# 4 School education

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| Attachment tables  |
| Attachment tables are identified in references throughout this chapter by a ‘4A’ prefix (for example, table 4A.1) and are available from the website www.pc.gov.au/research/ongoing/report-on-government-services. |
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This chapter focuses on performance information for government‑funded school education in Australia.

Further information on the Report on Government Services including other reported service areas, the glossary and list of abbreviations is available at www.pc.gov.au/research/ongoing/ report-on-government-services.

## 4.1 Profile of school education

### Service overview

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

#### Compulsory school education

Entry to school education is compulsory for all children in all states and territories, although the child age entry requirements vary by jurisdiction (ABS 2018). In 2017, minimum starting ages generally restrict enrolment to children aged between four‑and‑a‑half and five years (ABS 2018). (See chapter 3, table 3A.1, for more details.)

National mandatory requirements for schooling — as agreed in the National Youth Participation Requirement (NYPR) — came into effect through relevant State and Territory government legislation in 2010. Under the NYPR, all young people must participate in schooling until they complete year 10; and if they have completed year 10, in full time education, training or employment (or combination of these) until 17 years of age (ABS 2018). Some State and Territory governments have extended these requirements for their jurisdiction.

#### Type and level of school education

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

* *Primary schools* provide education from the first year of primary school — known as the ‘foundation year’ in the Australian Curriculum (see section 4.4 for the naming conventions used in each state and territory). Primary school education extends to year 6 (year 7 in SA). (Prior to 2015, primary school education also extended to year 7 in Queensland and WA.)
* *Secondary schools* provide education from the end of primary school to year 12
* *Special schools* provide education for students that exhibit one or more of the following characteristics before enrolment: mental or physical disability or impairment; slow learning ability; social or emotional problems; or in custody, on remand or in hospital (ABS 2018).

#### Affiliation, ownership and management

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

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

### Roles and responsibilities

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

From 1 January 2014, Australian Government funding for government and non‑government schools was through the Students First funding arrangements, as determined by the *Australian Education Act 2013* (the Act).[[1]](#footnote-2) State and Territory governments have discretion as to how to apply the funding to achieve the agreed outcomes. Detailed information on these funding arrangements can be found in box 4.7.

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

### Funding

Nationally in 2016‑17, government recurrent expenditure on school education was $57.8 billion, a 2.6 per cent real increase from 2015‑16 (table 4A.10). State and Territory governments provided the majority of funding (70.2 per cent) (figure 4.1).

Government schools accounted for $43.7 billion (75.7 per cent), with State and Territory governments the major funding source ($37.1 billion, or 84.9 per cent of government schools’ funding). Non‑government schools accounted for $14.0 billion (24.3 per cent), with the Australian Government the major funding source ($10.6 billion, or 75.7 per cent of non‑government schools funding) (table 4A.10).

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

This Report presents expenditure related to government funding only, not to the full cost to the community of providing school education. Caution should be taken when comparing expenditure data for government and non‑government schools, because governments provide only part of school funding. Governments provided 57.5 per cent of non‑government school funding in 2017, with the remaining 42.5 per cent sourced from private fees and fund raising (Australian Government Department of Education and Training unpublished).

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| Figure 4.1 Proportion of total school education government recurrent expenditure**a** |
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| Figure 4.1 Proportion of total school education government recurrent expenditure  More details can be found within the text surrounding this image. |

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| a See table 4A.10 for detailed footnotes and caveats. |
| *Source*: Education Council (unpublished) *National Schools Statistics Collection* (NSSC); Australian Government Department of Education and Training (unpublished); Australian, State and Territory governments (unpublished); table 4A.10. |
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### Size and scope

#### Schools

In 2017, there were 9444 schools in Australia (6228 primary schools, 1408 secondary schools, 1336 combined schools, and 472 special schools) (table 4A.1). The majority of schools were government owned and managed (70.3 per cent) (tables 4A.1).

Settlement patterns (population dispersion), the age distribution of the population and educational policy influence the distribution of schools by size and level in different jurisdictions. Data on school size and level are in *Schools Australia, 2017* (ABS 2018).

#### Student body

There were 3.8 million full time equivalent (FTE) students enrolled in school nationally in 2017 (table 4A.3). Whilst the majority of students are full time, there were 15 980 part time students in 2017 (predominantly in secondary schools) (ABS 2018).

* *Government schools* had 2.5 million FTE students enrolled (65.5 per cent of all FTE students). Over the past 10 years this proportion has ranged between 65.1 per cent (2012 to 2015) and 66.0 per cent (in 2008) (table 4A.3).
* *Non‑government schools* had 1.3 million FTE students enrolled (34.5 per cent of all FTE students).
* The proportion of students enrolled in government schools is higher for primary schools than secondary schools (table 4A.3).

A higher proportion of FTE students were enrolled in primary schools (57.7 per cent) than in secondary schools (42.3 per cent) (table 4A.3). SA has the highest proportion of students enrolled in primary school education (62.1 per cent) as it is the only jurisdiction that still includes year 7 in primary school.

The enrolment rate is close to 100 per cent for Australian children aged 15 years (consistent with requirements under the NYPR), but decreases as ages increase. Nationally in 2017, 99.0 per cent of Australian children aged 15 years were enrolled at school, declining to 93.7 per cent of 16 year olds and 78.0 per cent of 17 year olds. Data are available for 15–19 year olds by single year of age and totals in table 4A.4.

##### Special needs groups

Nationally in 2017, government schools had a higher proportion of students from selected special needs groups than non‑government schools, including for:

* Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students — 7.2 per cent in government schools and 2.6 per cent in non‑government schools (table 4A.5)
* students from a low socio‑educational background — 30.4 per cent in government schools and 12.9 per cent in non‑government schools (table 4A.6)
* geographically remote and very remote students — 2.4 per cent in government schools and 1.1 per cent in non‑government schools (table 4A.8).

For students with disability, 19.1 per cent, 16.9 per cent, and 19.9 per cent of students at government, Catholic, and independent schools, respectively, required an education adjustment due to disability (table 4A.7). Data by level of adjustment are in table 4A.7.

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

School‑aged people may participate in VET by either participating in ‘VET in Schools’, or (see chapter 5) remain engaged in education through a Registered Training Organisation. Nationally in 2017, there were 242 100 VET in Schools students (NCVER 2018). Overall, 413 300 people aged 15–19 years successfully completed at least one unit of competency as part of a VET qualification at the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) Certificate II or above (at a school or Registered Training Organisation) (table 4A.9).

