

Australian Government

Department of Education and Training

# Australia Country Report on the UNESCO Convention against Discrimination in Education (1960) / Recommendation against Discrimination in Education (1960)

Report to the UNESCO Director-General

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## General statements on discrimination

1. Australia has a strong tradition of respect for the rights and freedoms of every individual. Human rights are recognised and protected across Australia through a range of laws at the federal and state and territory levels, the Australian Constitution, and the common law.

2. In Australia, anti-discrimination laws make it unlawful to discriminate on the basis of a number of protected attributes including age, disability, race, sex, intersex status, gender identity and sexual orientation in certain areas of public life, including education.

3. In addition the Australian Government specifically supports the right of students with a disability to have the same educational opportunities as other students through the Australian Government Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (the DDA) and the Disability Standards for Education 2005. The Standards clarify and make more explicit the obligations of education and training service providers under the Act. The Standards seek to ensure that students with disability can access and participate in education on the same basis as other students. All education and training providers, both government and non-government, must comply with the Australian Government legislation and any relevant discrimination legislation of their State and Territory.

4. Education providers have obligations under the Standards, which include making reasonable adjustments; consultation with the student and the student's family; and eliminating harassment and victimisation towards students with disability. These obligations are described under four categories: enrolment; participation; curriculum development, accreditation and delivery; and student support services.

5. The Minister for Education and Training, in consultation with the Attorney General, is required to undertake a review of the Standards every five years. The Standards were reviewed in 2010 and in 2015. The 2015 Review recognised progress has been made since the 2010 Review in raising awareness of the Standards with educators through various initiatives and resources. The Australian Government is committed to continuing efforts with key stakeholders to support the use, application and interpretation of the Standards in practice.

## Primary, secondary and tertiary education

### *School education in Australia*

6. The Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians was agreed to by all Australian education ministers in December 2008. Through the Melbourne Declaration, education ministers are committed to:

- Support quality teaching and school leadership
- Promote world-class curriculum and assessment
- Improve the educational outcomes for disadvantaged young Australians

7. The Declaration supports the Beijing Declaration which sets goals that seek to ensure that all Australian school students gain the knowledge and skills that underpin effective participation in society and employment. The Declaration further recognises

that all children should be engaged in and benefit from a school education regardless of gender, ethnicity, disability or geographical location.

8. All Australian governments pursue this agenda through the National Education Agreement (NEA) and the National Education Reform Agreement (NERA). These agreements articulate the commitment of all Australian governments to ensure that all Australian school students acquire the knowledge and skills to participate effectively in society and employment in a globalised economy

### *Discrimination in education*

9. From 20 June 2011, amendments to the *Sex and Age Discrimination Legislation Amendment Act 2011* came into force. Students of any age are now legally protected from sexual harassment. Students are also legally protected from sexual harassment by adult students and staff members from other institutions that they may come into contact with through inter-school events such as sports carnivals and school formals.

10. These amendments provide greater protection for children from sexual harassment, particularly where it may occur through the use of modern technology, such as texting or the use of social networking sites.

11. State and territory anti-discriminatory legislation generally exempts private educational institutions from certain anti-discriminatory laws.

### *School Management*

12. The Australian Government plays a major role in policy setting and program development for schooling. Consultation and collaboration between the different levels of government in relation to school education occurs through the Standing Council on School Education and Early Childhood that reports to the Council of Australian Governments (COAG).

13. While the Australian Government plays a leadership role in school education, the management of schools on a day-to-day basis is the responsibility of the relevant state and territory government and non-government education authorities and can vary from school to school.

14. Australia has both public and private schools which are usually referred to as ‘government’ and ‘non-government’ schools. Government schools operate under the direct responsibility of the relevant state or territory governments, while non-government schools are established and operate under conditions determined by government and state or territory registration authorities. Non-government schools can be part of a system of schools (systemic) or be independent. Many non-government schools have some religious affiliation, most with the Catholic Church, and as such the non-government sector in Australia is often split into ‘Catholic’ and ‘Independent’ for reporting purposes.

