
3 School education

This chapter focuses on the performance — efficiency, effectiveness, access and equity — of government funded school education in Australia. While no direct comparison is made between government and non-government schools, performance indicators are reported for:

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

This year, the chapter has been enhanced to include:

- a discussion of recent policy developments, including developments in performance reporting;
- new data on nationally comparable learning outcomes for year 3 reading benchmark results;
- improved reporting on the performance of Indigenous students; and
- a revision of the framework of performance indicators for government schools, consistent with the *Adelaide Declaration by Education Ministers on the National Goals for Schooling in the 21st Century*. Nationally comparable performance indicators, along the lines of the revised performance indicator framework, are under development.

Following a discussion of the profile of school education in Australia in section 3.1, recent policy developments are discussed in section 3.2. These two sections provide the context for the assessment of performance indicators in the subsequent sections. Section 3.3 presents an overview of the existing framework of performance indicators for all schools. Section 3.4 describes the available information, while section 3.5 discusses future directions in the development and reporting of performance indicators for school education. The chapter concludes with jurisdictions' comments in section 3.6 and definitions of terms in section 3.7.

Supporting tables

Supporting tables for chapter 3 are provided on the CD-ROM enclosed with the Report. The files are provided in Microsoft Excel 97 format as

\Publications\Reports\2001\Attach3A.xls and in Adobe PDF format as
\Publications\Reports\2001\Attach3A.pdf.

Supporting tables are identified in references throughout this chapter by an ‘A’ suffix (for example, table 3A.3 is table 3 in the electronic files). They may be subject to revision. The most up-to-date versions of these files can be found on the Review’s web page (www.pc.gov.au/service/gsp/2001/). Users without Internet access can contact the Secretariat to obtain up-to-date versions of these tables (see details inside the front cover of the Report).

3.1 Profile of school education

Service overview

Schools are the institutions within which organised school education takes place. Schools are differentiated by the type and level of education they provide, their ownership and management, and the characteristics of their student body.

The formal statistical definition of schools used for this chapter is:

... an establishment that satisfies all of the following criteria:

- its major activity is the provision of full time day primary, secondary or special school education or correspondence/distance education;
- it is headed by a principal (or equivalent) responsible for its internal operation; and
- it is possible for students to enrol and be active in a course of study for a minimum of four weeks (excluding breaks for school vacations) (ABS 1999).

Student performance can be affected by factors that may be partly or totally outside the influence of the school, including student commitment, family income and commitment to education, proximity of the school to other educational facilities and resources available to the school. It is beyond the scope of this Report to consider the effect of all factors, but this section provides some contextual background for the performance information presented later in the chapter. Further information is provided in appendix A.

Roles and responsibilities

The State and Territory governments have constitutional responsibility to ensure the delivery of schooling to all children of school age. They determine curricula, regulate school activities and provide most of the funding. State and Territory

governments are directly responsible for the administration of government schools and they provide the majority of government expenditure in this area. Non-government schools operate under conditions determined by State and Territory government registration authorities and receive significant Commonwealth, State and Territory government funding.

The Commonwealth funds government and non-government schools through specific purpose payments. The Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA) — comprising Commonwealth, State and Territory education ministers — is the principal forum for developing national priorities and strategies for schooling.

Funding

State and Territory government expenditure on school education in 1998-99 was \$14 billion (table 3A.9) — the second largest area of expenditure after health¹ (\$17 billion). Government schools account for most of this expenditure, but State and Territory governments contribute to the funding of non-government schools and provide services used by both government and non-government schools. The Commonwealth Government also provides funding to both government schools and non-government schools.

Commonwealth, State and Territory governments spent \$14.4 billion on government schools in 1998-99, with the Commonwealth share totalling \$1.5 billion. In the same year, the Commonwealth Government spent \$2.5 billion on non-government schools, while expenditure by States and Territories was estimated at \$1.1 billion. Total government expenditure per full time student in government schools ranged from approximately \$6084 in Victoria to \$10 176 in the NT in 1998-99, while estimated government expenditure per full time student in all schools ranged from approximately \$5186 in Victoria to \$9134 in the NT (table 3A.9). Many factors may influence expenditure per full time student, as outlined in box 3.2.

¹ Including expenditure on public hospitals, general practice, some breast screening services and community residential care for mental health services.

Size and scope

Structure

The structure of school education varies among States and Territories. These differences can influence the interpretation of data presented under common classifications. Formal schooling begins with six to seven years of primary school education followed by five to six years of secondary school education, depending on the State or Territory (figure 3.1).

All States and Territories divide school education into compulsory and non-compulsory components based on age not grade. School education is compulsory in all States and Territories for people between 6 and 15 years of age (and to 16 years of age in Tasmania).

Figure 3.1 Structure of primary and secondary schooling, 1999

Level	NSW, Vic, Tas, ACT	SA, NT	WA, Qld
Year 12	SECONDARY	SECONDARY	SECONDARY
Year 11			
Year 10			
Year 9			
Year 8			
Year 7			
Year 6	PRIMARY	PRIMARY	PRIMARY
Year 5			
Year 4			
Year 3			
Year 2			
Year 1			
Pre-year 1 ^a			

^a Pre-year 1 is called 'kindergarten' in NSW and the ACT, 'preparatory' in Victoria and Tasmania, 'reception' in SA and 'transition' in the NT. Pre-year 1 is not included in the pattern of study in Queensland. Pre-year 1 is called 'pre-primary' in WA (where students attended on a four day week basis in 1999). From 2002, pre-primary students in WA will be attending five days a week, at which time students and staff will be included within the scope of MCEETYA's National School Statistics Collection.

Source: ABS (2000).

Schools

At the beginning of August 1999, there were 9590 schools in Australia. The majority of schools were:

- government owned and managed — 73 per cent; and
- exclusively primary schools — 70 per cent (table 3.1).

Table 3.1 Summary of school characteristics, August 1999

	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT	Aust
All schools (no.)									
Primary	2 186	1 684	1 228	663	577	172	94	106	6 710
Combined ^a	247	170	182	172	123	53	11	54	1 012
Secondary	539	372	258	137	101	46	29	17	1 499
Special schools ^b	115	93	52	66	23	10	5	5	369
Total	3 087	2 319	1 720	1 038	824	281	139	182	9 590
Proportion of government schools (%)									
Primary	75.3	73.6	80.7	77.2	79.7	81.4	72.3	85.8	76.7
Combined ^a	26.3	26.5	41.2	53.5	58.5	50.9	18.2	79.6	41.6
Secondary	72.2	71.8	71.3	70.8	75.2	87.0	79.3	70.6	72.6
Special schools ^b	70.4	84.9	96.2	97.0	87.0	90.0	80.0	100.0	84.6
All schools	70.7	70.3	75.6	73.7	76.2	76.9	69.8	83.0	72.7
Proportion of primary schools (%) ^c									
Government	75.5	76.0	76.2	66.9	73.2	64.8	70.1	60.3	73.9
Non-government	59.6	64.5	56.4	55.3	59.7	49.2	61.9	48.4	59.6
All schools	70.8	72.6	71.4	63.9	70.0	61.2	67.6	58.2	70.0

^a Combined primary and secondary schools. ^b Special schools provide special instruction for students with a physical or mental disability and students with social problems. Regular schools are increasingly also offering special education programs. ^c Excludes combined primary and secondary schools.

Source: ABS (2000).

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. For school education as a whole, the NT and Queensland had the highest proportions of very small primary schools (those having 20 or fewer students) with 14 per cent and 10 per cent respectively; the NT and SA had the highest proportions of very small secondary schools with 6 per cent and 2 per cent respectively. At least 50 per cent of all secondary schools in all jurisdictions (except SA, Tasmania and the NT) were larger schools enrolling over 600 students (table 3A.14). A breakdown of government primary and secondary schools by size is reported in table 3A.14.

Student body

There were 3.2 million full time students enrolled in primary and secondary schools in August 1999. The proportion of students enrolled in government schools was greater in primary schools (73 per cent) than in secondary schools (65 per cent) (table 3.2). Differences in schooling structures influence the interpretation of these enrolment patterns. Primary school education in SA and the NT, for example, includes an additional year of schooling. As a result, these jurisdictions would be expected to have a higher proportion of students enrolled in primary school education than that of other States and Territories. The proportion of students in government schools was lowest in Victoria and the ACT (table 3.2).

Table 3.2 Full time student enrolments, August 1999

	NSW	Vic	Qld ^a	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT	Aust
Total full time student enrolments at level of education ('000)									
Primary schools	623.6	447.0	359.0	191.4	159.6	46.8	32.3	25.6	1 885.4
Secondary schools	466.0	347.5	235.6	125.2	90.6	37.0	28.3	11.1	1 341.3
All schools	1 089.6	794.6	594.6	316.6	250.2	83.8	60.5	36.8	3 226.7
Proportion of full time students who were enrolled in government schools (%)									
Primary schools	73.0	69.4	76.2	75.6	73.1	77.6	67.0	80.5	73.1
Secondary schools	66.1	61.8	64.6	65.9	65.9	72.0	60.9	70.5	64.8
All schools	70.0	66.1	71.6	71.8	70.5	75.1	64.1	77.5	69.7
Proportion of full time students in all schools who were female (%)									
Primary schools	48.7	48.6	48.7	48.6	48.5	48.6	49.0	48.4	48.7
Secondary schools	49.8	50.1	49.7	49.7	50.0	50.3	49.0	50.2	49.9
All schools	49.2	49.3	49.1	49.0	49.1	49.3	49.0	49.0	49.2
Proportion of full time students who were enrolled in primary education (%)									
Government schools	59.6	59.1	64.3	63.7	66.2	57.7	55.7	72.4	61.3
Non-government schools	51.7	50.7	50.5	52.2	58.2	50.2	49.1	60.4	51.7
All schools	57.2	56.3	60.4	60.5	63.8	55.8	53.3	69.7	58.4

^a Students enrolled in special schools are included in this table with special school students of primary age being included in the primary figures and those of secondary age being included in the secondary figures.

Source: ABS (2000).

Total full time student enrolments in schools in Australia have been relatively stable over the past five years — up by about 0.9 per cent each year between August 1995 and August 1999. Enrolments in individual jurisdictions have grown at different rates, with enrolments in Tasmania and the ACT declining in absolute terms for most categories (table 3A.4).

The proportion of students enrolled in non-government schools has increased in all States and Territories except Tasmania. Total non-government enrolments expanded annually by about 2.1 per cent each year between August 1995 and August 1999 — nearly five times greater than the average annual growth rate in government

schools. However, the expansion of enrolments in non-government schools is from a lower base than that for government schools.

Between August 1995 and August 1999, total enrolments increased by 117 313 students, of whom 77 492 were in non-government schools. In all jurisdictions, the proportion of students in government schools was higher in primary than secondary schools (table 3A.4).

The Australian Bureau of Statistics publishes data on part time students at only the secondary level. Part time courses are available to secondary students, including mature age students attending colleges and those studying year 11 or year 12 short courses (lasting 5–22 weeks). The proportion of secondary school students who were part time also varied across jurisdictions. South Australia, Tasmania and the NT had the highest proportion of part time government secondary school students in 1999 (table 3.3).

Table 3.3 Part time secondary school students in government schools^a

<i>Unit</i>	<i>NSW</i>	<i>Vic</i>	<i>Qld</i>	<i>WA</i>	<i>SA</i>	<i>Tas</i>	<i>ACT</i>	<i>NT</i>	<i>Aust</i>	
Number of part time secondary school students in government schools ^b										
1995	no.	1 207	1 708	5 499	5 007	6 094	2 485	33	1 339	23 372
1997	no.	2 204	2 185	6 911	4 447	6 054	2 824	3	663	25 291
1999	no.	3 323	2 495	4 063	4 199	6 545	3 203	6	1 032	24 866
Proportion of part time secondary school students in government schools										
1995	%	0.4	0.8	3.8	6.1	9.8	8.4	0.2	15.4	2.7
1997	%	0.7	1.0	4.5	5.2	9.5	9.4	—	7.7	2.8
1999	%	1.1	1.1	2.6	4.8	9.9	10.7	—	11.6	2.8

^a Absolute number of part time secondary students, not full time equivalent and proportion (part time) students as a proportion of all full time and part time secondary students (absolute numbers) in government schools). ^b Part time figures vary considerably among jurisdictions because each education authority has different policy and organisational arrangements. The number of part time courses available also varies considerably among jurisdictions. — Nil or rounded to zero.

Source: ABS (2000).

Special needs groups

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

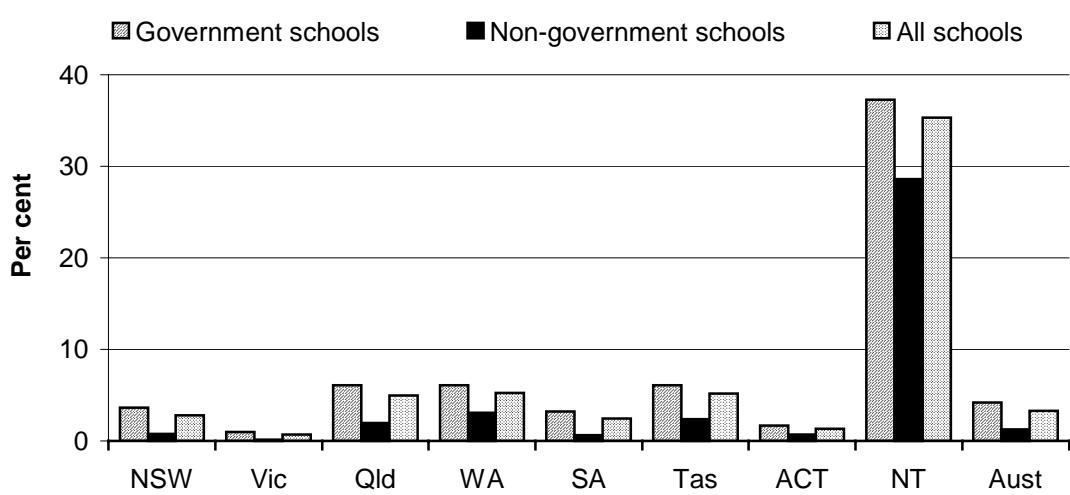
- students from families of low socioeconomic status;
- students who are geographically isolated;
- students from language backgrounds other than English (LBOTE);
- Indigenous students; and
- students with a disability.