## 4.2 Framework of performance indicators

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

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| Box 4.1 Objectives for School education |
| Australian schooling aims for all young Australians to become successful learners, confident and creative individuals, and active and informed citizens positioning them to live fulfilling, productive and responsible lives. It aims for students to excel by international standards, while reducing educational disadvantage.To meet this vision, the school education system aims to:* engage all students and promote student participation
* deliver high quality teaching with a world‑class curriculum.

Governments aim for school education services to meet these objectives in an equitable and efficient manner. |
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The performance indicator framework provides information on equity, effectiveness and efficiency and distinguishes the outputs and outcomes of school education services (figure 4.2).

The framework also shows which data are complete and comparable in the 2019 Report. For data that are not considered directly comparable, text includes relevant caveats and supporting commentary. Chapter 1 discusses data comparability, data completeness and information on data quality from a Report‑wide perspective. In addition to section 4.1, the Report’s Statistical context chapter (chapter 2) contains data that may assist in interpreting the performance indicators presented in this chapter. Chapters 1 and 2 are available from the website at www.pc.gov.au/research/ongoing/report-on-government-services.

| Figure 4.2 School education performance indicator framework  |
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| Figure 4.2 School education performance indicator framework   More details can be found within the text surrounding this image. |
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Improvements to performance reporting for School education are ongoing and include identifying data sources to fill gaps in reporting for performance indicators and measures, and improving the comparability and completeness of data.

The comparability of performance indicator results are shaded in indicator interpretation boxes, figures and chapter and attachment tables as follows:

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  |  |  | Data are comparable (subject to caveats) across jurisdictions and over time. |
|  |  |  | Data are either not comparable (subject to caveats) within jurisdictions over time or are not comparable across jurisdictions or both. |

The completeness of performance indicator results are shaded in indicator interpretation boxes, figures and chapter and attachment tables as follows:

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  |  |  | Data are complete (subject to caveats) for the current reporting period. All required data are available for all jurisdictions |
|  |  |  | Data are incomplete for the current reporting period. At least some data were not available. |

## 4.3 Key performance indicator results

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

### Outputs

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

### Equity

#### Access — Attendance by target group

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

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| Box 4.2 Attendance by target group |
| ‘Attendance by target group’ compares the attendance rate of those in the target group (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, students in remote/very remote areas) with the attendance rate of those outside the target group (non‑Indigenous students, students in major cities and regional areas). Similar rates of attendance for those within and outside the target groups indicates equity of access.The student attendance rate is the number of actual full time equivalent student days attended by full time students as a percentage of the total number of possible student attendance days attended over the period. |
| Data reported for this measure are: not comparable across jurisdictions prior to 2018 and not comparable over time (data for 2018 are not comparable to earlier years). Data are comparable across jurisdictions (subject to caveats) for 2018 complete for the current reporting period (subject to caveats). All required 2018 data are available for all jurisdictions. |
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Nationally in 2018, attendance rates across years 1–10 decreased as remoteness increased (figure 4.3), with the decrease greater for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students than for non‑Indigenous students. This pattern was similar for government and non‑government schools (table 4A.21).

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| Figure 4.3 Student attendance rate for years 1 to 10 combined, by remoteness, all schools, 2018**a, b** |
|  |  | Data are comparable across jurisdictions (subject to caveats).  |
|  |  | Data are complete (subject to caveats) for the current reporting period.  |
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| Figure 4.3 Student attendance rate for years 1 to 10 combined, by remoteness, all schools, 2018  More details can be found within the text surrounding this image. |

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| a See box 4.2 and table 4A.21 for detailed definitions, footnotes and caveats. b There are no very remote areas in Victoria. There are no major cities in Tasmania. There are no outer regional, remote or very remote areas in the ACT. There are no data for inner regional areas in the ACT. There are no major cities or inner regional areas in the NT. *Source*: Australian Curriculum and Assessment Reporting Authority (ACARA) (unpublished); table 4A.21. |
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Nationally in 2018, non‑Indigenous students in all schools had higher attendance rates than Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students across all year levels in all jurisdictions. This pattern was similar for government and non‑government schools (figure 4.4 and tables 4A.18–20).

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| Figure 4.4 Student attendance rate for years 1–6 to year 10, by Indigenous status, all schools, 2018**a, b** |
|  |  | Data are comparable (subject to caveats) across jurisdictions.  |
|  |  | Data are complete (subject to caveats) for the current reporting period. |
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| Figure 4.4 Student attendance rate for years 1–6 to year 10, by Indigenous status, all schools, 2018  More details can be found within the text surrounding this image. |

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

### Effectiveness

#### Access — Attendance

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

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| Box 4.3 Attendance  |
| ‘Attendance’ is defined by the student attendance rate — the number of actual full time equivalent student days attended by full time students as a percentage of the total number of possible student attendance days attended over the period.Higher or increasing rates of attendance are desirable. Poor attendance has been related to poor student outcomes, particularly once patterns of non‑attendance are established (Hancock et al. 2013). Data reported for this measure are: not comparable across jurisdictions prior to 2018 and not comparable over time (data for 2018 are not comparable to earlier years). Data are comparable across jurisdictions (subject to caveats) for 2018 complete for the current reporting period (subject to caveats). All required 2018 data are available for all jurisdictions. |
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Nationally in 2018, the attendance rate for all school students across year levels 1–6 was 93.0 per cent (table 4A.20). The year 1–6 attendance rates have remained steady since 2014 and are similar across most jurisdictions and within each state and territory over time.

Nationally in 2018, across all schools attendance rates decreased from year 7 to year 10 — from 92.5 per cent to 88.8 per cent (table 4A.20). For years 7–10 combined, attendance rates are higher at non‑government schools (92.5 per cent) than government schools (88.9 per cent) (figure 4.5).

The student attendance level is the proportion of full time students whose attendance rate is greater than or equal to 90 per cent over the period. Analysis of the attendance level can highlight ‘at risk’ populations (where a large proportion of individuals have had low attendance over the school year). Data for the student attendance level are in
tables 4A.22–24, with patterns consistent with the student attendance rate data.

