
Education

Part A: Education preface

Education is a lifelong activity, delivered both informally (for example, by family, through the community or at work) and formally through the three sectors that comprise Australia's education and training system (school education, vocational education and training [VET] and higher education sectors).

Factors external to the education sector — particularly health, housing and community services — can influence educational outcomes. These services are not covered in the following chapters on school education (chapter 3) and VET (chapter 4), but they are discussed in other chapters of the *Report on Government Services 2004*. Indigenous status, language and cultural background, disability status, socioeconomic status, gender and geographic location are also factors that potentially influence educational outcomes. It is a priority of the Review to improve the reporting of data to better assess the influence of these factors on the educational outputs and outcomes reported.

Chapters 3 and 4 cover the performance of the school education and VET sectors. Preschool programs, which provide a variety of educational and developmental experiences for children before full time schooling, are covered in chapter 14.

Some of the performance indicators in chapters 3 and 4 were also reported as key indicators of Indigenous disadvantage in the *Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage: Key Indicators 2003* Report.