In education, it is difficult to compare the proportions and the absolute numbers of students with special needs because some definitions of ‘special needs’ differ across States and Territories (see section 3.7 for examples). This chapter reports on the proportion (and the absolute number) of Indigenous students, the proportion of LBOTE students and students with disabilities.

Indigenous students

Reflecting its population profile, the NT had the highest proportion of Indigenous students in 1999 (35.3 per cent). Other jurisdictions with relatively high proportions of Indigenous students were WA, Queensland and Tasmania (figure 3.2). In absolute terms, NSW had the largest number of Indigenous students (30 756), accounting for 28.8 per cent of all Indigenous students enrolled in Australian schools. Table 3A.10 provides information on Indigenous enrolments in other jurisdictions.

Figure 3.2 Indigenous full time students, 1999



Source: table 3A.10.

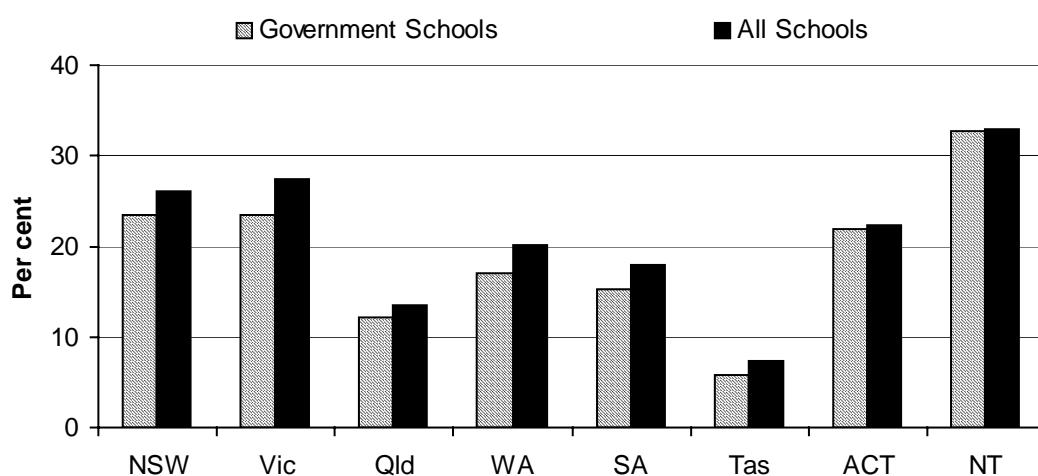
Students from language backgrounds other than English

Using data drawn from the Australian Bureau of Statistics 1996 Census of Population and Housing (ABS 1996), the Commonwealth Government calculated the proportion of LBOTE students in each jurisdiction as part of the process of determining Commonwealth Literacy and Numeracy Program funding allocations. As data are based on the five yearly Population Census (latest in 1996), they have not been updated from the 1999 Report. The data reported in this section are based on the Commonwealth’s definition of LBOTE students, which includes Indigenous

non-English speakers (see section 3.7 for possible variations to this definition for other indicators).

Across school education as a whole, the NT had the highest proportion of LBOTE students (33 per cent) in 1996 (which may reflect the inclusion of Indigenous students whose home language is not English in the Commonwealth's definition of LBOTE students). NSW and Victoria also had relatively high proportions of LBOTE students, while Tasmania had the lowest proportion (7 per cent) (figure 3.3).

Figure 3.3 Students from a language background other than English, 1996



Source: table 3A.11.

3.2 Policy developments

Indigenous students

Launched in March 2000 by the Prime Minister, the National Indigenous English Literacy and Numeracy Strategy is aimed at improving education outcomes for Indigenous people. This strategy builds on the National Literacy and Numeracy Plan endorsed by the Commonwealth, State and Territory education ministers in March 1997.

The strategy acknowledges that extra resourcing and teaching effort are required for Indigenous students to improve their learning outcomes, and it aims to address six key elements:

- lifting school attendance rates to national levels;

-
- addressing hearing impairments and other barriers to learning;
 - providing preschool opportunities;
 - training and retaining good teachers in areas with significant Indigenous student populations;
 - ensuring teachers use the most effective, culturally appropriate teaching methods; and
 - increasing accountability and performance measurement for schools and teachers.

National performance reporting

In July 1996, Commonwealth, State and Territory education ministers agreed to develop national benchmarks for use in reporting student literacy and numeracy achievement levels. In March 1997, the ministers agreed to the National Literacy and Numeracy Plan, which included the development of national benchmarks. They also agreed to nationally comparable reporting against these benchmarks.

Benchmarks in literacy for years 3 and 5 were approved by ministers in April 1998 and published in October 1998. During 2000, ministers approved the numeracy benchmarks for years 3, 5 and 7, and literacy benchmarks for year 7, and agreed that systems should report nationally comparable data against these benchmarks.

Ministers also made key decisions on national performance indicators in other priority areas. They approved national measures for the participation and attainment of 15–19 year olds and 20–24 year olds, and agreed that information provided through Australia's participation in the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development Programme for International Student Assessment should, for now, provide measures of student performance in science at the end of compulsory schooling. They also endorsed the standards for identifying students' sex and Indigenous status for the purposes of national reporting.

3.3 Framework of performance indicators

This chapter provides comparable indicators on the effectiveness and efficiency of government expenditure for all schools in Australia. The chapter does not compare the performance of government and non-government schools.²

² Some data are presented on sources of government funding for non-government schools. However, caution should be exercised when examining data on efficiency of government and non-government schools as only a part of the funding for non-government school comes from

Governments own and operate government schools and have a direct interest in the efficiency and effectiveness of their operation. In addition, governments are committed to providing access to education for all students (box 3.1). The reporting framework for schools (figure 3.4) is consistent with government goals for the school system. All indicators are defined in section 3.7.

Box 3.1 National goals for school education in Australia, 1999

The Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs endorsed in April 1999 the following set of national goals for school education.

Preamble

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

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

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

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

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

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

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government. The Commonwealth Government provides on average 37 per cent of the non-government school sector's funding, with the schools sourcing 45 per cent of their funds from private fees and fundraising, and the remaining 18 per cent being provided by State and Territory governments.

Box 3.1 (continued)

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

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

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

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

Goals

- 1. Schooling should develop fully the talents and capacities of all students. In particular, when students leave schools they should:**
 - 1.1 have the capacity for, and skills in, analysis and problem solving and the ability to communicate ideas and information, to plan and organise activities and to collaborate with others.
 - 1.2 have qualities of self-confidence, optimism, high self-esteem, and a commitment to personal excellence as a basis for their potential life roles as family, community and workforce members.
 - 1.3 have the capacity to exercise judgment and responsibility in matters of morality, ethics and social justice, and the capacity to make sense of their world, to think about how things got to be the way they are, to make rational and informed decisions about their own lives and to accept responsibility for their own actions.
 - 1.4 be active and informed citizens with an understanding and appreciation of Australia's system of government and civic life.

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Box 3.1 (continued)

- 1.5 have employment related skills and an understanding of the work environment, career options and pathways as a foundation for, and positive attitudes towards, vocational education and training, further education, employment and life-long learning.
- 1.6 be confident, creative and productive users of new technologies, particularly information and communication technologies, and understand the impact of those technologies on society.
- 1.7 have an understanding of, and concern for, stewardship of the natural environment, and the knowledge and skills to contribute to ecologically sustainable development.
- 1.8 have the knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary to establish and maintain a healthy lifestyle, and for the creative and satisfying use of leisure time.

2. In terms of curriculum, students should have:

- 2.1 attained high standards of knowledge, skills and understanding through a comprehensive and balanced curriculum in the compulsory years of schooling encompassing the agreed eight key learning areas:
 - the arts
 - English
 - health and physical education
 - languages other than English
 - mathematics
 - science
 - studies of society and environment
 - technologyand the interrelationships between them.
- 2.2 attained the skills of numeracy and English literacy, such that every student should be numerate, able to read, write, spell and communicate at an appropriate level.
- 2.3 participated in programs of vocational learning during the compulsory years and have had access to vocational education and training programs as part of their senior secondary studies.
- 2.4 participated in programs and activities which foster and develop enterprise skills, including those skills which will allow them maximum flexibility and adaptability in the future.

3. Schooling should be socially just, so that:

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

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Box 3.1 (continued)

- 3.2 the learning outcomes of educationally disadvantaged students improve and, over time, match those of other students.
- 3.3 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students have equitable access to, and opportunities in, schooling so that their learning outcomes improve and, over time, match those of other students.
- 3.4 all students understand and acknowledge the value of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures to Australian society and possess the knowledge, skills and understanding to contribute to, and benefit from, reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians.
- 3.5 all students understand and acknowledge the value of cultural and linguistic diversity, and possess the knowledge, skills and understanding to contribute to, and benefit from, such diversity in the Australian community and internationally.
- 3.6 all students have access to the high quality education necessary to enable the completion of school education to year 12 or its vocational equivalent and that provides clear and recognised pathways to employment and further education and training.

Source: MCEETYA (1999b).

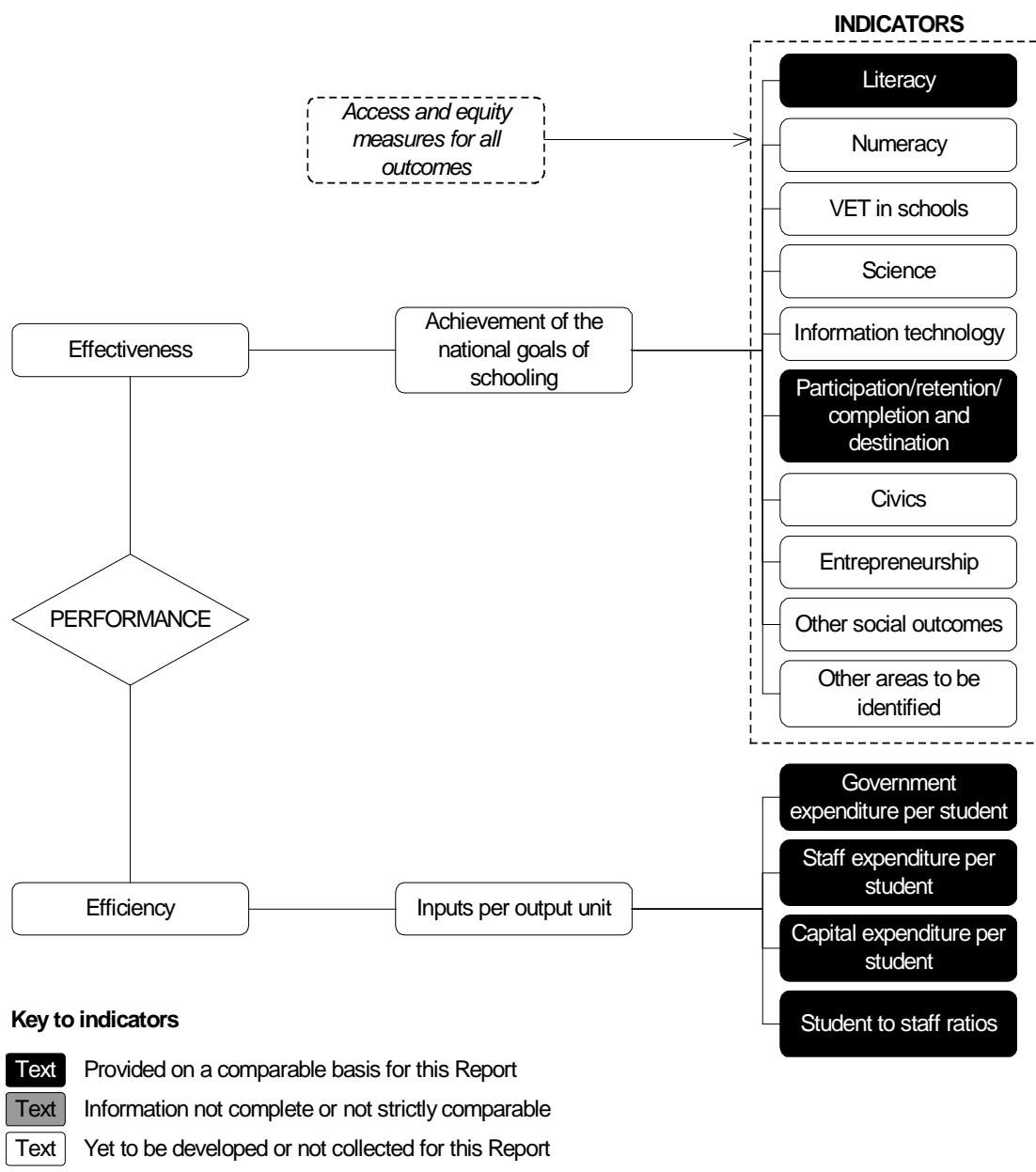
3.4 Key performance indicator results

Different delivery contexts and locations affect the effectiveness and efficiency of school education services. Appendix A contains detailed statistics and short profiles on each State and Territory, which may help in interpreting the performance indicators presented in this chapter. A framework for performance indicators is at figure 3.4. This section reports on what jurisdictions currently collect and assess in terms of learning outcomes, while section 3.5 discusses future directions in reporting.

Effectiveness

Access and equity objectives of school education can be assessed by comparing outcomes for special needs groups to those for the mainstream student population through indicators such as completion rates, apparent retention rates, age participation rates and learning outcomes. Outcomes are compared for special needs groups for available indicators where possible.

Figure 3.4 Performance indicators for all schools



Literacy

A literacy indicator is the proportion of students who reach a benchmark standard. A discussion of the development of benchmarks can be found in section 3.2. Table 3.4 shows the percentage of assessed year 3 students who achieved the reading benchmark in 1999 reported by gender, Indigenous status and LBOTE status. (For further information and caveats to table 3.4, see tables 3A.20, 3A.21 and 3A.22.)