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| Figure 4.5 Student attendance rates, years 7–10, by sector, 2018**a**  |
|  |  | Data are comparable (subject to caveats) across jurisdictions.  |
|  |  | Data are complete (subject to caveats) for the current reporting period.  |
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| Figure 4.5 Student attendance rates, years 7–10, by sector, 2018  More details can be found within the text surrounding this image. |

 |
| a See box 4.3 and tables 4A.18–19 for detailed definitions, footnotes and caveats.*Source*: ACARA (unpublished); tables 4A.18–19. |
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#### Appropriateness — Student engagement

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

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| Box 4.4 Student engagement |
| ‘Student engagement’ is defined as encompassing the following three dimensions:* *behavioural engagement* — which may be measured by identifiable behaviours of engagement, such as school attendance, attainment and retention
* *emotional engagement* — which may be measured by students’ attitudes to learning and school
* *cognitive engagement* — which may be measured by students’ perception of intellectual challenge, effort or interest and motivation (Fredricks, Blumenfeld, and Paris 2004).

It is measured using data from the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) — a triennial survey of 15‑year‑old students conducted by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). The PISA collects information on one aspect of *emotional engagement* — students’ sense of belonging at school. Students’ level of agreement to six statements are combined to construct a Sense of Belonging as School Index (table 4A.25). |
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| Box 4.4 (continued) |
| Higher or increasing scores on the Index illustrate a greater sense of belonging at school, which is desirable. (Scores are indexed to the OECD average in the 2003 PISA, with a negative score indicating a sense of belonging below 2003 and a positive score above 2003.)Data reported for this measure are: comparable (subject to caveats) across jurisdictions (Index scores are only available for one year) complete for the current reporting period (subject to caveats). All required 2015 data are available for all jurisdictions.These data should be interpreted with caution, as they are limited to one aspect of emotional engagement and captured for students at a single age (students aged 15 years).National data are not available to report against behavioural or cognitive engagement. However contextual information is provided on State and Territory government student engagement surveys, where they have been conducted (table 4A.27). These surveys collect information from students across the behavioural, emotional, and cognitive domains of engagement. In addition, some aspects of behavioural engagement are captured via the attendance, retention and attainment indicators. |
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Nationally in 2015, the proportion of 15 year old students that agreed/disagreed with the following statements was:

* I make friends easily at school (agree) — 79.4 (± 0.9) per cent
* I feel like I belong at school (agree) — 71.9 (± 1.0) per cent
* Other students seem to like me (agree) — 87.6 (± 0.6) per cent
* I feel like an outsider (or left out of things) at school (disagree) — 76.5 (± 0.8) per cent
* I feel awkward and out of place at my school (disagree) — 78.1 (± 0.8) per cent
* I feel lonely at school (disagree) — 83.5 (± 0.7) per cent (table 4A.25).

From these responses, the Sense of Belonging at School Index for Australian students aged 15 years was ‑0.12 (± 0.2). The score, which is below the 2015 OECD average, varied across jurisdictions (table 4.1 and table 4A.25). National data on the Sense of Belonging at School Index, by special needs group (sex, Indigenous status, geolocation, and socioeconomic background) are included in table 4A.26.

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| Table 4.1 Sense of Belonging at School Index, 2015a, b |
|  |  | Data are comparable (subject to caveats) across jurisdictions.  |
|  |  | Data are complete (subject to caveats) for the current reporting period.  |
|

|  | NSW | Vic | Qld | WA | SA | Tas | ACT | NT | Aust | OECD |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Index | -0.11±0.04 | -0.06±0.06 | -0.17±0.04 | -0.17±0.04 | -0.17±0.06 | -0.14±0.08 | -0.21±0.08 | -0.24±0.10 | -0.12±0.02 | 0.02±0.00 |  |

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| a The table includes the 95 per cent confidence interval associated with each point estimate (for example, -0.12 ± 0.2). b See box 4.4 and table 4A.25 for detailed definitions, footnotes and caveats.  |
| *Source*: Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) (2018), *PISA Australia in Focus: Number 1 – Sense of belonging at school*, ACER, Australia; table 4A.25. |
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Sense of belonging at school has been measured in three cycles of PISA: in 2003, 2012 and 2015. Nationally, over this 12‑year period, students’ agreement/disagreement with the Sense of Belonging Index statements have declined (ACER 2018).

Table 4A.27 summarises school student engagement information from NSW, Victoria, SA, Tasmania, and the ACT.

#### Appropriateness — Retention

‘Retention’ to the final years of schooling is an indicator of governments’ objective that the school education system aims to engage all students and promote student participation (box 4.5).

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| Box 4.5 Retention |
| ‘Retention’ (apparent retention rate) is defined as the number of full time school students in year 10 that continue to year 12. The term ‘apparent’ is used because the measures are derived from total numbers of students in each of year 10 and year 12, not by tracking the retention of individual students. Care needs be taken in interpreting the measures as they do not take account of factors such as:* students repeating a year of education or returning to education after a period of absence
* movement or migration of students between school sectors, between states/territories and between countries
* the impact of full fee paying overseas students.

These factors may lead to apparent retention rates that exceed 100 per cent.This indicator does not include part time or ungraded students (which has implications for the interpretation of results for all jurisdictions) or provide information on students who pursue year 12 (or equivalent qualifications) through non‑school pathways. |
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| Box 4.5 (continued) |
| Apparent retention rates are affected by factors that vary across jurisdictions. For this reason, variations in apparent retention rates over time within jurisdictions may be more useful than comparisons across jurisdictions. A higher or increasing rate is desirable as it suggests that a larger proportion of students are continuing in school, which may result in improved educational outcomes.Data reported for this measure are: comparable (subject to caveats) across jurisdictions and over time complete for the current reporting period (subject to caveats). All required 2017 data are available for all jurisdictions. |
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Nationally in 2017, the apparent retention rate from year 10 to year 12 was 83.3 per cent, an increase from 75.6 per cent in 2008 (table 4A.28). From 2008 to 2017, the rate for government schools has increased from 70.1 per cent to 79.8 per cent and for non‑government schools from 84.6 per cent to 88.5 per cent (tables 4A.29–30).

For the period 2008–2017, the apparent retention from year 10 to year 12 increased for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students at a greater rate than for non‑Indigenous students, albeit from a lower base. Nationally in 2017, the rate for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanderstudents was 63.0 per cent (an increase of 11.3 percentage points from 2008) and for non‑Indigenous students was 84.3 per cent (an increase of 7.8 percentage points from 2008) (figure 4.6).

Consistent with the NYPR mandatory requirement that all young people participate in schooling until they complete year 10, the apparent retention rate from the commencement of secondary school (at year 7 or 8) to year 10 has remained above 97 per cent in all jurisdictions (other than the NT) since 2008 (table 4A.28). The retention rate for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students was also near to 100 per cent (97.8 per cent), but lower than that of non‑Indigenous students, although this varies across jurisdictions (table 4A.28).

