
B Early childhood, education and training preface

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Attachment tables

Attachment tables are identified in references throughout this Indigenous Compendium by a 'A' suffix (for example, in this chapter, table BA.3). As the data are directly sourced from the 2011 Report, the Compendium also notes where the original table, figure or text in the 2011 Report can be found. For example, where the Compendium refers to '2011 Report, p. B.15' this is page 15 of the Early childhood, education and training preface of the 2011 Report, and '2011 Report, table BA.2' is attachment table 2 of attachment BA of the 2011 Report. A full list of attachment tables is provided at the end of this chapter, and the attachment tables are available from the Review website at www.pc.gov.au/gsp.

The Early childhood, education and training preface in the *Report on Government Services 2011* (2011 Report) provides contextual and cross-sector information relating to early childhood, education and training services in Australia. Data are reported for Indigenous people for a subset of the performance indicators reported in that preface — those data are compiled and presented here.

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 early childhood, education and training chapters in the 2011 Report cover child care (including outside school hours care) and preschools (chapter 3), school education (chapter 4), and VET (chapter 5).

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

- universities (although some contextual information is included in this preface where necessary for completeness)
- 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.

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- The objectives of children’s services are to meet the care and education needs of all children in developmentally appropriate ways, in a safe and nurturing environment, to provide support for families in caring for their children, and to provide these services across a range of settings in an equitable and efficient manner (2011 Report, 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 (2011 Report, box 4.1) (and consistent with the *National Education Agreement*) focus on improving educational outcomes for all young Australians which is central to the nation’s social and economic prosperity, and positioning young people to live fulfilling, productive and responsible lives.
 - The objectives of VET services, as reflected in the *National Agreement for Skills and Workforce Development* (2011 Report, box 5.3) are to ensure all working age Australians have the opportunity to develop the skills and qualifications needed, including through a responsive training system, to enable them to be effective participants in and contributors to the modern labour market. VET services also aim to assist individuals to overcome barriers to education, training and employment, and to be motivated to acquire and utilise new skills, to ensure Australian industry and businesses develop, harness and utilise the skills and abilities of the workforce, and to provide opportunities for Indigenous Australians to acquire skills to access viable employment.
 - The objectives of higher education services, as reflected in the *Commonwealth 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 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 increase workforce participation by 0.7 percentage points, and productivity by up to 1.2 per cent by 2030 (Productivity Commission 2006).

Measuring the performance of the sector

The Council of Australian Governments (COAG) has agreed to six National Agreements to enhance accountability to the public for the outcomes achieved or outputs delivered by a range of government services (see 2011 Report, chapter 1 for

more detail on reforms to federal financial relations). The NEA and NASWD cover the area of ECET, and education and training indicators in the *National Indigenous Reform Agreement* (NIRA) establish specific outcomes for reducing the level of disadvantage experienced by Indigenous Australians. The agreements include sets of performance indicators, for which the Steering Committee collates annual performance information for analysis by the COAG Reform Council (CRC). Revisions have been made to the performance indicators reported in this preface to align with the performance indicators in the National Agreements.

Individual performance indicator frameworks for the children's services, school education and VET sectors have been developed for the Report (figures 3.1, 4.1 and 5.1 in the respective chapters of the Compendium). There is significant interaction between children's services (particularly preschool) and school education, between school education and VET, and between schools/VET and the universities. 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 Survey of Education and Work (box B.1). Survey data are subject to sampling error, so to assist with interpreting data, confidence intervals are reported (see 2011 Report, appendix A for further details on interpreting confidence intervals).

Box B.1 Survey of Education and Work data

The ABS Survey of Education and Work (SEW) is conducted in all states and territories. Prior to 2009 all people in very remote areas were excluded from the SEW. Very remote areas represent about 2 per cent of the total Australian, and 20 per cent of the NT population. From 2009 onwards SEW has a slightly wider scope, and excludes only people in Indigenous communities in very remote areas. The current exclusion has only a minor impact on national estimates or estimates by State and Territory except for the NT where people in Indigenous communities in very remote areas account for around 15 per cent of the NT population.

Source: ABS (unpublished).