State and Territory-specific learning outcomes

The reporting of test result data by jurisdictions provides some insight into how States and Territories measure learning outcomes, and may help an understanding of trends within jurisdictions over time. Previous Reports have included graphs showing jurisdiction-specific learning outcomes (mainly in literacy and numeracy). However, the general non-comparability of data across States and Territories reduces the usefulness of this information.

The 1999 Report included a table showing the jurisdiction-specific learning outcomes in the key learning areas, and the school years at which jurisdictions assessed students' performance. Jurisdictions are in the process of aligning jurisdiction-specific testing with MCEETYA's plans for developing benchmarks for nationally comparable learning outcomes for a range of indicators. As a result, some jurisdictions have stopped collecting the type of jurisdiction-specific learning outcomes data published in previous Reports.

Where updated information on jurisdiction-specific learning outcomes was provided, this has been reported in attachment 3A. It is envisaged that jurisdiction-specific learning outcomes will not be published in future if nationally comparable data are available.

Learning outcomes for special needs groups

Nationally comparable data on year 3 literacy outcomes for Indigenous students are available for the 2001 Report (table 3.4). Learning outcomes for Indigenous students and LBOTE students are also reported for Victoria and Queensland in tables 3A.42–3A.45 and 3A.56.

Table 3.4 Proportion of year 3 students who achieved the reading benchmark, 1999^a

<i>State/Territory</i>	<i>All students</i>	<i>Male students</i>	<i>Female students</i>	<i>Indigenous students^d</i>	<i>LBOTE students^d</i>
1. Average age ^b	%	%	%	%	%
2. Years of schooling ^c					
NSW					
1. 8 yrs, 9 mths	91.2	89.6	92.7	77.8	91.3
2. 3 yrs, 7 mths	± 2.2	± 2.6	± 1.8	± 4.8	± 2.3
Victoria	86.2	82.6	89.9	68.0	81.1
1. 8 yrs, 11 mths	± 2.2	± 2.9	± 2.0	± 5.4	± 3.0
2. 3 yrs, 7 mths					
Queensland ^e	82.4	79.9	86.3	66.7	81.8
1. 7 yrs 9 mths	± 2.0	± 2.3	± 2.4	± 3.7	± 2.8
2. 2 yrs, 8 mths					
WA	87.9	85.5	90.4	54.4	85.2
1. 7 yrs, 7 mths	± 1.9	± 2.2	± 1.6	± 3.9	± 2.1
2. 3 yrs, 7 mths					
SA ^e	83.2	81.5	84.9	64.0	na
1. 8 yrs, 6 mths	± 3.1	± 3.4	± 2.7	± 6.6	na
2. 3 yrs, 3 mths					
Tasmania	85.9	82.0	89.9	76.3	71.1
1. 9 yrs, 0 mths	± 2.4	± 2.8	± 2.0	± 3.2	± 3.6
2. 3 yrs, 7 mths					
ACT ^e	89.9	87.6	92.2	67.2	na
1. 8 yrs, 9 mths	± 1.5	± 2.0	± 1.1	± 1.1	na
2. 3 yrs, 6 mths					
NT	72.3	69.8	74.9	29.7	18.2
1. 8yrs, 8mths	± 1.6	± 1.7	± 1.2	± 1.6	± 0.7
2. 3yrs, 3mths					
Australia	86.9	84.9	89.7	66.1	na

^a The achievement percentages reported in this table include 95 per cent confidence intervals (for example, 80 per cent ± 2.7 per cent). Results are population estimates for year 3 students in government and non-government schools (except in SA and the ACT where no non-government schools were assessed) who were assessed (that is, students who sat the tests and students who were formally exempted). In other jurisdictions, between 17.2 and 29 per cent of the students tested were from non-government schools. Details of test populations in all States and Territories are provided in table 3A.21. ^b The typical average age of students at the time of testing (expressed in years and months). ^c The typical average time students had spent in schooling at the time of testing (expressed in years and months). ^d The methods used to identify Indigenous students and LBOTE students varied across jurisdictions. Definitions can be found at section 3.7. ^e The student sample sizes exceeded 80 per cent in all States and Territories except SA (68 per cent), the ACT (61.8 per cent) and Queensland, which uses a rigorous, scientifically designed sampling approach where 8.8 per cent of year 3 students undertook the test. na Not available.

Source: MCEETYA (2000b) (see www.curriculum.edu.au/mctyapdf/3648-report.pdf for the full version of this report).

Table 3.5 identifies jurisdictions that monitor student performance in literacy and numeracy for five special needs groups, along with the school years in which these assessments are undertaken. The table also indicates which jurisdictions collect information on year 10 and year 12 achievement levels of students in the special

needs groups. At the year 10 level, information collected may include assessments of these students in key learning areas such as mathematics and English, and the proportion of students who achieved certificates at this junior secondary level. At the year 12 level, information collected may include the proportion of students in these groups who have achieved academic results that qualify them for entry to higher education.

Table 3.5 School years by learning outcomes against which the performance of students in special needs groups is assessed, 1999

	NSW ^a	Vic	Qld ^b	WA	SA	Tas ^c	ACT	NT ^d
Literacy								
Indigenous	3, 5, 7	3, 5	2, 3 5, 7	3, 5, 7, 10	3, 5	3, 5, 7	3, 5, 7, 9	1, 3, 5
LBOTE	3, 5, 7	3, 5	2,3, 5, 7	3, 5, 7, 10	3, 5	3, 5, 7	3, 5, 7, 9	3, 5
Low socioeconomic status	3, 5, 7	3, 5	2, 3, 5, 7		3, 5	3, 5, 7		
Remote	3, 5, 7	3, 5	2, 3, 5, 7		3, 5	3, 5, 7		3, 5
With a disability ^e			2, 3, 5, 7		3, 5	3, 5, 7		
Numeracy								
Indigenous	3, 5	3, 5	2, 3, 5, 7	3, 5, 7, 10	3, 5	3, 5, 7	3, 5, 7, 9	1, 3, 5
LBOTE	3, 5	3, 5	2, 3, 5, 7	3, 5, 7, 10	3, 5	3, 5, 7	3, 5, 7, 9	3, 5
Low socioeconomic status	3, 5	3, 5	2, 3, 5, 7		3, 5	3, 5, 7		
Remote	3, 5	3, 5	2, 3, 5, 7		3, 5	3, 5, 7		3, 5
With a disability			2, 3, 5, 7		3, 5	3, 5, 7		
Year 10 learning outcomes								
Indigenous	Yes		Yes	Yes		Yes		Yes
LBOTE	Yes		Yes	Yes				
Low socioeconomic status	Yes		Yes					
Remote	Yes		Yes					Yes
With a disability			Yes					Yes
Year 12 learning outcomes								
Indigenous	Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes	Yes		Yes
LBOTE	Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes	
Low socioeconomic status	Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes			
Remote	Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes			
With a disability			Yes		Yes			Yes

^a Data are collected on Indigenous, LBOTE and low socioeconomic student participation in the Reading Recovery Program. In NSW year 7 numeracy tests were trialed in 2000 for introduction in 2001. ^b Data are collected on the proportion of Indigenous students in the Reading Recovery Program. ^c Testing for years 3, 5, and 7 is undertaken biennially. Testing for year 9 is under review. ^d Data are collected on the number of students with disabilities who received the Statement of Educational Achievement and its post-compulsory certificates. ^e Includes students with intellectual and/or physical disability.

Source: MCEETYA (2000a) and State and Territory education departments (unpublished).

Queensland, SA and Tasmania all monitor literacy and numeracy outcomes for five special needs groups (Indigenous students, LBOTE students, students of low socioeconomic status, geographically isolated students and students with a disability). NSW and Victoria report performance information for all groups except students with a disability. For selected groups, NSW, Queensland, WA, Tasmania and the NT have performance indicators at the year 10 level, while NSW, SA, Tasmania, the ACT and the NT have some performance indicators at the year 12 level.

Participation, retention, completion and school leaver destination

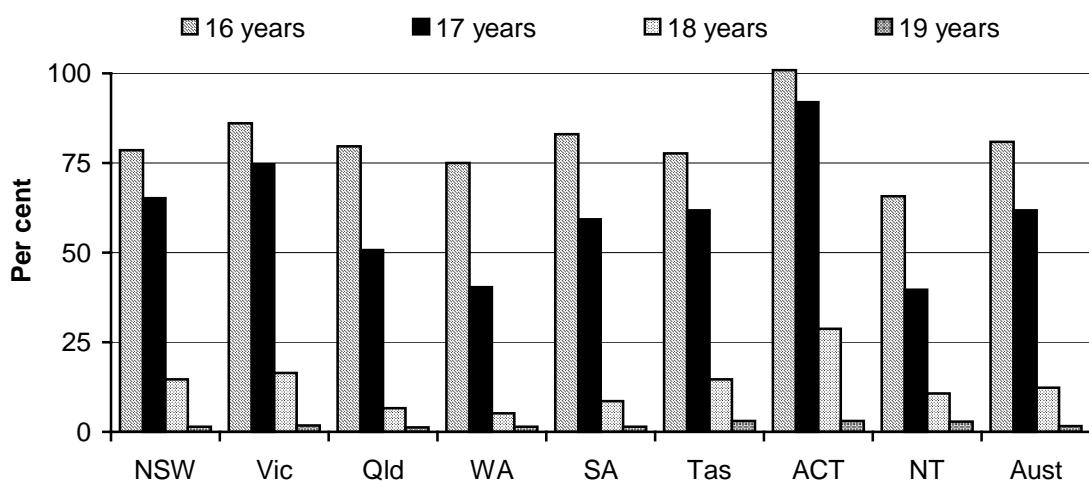
Participation rate

The participation rate of 15–19 year olds (for whom school attendance is no longer compulsory) measures the number of full time school students aged 15–19, as a proportion of the estimated resident population of the same age. Care should be exercised in interpreting participation rates in school education because rates are influenced by differences in year structures across jurisdictions and the interaction between schools and other education and training institutions. Further, the participation rates are influenced by differences in age/grade structures and the delivery of post-compulsory education and training options across the jurisdictions. Participation rates in the ACT in 1999, as in the past, were higher than those in other jurisdictions for all ages (exceeding 100 per cent for 16 year olds). This is a result of the enrolment in the ACT of NSW residents from surrounding areas.

Nationally, 50 per cent of 15–19 year olds were enrolled in schools in 1999. Actual participation rates varied by jurisdiction, age and gender. For example:

- the ACT had the highest overall participation rate of 15–19 year olds (63.0 per cent) followed by Victoria (54.3 per cent). The NT had the lowest overall participation rate (40.4 per cent);
- participation rates for females were typically 2–3 percentage points higher than those for males in all jurisdictions; and
- participation rates declined significantly as students exceeded the maximum compulsory school age (16 years for Tasmania and 15 years for other jurisdictions) (figure 3.5).

Figure 3.5 School participation rates by age of students, all schools, August 1999^{a, b, c}



^a Recognises the influence of participation in other forms of education and training, help interpretation of participation in schools, apparent retention and completion data. ^b Proportion of the population who were not of compulsory school age but were enrolled as full time students in August 1998. ^c School is compulsory for 16 year olds in Tasmania.

Source: table 3A.16.

Apparent retention rates

The apparent retention rate is the percentage of full time students who continued to year 12 in 1999 from respective cohort groups at the commencement of their secondary schooling. Students commenced secondary schooling at year 7 in NSW, Victoria, Tasmania and the ACT, and in year 8 in Queensland, SA, WA and the NT.

Apparent retention rates are useful for monitoring student progression to the final year of secondary school but they are subject to many influences, including student perceptions of the benefits of schooling, the availability of employment and further educational opportunities as alternatives, and population movements. The data reported refer to only full time students, and do not account for students who are studying part time. The effect of this exclusion varies across jurisdictions (see table 3.3 for the proportions of part time students in each jurisdiction).

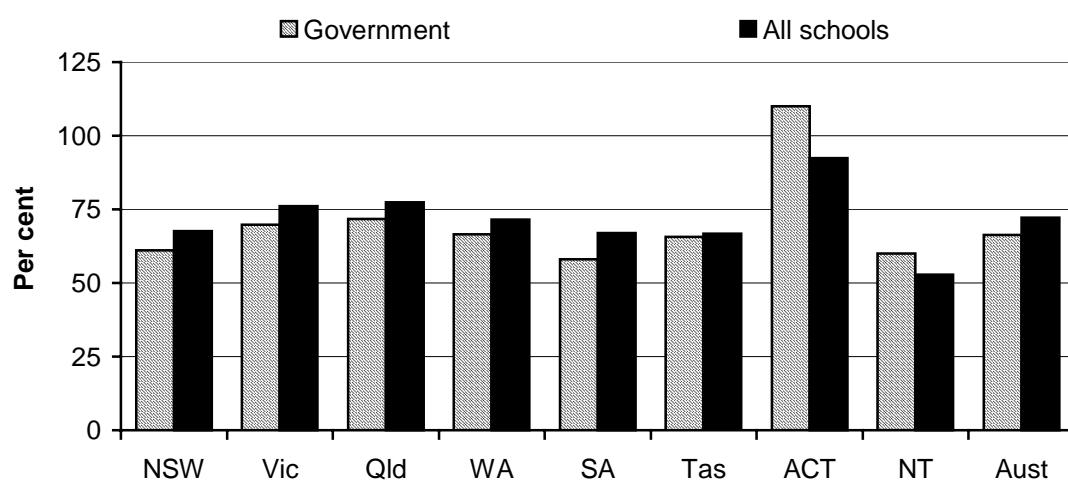
Care should be taken in interpreting apparent retention rates because a range of factors affect the calculation of the national rates — for example, students repeating a year of education and the effect of immigration and other net changes to the school population (such as the enrolment of full fee-paying overseas students). No adjustments are made for these effects. At the jurisdictional level, other factors affect apparent retention rates — for example, enrolment policies (which contribute

to different age/grade structures among jurisdictions), intersector transfers (between government and non-government schools), interstate movements of students, and varying enrolment patterns in schools/training and further education across jurisdictions. For these reasons, variations in apparent retention rates over time within jurisdictions may be more useful than comparisons across jurisdictions.