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| Figure 4.6 Apparent retention rates from year 10 to year 12, full time students, by Indigenous status, 2008 to 2017**a, b, c**  |
|  |  | Data are comparable (subject to caveats) across jurisdictions and over time.  |
|  |  | Data are complete (subject to caveats) for the current reporting period.  |
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| Figure 4.6 Apparent retention rates from year 10 to year 12, full time students, by Indigenous status, 2008 to 2017  More details can be found within the text surrounding this image. |

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| a The non‑Indigenous retention rate is the total area shaded for each year. b In 2016, the ACT apparent retention rate for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students was higher than for non‑Indigenous students by 1 percentage point. c See box 4.5 and table 4A.28 for detailed definitions, footnotes and caveats.*Source*: ABS (2018) *Schools Australia 2017*, Cat. no. 4221.0; table 4A.28. |
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Data on retention rates for all full time and part time students and for students from year 7 or 8 to year 12 are available in tables 4A.28–30.

#### Quality — Quality teaching

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

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| Box 4.6 Quality teaching |
| ‘Quality teaching’ is defined in relation to the teaching environment, including the quality of the curriculum and the effectiveness of the teachers. Teachers are considered effective where they:* create an environment where all students are expected to learn successfully
* have a deep understanding of the curriculum and subjects they teach
* have a repertoire of effective teaching strategies to meet student needs
* direct their teaching to student needs and readiness
* provide continuous feedback to students about their learning
* reflect on their own practice and strive for continuous improvement (PC 2012).

This indicator may be measured in future by student responses to survey questions on their perceptions of the teaching environment including the curriculum. High or increasing proportions of students indicating positive responses to the teaching environment are desirable.Data are not yet available for reporting against this indicator.  |
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### Efficiency

An objective of the Steering Committee is to publish comparable estimates of costs. Ideally, such comparison should include the full range of costs to government. This chapter does not report on non‑government sources of funding, and so does not compare the efficiency of government and non‑government schools. Box 4.7 provides further information on the data used to report on the efficiency measures in this Report.

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| Box 4.7 School expenditure data reported in this chapter |
| Efficiency indicators in this chapter are based on financial year recurrent expenditure on government and non‑government schools by the Australian Government and State and Territory governments. Capital expenditure is generally excluded, but as Students First funding cannot be separated into capital and recurrent expenditure, these payments are treated as recurrent expenditure in this chapter. Expenditure relating to funding sources other than government (such as parent contributions and fees) are excluded.Sources of data — government recurrent expenditure on government schoolsTotal recurrent expenditure on government schools is unpublished data sourced from the NSSC, under the auspices of the Education Council.* Each State and Territory government reports to the Education Council on its expenditure on government schools. Expenditure on government schools comprises: employee costs (including salaries, superannuation, workers compensation, payroll tax, termination and long service leave, sick leave); capital costs (depreciation and user cost of capital [UCC]); umbrella departmental costs; and other costs (including rent and utilities). The Education Council provides unpublished data on the UCC for government schools, imputed as 8 per cent of the written down value of assets (table 4A.13).
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| Box 4.7 (continued) |
| * The Australian Government reports its allocation to each State and Territory for government schools, consistent with Treasury Final Budget Outcomes — including the Students First funding and a range of National Partnership payments (table 4A.12).
* To avoid double counting, Australian Government allocations are subtracted from the State and Territory expenditure to identify ‘net’ State and Territory government expenditure (table 4A.10).

Sources of data — government recurrent expenditure on non‑government schoolsTotal recurrent expenditure on non‑government schools is a combination of unpublished data from the NSSC and State and Territory governments, and comprises the following.* Each State and Territory government provides unpublished data on its contributions to non‑government schools (table 4A.10).
* The Australian Government reports its allocation to each State and Territory for non‑government schools, consistent with Treasury Final Budget Outcomes — including the Students First funding and National Partnership payments (see table 4A.12).

Allocation of funding Students First funding — Australian Government From 2014 to 2017[[2]](#footnote-3), Australian Government recurrent funding for all schools was transitioning under the *Australian Education Act 2013* from levels under the previous funding arrangements towards the Schooling Resource Standard funding arrangement levels. Under Students First, funding is calculated with reference to a base amount plus loadings to target student and school disadvantage including students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds, students with disability, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, students with low English proficiency, and school size and location. For most non‑government schools, the base amount is discounted by the anticipated capacity of their school community to financially contribute towards the school’s operating costs. Commonwealth recurrent funding is provided to approved authorities for the purpose of providing school education. Although calculated to reflect the need of each student and school, the approved authority for the school is not required to spend that funding on any particular student or group of students; approved authorities have the flexibility to allocate the funding for the purpose of providing school education that best meets the needs of their students, taking into account other revenue sources and budgetary restrictions.State and Territory governmentsIn general, State and Territory government schools systems are funded based on a variety of formulas to determine a school’s recurrent or base allocation, with weightings and multipliers added for students facing disadvantage. For non‑government schools, State and Territory governments also provide funding for recurrent and targeted purposes, usually through per capita allocations. Indexation of costs is normally applied to these funding arrangements for both the government and non‑government school sectors. Changes in overall funding by State and Territory governments across years is affected by all these factors, including enrolment numbers and school size, location and staffing profiles. |
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| Box 4.7 (continued) |
| User cost of capital (UCC)The UCC is defined as the notional costs to governments of the funds tied up in capital (for example, land and buildings owned by government schools) used to provide services. The notional UCC makes explicit the opportunity cost of using government funds to own assets for the provision of services rather than investing elsewhere or retiring debt. UCC is only reported for government schools (*not* non‑government schools). It is estimated at 8 per cent of the value of non‑current physical assets, which are re‑valued over time. |
| *Source*: ACARA (2018); Australian Government Department of Education and Training (unpublished). |
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#### Inputs per output unit — Recurrent expenditure per student

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

| Box 4.8 Recurrent expenditure per student |
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| ‘Recurrent expenditure per student’ is defined as total government recurrent expenditure per FTE student, reported for government schools and for non‑government schools. Government recurrent expenditure per FTE student includes estimates for UCC for government schools (box 4.7). UCC is not included for non‑government schools.FTE student numbers (table 4A.3) are drawn from the ABS publication *Schools Australia 2017* (ABS 2018) and averaged over two calendar years to match the financial year expenditure data.Holding other factors constant, a low or decreasing government recurrent expenditure or staff expenditure per FTE student may represent better or improved efficiency.Care should be taken in interpretation of efficiency data as:* a number of factors beyond the control of governments, such as economies of scale, a high proportion of geographically remote students and/or a dispersed population, and migration across states and territories, may influence expenditure
* while high or increasing expenditure per student may reflect deteriorating efficiency, it may also reflect changes in aspects of schooling (increasing school leaving age, improving outcomes for students with special needs, broader curricula or enhancing teacher quality), or the characteristics of the education environment (such as population dispersion).

