in Schools programs’) (NCVER 2008).

In 2005, there were 182 900 VET in Schools students nationally (70.8 per cent in government schools), or 37.4 per cent of school students undertaking a senior secondary certificate. Approximately 7 per cent were school-based apprentices and trainees, and 93 per cent were enrolled in other accredited VET in Schools programs that lead to a nationally recognised VET qualification (NCVER 2008).

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## Non-linear education and training pathways

The traditional view that formal learning progresses in a linear fashion from secondary school to either TAFE institutions or university has shifted over the last decade. This shift reflects the changing needs of individuals and the workplace, and has been facilitated by government funded programs such as VET in Schools. Some examples of other non-linear pathways include:

- VET students going on to undertake a university course
- university students going on to undertake a VET course
- mature-age students returning to complete senior secondary schooling
- mature-age students who have not undertaken senior secondary schooling undertaking a VET course
- unaccredited training in the workplace.

Looking specifically at the pathways experienced by young people, the Longitudinal Surveys of Australian Youth (LSAY) research program examined the paths taken by the year 9 class of 1995 through to age 20 (ACER 2005b). One third of this group (33 per cent) entered university in their first post-school year, and 4 per cent in their second post-school year. Another 21 per cent (both year 12 completers and non-completers) entered non-apprenticeship VET study, and a similar proportion (20 per cent) participated in an apprenticeship or traineeship by age 20. By age 20, 80 per cent had participated in some post school study (ACER 2005b).

The LSAY research shows that even for a relatively short period following secondary school, a small percentage of people (from the year 9 class of 1995) transferred between different forms of post-school study:

- of those who completed their non-apprenticeship VET course, 8 per cent of certificate recipients and 18 per cent of diploma or higher recipients went on to higher education
- 3 per cent of those who entered higher education by 2000 (5 years following year 9) had been in the VET sector before commencing their university studies
- 5 per cent of university entrants left to undertake VET study and did not return to university by 2001
- 8 per cent of university participants had participated in VET by 2001 (ACER 2005b).

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## Special needs groups

The following chapters report various data in relation to Indigenous populations as well as other special needs groups such as people with a disability, people living in remote areas, people with a language background other than English (LBOTE), and people from low socioeconomic status (SES) backgrounds (table B.1).

Table B.1 **Some data reported on special needs groups in ECET chapters**

	<i>Children's services (chapter 3)</i>	<i>School education (chapter 4)</i>	<i>VET (chapter 5)</i>
Indigenous people	✓	✓	✓
People with a disability	✓	✓	✓
People in remote areas	✓	✓	✓
People with a language background other than English	✓	✓	✓
People from low SES backgrounds	✓	✓	

Special needs groups are not discrete, with some individuals belonging to more than one of these groups. For example, there is a greater incidence of low socioeconomic status and certain types of disability amongst Indigenous people compared with the general population (ABS (unpublished) *2006 Census of Population and Housing*). People with a severe disability are often disadvantaged in terms of workforce participation (ABS 2004b), which may lead to lower socioeconomic status.

## Future directions

COAG has agreed as part of its reform agenda to the following aspirations for the ECET sector:

- children are born healthy and have access to the support, care and education throughout early childhood that equips them for life and learning, delivered in a way that actively engages parents, and meets the workforce participation needs of parents
- all Australian school students acquire the knowledge and skills to participate effectively in society and employment in a globalised economy

- 
- all working aged Australians have the opportunity to develop skills and qualifications needed, included through a responsive training system, to enable them to be effective participants in and contributors to the modern labour market (COAG 2008a).

It is anticipated that working to achieve the COAG aspirations will provide further information with which to measure the performance of the ECET sector. Four important national initiatives currently under development are the *Early Years Learning Framework*, the *National Early Childhood Development Strategy*, the *National Quality Framework for Early Childhood*, and the *National VET Data Strategy*. These projects will improve understanding of the delivery of government services in the ECET sector, and resulting information will be included in future Reports where relevant.

Early childhood education and care is often considered separately to school education and training (and data are generally collected separately), thereby making the reporting for the expanded ECET sector difficult. While this preface has been revised for the 2009 Report, the Steering Committee intends to continue to refine the preface where the opportunity arises from the availability of new data.