### *Consistent school leaving age*

15. Under the Compact with Young Australians, all states and territories have a consistent school leaving age. Young people are required to complete Year 10 (or an approved equivalent) and participate full time (25 hours a week) in education, training or employment, or a combination of these until the age of 17.

### *Reform agenda for schools*

16. The Australian Government's reform agenda for school education is designed to ensure that every school is a great school and that every child is supported to reach his or her full potential. Key reform elements include greater transparency and accountability through improved collection, analysis and use of data; a focus on quality and improvement through the introduction of greater national consistency in areas such as teaching and curriculum; and investing in high quality online and physical learning environments.

17. The Australian Government's reforms have also focused on boosting fairness and opportunity for all students, particularly those from disadvantaged cohorts such as regional and remote students, students with disability, low socioeconomic status (SES) students, and Indigenous students. In addition to national initiatives such as the Smarter Schools National Partnerships and additional funding for students with disability, states and territories also offer a range of programs to address the learning needs of all students, including students with intellectual and physical disability, behaviour disorders, special learning needs, for gifted students, and for migrant students particularly those with low numeracy and literacy skills or from non-English speaking backgrounds.

### *Funding for Schooling*

18. Under the Australian Constitution, the Australian Government has no specific power in relation to schooling and does not have a direct role in the registration, administration and operation of schools. Instead states and territories are responsible for the overall quality of school education in their jurisdictions.

19. Recurrent schools funding is the main way in which the Australian Government contributes to in-school educational costs. Through recurrent funding, the Government provides the majority of public funding for non-government schools. This funding is supplemented by state and territory governments and, in the majority of cases, funding from other sources, including fees and other contributions from school communities. The states and territories provide the majority of public funding for government schools, with the Australian Government providing supplementary assistance.

20. Following the 2011 Review of Funding for Schooling report, new arrangements for Australian Government recurrent funding for schools were introduced in 2014. From 2014 Commonwealth recurrent funding for all schools is transitioning under the *Australian Education Act 2013* (the Act) from levels under the previous funding arrangements towards the needs-based Schooling Resource Standard (SRS) funding arrangement levels.

21. Funding is calculated with reference to a base amount plus loadings to target student and school disadvantage including students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds, students with disability, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, students with low English proficiency, and school size and location. For most non-government schools, the base amount is discounted by the anticipated capacity of their school community to financially contribute towards the school's operating costs.

22. The new arrangements provide greater flexibility for the use of recurrent funding. Ongoing funding for a number of standalone programs existing prior to 2014 was rolled into the new recurrent funding arrangements under the Act, including funding for English as a Second Language students. Further, while Australian Government recurrent funding is calculated with reference to the characteristics of students at a school, approved authorities for schools are not required to spend the funding on any particular student or student cohort.

23. This is to allow approved authorities the flexibility to manage the funding they receive from all sources–public and private–to ensure the best educational opportunities for all of their students. This approach recognises that schools and school systems are best placed to judge the needs of their individual students and budget accordingly.

24. In order to be eligible for Australian Government recurrent funding, an approved authority for a school must meet certain basic requirements for approval under the Act. These include having the correct state or territory registration to operate as a school (which includes compliance with state and territory government legislation), be not-for-profit, be financially viable and be a fit and proper person. The Act also sets out ongoing funding and policy requirements that an approved authority for a school must also meet in order for the school to be eligible for funding.

### *Quality teaching and school leadership*

25. The Government's Students First policy is responding to the vital role that greater school autonomy, skilled teachers, an effective curriculum, and increased parent engagement all play in producing good education outcomes for all students.

26. The Government also recognises that states, territories and the non-government school sector are best placed to determine how policies should be implemented in their schools, as they have day-to-day responsibility for the management of Australian schools.