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 2008) and in the NIRA. COAG targets include increasing access to quality

early childhood education for 4 year olds in remote communities, reducing the gap in literacy skills for school-age children, and increasing year 12 (or equivalent) attainment. A range of indicators in the 2011 Report Preface report on the performance of education and training services in relation to Indigenous people, and are presented here.

Selected equity and effectiveness indicators

Participation in child care

Indigenous children's participation in Australian Government approved child care services is presented in tables 3A.2 and 3A.3. Nationally in 2010, 2.0 per cent of Indigenous children aged 0–5 years and 1.9 per cent of Indigenous children aged 6–12 years participated in Australian Government approved child care services (table 3A.2).

Participation in preschool

Indigenous children's participation in preschool is presented in table 3A.4. Nationally, the representation of Indigenous children in preschools was a higher proportion (5.3 per cent) than their representation in the community (4.5 per cent) (table 3A.4).

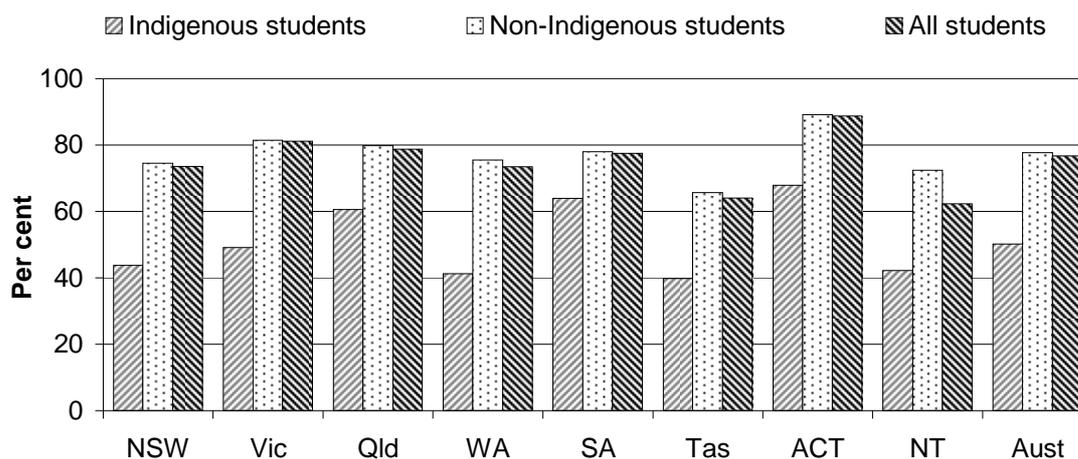
The *National Report to Parliament on Indigenous Education and Training, 2006* reported that nationally, the proportion of Indigenous students in government preschools who were assessed as being literacy ready to start school was similar in 2002 (64.9 per cent) and 2006 (65.3 per cent in 2006), and the proportion assessed as numeracy ready increased from 64.4 per cent in 2002 to 67.7 per cent in 2006 (DEEWR 2008). However, the disparity in academic performance between Indigenous students and non-Indigenous students increases as students progress through school (SCRGSP 2009, p. 4.46). 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 enter into higher education (ACER 2004).

Participation in school education and VET

Nationally, the apparent retention rate of full time Indigenous students from year 10 to year 12 was 50.1 per cent in 2009, compared with 76.7 per cent for all full time students (figure B.1). Indigenous students who leave school before year 10 are not included in the base year for retention from year 10 to year 12. Nationally,

9.1 per cent of Indigenous students left school before year 10 — compared to 0.2 per cent of all students — so these students are not included in the base year for retention from year 10 to year 12 (table 4A.80).

Figure B.1 Apparent retention rates from year 10 to year 12, full time secondary students, 2009^{a, b, c, d}



^a Apparent retention rates are affected by factors that vary across jurisdictions. For this reason, variations in apparent retention rates over time within jurisdictions may be more useful than comparisons across jurisdictions. ^b The exclusion of part time students from standard apparent retention rate calculations has particular implications for the interpretation of results for SA and Tasmania where there are high proportions of part time students in government schools (2011 Report, table 4.4). ^c Ungraded students are not included in the calculation of apparent retention rates. ^d Some students' Indigenous status is not stated. Students for whom Indigenous status is not stated are not included in the data for 'Non-Indigenous students', but are included in the data for 'All students'. Consequently, the number of Indigenous students counted in the Indigenous rates may be under-represented in some jurisdictions.