## **Reform of Specific Purpose Payments**

In December 2007, COAG agreed to reform Specific Purpose Payments (SPPs). SPPs are financial agreements between the Australian Government and State and Territory governments involving a contribution by the Australian Government to the funding of services which are considered a joint Australian and State and Territory government responsibility. Such SPPs included the *Schools Assistance (Learning Together – Achievement Through Choice and Opportunity) Act 2004 (Cth)* for school education, and the *Commonwealth–State Agreement for Skilling Australia’s Workforce* for the VET sector.

At its 29 November 2008 meeting, COAG agreed to six new National Agreements, five of which are associated with a National SPP, including two related directly to the ECET sector: one covering school education (*National Education Agreement*) and one covering VET (*National Agreement on Skills and Workforce Development*) (COAG 2008d). Under the reforms, each Agreement contains the objectives, outcomes, outputs and performance indicators for its respective area. The performance of governments in achieving these mutually agreed outcomes will be assessed by the COAG Reform Council (CRC). The Steering Committee has been requested by COAG to provide the SPP performance information to the CRC (COAG 2008c).

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The National Agreements/SPPs will be supplemented by a range of National Partnerships (NPs): project, facilitation and reward agreements. Funding for NPs may be conditional on states and territories meeting agreed milestones and performance benchmarks.

The Steering Committee and the various working groups covering the ECET sector will ensure that reporting in this preface reflects the COAG priorities identified in the two relevant Agreements, the associated SPPs and relevant NPs.

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## Attachment tables

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

<b>Table BA.1</b>	Australian, State and Territory governments real recurrent expenditure on child care services, (2006-07 dollars)
<b>Table BA.2</b>	Australian, State and Territory (including local) government real expenditure on education, (2006-07 dollars)
<b>Table BA.3</b>	Total government real expenditure on education, by purpose (2006-07 dollars) (\$ million)
<b>Table BA.4</b>	State and Territory (including local) government real expenditure (2006-07 dollars)
<b>Table BA.5</b>	Participation in education and training, by age, by sector, 2007
<b>Table BA.6</b>	Participation in education and training (per cent)
<b>Table BA.7</b>	Full time participation in education, training or work (per cent), 2007
<b>Table BA.8</b>	School leaver destination (15–24 year olds)
<b>Table BA.9</b>	Applications to enrol in an educational institution, by people aged 15–64 years
<b>Table BA.10</b>	Applications to enrol in an educational institution, by people aged 15–19 years
<b>Table BA.11</b>	Applications to enrol in an educational institution, by people aged 20–24 years
<b>Table BA.12</b>	Level of highest non-school qualification or school year completed for those without a non-school qualification, 15-64 year olds
<b>Table BA.13</b>	Level of highest non-school qualification, or school year completed for those without a non-school qualification, people aged 15–64 years, by labour force status, 2007
<b>Table BA.14</b>	Level of highest non-school qualification or school year completed for those without a non-school qualification, people aged 15–64 years, by occupation, 2007
<b>Table BA.15</b>	Proportion of 20–24 year olds who have completed year 12 or equivalent or gained a qualification at AQF level II or above
<b>Table BA.16</b>	Proportion of 25–64 year olds who have completed year 12 or equivalent or gained a qualification at AQF level II or above
<b>Table BA.17</b>	Proportion of 25–29 year olds who have gained a post-secondary qualifications at AQF level III or above
<b>Table BA.18</b>	School education real recurrent unit costs (2006-07 dollars)
<b>Table BA.19</b>	VET institution real recurrent unit costs (2007 dollars)
<b>Table BA.20</b>	Proportion of 15–74 year olds who achieved at skill level 3 or above, 2006

- 
- Table BA.21** Proportion of 15–74 year olds at level 3 or above for prose and document literacy skills, by age
- Table BA.22** Proportion of 15–74 year olds at level 3 or above for numeracy, by age and employment status, 2006
- Table BA.23** Higher education participation by selected groups compared to share of total population, 2006

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