### *Quality Teaching*

27. The Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) was established to provide national leadership for the Commonwealth, state and territory governments in promoting excellence in the profession of teaching and school leadership. AITSL has responsibility for rigorous professional standards and supporting the professional growth for teachers and school leaders through quality evidence based tools and resources.

28. AITSL works collaboratively across jurisdictions and engages with key professional bodies. AITSL also plays an important role in driving reforms to improve teaching and school leadership in Australia's schools paying particular attention to three priority areas – initial teacher education, supporting school leadership to effectively manage more autonomous schools, and engaging with the profession.

### *Australian Professional Standards for Teachers*

29. Well trained, skilled and knowledgeable teachers provide the foundation for a high quality education system and quality teaching is essential to lifting student outcomes.

30. The Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership is committed to raising the quality, value and status of the teaching profession through the development of and support for the implementation of the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers (the Standards) and the Australian Professional Standard for Principals (the Standard).

31. The Standards are a public statement of what constitutes teacher quality and define what teachers should know and be able to do at different stages across their careers (Graduate, Proficient, Highly Accomplished and Lead). The Standards comprise three domains: Professional Knowledge; Professional Practice and Professional Engagement; each with a number of standards that articulate the knowledge, skills and attributes required across the four career stages.

32. The Standards are an objective tool to measure teaching capability at the various levels of a teacher's work cycle and provide a nationally agreed quality assurance mechanism that ensures Australian teachers have the required competencies to be effective educators. The Standards underpin national approaches to the accreditation of initial teacher education programs, the registration of teachers and the formal recognition of Highly Accomplished and Lead teachers. Further information is available at www.teacherstandards.aitsl.edu.au.

### *Certification of Highly Accomplished and Lead Teachers*

33. Certification supports teachers to explore their practice at the Highly Accomplished or Lead career stage of the Standards. It is a voluntary evaluation process that recognises skilled teachers and promotes the development of collaborative professionals who continually reflect upon and improve their practice. It is also a tool that can be used to underpin performance appraisals, identify professional development needs and enhance career progression.

34. It is important to note that as certification refers to the formal recognition and classification of teachers' practice, the terms 'Highly Accomplished teacher' and 'Lead teacher' do not refer to job positions. This makes certification under the national system portable within and across sectors, states and territories, but it does not mean that any industrial arrangement attached to certification is automatically transferable.

### *Nationally Consistent Registration of Teachers in Australia*

35. Australian Professional Standards for Teachers (the Standards) underpin a nationally consistent approach to teacher registration. All teachers are required to demonstrate they meet the Standards in order to obtain registration or re-registration and all states and territories have mutual recognition provisions in place to allow more flexibility in the registration of teachers to improve the mobility of the teaching workforce.

### *Professional learning*

36. High quality professional learning that has a focus on improving student outcomes and supports teachers to develop the capabilities described in the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers is also a priority. The nationally endorsed Australian Professional Charter for the Professional Learning of Teachers and School Leaders affirms, at a high level, the importance of professional learning in improving the professional knowledge, practice and engagement of teachers for high impact student outcomes.

37. Responsibility for setting priorities for teacher professional learning sits with state and territory education authorities and teacher employers. School leaders also play a role in building a professional learning community in their school that is focused on the continuous improvement of teaching and learning by identifying and implementing professional learning opportunities that are aligned with staff learning plans and school priorities.

### *Initial Teacher Education*

38. The Teacher Education Ministerial Advisory Group, comprising eight educational experts, was established early in 2014 to provide advice on how initial teacher education could be improved to better prepare new teachers for the classroom. The resulting report, Action Now: Classroom Ready Teachers was released on 13 February 2015 along with the Australian Government response to the 38 recommendations.

39. The Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership took on a pivotal role to deliver these important reforms through working closely with universities, state and territory governments and other key stakeholders. In December 2015, all education ministers endorsed a revised and strengthened process for the accreditation of initial teacher education courses which are expected to have a significant impact on the quality of the future teaching workforce.