Source: ABS (2010), *Schools Australia 2009*, Cat. no. 4221.0; table 4A.80; 2011 Report, figure B.8, p. B.18.

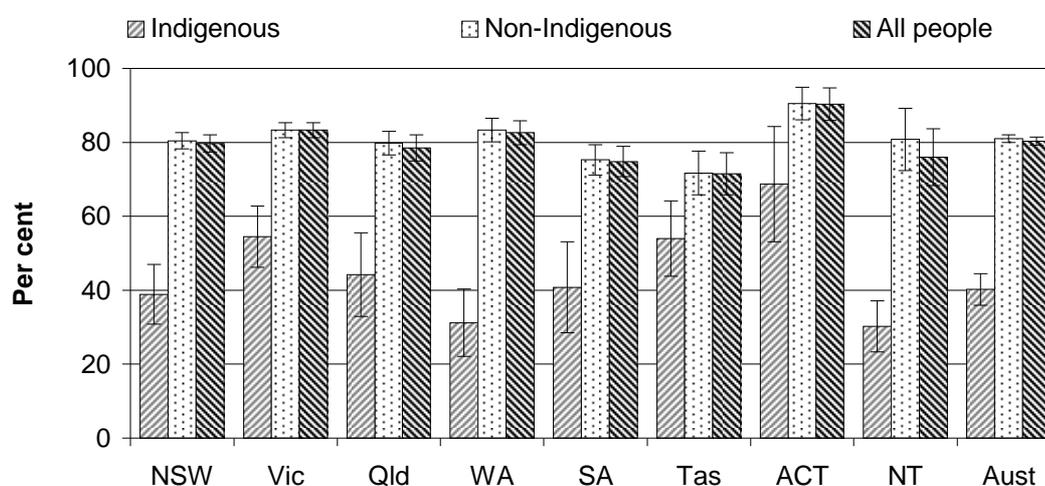
In 2006, 32 per cent of the year 12 Indigenous student cohort undertook a senior secondary certificate course aimed at gaining university entrance, compared to 78 per cent of the non-Indigenous student cohort. Of these Indigenous students, 11 per cent attained a score that would gain them university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

Nationally in 2008, Indigenous students comprised 3.5 per cent of students participating in VET in Schools (NCVER 2010). Indigenous students made up a higher proportion of VET students than their proportion in the population (table 5A.2).

Participation in full time employment, education or training

Nationally in 2008, non-Indigenous 18–24 year olds were more likely than Indigenous 18–24 year olds to be engaged in full time employment, education or training (81.0 per cent and 40.2 per cent respectively) (figure B.2). Data for other age groups are presented in table BA.1.

Figure B.2 **Proportion of 18–24 year olds engaged in full time employment, education or training, by Indigenous status, 2008**^{a, b, c, d, e, f, g, h, i}



^a Error bars represent the 95 per cent confidence interval associated with each point estimate. ^b Full time participation is defined as participation in full time employment, full time education or training, or a combination of both part time employment and part time education or training. ^c Data for Australia for non-Indigenous people and 'all people' includes 'Other Territories'. ^d All people aged 18–24 years excludes people whose fully engaged employment or education status was unknown. ^e All people includes those for whom Indigenous status is unknown. ^f Proportions are determined using the number of students educated in the jurisdiction divided by the estimated resident population for the jurisdiction in the age group. In some cases students are educated in a different jurisdiction to their place of residence. These students are counted in their jurisdiction of education for the numerator (number of students educated in the jurisdiction) and their jurisdiction of residence for the denominator (estimated resident population). ^g Data for Indigenous people are sourced from the ABS *National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey*. ^h Data for non-Indigenous and 'all people' are sourced from the ABS *Survey of Education and Work*. ⁱ The 2008 ABS Survey of Education and Work is not conducted very remote areas, which affects the comparability of NT's results (refer to box B.1 for more information).

Source: ABS (unpublished) *National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey* and *Survey of Education and Work*; table BA.1; 2011 Report, figure B.12, p. B.22.