Data reported for this measure are: comparable (subject to caveats) across jurisdictions and over time. (Note that as non‑government schools data do not account for UCC nor non‑government sources of funding, the data are *not comparable* for comparing the efficiency of government and non‑government schools.) complete for the current reporting period (subject to caveats). All required 2016‑17 data are available for all jurisdictions. |
| *Source*: ACARA (2018); Australian Government Department of Education and Training (unpublished). |
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Nationally in 2016‑17, government recurrent expenditure per FTE student in all schools was $15 149. Between 2007‑08 and 2016‑17, real government expenditure per FTE student increased at an average rate of 1.5 per cent per year (table 4A.14).

##### Government schools

Nationally in 2016‑17, government recurrent expenditure (including UCC) was $17 531 per FTE student in government schools (excluding UCC this was $15 020). Between 2007‑08 and 2016‑17, real government expenditure (including UCC) per FTE student increased at an average rate of 1.1 per cent per year (figure 4.7).

In‑school expenditure per FTE student was higher for government secondary schools ($19 076 per FTE student) compared to government primary schools ($15 392 per FTE student). Out‑of‑school government expenditure per FTE student was substantially lower ($724 per FTE student) (table 4A.15).

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| Figure 4.7 Government real recurrent expenditure per FTE student (including UCC), government schools, 2007‑08 to 2016‑17 (2016‑17 dollars)**a**  |
|  |  | Data are comparable (subject to caveats) across jurisdictions and over time.  |
|  |  | Data are complete (subject to caveats) for the current reporting period.  |
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| Figure 4.7 Government real recurrent expenditure per FTE student (including UCC), government schools, 2007-08 to 2016-17 (2016-17 dollars)  More details can be found within the text surrounding this image. |

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| a See box 4.8 and table 4A.15 for detailed definitions, footnotes and caveats. |
| *Source*: ABS (2018) *Schools Australia 2017*, Cat. no. 4221.0; Education Council (unpublished) NSSC; table 4A.15. |
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##### Non‑government schools

Nationally in 2016‑17, government recurrent expenditure per FTE student in non‑government schools was $10 644 (does not include UCC). Between 2007‑08 and 2016‑17, real government expenditure per FTE student increased at an average rate of 2.8 per cent per year (figure 4.8).

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| Figure 4.8 Government real recurrent expenditure per FTE student, non‑government schools, 2007‑08 to 2016‑17 (2016‑17 dollars)**a** |
|  |  | Data are comparable (subject to caveats) across jurisdictions and over time.  |
|  |  | Data are complete (subject to caveats) for the current reporting period.  |
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| Figure 4.8 Government real recurrent expenditure per FTE student, non‑government schools, 2007-08 to 2016-17 (2016-17 dollars)  More details can be found within the text surrounding this image. |

 |
| a See box 4.8 and table 4A.14 for detailed definitions, footnotes and caveats. |
| *Source*: ABS (2018) *Schools Australia 2017*, Cat. no. 4221.0; Australian Government Department of Education and Training (unpublished); State and Territory governments (unpublished); table 4A.14. |
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##### Student‑to‑staff ratio

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

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

Nationally in 2017, the student‑to‑teacher ratio at government schools (primary and secondary combined) was 13.9 students per teacher; for non‑government it was 13.1 (table 4A.17). The student‑to‑teacher ratio, for both government and non‑government schools, is generally lower for secondary schools than primary schools.

Nationally in 2017, the student to non‑teaching staff ratio at government schools (primary and secondary combined) was 33.5 students per staff member; for non‑government schools it was 27.9 students per staff member (table 4A.16). Non‑teaching staff (such as specialists, administrative and building operations staff) account for approximately 30 per cent of the FTE staff at schools (ABS 2018).

### Outcomes

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

#### Student outcomes (national testing)

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

| Box 4.9 Student outcomes (national testing) |
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| ‘Student outcomes (national testing)’ is defined by measures drawn from the National Assessment Program — Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) and National Assessment Program (NAP) sample assessments. All data are accompanied by confidence intervals. See section 4.4 for details on NAPLAN and NAP confidence intervals.National Assessment Program — Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN)NAPLAN testing is undertaken by students in years 3, 5, 7 and 9. Measures are reported for the proportion of students at or above the national minimum standard in NAPLAN testing and mean scale score for reading, numeracy and writing.Achieving (but not exceeding) the national minimum standard represents achievement of the basic elements of literacy or numeracy for the year level (ACARA 2017). The mean scale score refers to a mean (average) score on a common national scale.A high or increasing mean scale score or proportion of students achieving at or above the national minimum standard is desirable. |
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| Box 4.9 (continued) |
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| Data reported for these measures are:  comparable (subject to caveats) across jurisdictions and over time incomplete for the current reporting period. Data for 2018 are not available.NAP Sample assessmentsNAP national sample assessments are undertaken by students in year 6 and 10, on a triennial, rotating basis. Measures are reported for the proportion of students at or above the proficient standard in NAP assessments and mean scale score for:* NAP civics and citizenship literacy
* NAP Science literacy (testing undertaken by year 6 students only)
* NAP information and communication technologies (ICT) literacy.

The proficient standards, which vary across the tests, are challenging but reasonable levels of performance, with students needing to demonstrate more than minimal or elementary skills expected at that year level to be regarded as reaching them.A high or increasing mean scale score or proportion of students achieving at or above the proficiency standard is desirable.Data reported for these measures are:  comparable (subject to caveats) across jurisdictions and over time complete for the most recent reporting period (subject to caveats). All required data are available for all jurisdictions for: 2017 (for ICT literacy); 2016 (for civics and citizenship literacy), and 2015 (for science literacy). |
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The 2018 NAPLAN data were not available in time for inclusion in this Report. NAPLAN data for 2017 are available in tables 4A.31–42. Data for years 2008–2017 were included in previous editions of this Report.