40. The strengthened accreditation process includes the adoption of a National Literacy and Numeracy Test for Initial Teacher Education Students to ensure that graduates from initial teacher education programmes have been assessed as being in the top 30 per cent of the population for personal literacy and numeracy.

### *Teach for Australia*

41. The Teach for Australia programme aims to fast track high-calibre non-teaching graduates into disadvantaged schools through providing an employment-based pathway into teaching. The programme plays an important role in attracting to the teaching profession, high-quality candidates who might not otherwise have considered a career in education.

42. Participants accept two year employment contracts in disadvantaged schools and teach with a reduced teaching load and a high level of support and training throughout their two year placement period. On completion of their placement, participants are awarded a Master of Teaching.

### *School Leadership and Autonomy*

Australian Professional Standard for Principals

43. Principals have a key role in the development and learning of children and young people. To ensure that all students obtain the best possible learning outcomes, the Government funded the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) to develop the Australian Professional Standard for Principals (the Standard).

44. The Standard sets out what principals are expected to know, understand and do to achieve excellence in their work. The Standard can be used to build the quality and

capacity of principals across Australia and to provide a basis for the broader Australian community to understand the scope and complexity of a principal's work

### *Independent Public Schools*

45. The $70 million Independent Public Schools initiative aims to give selected government schools more control of local decision making and to help encourage stronger links between schools, parents and the local community.

46. All states and territories have signed bilateral Project Agreements with the Australian Government to participate in the initiative. More than 5000 government schools are expected to benefit from the initiative over the 2013–14 to 2016–17 period. The activities being funded include professional development for school leaders in managing their school operations, training for school council members to help them become more involved in their school and the implementation of one-line budgets to enable schools to determine the best use of their resources.

### *Teaching profession*

47. The Australian Government provides substantial funding for government and non−government schools and works collaboratively with states and territories in developing national priorities for education, but it does not have a direct role in the administration or operation of schools. Responsibility for the employment of teachers, including setting salaries and working conditions, rests with the government and non−government education authorities in each state and territory. As such, the best available national data on teacher salaries is as reported to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) for Education at a Glance.

*Education at a Glance (EAG) 2015, OECD*
Source: From data series Table D3 Teachers' statutory salaries, based on minimum qualifications

| ***Education at a Glance* Indicator** | **Australia** | **OECD Average** |
|---|---|---|
| | equivalent USD | equivalent USD |
| Teachers' salaries, 15 years of experience, minimum qualification, pre-primary education | 56,163 | 37,248 |
| Teachers' salaries, 15 years of experience, minimum qualification, primary education | 55,858 | 39,756 |
| Teachers' salaries, 15 years of experience, minimum qualification, lower secondary education | 55,894 | 41,313 |
| Teachers' salaries, 15 years of experience, minimum qualification, upper secondary education | 55,894 | 43,076 |

48. The Australian Government knows that well trained, skilled and knowledgeable teachers provide the foundation for a high quality education system. In recognition of the importance of quality teaching and teacher preparation, the Teacher Education Ministerial Advisory Group (TEMAG) was established in 2014 to provide advice on improving initial teacher education in Australia. The Report from TEMAG, Action Now: Classroom Ready Teachers was released, along with the Government’s response, in February 2015.

49. The report was clear that initial teacher education providers should deliver evidence-based content that equips new teachers with the knowledge and skills to make a positive impact on the learning of all students.

50. In December 2015, all education ministers endorsed revised Accreditation of Initial Teacher Education Programs in Australia: Standards and Procedures. The more rigorous standards will require all providers of initial teacher education to show evidence they are delivering programs that ensure initial teacher education students can demonstrate they meet the Graduate level of the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers on graduation. Higher education providers are currently reviewing their initial teacher education programs in order to seek accreditation against the new standards.

51. All Australian teachers are required to meet the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers in order to be registered to teach. This includes demonstrated capacity to implement teaching strategies that are responsive to the needs of students from diverse linguistic, cultural, religious and socioeconomic backgrounds, as well as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and students with disability. Teachers are also required to promote reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians, support inclusive student participation and maintain student safety.