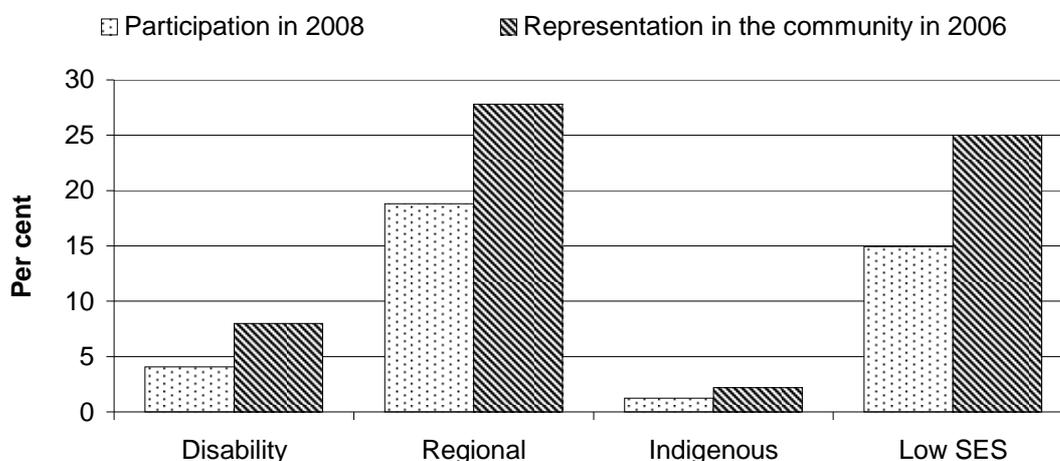
Participation in higher education

While most young people make successful transitions from school to higher education, some do not. Research shows 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 (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 disability, those with disadvantaged/low socioeconomic backgrounds and Indigenous Australians (figure B.3).

Figure B.3 Higher education participation by selected groups, Australia^{a, b}



^a Students can be included in more than one selected group. ^b Regional includes regional, remote, rural and isolated areas.

Source: DEEWR (2009 and unpublished) *Higher Education Student Statistics, 2008*; table BA.5; 2011 Report, figure B.13, p. B.23.

Selected outcome indicators

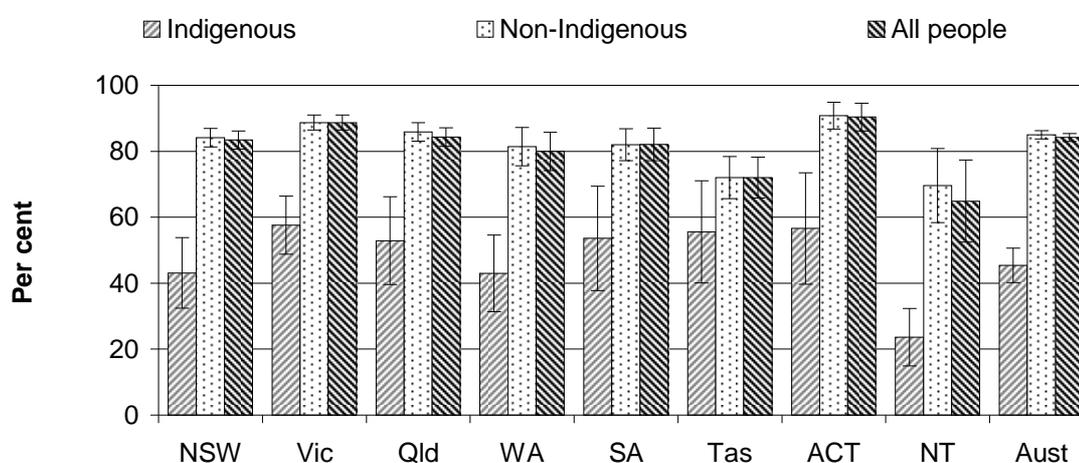
Educational attainment

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.

Non-school qualifications and employment

Nationally in 2008, non-Indigenous 20–24 year olds were more likely than Indigenous 20–24 year olds to have completed year 12 or equivalent, or gained a qualification at certificate II or above (85.0 per cent and 45.4 per cent respectively) (figure B.4). Similar data for 20–64 year olds are presented in table BA.2.