The Australian Bureau of Statistics publishes two separate measures of apparent retention rates: the first indicates student progression from years 7 and 8 to year 12, while the second indicates student progression from year 10 to year 12. Although both measures are presented in this chapter, apparent retention rates from year 10 to year 12 are the most stable, because the effect of factors such as inter-sector transfers and interstate movement are likely to have a greater influence from years 7 and 8 to year 10.

For school education as a whole, apparent retention rates to year 12 in 1999 ranged from 53 per cent in the NT to 93 per cent in the ACT. Nationally, 79 per cent of females continued to year 12, compared with 66 per cent of males. The apparent retention rates for government schools ranged from 58 per cent in SA (compared with 67 per cent for all schools) to 110 per cent in the ACT (compared with 93 per cent for all schools) (figure 3.6). One reason for the ACT rate for

Figure 3.6 Apparent retention rates of full-time secondary students to year 12, 1999^{a, b}



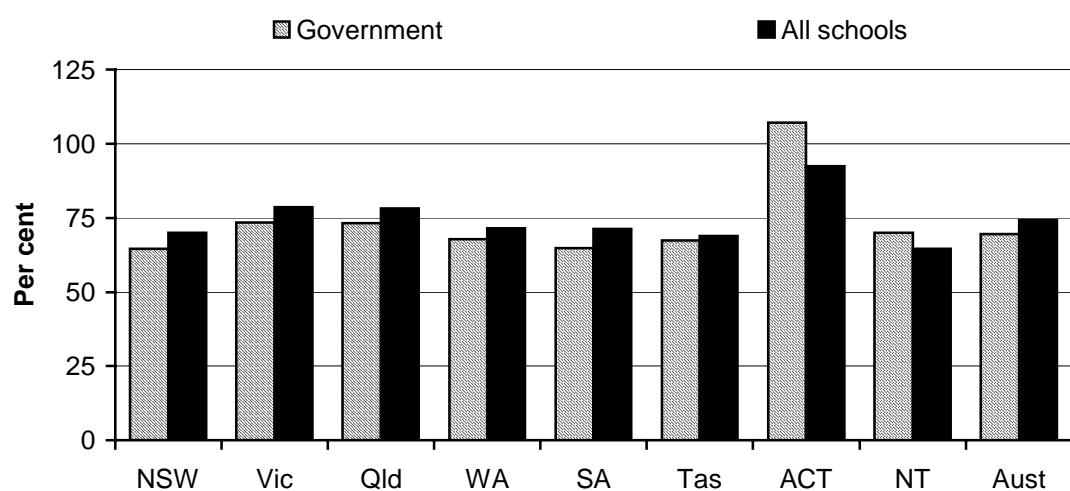
^a To help understanding of participation in schools, and apparent retention and completion data. Recognises the role played by participation in all forms of education and training. ^b Retention rates can exceed 100 per cent because student transfers between government and non-government schools occurred after the base year.

Source: table 3A.17.

government schools exceeding 100 per cent is that a number of non-government schools do not enrol students beyond year 10 and students need to change schools to continue to years 11 and 12. This has the effect of reducing the rate for non-government schools and increasing the rate for government schools.

Apparent retention rates from year 10 to year 12 ranged from 65 per cent in the NT to 93 per cent in the ACT in all schools in 1999. The apparent retention rates for government schools ranged from 65 per cent in NSW and SA (compared with 70 per cent and 71 per cent respectively for all schools) to 107 per cent in the ACT (compared with 92.5 per cent for all schools) (figure 3.7).

Figure 3.7 Apparent retention rates of full time secondary students from year 10 to year 12, 1999^{a, b}



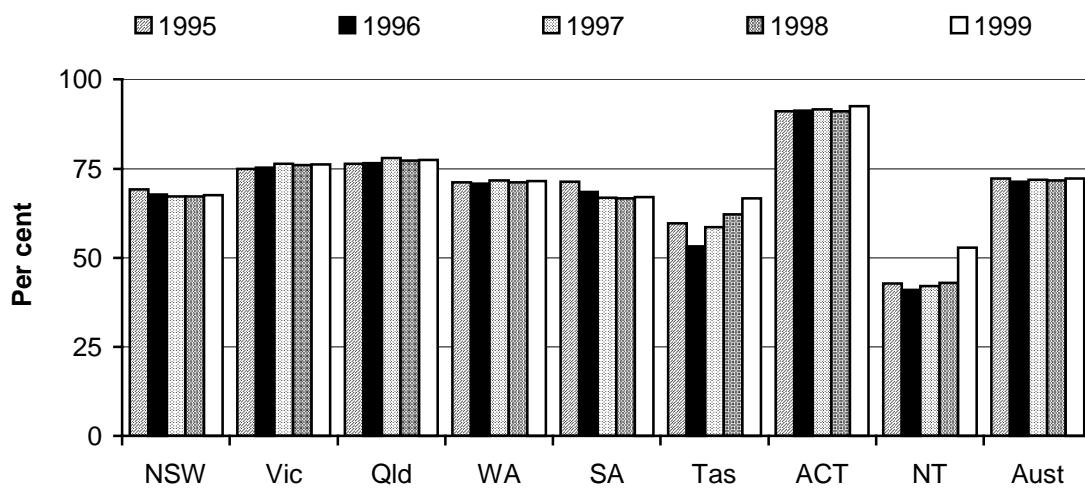
^a To help an understanding of participation in schools and of apparent retention and completion data. Recognises the role played by participation in all forms of education and training. ^b Retention rates can exceed 100 per cent because student transfers between government and non-government schools occurred after the base year.

Sources: table 3A.18.

Between 1995 and 1999, apparent retention rates to year 12 in all schools increased in Tasmania and the NT, declined in NSW and SA, and remained fairly steady in all other jurisdictions (figure 3.8).

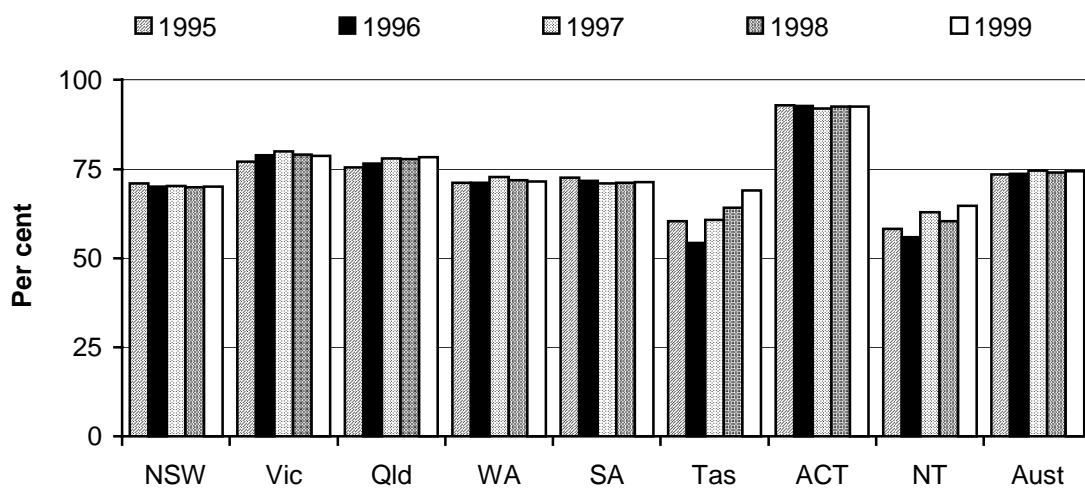
A similar trend was exhibited for apparent retention rates from year 10 to year 12 in all schools between 1995 and 1999 (figure 3.9).

Figure 3.8 Apparent retention rates of full time secondary students to year 12, all schools



Sources: table 3A.17 and ABS (2000b).

Figure 3.9 Apparent retention rates of full time secondary students to from year 10 to year 12, all schools



Sources: table 3A.18 and ABS (2000b).

Completion of secondary schooling

The Commonwealth Government has developed a method for estimating the proportion of young Australians who complete year 12, disaggregated by locality, socioeconomic background and gender. Completion rates are estimated by calculating the number of students who obtain a year 12 certificate expressed as a percentage of the potential year 12 population. Completion rates are calculated on a

different basis from retention rates and participation rates reported elsewhere, so they are not directly comparable.

The Commonwealth uses the completion rates in the absence of participation or retention data by socioeconomic background or geographic location. Completion rates are primarily used as indicators of trends. Small changes in population or completions can affect rates quite significantly, particularly for smaller States and the Territories. Also, there are variations in assessment, reporting and certification methods for year 12 across States and Territories. Given these differences, comparisons among jurisdictions need to be made with care.

The method developed by the former Department of Primary Industry and Energy is used to determine geographic isolation. This method provides for seven categories grouped into four locations (in table 3.9 — that is, capital city, other metropolitan, rural centres, and other rural and remote areas — and three locations in table 3.8 — urban, rural and remote. Urban (a combination of capital city and other metropolitan) includes Darwin, Townsville/Thuringowa and Queanbeyan. There are no rural or remote areas in the ACT and no rural centres in the NT.

Socioeconomic status has been determined according to the Index of Relative Socioeconomic Disadvantage developed by the Australian Bureau of Statistics. Low socioeconomic status is the average of the three lowest deciles and high socioeconomic status is the average of the top three deciles. The aggregation of all postcode locations into three categories — high, medium and low — means that there may be significant variation within the categories. Low deciles, for example, will include locations ranging from extreme disadvantage to moderate disadvantage.

Year 12 completion rates by socioeconomic background, location and gender are provided in tables 3.6, 3.7, 3.8 and 3.9. The data show there is a trend for urban students to have higher completion rates than those of non-urban students. Gender differences are also evident with the completion rates for females being consistently higher than those for males regardless of location or socioeconomic background. Further, the time series data reveal the gap between male and female completion rates has continued to grow.

Consistent with the lack of movement in the retention rate to year 12, table 3.6 shows little difference in total completion rates between 1994 and 1999. The completion rate was 68 per cent in 1994 and 67 per cent in 1999.

Table 3.6 also highlights differences in completion rates on the basis of socioeconomic background. Completion rates for students from a low socioeconomic background were below those for students from a high socioeconomic background. There was a 16 percentage point difference between

students from low and high socioeconomic backgrounds in 1999. The completion rates in both socioeconomic categories were higher for female students; female completion rates in the low socioeconomic category were only five percentage points behind males in the high socioeconomic category in 1999.

Table 3.6 Year 12 estimated completion rate, by socioeconomic status and gender — time series (per cent)

	Socioeconomic status								
	Low deciles			High deciles			Total		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
1994	55	66	60	74	85	79	63	74	68
1995	53	65	59	73	83	78	61	73	67
1996 ^a	50	62	56	71	82	76	59	71	65
1996 ^b	52	67	59	72	80	76	60	72	65
1997 ^c	51	66	58	71	80	75	58	71	64
1998 ^d	53	67	60	72	81	76	60	72	66
1999	53	68	61	73	83	77	61	74	67

^a Calculated using socioeconomic status deciles derived from the 1991 Census. ^b Calculated using socioeconomic status deciles derived from the 1996 Census. ^c Revised data. ^d Final data.

Source: DETYA (unpublished).

Table 3.7 shows the 1999 completion rates on the basis of socioeconomic background by jurisdiction. The 1999 completion rates indicate substantial variation

Table 3.7 Year 12 estimated completion rate, by socioeconomic status and gender, 1999 (per cent)

	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT ^a	NT ^b	Aust
Low socioeconomic status deciles									
Male	54	53	61	42	49	58	..	17	53
Female	68	71	74	55	68	76	..	18	68
All students	61	62	67	49	58	67	..	17	61
High socioeconomic status deciles									
Male	72	70	77	73	73	88	76	na	73
Female	81	83	80	80	89	102	85	na	83
All students	76	76	79	77	81	95	80	na	77
Total									
Male	59	60	66	56	58	69	74	37	61
Female	71	77	75	68	76	83	82	47	74
All students	65	68	70	62	67	76	78	42	67

^a On the basis of this index, the ACT has no low socioeconomic status deciles. ^b Small increases in the estimated resident population can cause significant fluctuations in the data. As a result, high socioeconomic status rates for the NT are unreliable and have been excluded. .. Not applicable.

Source: DETYA (unpublished).

across jurisdictions in the low socioeconomic status deciles, from 17 per cent in the NT to 67 per cent in Queensland and Tasmania. The completion rates for the high socioeconomic status deciles ranged from 76 per cent in NSW and Victoria to 95 per cent in Tasmania. In all jurisdictions, the completion rates for females were higher than those for males.

Table 3.8 shows the variation over time in completion rates for males and females in urban, rural and remote localities. The urban rate declined from 71 per cent in 1994 to 68 per cent in 1999; the rural rate of 64 per cent in 1994 remained the same in 1999; and the remote rate declined from 58 per cent in 1994 to 56 per cent in 1999. In all localities, the completion rates for females were higher than those for males. The gender difference has increased in all locations — a difference that is particularly noticeable in remote locations, which showed a 24 percentage point difference between male and female completion rates in 1999.

Table 3.8 Year 12 estimated completion rates, by locality and gender — time series (per cent)

	Urban			Rural			Remote			Total		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
1994	66	76	71	57	71	64	51	65	58	63	74	68
1995	64	75	69	54	70	62	46	59	52	61	73	67
1996	62	72	67	54	71	62	45	64	54	60	72	65
1997 ^a	61	71	66	54	70	62	43	62	51	58	71	64
1998 ^b	62	73	67	55	71	63	48	61	54	60	72	66
1999	63	74	68	57	73	64	45	69	56	61	74	67

^a Revised data. ^b Final data.

Source: DETYA (unpublished).

Gender differences are also evident in table 3.9. In other rural and remote areas there was a 22 percentage point difference between male and female completion rates in 1999. In other metropolitan locations, there was an 8 percentage point gender difference.

School leaver destinations

The education preface of this Report discusses the destinations of year 12 leavers and early school leavers in 1999 at the national level, and examines the proportions of male and female students attending other educational institutions in 1999 after leaving school in the previous year (table B3, which also shows the proportion of students who were not attending any educational institution).