##### NAP Science literacy assessment

Nationally in 2015, 55.1 (±1.8) per cent of year 6 students achieved at or above the proficient standard in science literacy performance (tables 4A.43–45).

##### NAP Civics and citizenship literacy assessment

Nationally in 2016, the proportion of participating year 6 and year 10 students who achieved at or above the proficient standards in civics and citizenship literacy performance was 54.5 (±2.4) per cent and 38.3 (±2.7) per cent respectively (tables 4A.46–48).

##### NAP ICT literacy assessment

Nationally in 2017, of year 6 students and year 10 students, 53 (±2.4) per cent and 54 (±3.0) per cent, respectively, achieved at or above the proficient standards in ICT literacy performance (figure 4.9). Nationally, the proportion of students that achieved the proficient standard or above was:

* for year 6 students — significantly lower than in 2011, but not significantly different to other years
* for year 10 students — significantly lower than in 2008 and 2011, but not significantly different to 2014 (table 4A.49).

| Figure 4.9 Proportion of students achieving at or above the proficient standard in ICT literacy**a, b** |
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|  |  | Data are comparable (subject to caveats) across jurisdictions and over time.  |
|  |  | Data are complete (subject to caveats) for the current reporting period.  |
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| Figure 4.9 Proportion of students achieving at or above the proficient standard in ICT literacy  Year 6 Students  More details can be found within the text surrounding this image.Figure 4.9 Proportion of students achieving at or above the proficient standard in ICT literacy  Year 10 Students  More details can be found within the text surrounding this image. |
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| a Error bars represent the 95 per cent confidence interval associated with each NAP sample point estimate (see section 4.4). b See box 4.9 and table 4A.49 for detailed definitions, footnotes and caveats. |
| *Source*: ACARA (2018) *National Assessment Program — ICT Literacy Report 2017,* Sydney; table 4A.49. |
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Mean scale scores for NAP ICT literacy are in table 4A.50. National data on the proportion of students achieving at or above the proficient standard, by special needs group (sex, Indigenous status, geolocation, and parental occupation) are included in table 4A.51.

#### Attainment

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

| Box 4.10 Attainment |
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| ‘Attainment’ (attainment rate) is defined as the number of students who meet the requirements of a year 12 certificate or equivalent expressed as a percentage of the estimated potential year 12 population. The estimated potential year 12 population is an estimate of a single year age group that could have attended year 12 that year, calculated as the estimated resident population aged 15–19 divided by five. This indicator should be interpreted with caution as:* assessment, reporting and criteria for obtaining a year 12 or equivalent certificate varies across jurisdictions
* students completing their secondary education in technical and further education institutes are included in reporting for some jurisdictions and not in others
* the aggregation of all postcode locations into three socioeconomic status categories (as a disaggregation for socioeconomic status) — high, medium and low — means there may be significant variation within the categories. The low category, for example, will include locations ranging from those of extreme disadvantage to those of moderate disadvantage.

A high or increasing completion rate is desirable.Data reported for this measure are: not comparable across jurisdictions, but are comparable (subject to caveats) within some jurisdictions over time complete for the current reporting period (subject to caveats). All required 2017 data are available for all jurisdictions. |
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Nationally in 2017, the year 12 certificate attainment rate for all students was 79 per cent (table 4A.58). The rates for students from low and medium socioeconomic backgrounds (76 per cent and 79 per cent, respectively) were below those for students from a high socioeconomic background (83 per cent) (figure 4.10). This pattern varied across jurisdictions.

Nationally in 2017, the attainment rate declined with remoteness, from 80 per cent in major cities to 74 per cent in remote areas. The rate was substantially lower in very remote areas (43 per cent) (table 4A.59). This pattern varied across jurisdictions.

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| Figure 4.10 Year 12 certificate attainment rates, by socioeconomic background, 2017**a** |
|  |  | Data are not comparable across jurisdictions.  |
|  |  | Data are complete (subject to caveats) for the current reporting period.  |
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| Figure 4.10 Year 12 certificate attainment rates, by socioeconomic background, 2017  More details can be found within the text surrounding this image. |

 |
| a See box 4.10 and table 4A.58 for detailed definitions, footnotes and caveats. |
| *Source*: Australian Government Department of Education and Training (unpublished); table 4A.58. |
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The Child care, education and training sector overview includes data on the proportions of the population aged 20–24 and 20–64 years having attained at least a year 12 or equivalent or AQF Certificate II or above (that is school and non‑school education and training to year 12 or above) (tables BA.9–10).

#### Equity of outcomes

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

| Box 4.11 Equity of outcomes |
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| ‘Equity of outcomes’ is defined as the difference in the scores for students at the median and the lower end of national testing for literacy and numeracy.The test score difference between students undertaking standardised tests (such as NAPLAN or Programme for International Student Assessment [PISA]) can be used to measure the relative performance gap between students at the median and the lower end of achievement. (For example, see Bruckauf, Zlata; Chzhen, Yekaterina (2016).) |
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| Box 4.11 (continued) |
| A low or decreasing gap between poor performing students and the median performers (and median score not reducing over time) is desirable.Data are not yet available for reporting against this indicator. The Student outcomes (national testing) indicator (box 4.9) provides NAPLAN data on the proportion of students at or above the national minimum standard and mean scale score, by special needs group (Indigenous status, remoteness, parental education and parental occupation).  |
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#### Student outcomes (international testing)

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

| Box 4.12 Student outcomes (international testing) |
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| ‘Student outcomes (international testing)’ is defined by Australia’s participation in three international tests:* Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) — conducted by the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA) as a quinquennial international assessment — measures the proportion of sampled year 4 students achieving at or above the IEA intermediate international benchmark, the national proficient standard in Australia for reading.
* Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) — conducted by the OECD as a triennial international assessment — measures the proportion of sampled 15 year old students achieving at or above the national proficient standard (set to level 3) on the OECD PISA combined scales for reading, mathematical and scientific literacy.
* Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) — conducted by the IEA as a quadrennial international assessment — measures the proportion of sampled year 4 and year 8 students achieving at or above the IEA intermediate international benchmark, the national proficient standard in Australia for mathematics and science.

A high or increasing proportion of students achieving at or above the national proficient standard, or a high or increasing mean scale score is desirable.Data reported for these measures are:  comparable (subject to caveats) across jurisdictions and over time complete for the current reporting period (subject to caveats). All required 2016 (PIRLS) and 2015 (PISA and TIMSS) data are available for all jurisdictions. |
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##### Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS)

Nationally in 2016, the proportion of year 4 students that achieved at or above the national proficient standard for reading literacy was 80.9 (±2.0) per cent, a significant increase from 2011 although results vary by jurisdiction (table 4A.57).