Figure B.4 **Proportion of 20–24 year olds who have completed year 12 or equivalent, or gained a qualification at certificate level II or above, by Indigenous status, 2008**^{a, b, c, d, e, f, g}



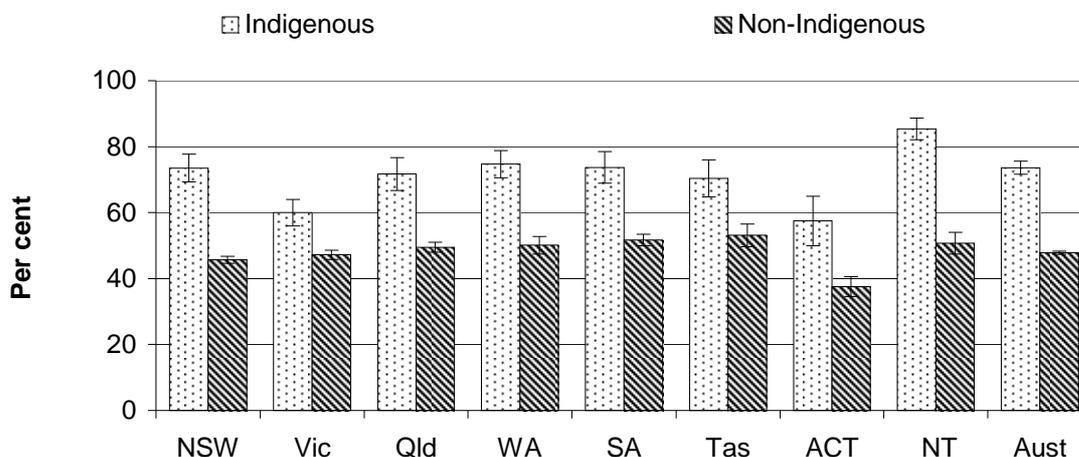
^a Error bars represent the 95 per cent confidence interval associated with each point estimate. ^b Australia includes 'Other Territories'. ^c People aged 20–24 years who have completed year 12 or certificate II or above includes certificate I or II nfd but excludes people with a certificate nfd and people whose level of non-school qualification could not be determined. ^d All people include those for whom Indigenous status is unknown and consequently the proportion of Indigenous students may be under-represented in some jurisdictions. ^e Data for Indigenous people are sourced from the ABS (unpublished) *National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey*. ^f Data for non-Indigenous and all people are sourced from the ABS (unpublished) *Survey of Education and Work*. ^g The 2008 ABS *Survey of Education and Work* was not conducted in very remote areas, which affects the comparability of NT's results (refer to box B.1 for more information).

Source: ABS (unpublished) *National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey* and *Survey of Education and Work*; table BA.2; 2011 Report, figure B.21, p. B.31.

People with limited or no qualifications

In 2008 Indigenous 20–64 year olds were more likely to be without qualifications at or above a certificate III than non-Indigenous 20–64 year olds (73.6 per cent and 47.8 per cent respectively) (figure B.5).

Figure B.5 Proportion of 20–64 year olds without qualifications at or above certificate III, by Indigenous status, 2008^{a, b, c, d, e}