Table 3.9 Year 12 estimated completion rates, by locality and gender, 1999 (per cent)

	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA ^a	SA ^a	Tas ^a	ACT ^b	NT ^c	Aust
Capital city									
Male	63	62	67	59	61	79	74	57	63
Female	74	77	76	69	77	92	82	64	75
All students	68	70	72	64	69	85	78	60	69
Other metropolitan									
Male	52	57	64	..	..	..	..	..	57
Female	61	70	68	..	..	..	..	..	65
All students	57	64	66	..	..	..	..	..	60
Rural centres									
Male	53	54	67	46	46	68	..	..	57
Female	64	73	73	62	61	76	..	..	69
All students	58	63	70	54	54	72	..	..	63
Other rural and remote areas									
Male	55	53	61	50	50	53	..	21	54
Female	75	79	81	67	81	78	..	34	76
All students	65	66	71	58	65	65	..	27	64
All areas									
Male	59	60	66	56	58	69	74	37	61
Female	71	77	75	68	76	83	82	48	74
All students	65	68	70	62	67	76	78	42	67

^a There are no other metropolitan areas in this jurisdiction. ^b All of the ACT is defined as a Capital City. ^c There are no other metropolitan or rural Centres. .. Not applicable.

Source: DETYA (unpublished).

Social objectives of schooling

In 1996, the Commonwealth Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs, on behalf of MCEETYA, commissioned an investigation 'to define and describe aspects of the social objectives of schooling. The purpose of this investigation was to obtain baseline data on achievements against the selected social objectives and to investigate the role and influence of schools in this regard (Ainley *et al.* 1998, p. xiii). The 1999 Report (SCRCSSP 1999) included a summary of these results.

Efficiency

Governments have an interest in achieving the best results from their expenditure on schooling, both as owners and operators of government schools, and as major providers for funds to the non-government school sector. It is an objective of the Review to report comparable estimates of costs. Ideally, such comparison should include the full range of costs to government. Where the full costs cannot be

measured, cost should be estimated on a consistent basis. Significant effort has been made to improve the method for calculating the indicators in this Report and to document where there are differences. However, some concerns remain over the comparability of the results because jurisdictions use somewhat different methods of data collection. These differences are summarised in table 3.10.

Government recurrent expenditure per student

Government recurrent expenditure per student may be influenced by a number of factors which are discussed in box 3.2.

Box 3.2 Factors that may influence the level of expenditure per student

Differences in the costs of educating students can be driven by:

- influences beyond the control of governments, such as a high proportion of geographically isolated population and/or a dispersed population;
- policy changes in education, such as tradeoffs between reducing costs and improving the quality of education, or between reducing costs and increasing the accessibility of education; and
- how well the education department and schools manage resources.

The Commonwealth Grants Commission, when calculating relativities between States and Territories to distribute Commonwealth general purpose grants, accounts for influences beyond a jurisdiction's control (called disabilities) that affect its cost of providing services and its capacity to raise revenue. In relation to education, the assessment includes 'service delivery scale' disability factors. These factors allow for the effects on relative cost differences among jurisdictions that have to service small and remote schools because they have a small and dispersed population. However, the Steering Committee for the Review of Commonwealth/State Service Provision does not make any cost adjustments based on any of the above factors. These factors may need to be considered when examining each jurisdiction's expenditure per student.

A proxy indicator of efficiency is the level of government inputs per unit of output (unit cost). In-school government expenditure per student in government primary schools ranged from \$5200 in NSW to \$7808 in the NT in 1998-99. In-school government expenditure per secondary student in government secondary schools ranged from \$6514 in Victoria to \$11 667 in the NT. Out-of-school departmental overheads per student in government schools ranged from \$265 in NSW to \$1305 in the NT (figure 3.10).

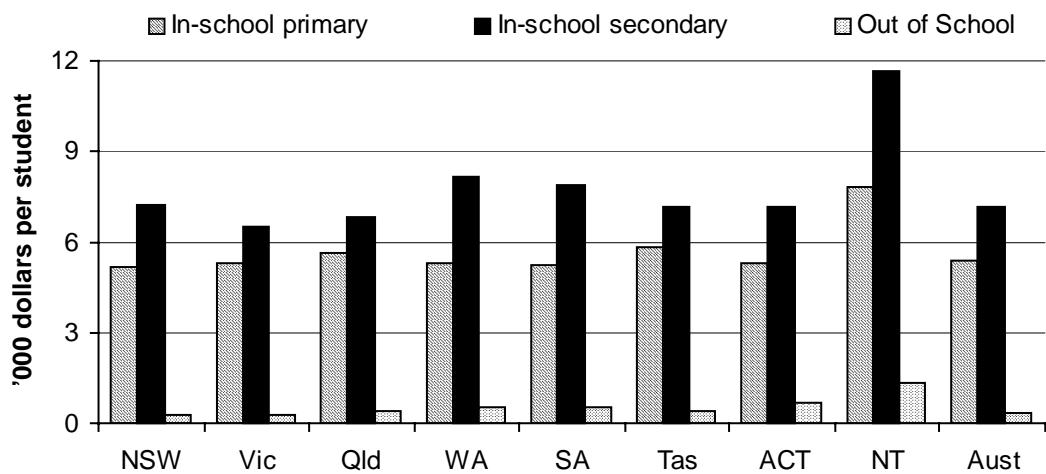
Table 3.10 Comparability of expenditure — items included, 1998-99

	Commonwealth	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT
Superannuation	na	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	na
<i>basis of estimate</i>	na	na	cash	na	accrual	na	na	na	na
Workers compensation	na	✓	✓	na	✓	✓	✓	✓	na
Payroll tax	na	✓	✗	na	✗ ^a	✗	✓	✗	na
<i>basis of estimate</i>	na	accrual	..	na	..	na	✗	na	na
Termination and long service leave	na	✓	✗	na	✓	✓	✓	✓	na
<i>basis of estimate</i>	na	cash ^b	..	na	accrual	na	cash	na	na
Sick leave	na	✓	✗	na	✗	✓	✓	✓	na
<i>basis of estimate</i>	na	cash ^b	..	na	✓	na	cash	na	na
Depreciation	na	✗	✗	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗	na
Rent	na	✓	✓	na	✓	✓	na	✓	na
<i>basis of estimate</i>	na	accrual	cash	na	accrual	na	✓	na	na
Utilities	na	✓	✓	na	✓	✓	✓	✓	na
<i>basis of estimate</i>	na	accrual	cash	na	accrual	na	cash	na	na
Umbrella department costs	na	✓	✓	na	na	✓	na	✓	na
<i>basis of estimate</i>	na	Formula ^c	Formula ^d	na	na	Formula ^e	na	na	na

^a Education Department of WA is exempt from payroll tax. ^b Actual leave taken. ^c Departmental program structure. ^d Based on usage (including enrolment). ^e Based on per cent of program division outputs. na Not available. .. Not applicable. ✓ Included. ✗ excluded.

Source: Commonwealth, State and Territory governments.

Figure 3.10 Total government expenditure per full time student, government schools, 1998-99^a

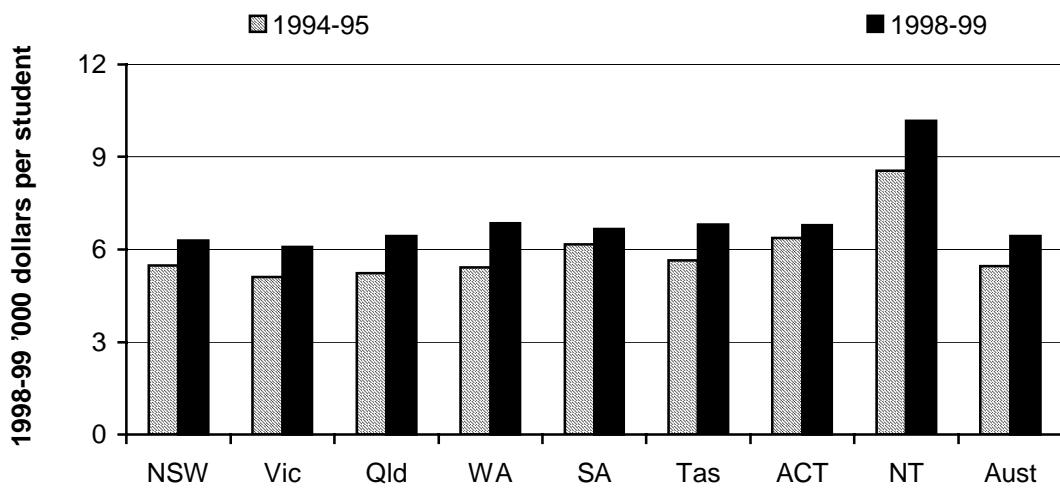


^a See notes to table 3A.7 for definitions and data caveats.

Source: table 3A.8.

Total government expenditure per student in government schools increased (in real terms) between 1994-95 and 1998-99 in all jurisdictions (figure 3.11).

Figure 3.11 Total government expenditure per full time student, government schools^{a, b, c}

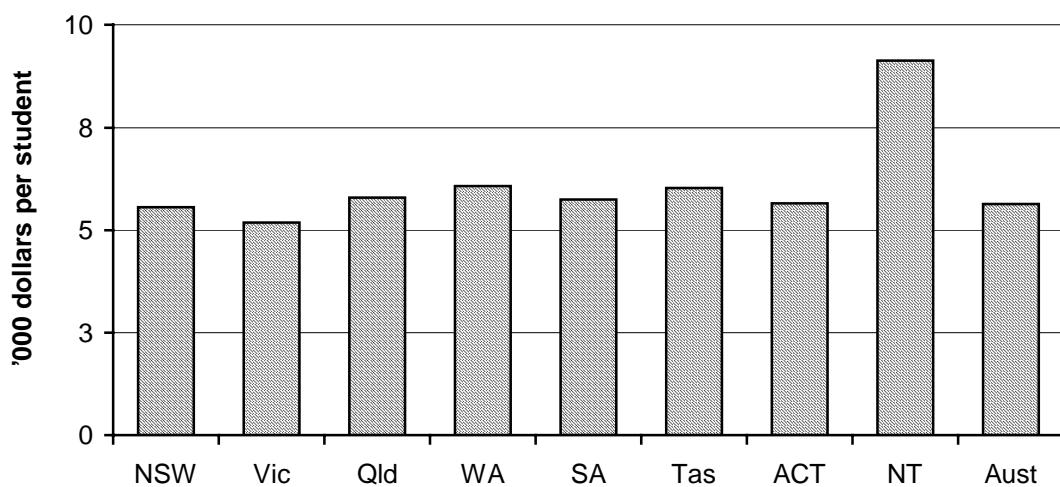


^a See notes to table 3A.7 for definitions and data caveats. ^b 1994-95 data have been adjusted to 1998-99 dollars using the gross domestic product deflator. ^c Superannuation has been included in the expenditure for all jurisdictions in this figure.

Source: table 3A.9.

In 1998-99, government expenditure per student in all schools (government and non-government) in Australia ranged from \$5186 in Victoria to \$9134 in the NT. (figure 3.12).

Figure 3.12 Total government expenditure per full time student, all schools, 1998-99^a



^a The sum of Commonwealth, State and Territory government expenditure on government schools, Commonwealth specific purpose payments for non-government schools, and State and Territory payments to non-government schools.

Source: table 3A.9.

User cost of capital of school education

The user cost of capital for government services is the cost of funds tied up in capital used to produce services (for example, land and buildings owned by government schools). The user cost of capital makes explicit the opportunity cost of using the funds to provide services rather than investing elsewhere or retiring debt.

When comparing costs of government services, it is important to account for the user cost of capital because:

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

This chapter includes a user cost of capital for all jurisdictions (except the NT, which has yet to introduce accrual accounting) as part of the cost to government of each service. The user cost of capital is calculated by applying a jurisdictional cost

of capital rate to the value of government assets (see chapter 2 for details of the determination of a cost of capital rate). The indicative user cost of capital per school was highest in NSW (\$1762 per student in government schools) and lowest in SA (\$672 per student in government schools) in 1998-99 (table 3A.9).

The Steering Committee accepts that asset valuation data are imperfect. However, it also recognises that the treatment of costs has not fully recognised the cost of public capital used by departments to deliver services; that is, capital has generally been considered ‘free’. This can lead to significant underestimation of costs for those services for which government capital is a major input. Thus, using an imperfect costing is preferable to not costing government capital.

Student-to-staff ratios³

The student-to-teacher ratio presents the number of students per person classified as a teacher in a way that can be compared across jurisdictions. A low ratio means that there are a small number of students per teacher. (The ratio is not a measure of class size.)

The ratio should be interpreted with care because it can be affected by a number of factors, including:

- the proportion of small rural schools. A large proportion of small rural schools, for example, can significantly lower the overall average student-to-teacher ratio; conversely, a large proportion of students in metropolitan schools can raise the ratio;
- the degree to which administrative work is undertaken by people classified as teachers (such as principals, deputy principals and senior teachers); and
- other inputs to school education (for example, non-teaching staff, computers, books and laboratory equipment).

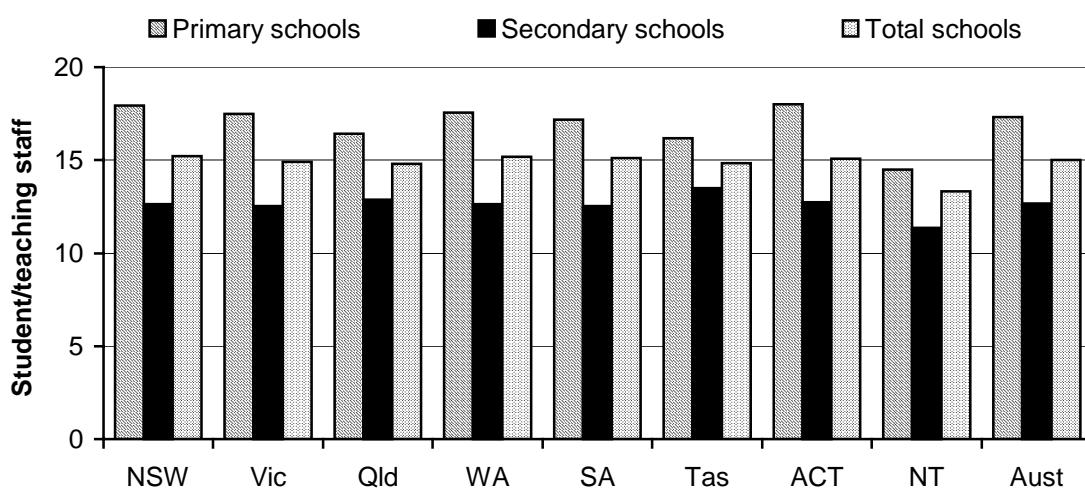
Interpretation of student-to-teacher ratios is usually accompanied by assumptions about efficiency and quality.