52. The Australian Human Rights Commission's series of education resources—RightsED—is designed to help students gain a critical understanding of human rights and responsibilities, and to develop the attitudes, behaviours and skills to apply human rights in everyday life. The RightsED resources are mapped to the national Australian Curriculum and are free to download and copied.

53. Teacher employers, as well as the statutory authorities that regulate teacher registration, are required to comply with legislation prohibiting discrimination in employment. Individuals have a number of avenues to pursue complaints and reviews of process. These include, but are not limited to:

- *Australian Human Rights Commission Act 1986* (formerly called the *Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission Act 1986*)
- *Age Discrimination Act 2004*
- *Disability Discrimination Act 1992*
- *Racial Discrimination Act 1975*
- *Sex Discrimination Act 1984*
- *Fair Work Act 2009* and the Fair Work Ombudsman
- Civil and administrative appeals processes in each state and territory

### *Australian Curriculum*

54. All Australian governments have committed to the development and implementation of an Australian Curriculum from Foundation to Year 12.

55. In 2008, the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) was established, to develop a rigorous and world-class Australian Curriculum.

56. The Australian Curriculum development was guided by the 2008 Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians, agreed by all education ministers.

57. In 2010, all of Australia's education ministers endorsed Australia's first national curriculum for Foundation to Year 10 in the learning areas of English, mathematics, science and history.

58. In 2014, the Review of the Australian Curriculum was established by the Australian Government. The Review evaluated the robustness, independence and balance of the development and content of the Australian Curriculum. It also sought to understand whether the curriculum is delivering what students need, parents expect and the nation requires in an increasingly competitive world.

59. In September 2015, all Education Ministers endorsed the revised Australian Curriculum for Foundation to Year 10 across eight learning areas. Learning areas included English, mathematics, science, humanities and social sciences, the arts, health and physical education, languages, and technologies. The curriculum has three cross-curriculum areas and seven general capabilities.

60. Under the *Australian Education Act 2013*, all schools and school systems are required to implement the Australian Curriculum or an alternative curriculum that is approved by ACARA.

61. State and territory curriculum, assessment and certification authorities are responsible for implementing the Australian Curriculum and determining how content and achievement standards are integrated into their schools. The curriculum can be used flexibly according to jurisdictional and system policies.

### *Students with disability*

62. Under the Disability Standards for Education 2005 schools are required to make reasonable adjustments to assist students with disability to participate on the same basis as other students. Schools can draw upon a broad range of resources to provide reasonable adjustments including targeted disability programmes and resources, as well as ongoing school funding and utilisation of general school resources to address the needs of students with disability.

63. In addition, all states and territories offer a range of specific programs to address the individual needs of students, including those for students with intellectual and physical disability, autism spectrum disorder, dyslexia or other learning difficulties.

64. The Australian Government is committed to working with state and territory governments and non-government education authorities to support the ongoing implementation of the Nationally Consistent Collection of Data on School Students with Disability (NCCD). Through this annual data collection, schools and governments are reporting for the first time in a nationally consistent way on the number of students in Australian schools requiring an educational adjustment (as required under the Disability Standards for Education 2005) to access education because of a disability. After three years of progressive implementation, nearly all schools (99.9 per cent) participated in the NCCD in 2015.

65. The *National Disability Strategy 2010–2020* is Australia's national policy framework for disability reform, and an important mechanism to ensure that the principles underpinning the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities are incorporated into policies and programmes affecting people with disability, their families and carers. One of the central outcomes of the strategy is to ensure that people with disability achieve their full potential through their participation in an inclusive high quality education system that is responsive to their needs, and that people with disability have opportunities to continue learning throughout their lives. There are a range of actions and initiatives under the strategy designed to reduce barriers, simplify access, and improve inclusion and support for students with disability within the Australian curriculum.

### *Transparency*

66. The Australian Government is committed to improving the quality of education and providing greater transparency and accountability of school performance.