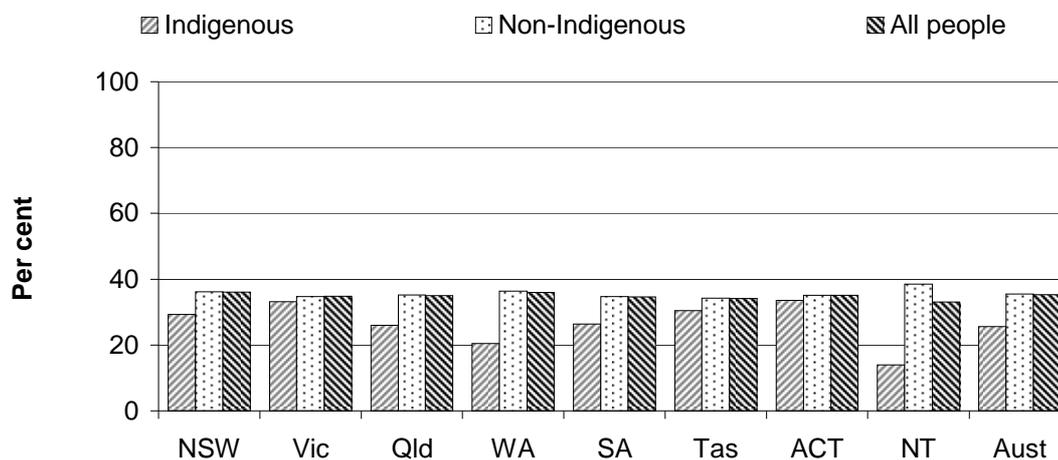
^a Error bars represent the 95 per cent confidence interval associated with each point estimate. ^b Certificate III or above includes certificate III, IV, diploma, advanced diploma, bachelor degree and above, based on ABS decision tree for determination of level of highest education attainment. ^c Data for Indigenous people are sourced from the ABS (unpublished) *National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey*. ^d Data for non-Indigenous people are sourced from the ABS (unpublished) *Survey of Education and Work*. ^e The ABS *Survey of Education and Work* is not conducted in Indigenous communities in very remote areas, which affects the comparability of NT's results (refer to box B.1 for more information).

Source: ABS (unpublished) *National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey* and *Survey of Education and Work*; table BA.3; 2011 Report, figure B.23, p. B.33.

People with or working towards selected VET qualifications

Nationally in 2006, 35.3 per cent of 20–64 year olds had, or were working towards, a post school qualification at a certificate III, IV, diploma or advanced diploma level. Non-Indigenous 20–64 year olds were more likely than Indigenous 20–64 year olds to have, or be working towards, a certificate III, IV, diploma or advanced diploma (35.5 per cent and 25.6 per cent respectively) (figure B.6).

Figure B.6 Proportion of 20–64 year old population with or working towards post school qualification in certificate III, IV, diploma and advanced diploma, by Indigenous status, 2006^{a, b, c, d}



^a Australia includes Other Territories. ^b Includes people who have indicated that they have attained one of these qualifications, or are working towards a post school qualification. The Census does not enable disaggregation by qualification type, therefore this figure is an overcount of the required population. ^c All people excludes people whose level of education or attendance status was not stated. ^d All people includes those for whom Indigenous status is unknown and consequently the proportion of Indigenous students may be under-represented in some jurisdictions.

Source: ABS (unpublished) *2006 Census of Population and Housing*; table BA.4; 2011 Report, figure B.24, p. B.34.

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 the 2011 Report preface has pointed to some of these relationships.

List of attachment tables

Attachment tables for data within this chapter are contained in the attachment to the Compendium. These tables are identified in references throughout this chapter by an 'A' suffix (for example, table BA.3 is table 3). Attachment tables are provided on the Review website (www.pc.gov.au/gsp).

Table BA.1	Full time participation in employment, education or training, by Indigenous status (per cent), 2008
Table BA.2	Proportion of people who have completed year 12 or equivalent or gained a qualification at certificate level II or above, by Indigenous status, 2008
Table BA.3	Proportion of 20–64 year old population who do not have qualifications at or above certificate III, by Indigenous status, 2008
Table BA.4	Proportion of 20–64 year old population with or working towards post school qualification in certificate III, IV, diploma and advanced diploma, by Indigenous status, 2006
Table BA.5	Higher education participation by selected groups

References

- ABS (Australian Bureau of Statistics) 2004, *Disability, Ageing and Carers 2003*, Cat. no. 4430.0, Canberra.
- ACER (Australian Council for Educational Research) 2003, *Entering Higher Education in Australia*, LSAY Briefing Number 6, January 2003, Melbourne.
- 2004, *What do we know about the experiences of Australian Youth?*, Melbourne.
- COAG (Council of Australian Governments) 2008, *Productivity Agenda Working Group — Education, Skills, Training and Early Childhood Development: outcomes, progress measures and policy directions 12 March 2008*, Canberra, <http://mediacentre.dewr.gov.au/NR/rdonlyres/85499B3A-E77F-4A55-9735-F8CD853EB072/0/Comminque.pdf> (accessed 10 October 2010).
- DEEWR (Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations) 2008, *National Report to Parliament on Indigenous Education and Training, 2006*, Canberra.
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