³ 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). Rather, the latter provide benefits to students or teaching staff in the development of the school curriculum.

- A high ratio could indicate an efficient school system, because desired outputs are produced with a small number of inputs. However, lower inputs per unit of output only indicate efficiency when output units and outcomes are the same across all systems being compared. It is not possible to determine how changes in teaching staff numbers influence school outcomes until better indicators of those outcomes are available.
- A low ratio could indicate a higher quality education system, if it is assumed that teachers have more time for each student. The ratio should not be interpreted as an indicator of class size; further, it does not reflect the quality, experience or qualifications of teachers. The ratio is also an aggregate across all subjects and year levels, and does not reflect the fact that a lower ratio may not be so important for certain subjects or year levels. There is no clear agreement in international literature that smaller class sizes necessarily improve outcomes. It will not be possible to determine how different ratios influence quality in Australian schools until better indicators of school outcomes are available.

In school education as a whole, the ratio of full time equivalent students⁴ to a full time equivalent teacher in 1999 ranged from 13.3 in the NT to 15.2 in NSW and WA. For primary schools, the NT had the lowest student-to-teacher ratio (14.5) and the ACT had the highest (18.0). For secondary schools, the NT had the least students per teacher (11.4) while Tasmania had the most (13.5) (figure 3.13).

Figure 3.13 Ratio of full time equivalent students to full time equivalent teaching staff, all schools, 1999

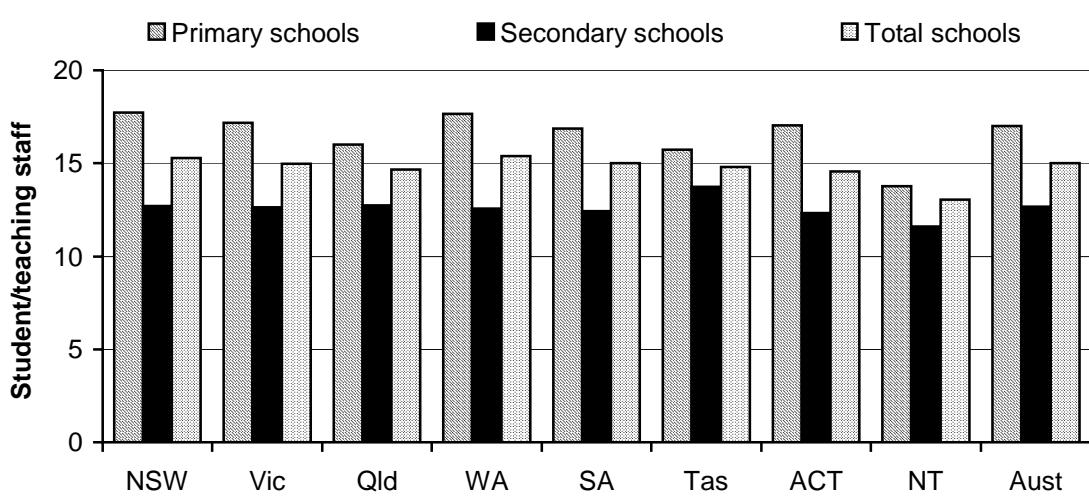


Source: table 3A.5.

⁴ Full time equivalent students is defined as the sum of full time students and full time equivalent part time secondary students.

The overall student-to-teacher ratio in the government schools sector in 1999 ranged from 13.1 in the NT to 15.4 in WA. For primary schools, the NT had the least students per teacher (13.8) and NSW had the most (17.7). For secondary schools, the NT had the least students per teacher (11.6) and Tasmania had the most (13.7) (figure 3.14).

Figure 3.14 Ratio of full time equivalent students to full time equivalent teachers, government schools, 1999



Source: table 3A.5.

Student-to-non-teaching, in-school staff⁵

The ratio of full time equivalent students to full time equivalent, non-teaching, in-school staff should be interpreted with care. It can be affected by:

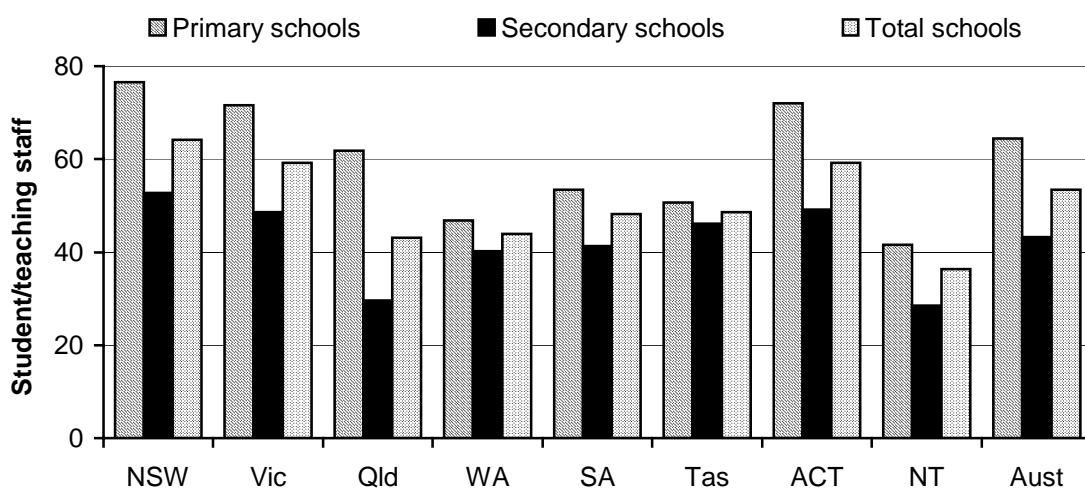
- the amount of administrative work undertaken by staff nominally classified as teachers (such as principals, assistant principals and senior teachers);
- the proportion of administrative work undertaken outside the school (because administrative tasks such as personnel management are centralised in some jurisdictions, but undertaken at the school level in others);
- the extent to which technology is applied to teaching, learning and school administration; and

⁵ Non-teaching staff include administrative and clerical staff (teacher aides and assistants who perform functions that are of benefit to students and teaching staff, including assisting in the development of school curriculum); building operations, general maintenance and other staff; and special support staff. In-school staff include staff who spend more than half their time actively engaged in duties in one or more schools.

-
- the degree to which schools contract out services.

For school education as a whole, the ratio of students to non-teaching, in-school staff in 1999 ranged from 36.4 in the NT to 64.1 in NSW (figure 3.15).

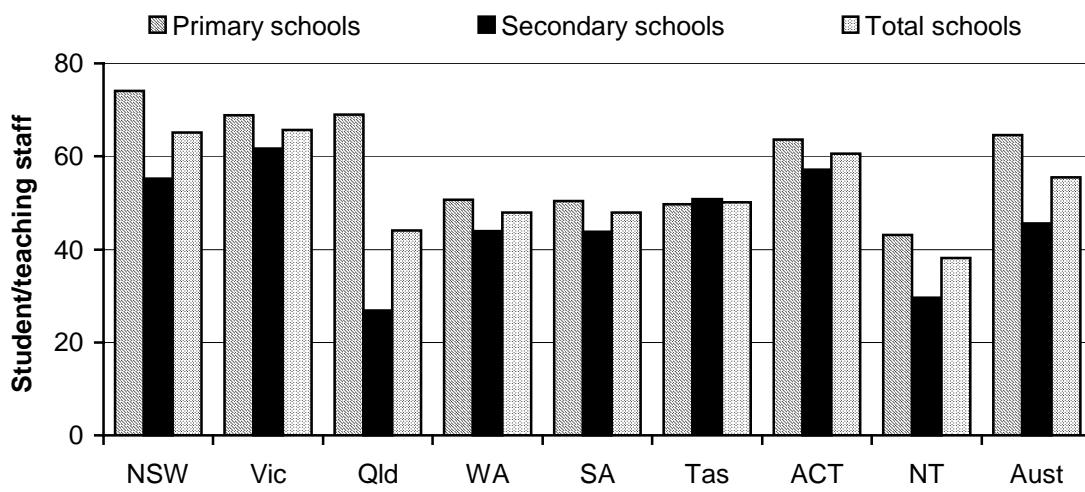
Figure 3.15 Ratio of full time equivalent students to full time equivalent, non-teaching, in-school staff, all schools, 1999



Source: table 3A.5.

The ratio of students to non-teaching in-school staff in the government sector in 1999 ranged from 38.1 in the NT to 65.7 in Victoria (figure 3.16).

Figure 3.16 Ratio of full time equivalent students to full time equivalent, non-teaching, in-school staff, government schools, 1999

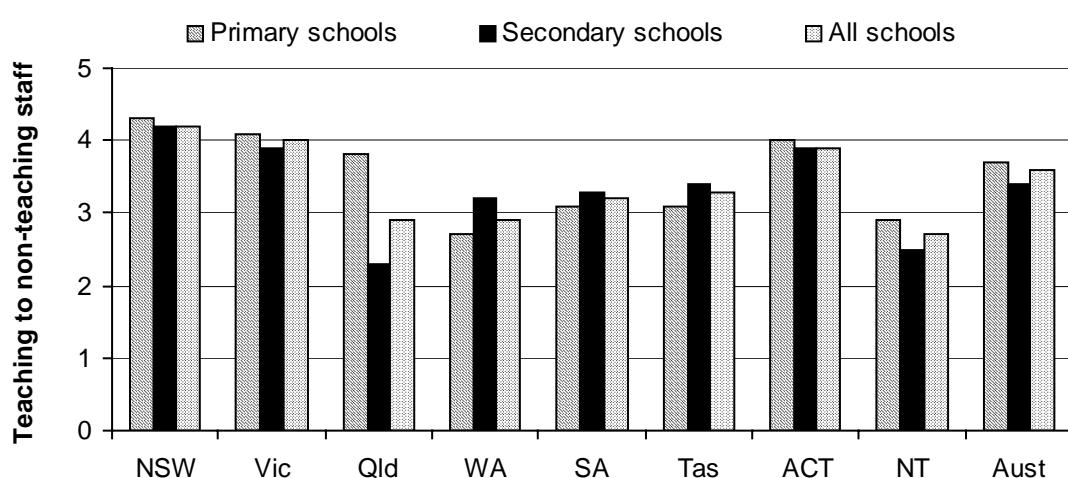


Source: table 3A.5.

Teaching-to-non-teaching staff ratios

The teaching to non-teaching, in-school staff ratio partly highlights the level of administrative and management overheads that exists in a school. For school education as a whole, the overall teaching-to-non-teaching staff ratio in 1999 ranged from 2.7 in the NT to 4.2 in NSW. For primary schools, WA had the least number of teachers per non-teaching staff (2.7) and NSW had the most (4.3). For secondary schools, Queensland had the lowest ratio (2.3) and NSW again had the highest (4.2) (figure 3.17).

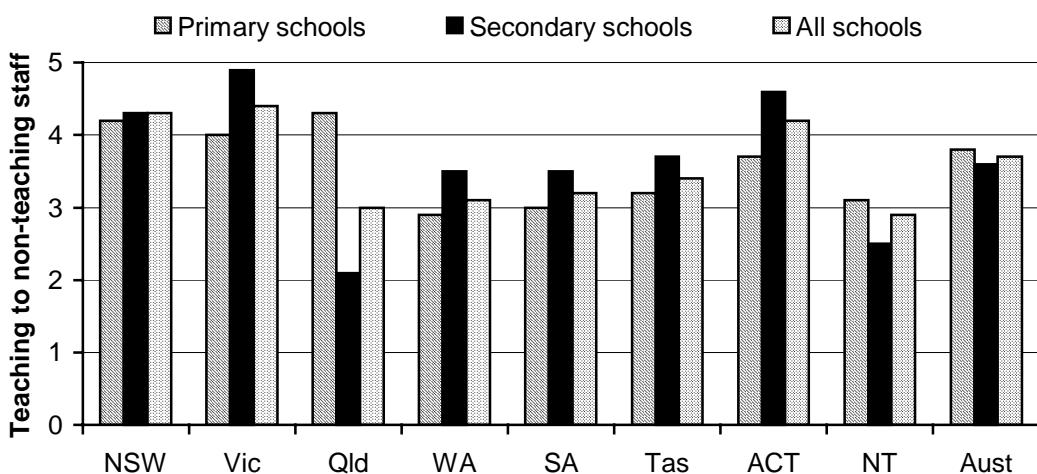
Figure 3.17 Ratio of teaching-to-non-teaching, in-school staff, all schools, 1999



Source: table 3A.5.

In government schools, the overall teaching-to-non-teaching staff ratio in 1999 ranged from 2.9 in the NT to 4.4 in Victoria. For primary schools, WA had the least number of teachers per non-teaching staff member (2.9) and Queensland the most (4.3). For secondary schools, Queensland had the lowest ratio (2.1) and Victoria had the highest (4.9) (figure 3.18).

Figure 3.18 Ratio of teaching-to-non-teaching, in-school staff, government schools, 1999



Source: table 3A.5.

3.5 Future directions in performance reporting

Nationally comparable reporting of learning outcomes

The National Education Performance Monitoring Taskforce (NEPMT), under the auspices of MCEETYA, is undertaking work in areas that will provide useful information for future Reports.

The NEPMT is coordinating the development of definitions for and approaches to collecting nationally comparable data on performance indicators that will result in additional information in line with the performance indicator framework.