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

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

##### Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA)

Nationally in 2015, the proportion of Australian 15 year old students who achieved the national proficient standard in:

* reading literacy was 60.6 (±1.4) per cent (table 4A.52)
* mathematical literacy was 55.4 (±1.6) per cent (table 4A.53)
* scientific literacy was 60.8 (±1.2) per cent (table 4A.54).

Across the three testing domains, the proportions of Australian 15 year old students who achieved at or above the national proficient standard in 2015 were significantly lower than the proportions achieved in the last major domain cycle (2009 for reading, 2012 for mathematics, and 2006 for science) (tables 4A.52–54).

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

Nationally in 2015, the proportion of students that achieved at or above the national proficient standard for the TIMSS:

* mathematics assessment was 70.2 (±2.6) per cent for year 4 students and 64.4 (±3.1) per cent for year 8 students (table 4A.55)
* science assessment was 75.4 (±2.7) per cent for year 4 students and 68.8 (±2.6) per cent for year 8 students (table 4A.56).

Nationally in 2015, a similar proportion of students achieved at or above the intermediate international benchmark in 2015 compared to previous assessments, other than for the year 4 science assessment, where a significantly higher the proportion of students achieved the benchmark compared to 2011. Results varied across jurisdictions (tables 4A.55–56).

#### Destination

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

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| Box 4.13 Destination |
| ‘Destination’ is defined as the proportion of school leavers aged 15–24 years who left school in the previous year, who are participating in further education, training and/or employment. Data are reported for school leavers whose highest level of school completed was year 12, or year 11 and below. A higher or increasing proportion of school leavers participating in further education, training and/or employment is desirable.Data are sourced from the Survey of Education and Work and for this indicator relate to the jurisdiction in which the young person was resident the year of the survey and not necessarily the jurisdiction in which they attended school.Data reported for this measure are: comparable (subject to caveats) across jurisdictions and over time complete for the current reporting period. All required 2018 data are available for all jurisdictions.This Report includes information on the student destination surveys conducted by each State and Territory government, as context to this indicator (table 4A.61). These surveys collect information from a larger number of students within relevant jurisdictions, but the research methods and data collection instruments differ which do not enable comparative reporting. |
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The proportion of all school leavers aged 15–24 years who left school in 2017 and who in 2018 were fully engaged in work or study was 70.9 (±3.4) per cent, similar to years
2014–2017 (figure 4.11). Proportions were higher for year 12 completers (73.9 [±2.7] per cent), compared to those who completed year 11 or below (60.9 [±8.4] per cent) (table 4A.60).

| Figure 4.11 Proportion of school leavers fully engaged in education or work (15–24 year olds)**a, b** |
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|  |  | Data are comparable (subject to caveats) across jurisdictions and over time.  |
|  |  | Data are complete (subject to caveats) for the current reporting period.  |
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| Figure 4.11 Proportion of school leavers fully engaged in education or work (15–24 year olds)  More details can be found within the text surrounding this image. |
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| a Error bars represent the 95 per cent confidence interval associated with each point estimate. b See box 4.13 and table 4A.60 for detailed definitions, footnotes and caveats.  |
| *Source*: ABS (2018) *Education and Work, 2018*, TableBuilder; table 4A.60. |
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The Child care, education and training sector overview includes additional data on the participation of school leavers aged 17–24 years in work and study, including data on the Indigenous status of school leavers (tables BA.2–4).

Table 4A.61 summarises school leaver destination survey results from six jurisdictions.

## 4.4 Definitions of key terms

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| Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students | Students are considered to be Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander origin if they identify as being an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander or from an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander background. Administrative processes for determining Indigenous status vary across jurisdictions.  |
| Comparability | Data are considered comparable if (subject to caveats) they can be used to inform an assessment of comparative performance. Typically, data are considered comparable when they are collected in the same way and in accordance with the same definitions. For comparable indicators or measures, significant differences in reported results allow an assessment of differences in performance, rather than being the result of anomalies in the data. |
| Completeness | Data are considered complete if all required data are available for all jurisdictions that provide the service. |
| Confidence interval | A confidence interval is a specified interval, with the sample statistic at the centre, within which the corresponding population value can be said to lie with a given level of confidence (chapter 1). |
| Confidence intervals (for NAPLAN and NAP sample) | The NAPLAN and NAP sample confidence intervals are calculated by ACARA and take into account two factors:* *Sampling error* — The sampling error accounts for adjustments for non‑response and measures the variance across students.
* *Measurement error* — The NAPLAN assessments can only sample a small part of the literacy or numeracy curriculum so as not to place too much burden on each students’ time. Consequently, the result of the NAPLAN assessments will contain some uncertainty *for each student*. This uncertainty is referred to as measurement error.

Estimates of sampling and measurement errors are combined to obtain final standard errors and confidence intervals to determine statistical significance of mean differences and percentage differences in NAPLAN and NAP sample performance *within a report year*.For analysing difference across years, a further source of error needs to be accounted for:* *Equating error* — The equating error measures the variance related to the impact of changes to the NAPLAN secure equating tests between years. That is, how closely the equating tests align between years.