67. The Education Council's Measurement Framework for Schooling in Australia (May 2015) defines national key performance measures for schooling arising from the 2008 Melbourne Declaration and is the basis of reporting to Education ministers.

68. The agreed areas of performance monitoring established in the Measurement Framework include:

- participation focusing on enrolment in school, student attendance, participation in the national assessments, participation of young people in vocational education and training and participation by young people in post-school learning pathways and work;
- achievement in the National Assessment Program (NAP) focusing on literacy, numeracy, civics and citizenship, ICT literacy and science literacy
- attainment focusing on school completion and attainment, attainment of young people in post-school learning pathways, population-based attainment measures providing evidence of the outcomes of schooling
- equity focusing on indigenous status, sex, language background, geographic location, socioeconomic background and disability.

69. The key reports that focus on performance and reporting for the school education sector at the aggregate national, jurisdictional and sector level are:

- The National Report on Schooling in Australia (ANR) published by ACARA.
- The Report on Government Services (RoGS) and its Indigenous Compendium published by the Productivity Commission and Chapter 4 provides details on school education.
- The National Agreement Performance Report providing information about the achievement of agreed national benchmarks and targets published by CoAG, including for the NEA and NERA.
- The report of the national analysis of National Assessment Program Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) published by ACARA.

- Trends in Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) and the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) published by the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER).
- Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) published by the OECD, including a separate report on Australia's performance.

70. At the school-level, the My School website managed by ACARA and launched in 2010 is part of the Australian and other government's commitment to deliver genuine transparency of the performance of Australia's schools. The information contained on the website helps parents, schools and the broader community gain a better understanding of the different circumstances of each school. It also assists them to share best practice and provides greater impetus for education ministers to drive school improvement.

71. The framework for information published on My School was agreed by all states and territories, and reflects research and expert advice that the most appropriate indicators to publish about schools are those that provide insight into three aspects of a school:

- the outcomes of students, including literacy and numeracy outcomes
- the context in which a school operates, including the levels of educational advantage or disadvantage that students bring to their school
- the school's capacity, including the numbers of teaching staff and resources.

72. For each school in Australia, the website provides a national profile that contains a range of information about the school, including details about the type of school, results from national literacy and numeracy tests, student and staff numbers, student attendance rate, socio-educational background of the school student body, teaching resources, Year 12 attainment, post-school destinations, school financial data and growth data on literacy and numeracy achievement.

73. The information published provides the evidence necessary to support the continuous improvement of students, schools and education systems over time, In 2014 the Australian Government and commissioned an independent consultant's review of My School and based on discussions with Education Ministers in 2015 a range of improvements and commitments to new indicators was agreed and is being progressed by ACARA.

### *National Assessment Program*

74. Under the *Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians* (Melbourne Declaration), state and territory governments have agreed to a reporting and transparency framework for schools to support accountability for outcomes. The *Measurement Framework for Schooling in Australia*, including the Schedule of Key Performance Measures, is the basis for reporting by Australian Education Ministers to the community on progress towards the Melbourne Declaration. Further, non-government schools must meet the same transparency requirements under the *Australian Education Act 2013*.

75. The National Assessment Program (NAP) comes under the reporting and transparency framework and is run at the direction of the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) Education Council, and includes the following assessments:

- the National Assessment Program-Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) which consists of full cohort annual literacy and numeracy testing of students in Years 3, 5, 7 and 9
- NAP Sample Assessments—Triennial sample studies in science literacy, civics and citizenship and information and communication technologies
- International assessments—PISA, TIMSS, and PIRLS.

### *NAPLAN*

76. NAPLAN is one of the reported measures through which governments, education authorities and schools can determine whether or not young Australians are meeting important educational outcomes. NAPLAN commenced in 2008 and is delivered annually to all Australian students in Years 3, 5, 7 and 9. Students are assessed during the second week in May in the domains of reading, writing, language conventions (spelling, grammar and punctuation) and numeracy.