Literacy and numeracy

Education ministers have agreed that the years 3 and 5 literacy benchmark results for 1999 will be published in 2000. They have agreed that the years 3 and 5 literacy and numeracy benchmark results for 2000 will be published in 2001, and that the years 3, 5 and 7 literacy and numeracy benchmark results for 2001 will be published in 2002 (provided the data available are recognised as being comparable by an objective process involving the Commonwealth, State and Territory governments). Development of years 9–10 benchmarks has been postponed pending further

information from the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development Program for International Student Assessment.

Social and other outcomes

The NEPMT is developing measures to test students' knowledge and understanding of the Australian system of government and civic life. A sub-group of NEPMT is developing a device in this area for the NEPMT's consideration.

Vocational education and training (VET) in schools

As part of the national goals for schooling (box 3.1), students are expected to have participated in vocational learning programs before completing year 12 as a pathway to employment and further education and training. The NEPMT is working with the VET in Schools Taskforce to develop a number of key performance indicators for VET in Schools. It is anticipated that these will be considered by ministers in the first half of 2001.

Science literacy

In 2000, a sample of school students aged 15 years participated in the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development Program for International Student Assessment, which will provide internationally comparable indicators of student achievement in scientific literacy. Results from this study will be available from December 2001. In addition, consistent with the national goals for schooling, separate measures the NEPMT is developing for monitoring the performance of year 6 primary students in scientific literacy, using the international program's definition of science.

Reporting on access and equity

The NEPMT has commissioned studies into the definitions of, and approaches for collecting, comparable data, in the following areas:

- LBOTE students;
- the socioeconomic status of students; and
- the geographic location of students.

The NEPMT has endorsed approaches and definitions in these areas pending outcomes of feasibility studies to be completed by mid-2001.

Indigenous peoples' access to mainstream services

In 2000, ministers endorsed the Australian Bureau of Statistics' standards for identifying students' Indigenous status. This will improve the comparability of Indigenous students' participation rates and learning outcomes across jurisdictions.

3.6 Jurisdictions' comments

This section provides comments from each jurisdiction on the services covered in this chapter and attachment 3A on the CD-ROM. Appendix A contains short profiles on each State and Territory, which may assist in interpreting the performance indicators presented in this chapter. In addition, detailed statistics covering various aspects such as age profile, geographic distribution of the population, income levels, education levels, tenure of dwellings and cultural heritage (such as Indigenous and ethnic status) are also found in appendix A.

Commonwealth Government comments

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The Commonwealth has continued to work with the States and Territories to secure improved reporting of student achievement. The National Goals for Schooling in the Twenty-First Century, which were endorsed by Commonwealth, State and Territory Education Ministers in 1999, provide both the context and framework for the reporting of student outcomes. Since then there has been a cooperative Commonwealth, State and Territory effort to develop performance measures which can progress the National Goals.

In March 2000, education ministers approved several recommendations from the National Education Performance Monitoring Taskforce to support national performance measurement, including agreement on: literacy and numeracy reporting, performance measures for student participation and middle secondary science achievement as well as two national definitions for student groups.

There has been considerable progress since 1999 in the reporting of student outcomes. Benchmark results for Year 3 students in reading were reported as a supplement to the 1999 Annual National Report on Schooling in Australia (ANR) in early 2000, and Year 5 reading and Year 3 and 5 writing and spelling results are expected to be available later this year or early in 2001. Student participation is expected to be reported on in the 2000 ANR and it is possible that data on middle secondary science achievement from Australia's participation in the OECD Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) could be available late in 2001.

PISA will provide the initial measure of students' performance in science in the middle secondary school years. It involves the testing of 15 year old school students every three years. The first Australian assessments were conducted in 2000. Australia has elected to increase the number of Indigenous students tested in order to provide reliable estimates of achievements and hence valid reporting for Indigenous students as a group. As well as providing international comparisons of science achievement, PISA will enable comparisons between States and Territories.

In addition to work associated with the new National Goals, the Commonwealth has actively supported the collection of nationally comparable data through international studies and national surveys including the first national sample survey of civics and citizenship education which assessed students' knowledge, skills and attitudes in relation to Australia's system of government and law, political symbols, citizens' rights, obligations and expectations, multiculturalism and democracy. The Commonwealth is also supporting the repeat of the Third International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS-R) in respect of 13 year old students, the results of which are expected in late 2000.

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New South Wales Government comments

“ The NSW Department of Education and Training is responsible for approximately one quarter of the State's total budget and delivers education and training services from early childhood education through to post-compulsory education. The 2000-01 Budget included a record \$7.23 billion for education and training, representing an increase of \$320 million on 1999-2000 or a 4.7 per cent rise. Total expenses on school education services accounted for an estimated \$5.69 billion.

The State has made significant achievements in promoting public education despite the Commonwealth Government's Enrolment Benchmark Adjustment (EBA) policy. This policy has seen \$31 million taken away from NSW government schools to date, which is predicted to rise to \$50 million annually by 2003. Budget increases announced by the Commonwealth for non-government schools have further affected public education.

Despite this uncertain climate NSW public schools have delivered outstanding results. The 1999 Basic Skills Test showed the best ever results in literacy and numeracy for Year 3 and 5 students. NSW figured prominently in the national results with 91.2 per cent of Year 3 students meeting or exceeding the National Literacy Benchmark. NSW has Australia's most comprehensive state-wide testing program with Basic Skills Literacy and Numeracy tests in Years 3 and 5, the English Language and Literacy Assessment (ELLA) in Years 7 and 8, the School Certificate in Year 10 and the Higher School Certificate (HSC) in Year 12. New tests are being developed in numeracy for Year 7 and in Australian History, Geography, Civics and Citizenship for Year 10.

Almost \$450 million has been allocated over 4 years for the further expansion of the State Literacy and Numeracy Plan. Significant investments have also been made in technology for teaching and learning with \$500 million being provided over four years for the Computers in Schools program. The Government has provided 115,000 new and replacement computers and a total of \$113.6 million will be spent in 2000-01 alone. This investment in technology will keep NSW students at the forefront in the information age.

A new, better, fairer and more challenging HSC has been introduced. It features improved syllabuses, testing and reporting. To ensure NSW students are 'job-ready', it includes seven new vocational education and training courses, each involving extensive industry experience and leading to a nationally recognised and accredited credential, as well as counting toward University entrance.

Individual School-to-Work plans are being implemented for government school students in Years 9–12. These plans assist students in assessing their interests and skills, identifying a program of study and work experience to match their aspirations and to gain employment or move into further education and training.

Multi campus schools at Nirimba, Dubbo, Mt Druitt and Oatley are being developed as part of the Collegiate Education Plan involving joint educational campuses with TAFE, University and other education and training providers.”

Victorian Government comments

“ The Victorian Government is committed to a high-quality, universally accessible, student centred, public education system and emphasises that a strong education system is more important than ever before, given the rapid changes taking place in work, culture and technologies.

In 2000, the Victorian Government undertook two major reviews in education — The Ministerial Review of Post Compulsory Education and Training Pathways and the Review of Public Education: the Next Generation. The initiation of these reviews emphasises the importance the Government places on education and their reports have provided recommendations that will help to shape the future.

The Government has set three significant benchmark targets to provide impetus:

By 2005 – Victorian primary students will be at or above national average benchmark levels for reading, writing and numeracy.

By 2010 – 90 per cent of young people in Victoria will complete Year 12 or its equivalent.

By 2005 – there will be a 6 per cent rise in the percentage of young people aged 15 to 19 in rural and regional Victoria engaged in education and training.

A key objective for school education is for Victorian children to have access to high-quality primary and secondary education. The Early Years strategy, combined with teacher commitment and reduced class sizes, is ensuring that student achievement in literacy and numeracy continues to improve. In 1999, 86.2 per cent of Victorian students at Year 3 performed at or above the national benchmarks in reading. The establishment of the Early Numeracy Research project will lead to the development of programs that will lift numeracy learning in government primary schools to the same high standards addressed in the literacy program.

Victoria's apparent retention rate for 1999 of students from years 7 to 12 was 76.2 per cent and above the national average of 72.3 per cent. The level of participation in schooling of 15 to 19 year olds was 54.3 per cent, higher than the national average of 50 per cent and the highest of any state (except ACT). Further substantial growth was realised in the number of students participating in VET in Schools and New Apprenticeships programs. Participation and achievement in these programs provides students with pathways to university, training and further education, and to the workforce.

Victoria is widely recognised as a leader in the use of information and communication technology in education. Schools are increasingly using new technologies and multimedia to support effective teaching and learning. These technologies help to provide quality educational resources throughout the State, particularly to students in rural and remote areas that rely on technology to reduce the disadvantage of distance. Greater access to technology and related professional development is improving teacher and student skill levels.

Queensland Government comments

“ Education Queensland’s vision is for all Queensland students to become active citizens in a learning society: the Smart State.

In April 2000, *Queensland State Education – 2010* was adopted by government as the strategic response to the broad economic and social change. The strategy is based on research undertaken in Queensland and reflects the views about the future expressed by people involved in public education in Queensland. The purpose of education in Queensland is to create a safe, tolerant and disciplined environment within which young people prepare to be active and reflective Australian citizens with a disposition to lifelong learning. They will be able to participate in and shape community, economic and political life in Queensland and the nation. They will be able to engage confidently with other cultures at home and abroad

The first stage initiatives for implementing Queensland State Education - 2010 have commenced. The Secondary Schools Renewal Program, a \$114 million, three-year commitment, will reinvigorate secondary school as part of the move towards establishing distinctive state schools. The New Basics, a new approach to teaching and learning that focuses on essential areas of learning, is being trialled in 38 schools.

Strategies to maximise student learning continue to be implemented. Learning Technology grants totalling more than \$22 million were provided to schools for maintenance and purchase of computers, training and software. A comprehensive review of literacy teaching in Queensland state schools was conducted and the report launched in November. It complements and builds on the already significant achievements of schools in improving literacy standards.

Interest in vocational subjects continued to grow, broadening the career opportunities of all students, especially those who might leave school early. In 2000, 61 per cent of students in state secondary schools were studying at least one vocational subject. More than 2200 students combined schoolwork with an apprenticeship.

Confidence in public schools is an important indicator as to whether schools are providing what the public want. The majority of parents rated their school a good school and indicated satisfaction with their child’s progress at school. The demand for school places continues to increase as a result of Queensland’s high population growth rate, which has tapered but remains the highest in the country, at 1.6 per cent after account is taken of interstate movements.

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Western Australian Government comments

“ Accounting for a quarter of the State budget, and employing the equivalent of some 25 000 full-time staff, the Education Department is the largest employer in Western Australia.

The Department is responsible for the education of more than 266 000 students at 767 schools spread from Kalumburu in the north to Albany in the south, and from the Cocos (Keeling) Islands in the west to Wingellina, on the edge of the Great Victoria Desert, in the east.

Following the passage of the School Education Bill in November 1999, extensive work was undertaken to ensure that the Education Department would be fully prepared for the proclamation of the legislation.

Under the *Curriculum Council Act 1997*, all schools in the State are required to use the Curriculum Framework developed by the Council to plan, deliver, assess and report on the outcomes of schooling. Government schools made substantial progress in the phased introduction of outcomes-based education using the Curriculum Framework and the Education Department's Student Outcome Statements.

As a major stakeholder, the Education Department contributed significantly to the review of post-compulsory schooling being undertaken by the Curriculum Council.

Increased local decision-making authority was trialled in 21 schools.

Schools made further progress toward the target minimum of one centrally-funded computer for every ten primary-aged students and every five secondary-aged students by 2002.

Under Making the Difference, a strategy targeting students at educational risk, schools developed processes for the early identification and support of these students.

Building of the State's first Indigenous government school, first co-located senior and TAFE campuses and first dedicated middle school commenced.

All eligible children were offered two sessions per week of kindergarten or eight sessions per week of pre-primary education.

Some 5200 students in years 11 and 12 at 125 government schools participated in vocational education and training (VET) programs.

The enrolment of fee-paying international students was trialled at six senior high schools.

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South Australian Government comments

“ The South Australian Department of Education, Training and Employment provides a range of services encompassing children's services, schools, vocational education and training, youth affairs and employment. It also funds and regulates aspects of non-government services in childcare, education and training. In 1999, more than 37,000 employees provided services to over a quarter of a million children and students enrolled in children's services, schools and technical and further education (TAFE) institutes.

Partnerships 21, a local governance and management strategy was launched in April 1999, with full implementation to occur during 2000-2002. By the end of 1999 about 40 per cent of schools and preschools had submitted their Partnership Agreements and Plans.

A Country Directorate was established to develop strategies to improve the delivery of children's services and education in country areas. As part of Partnerships 21, a Rural Student Index was developed to specifically address the funding requirements of remote communities.

Development of the South Australian Curriculum, Standards and Accountability framework, birth to year 12, commenced mid way through 1999. The framework is designed to take account of the national goals for schooling and provide a foundation of or a broad, general education leading to a range of pathways, including vocational training, higher education and life long learning.

The scores of the years 3 and 5 Basic Skills Test for students showed improvement on previous years, particularly scores for Aboriginal students whose year 3 literacy results indicated that they were approximately ten months ahead of 1998's year 3 Aboriginal students. The government provided an additional \$2 million for programs to help students identified by the tests as experiencing difficulties. The school entry assessment of children's early literacy and numeracy commenced with full implementation in 2000.

Information technology was given a high profile, with the roll-out of high quality Internet services and IT infrastructure to all government schools and curriculum innovation and professional development programs aimed at using information technology to improve student learning outcomes.

The enterprise and vocational education initiative resulted in a 35 per cent increase in the percentage of year 11 and 12 students participating in vocational education and training (VET) and raising the average hours spent at off-job training by 61 per cent. VET in schools curriculum hours increased by 118 per cent to over 988,000. Windsor Gardens Vocational College commenced operations in partnership with TAFE institutes and other providers in delivering programs within the South Australian Certificate of Education.

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Tasmanian Government comments

“ The Tasmanian Department of Education invested significant effort during 1999 in review processes designed to improve education services to identified equity groups. Reviews occurred in relation to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education and training provision in Tasmanian schools, colleges and TAFE and the Department's Inclusion Policy for students with disabilities.