To evaluate statistical significance of mean and percentage differences between years, ACARA tests the change between years taking into account the equating, sampling and measurement errors. However, the equating error is not represented within the reported confidence interval. |
| Foundation year(pre-year 1) | The first year of primary school.Naming conventions for the foundation year differ between states and territories. Foundation year is known as:* Kindergarten in New South Wales and the Australian Capital Territory
* Preparatory in Victoria, Queensland and Tasmania
* Reception in South Australia
* Pre‑primary in Western Australia
* Transition in the Northern Territory, and
* Foundation year in the Australian Curriculum.
 |
| Full time equivalent student | The FTE of a full time student is 1.0. The method of converting part time student numbers into FTEs is based on the student’s workload compared with the workload usually undertaken by a full time student. |
| Full time student | A person who satisfies the definition of a student and undertakes a workload equivalent to, or greater than, that usually undertaken by a student of that year level. The definition of full time student varies across jurisdictions. |
| Geographic classification(ASGS) | From 2016, Student remoteness is based on the Australian Statistical Geography Standard (ASGS) Remoteness Structure. The extended version of the Accessibility/Remoteness Index of Australia (ARIA+), developed by the University of Adelaide’s Australian Population and Migration Research Centre, is the standard ABS‑endorsed measure of remoteness on ABS postal areas. Student remoteness (ARIA+) regions use the same ARIA+ ranges as the ABS remoteness areas and are therefore an approximation of the ABS remoteness areas. For more details of ARIA+ refer to <www.abs.gov.au/websitedbs/d3310114.nsf/home/remoteness+structure>. The remoteness categories are:* Major cities of Australia
* Inner regional areas of Australia
* Outer regional areas of Australia
* Remote areas of Australia
* Very remote areas of Australia.
 |
| Geographic classification(ASGS)(continued) | Geographic classifications prior to 2016 are based on the Ministerial Council for Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs (MCEECDYA) standard. Data are not directly comparable. (The exception is Census and survey data which were already using the ASGS, and prior to that the Australian Standard Geographic Classification). |
| Geographic classification(MCEECDYA) | Prior to 2016, Geographic categorisation is based on the agreed MCEECDYA Geographic Location Classification which, at the highest level, divides Australia into three zones (the metropolitan, provincial and remote zones). * *Metropolitan zone*: Mainland State capital city regions and Major urban Statistical Districts (100 000 or more population).
* *Provincial zone*: Provincial city statistical districts and Darwin statistical division (25 000–99 999 population); and Other provincial areas (Collection District [CD] ARIA+ score < 5.92).
* Inner provincial areas (CD ARIA+ score < 2.4)
* Outer provincial areas (CD ARIA+ score > 2.4 and < 5.92)
* *Remote zone*: Remote zone (CD ARIA+ score > 5.92)
* Remote areas (CD ARIA+ score > 5.92 and < 10.53)
* Very remote areas (CD ARIA+ score > 10.53)
 |
| In‑school expenditure | Costs relating directly to schools. Staff, for example, are categorised as being either in‑school or out‑of‑school. They are categorised as in‑school if they usually spend more than half of their time actively engaged in duties at one or more schools or ancillary education establishments. In‑school employee related expenses, for example, represent all salaries, wages awards, allowances and related on costs paid to in‑school staff. |
| Low socio-educational background | Students in the lowest quartile of the index of socio‑educational advantage.The index of socio‑educational advantage is a student level score constructed by ACARA from information (obtained from school enrolment records) relating to parents’: occupation; school education; and non‑school education.  |
| Out‑of‑school expenditure | Costs relating indirectly to schools. (See in‑school expenditure) |
| Pre‑year 1 | See ‘foundation year’.  |
| Part time student | A student undertaking a workload that is less than that specified as being full time in the jurisdiction. |
| Real expenditure | Nominal expenditure adjusted for changes in prices, using the General Government Final Consumption Expenditure chain price deflator and expressed in terms of final year prices. |
| School | A school is an establishment which satisfies all of the following criteria.* Its major activity is the provision of full time day primary or secondary education or the provision of primary or secondary distance education.
* It is headed by a principal (or equivalent) responsible for its internal operation.
* It is possible for students to enrol for a minimum of four continuous weeks, excluding breaks for school vacations.
 |
| Science literacy | Science literacy and scientific literacy: the application of broad conceptual understandings of science to make sense of the world, understand natural phenomena, and interpret media reports about scientific issues. It also includes asking investigable questions, conducting investigations, collecting and interpreting data and making decisions. |
| Socioeconomic status | As identified in footnotes to specific tables. |
| Socio‑educational background | See ‘Low socio‑educational background’. |
| Source of income | In this chapter, income from either the Australian Government or State and Territory governments. Australian Government expenditure is derived from specific purpose payments (current and capital) for schools. This funding indicates the level of monies allocated, not necessarily the level of expenditure incurred in any given financial year. The data therefore provide only a broad indication of the level of Australian Government funding. |
| Special school | A special school satisfies the definition of a school and requires one or more of the following characteristics to be exhibited by the student before enrolment is allowed:* mental or physical disability or impairment
* slow learning ability
* social or emotional problems
* in custody, on remand or in hospital (ABS 2018).
 |
| Student‑to‑staff ratios | The number of FTE students per FTE teaching staff. Students at special schools are allocated to primary and secondary (see below). The FTE of staff includes those who are generally active in schools and ancillary education establishments. |
| Student | A person who is formally (officially) enrolled or registered at a school, and is also active in a primary, secondary or special education program at that school. Students at special schools are allocated to primary and secondary on the basis of their actual grade (if assigned); whether or not they are receiving primary or secondary curriculum instruction; or, as a last resort, whether they are of primary or secondary school age. |
| Students with disability | Students are counted in the Nationally Consistent Collection of Data on School Students with Disability where: * the student’s impairment meets the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* (DDA); AND
* the functional impact of the student’s disability results in the school actively addressing or supporting the student’s specific individual education needs arising from their disability.

The DDA provides a broad definition of disability. The DDA covers individuals with disability, associates of a person with a disability, people who do not have a disability but who may face disability discrimination in the future, people who are not in fact impaired in functioning but treated as impaired, and people with conditions such as obesity, mild allergies or physical sensitivities, and those who wear glasses.  |
| Teaching staff | Teaching staff have teaching duties (that is, they are engaged to impart the school curriculum) and spend the majority of their time in contact with students. They support students, either by direct class contact or on an individual basis. Teaching staff include principals, deputy principals and senior teachers mainly involved in administrative duties, but not specialist support staff (who may spend the majority of their time in contact with students but are not engaged to impart the school curriculum). For the NT, Assistant Teachers in Homeland Learning Centres and community school are included as teaching staff. |
| Ungraded student | A student in ungraded classes who cannot readily be allocated to a year of education. These students are included as either ungraded primary or ungraded secondary, according to the typical age level in each jurisdiction. |
| VET in Schools | VET in Schools refers to nationally recognised VET qualifications or accredited courses undertaken by school students as part of the senior secondary certificate. The training that students receive reflects specific industry competency standards and is delivered by an external Registered Training Organisation (RTO), the school or school sector as an RTO and/or the school in partnership with an RTO. VET courses may require structured work placements and may be undertaken as a school‑based apprenticeship or traineeship. |

## 4.5 References

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1. As part of the 2017-18 Budget, the Australian Government introduced a new needs‑based funding model for schools known as Quality Schools funding. This model came into effect on 1 January 2018, replacing the Students First funding model. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. Financial data in this Report cover the period up to 2016-17. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)