77. The Australian Government is working with states and territories, the Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority and Education Services Australia to develop a platform that will deliver national assessments online, including NAPLAN. NAPLAN online assessments will be available for use by schools from 2017 onwards. Education Ministers have committed to all schools being able to undertake NAPLAN online by 2019.

78. Moving NAPLAN online will transform national testing, giving teachers and parents faster and more accurate information regarding student performance by tailoring individual tests to match each student's ability. This will allow more timely and targeted action to be taken to improve the literacy and numeracy skills of young people.

### *NAPLAN Testing and Reporting*

79. NAPLAN tests are important because they identify whether children have the basic literacy and numeracy skills that are essential for every child to progress through school and life, such as reading, writing, spelling, and numeracy. For each domain, there is a single continuous scale of achievement across ten bands from Year 3 to Year 9. The ten bands represent the increasing complexity of the skills and understandings assessed by NAPLAN from Years 3 to 9, and six bands are used for reporting student performance at each year level.

80. The second lowest band on the achievement scale represents the national minimum standard expected of students at each year level. Students whose results are in the lowest band for the year level are at risk of being unable to progress satisfactorily at school without targeted intervention to enable them to achieve their potential. Students who are achieving at the national minimum standard (their results are in the second lowest band) may also require additional assistance to enable them to achieve their potential.

81. Results from the NAPLAN tests are reported in several ways:

- Parents of students taking the tests receive a report showing their child's results along with common national key information about his or her performance
- Jurisdictions provide schools with a detailed report on their students' NAPLAN results. Principals and teachers use this information to monitor student progress and identify students in need of additional support
- National, state and territory results are provided each year through the Summary Report (August) and the National Report (December)
- School level results are reported on the MySchool website

82. The standardised reporting of NAPLAN test results offers an objective view of students' performance and a sound basis for decision making about literacy and numeracy policies, practices and resourcing. It also allows the Australian public to develop a national perspective on student achievement and the performance of schools.

83. The NAPLAN 2015 National Report was released on 2 December 2015 and the results show that across all domains and year levels an average 92.5 per cent of students are achieving at or above national minimum standard.

### *International Assessments*

84. The OECD's PISA is an international assessment of 15 year-old students in reading literacy, mathematical literacy and scientific literacy which is conducted on a three year cycle. The focus of PISA is to determine the extent to which students nearing the end of their compulsory schooling have the ability to apply their skills and knowledge in real-life contexts.

85. Student performance in PISA testing is used to measure the agreed COAG outcome "Australian students excel by international standards" and the objective of the *Australian Education Act 2013* that Australia "be placed, by 2025, in the top 5 highest performing countries based on the performance of school students in reading, mathematics and science" and "for the Australian schooling system to be considered a high quality and highly equitable schooling system by international standards by 2025".

86. Australia also participates in the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA) sample assessments—TIMSS and the PIRLS. TIMSS is a four yearly curricula-based assessment of years 4 and 8 students' achievement in mathematics and science. PIRLS is a five yearly curricula-based assessment of Year 4 students' achievement in the areas of reading for literacy experience and reading to acquire and use information.

87. Data and results on NAPLAN, PISA, TIMSS and PIRLS are at the end of this report under data and reporting.

### *National Partnerships*

88. The National School Chaplaincy Programme Project Agreement is funded by the Commonwealth and delivered by States and Territories. The Agreement provides $243.8 million over four years (2014–15 to 2017–18) to assist over 3000 schools

engage the services of a school chaplain, to support the emotional wellbeing of students through the provision of pastoral care services and strategies that support the emotional wellbeing of the broader school community.

### *Information and communication technology (ICT) in school education*

89. The Australian Government recognises the potential of ICT in improving the quality of teaching and learning throughout all Australian schools, and continues to implement strategies to ensure that all young people have access to a high-quality school education.