The review of Aboriginal education and training services involved extensive consultation with stakeholders. The findings of the review were published in December 1999. Key recommendations arising from the review include a need for greater leadership in policy development and implementation, reporting of achievements of goals and objectives to be undertaken regularly and ensuring outcomes for Aboriginal students are included in all planning for reporting on and publishing student learning outcomes. As a result of the review, the major emphasis for intervention with Aboriginal students will be in the areas of literacy, numeracy, attendance, participation in education and retention to Year 12.

A major review of the Department's Inclusion policy was undertaken during 1999. The process of review was designed to incorporate extensive parental and school involvement. It was supported by research on international best practice. The review report was finalised during 1999 and was published in early 2000.

Literacy and numeracy programs within the school system remained a major focus of the education system. The Department published its second Literacy and Numeracy plan – the formal plan is now a feature of the program and it is updated for each school year. The plan provides a comprehensive overview of all programs and links the programs to strategy and educational outcomes.

During 1999 the Department had a particular emphasis on trialing and implementing programs which supported explicit literacy and numeracy teaching. The range of programs include intensive general support up to year three, intensive research and support programs in all other years of school and targeted programs for at risk groups of students.

The Department's IT grants program was extended to all schools. The program has enabled all Tasmanian schools to be provided with networks, telecommunications connections, a significant level of hardware in classrooms and a comprehensive range of software. A program to provide professional technical support to all schools has also been implemented.

The provision of educational content was significantly advanced during 1999 with the launch of the Discover web site. The 'Discover' website incorporates an intelligent digital databank that acts as a repository for resources, provides web enabled services to the education community and is designed to engender an online learning community culture.

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Australian Capital Territory Government comments

“ The ACT Department of Education and Community Services is responsible for school and vocational education, children's, family, youth, sport and recreational services. The provision of government school education is part of the seamless provision of services to children and youth in the ACT.

Enhancing information technology capacity and skills across all service delivery and management functions was a major focus for the year. This strategy significantly improved hardware, software and network facilities, and incorporated information technology into teaching and learning, and management and administration practices. The number of computers in schools more than doubled in two years from 3300 in 1997 to 8,215 in 1999. The number of computers more than doubled in high schools and colleges, and more than tripled in primary schools. In high schools, the ACT is leading the way, nationally, in assessing the Information Communication Technology competencies of year 10 students.

The School Legislation Review was completed in June 2000, providing advice to government about the best legislative basis to position education in the Territory for advancement into the new century.

The department continued to focus on assessment and reporting of literacy and numeracy skills, providing system wide data on literacy and numeracy for the first time in February 2000. Assessment is now undertaken in years 3, 5, 7 and 9. Detailed reports are issued to parents/carers on their children's achievement against curriculum profiles in both literacy and numeracy. Year 3 students were assessed against the national benchmark in reading.

Under the Indigenous Education Strategic Initiative Program, improving outcomes for Indigenous students has been a high priority. The department approved the Indigenous Literacy and Numeracy Strategy and agreed with the Commonwealth to use the literacy and numeracy assessment for years 3, 5, 7 and 9 implemented in 1999 as the benchmarks for measuring the non-Indigenous/Indigenous outcomes. It introduced a tracking strategy for Indigenous students and improved data collection and reporting procedures. Assessment of Indigenous culture education has been made part of the school review process from 2000.

The department placed a priority on looking at ways our high schools can better meet the needs of students, and parents/carers and better equip students to move from high school into college and work. High Schools for the New Millennium project ended the first of its three years with work in consulting students, parents/carers and teachers about what they think of high schools. Addressing identified needs in high schools is also underway.

There were significant developments in vocational education and training in schools. ACT secondary colleges achieved accreditation as Registered Training Organisations, allowing them to deliver nationally recognised vocational courses as part of a college course. Around 50 per cent of college students undertake at least one course in Vocational Education and Training. School based New Apprenticeships were introduced in several industries.

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Northern Territory Government comments

“ The NT Department of Education is committed to delivering high quality and relevant learning to students within available resources. To achieve this goal, the department has undergone significant restructuring to more effectively meet the needs of students in remote and urban Territory schools. A new Departmental Plan has been promulgated identifying six new operating principles and embodying eight new strategies. These strategies have been developed to refocus the activity of the Department onto its core business of schools and school learning outcomes. This major refocus brings with it significant restructuring of the delivery of Indigenous educational services. The Collins review into Indigenous Education recommended the creation of a single Branch to coordinate and deliver educational services to remote Indigenous students, and endorsed the reorganisation of schools into seven regionally based school clusters.

The NT has the highest proportion of Indigenous students of all jurisdictions at 35 per cent of the total student population. A high percentage of Indigenous students who reside in remote communities suffer from hearing and sight impairment and other health problems which inhibit educational participation and achievement.

A small population sparsely dispersed across the Territory presents very significant challenges to service delivery. With 53.8 per cent of NT schools and 26.7 per cent of students being located in rural and remote areas, meeting this challenge means that efficiencies of scale are hard to achieve, pushing unit costs and staffing levels away from the national average.

In 1999, the NT recorded 28 986 full-time equivalent enrolments in government schools and 8 319 in non-government schools. The NT continued to have the highest proportion of government school enrolments in Australia; 78 per cent compared to the national average of 70 per cent.

The percentage of Year 3 students achieving the reading benchmark has been included in this report for the first time. The NT recorded the lowest percentage of Year 3 students achieving the benchmark with a system average of 72 per cent. For Year 3 students in Urban schools the result was significantly higher at 82 per cent indicating a need for the department to focus on rural and remote service delivery.

In response to the Commonwealth reporting requirements, the NT Multi-level Assessment Program (NT MAP) has changed from testing students in Year 4 and Year 6 to Year 3 and Year 5. Furthermore, the testing of Year 7 students is being trialed.

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3.7 Definitions

Data for this chapter were sourced from *Schools Australia* (ABS 2000), the *National Schools Statistics Collection* (MCEETYA 1999a) and Commonwealth, State and Territory governments, and unpublished DETYA data. More information on definitions and explanatory notes can be found in *National Schools Statistics Collection (Government Schools Sector) Notes Instructions and Tabulations 1999* (ABS 1999).

Table 3.11 Terms

Term	Definition
Apparent retention rates	The percentage of full time students who continued to year 12 in 1999 from respective cohort groups at the commencement of their secondary schooling. The rate is calculated by dividing the total number of full time students in year 12 in 1999 by the sum of the full time students in year 7 in NSW, Victoria, Tasmania and the ACT in 1994 and the full time students in year 8 in Qld, SA, WA and the NT in 1995 (year 8 being the commencement of the secondary school system in the latter group of jurisdictions).
Average expenditure per student	Total expenditure (including superannuation liabilities) divided by the total number of students. Based on the <i>National School Statistics Collection</i> definitions (MCEETYA 1999a). Expenditure figures are in financial years and student numbers are in calendar years, so the total number of students is taken as the average of two years. When calculating 1998-99 average expenditure per student, for example, the total expenditure figure is at 1998-99 but the total student number figure is the average of student numbers from 1998 and 1999.
Enrolment index	The full time equivalent enrolments in each subject as a proportion of all full time equivalent enrolments in the State or Territory, grouped into the eight key learning areas. The enrolment index for science, for example, in a State/Territory is the number of full time equivalent students enrolled in science as a proportion of all full time equivalent enrolments in that State/Territory. The enrolment index data are supplied by each jurisdiction and the counting rules for the data are based on the jurisdictions' reporting requirements in MCEETYA. The key learning areas are English; mathematics; studies of society and environment; science; arts; LBOTE; technology; and health, physical education and personal development.
Full time equivalent (FTE) student	The full time equivalent of a full time student is 1.0. The method of converting part time student numbers into full time equivalents should be based on the students' workload compared to 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.

(continued next page)

Table 3.11 (continued)

<i>Term</i>	<i>Definition</i>
Indigenous student	<p>A student of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander origin who identifies as an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander or as from an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander background.</p> <p><i>NSW:</i> Indigenous students are those who answered ‘yes’ to the question, ‘Are you an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander person?’.</p> <p><i>Victoria:</i> Schools are asked to answer the question, ‘Is this student Aboriginal or a Torres Strait Islander?’ on the front page of each student’s test booklet. Students are identified as Indigenous on enrolment forms at the commencement of school.</p> <p><i>Queensland:</i> Students self identify as being Indigenous by answering ‘yes’ to either or both the questions, ‘Are you an Aboriginal person?’ and ‘Are you a Torres Strait Islander person?’. Teachers are required to check the accuracy of the students’ responses.</p> <p><i>SA:</i> Students who are of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander origin and who identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander;</p> <p><i>WA:</i> Indigenous students are identified through their ‘yes’ response to the question ‘Are you an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander person?’. This question is included on the front of the student answer booklet.</p> <p><i>Tasmania:</i> Indigenous students are identified by each school from information collected at enrolment or through self identification. If the Indigenous status is unknown, the student is not considered to be Indigenous.</p> <p><i>ACT:</i> Indigenous students are identified at the time of enrolment by the parents/caregivers.</p> <p><i>NT:</i> Indigenous students are identified by schools at the time of enrolment or by self identification.</p>
Language backgrounds other than English (LBOTE)	<p>No nationally agreed definition. Some ABS publications broadly defined LBOTE persons as those born in non-English speaking countries (excluding Indigenous people). Education departments in each jurisdiction define LBOTE students as follows:</p> <p><i>NSW:</i> Those who answered ‘yes’ to the question, ‘Does anyone speak a language other than English in your home?’.</p> <p><i>Victoria:</i> schools were asked to answer the question, ‘Is this student of non-English speaking background?’ on the front page of each student’s test booklet. The generally accepted definition of an LBOTE student is one where the student or either parent was born in a non-English speaking country or has a home language other than English;</p> <p><i>Queensland:</i> Those who self identify as having a language background other than English by answering the questions, ‘At home is English the language you speak MOST of the time?’ and ‘At home, does either of your parents/care-givers speak a language other than English MOST of the time?’ Teachers are required to check the accuracy of the students’ responses.</p> <p><i>SA:</i> A definition of LBOTE is being developed for use with the Basic Skills Test.</p>

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Table 3.11 (continued)

<i>Term</i>	<i>Definition</i>
Locality	<p>WA: Those from a language background other than English, who were identified from their responses to the following four questions, ‘Are you an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander person?’, ‘Does anyone in your home usually speak in a language other than English?’, ‘How often do YOU speak English at home?’ and ‘How long have you lived in Australia?’.</p> <p>Tasmania: For government schools, those who are identified from enrolment records; for Catholic schools, those who are identified from new-arrival and special education applications.</p> <p>ACT: Funded English as a Second Language students rather than the broader LBOTE category.</p> <p>NT: Students identified by teachers as being eligible for inclusion in the English as a Second Language Program</p> <p>Commonwealth: Non-English speakers, including non-English speaking Indigenous students.</p> <p>Where a school is located (either in a metropolitan or non-metropolitan area) based on the jurisdiction’s own definitions/classifications.</p> <p>In this Report, the definitions are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • capital city, as defined by the former Department of Primary Industry and Energy; • other metropolitan as defined by the former Department of Primary Industry and Energy; • rural centres (the summation of large and small rural centres), as defined by the former Department of Primary Industry and Energy; and • other rural and remote centres (the summation of other rural areas, remote centres and other remote areas) as defined by the Department of Primary Industry and Energy. <p>Further classifications are capital city and other metropolitan as urban; large rural centres, small rural centres and other rural as rural; and other remote as remote.</p> <p>Metropolitan may be defined as capital city and other metropolitan, while non-metropolitan may be defined as rural centres and other rural and remote areas.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capital cities consists of State and Territory capital city statistical divisions. • Other metropolitan centres consist of one or more statistical subdivisions that has an urban centre of population of 100 000 or more. • Large rural centres are statistical local areas where most of the population resides in urban centres of population of 25 000 or more. • Small rural centre are statistical local areas in rural zones that contain urban centres of population of between 10 000 and 24 999. • Other rural areas are the remaining statistical local areas within the rural zone.

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Table 3.11 (continued)

<i>Term</i>	<i>Definition</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remote centres are statistical local areas in the remote zone that contain urban centres of population of 5000 or more. • Other remote area are the remaining statistical local areas within the remote zone.
Part time student	A student undertaking a workload which is less than that specified as being full time in government schools.
Participation (15–19 years)	Number of full time students of a particular age and sex, expressed as a proportion in government schools of a particular age group, multiplied by the published participation rate for all schools of that particular age group.
Real expenditure	Nominal expenditure adjusted for changes in prices, using the GDP(E) price deflator and expressed in terms of final year prices.
Socioeconomic status	As identified by each jurisdiction.
Source of income	Income from a level of government as a percentage of total government expenditure. Income in this report may come from any of the three levels of government — Commonwealth, State and Territory, and local governments. Commonwealth expenditure is derived from specific purpose payments (current and capital) for government 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 Commonwealth funding.
Special needs	<p>For Tasmania, students with the intellectual disability; autism; psychiatric disorder; physical disorder; physical disability; multiple disability; sensory impairment; or other more general difficulties with learning. A central moderation process identifies the most severe levels of need.</p> <p>For the ACT, students with special needs are those with a sensory, physical, psychological, intellectual, communication disorder; severe disturbed behaviour; or multiple disabilities.</p>
Staff	Full time equivalent of staff generally active in government schools and ancillary education establishments.
Student/staff ratios	Number of full time students per full time teaching and non-teaching staff. Students at special schools are allocated to primary and secondary. The full time equivalent of staff includes those who are generally active in government schools and ancillary education establishments.
Student	Full time student only. A student is a person who is formally (officially) enrolled or registered at a school, and who 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 age, unless otherwise identified.
Student— primary	Student in primary education, which commences at pre-year 1 to year 6 in NSW, Victoria, Tasmania and the ACT; pre-year 1 to year 7 in WA, SA and the NT; and year 1 to year 7 in Queensland.
Student— secondary	Student in secondary education, which commences at year 7 in NSW, Victoria, Tasmania and the ACT; and at year 8 in Queensland, SA, WA and the NT.
Students with disabilities	Number of students based on the annual system reports to DETYA. The definitions of students with disabilities are based on individual State criteria, thus data are not comparable across jurisdictions.