### *Indigenous people and education*

90. The Australian Government is committed to driving changes that provide good access to quality education for Indigenous peoples and is working to improve teacher quality and achieve better outcomes for Indigenous students. It is taking steps to ensure Indigenous education is provided in ways that respect Indigenous cultures. The Australian Government is working with other governments, the non-government sector and families to increase the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children: going to preschool, attending school regularly, performing well at school, staying on at school through to Year 12, and making successful transitions into further education and employment.

91. Since 1990, the Australian Federal Government has worked with state and territory governments to improve outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. In 2015, Education Ministers endorsed the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Strategy, which builds on existing national initiatives by setting out principles and priorities to inform jurisdictional approaches to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education. The seven linked priorities of the Strategy are:

- school and child readiness
- literacy and numeracy
- attendance
- transition points including pathways to post-school options
- leadership, quality teaching and workforce development
- culture and identity
- partnerships

92. In 2008, the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) agreed to ambitious targets to address the disadvantage faced by Indigenous Australians in life expectancy, child mortality, education and employment. These targets include a focus on access to education; school attendance; improving reading, writing, and numeracy; and finishing school.

93. In 2013, the whole of Government policy and program responsibility for Indigenous advancement (including policy and programme responsibilities previously held within the education portfolio) was centralised within the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet.

94. The Australian Government provides specific funding to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students through the Children and Schooling programme, part of the Australian Government's Indigenous Advancement Strategy. In 2015–16, the Children and Schooling programme is providing $237.5 million to projects to improve school attendance, educational outcomes and Year 12 retention. This funding supplements mainstream funding in early childhood, schooling and higher education.

### *School attendance*

95. Improving school attendance rates amongst Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students is a key priority for the Australian Government. School attendance rates for Indigenous students are well below those of their non-Indigenous peers across all years of schooling; and this gap increases with remoteness and age. Being present at school is the first step to accessing the benefits and learning opportunities presented by a good education.

96. Recognising that regular school attendance is important to a child's literacy and numeracy development and level of educational attainment, in May 2014, COAG agreed to a new target to close the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous school attendance within five years (by the end of 2018). There is still some way to go in meeting the target agreed by COAG. Attendance is a particular issue in remote areas. Data released in December 2014 shows the proportion of schools achieving the 90 per cent benchmark for Indigenous student attendance varies sharply depending on location: 48 per cent of schools in metropolitan areas, 44 per cent in provincial, 21 per cent in remote and only 14 per cent in very remote areas.

97. In 2014, in response to this crisis in remote areas, the Remote School Attendance Strategy (RSAS) was implemented by the Australian Government. Between 2016 and 2018, the Australian Government has invested $80.1 million in the RSAS. The RSAS operates in 77 remote schools across Australia and aims to improve rates of Indigenous school attendance through employing local community members as school attendance officers and supervisors to provide support to children to attend school every day. Since the initiative began, there has been a two percentage point increase in school attendance across RSAS schools. RSAS has highlighted the complexity of factors that underpin school attendance, including factors linked to social functioning. Issues like family mobility have also been highlighted through the roll out as impacting significantly on attendance.

### *Schooling*

98. Each aspect of Australia's national school education policy architecture includes Indigenous specific elements, including:

- the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers (through 1.4 strategies for teaching Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, and 2.4 understand and respect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to promote reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians)
- the Australian Curriculum (through the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures cross-curriculum priority)
- school funding (through the Indigenous loading which is paid in respect of each Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student at a school).

99. A significant restructure of existing programmes has been implemented to redirect funding to initiatives that have been demonstrated to work, and to put greater weighting of funding towards Indigenous students of greatest disadvantage—those in remote areas of the country.

100. To assist remote students to access secondary schooling and support Year 12 attainment as well as support higher education and training outcomes, the Australian Government funds the ABSTUDY scheme as part of the income support system. ABSTUDY can provide a means-tested living allowance, travel, accommodation and other entitlements and assists around 30,000 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students each year.

101. The Australian Government supports Indigenous students' education through a range of initiatives, including:

- investing an estimated $244.04 million in 2016, through the Indigenous loading under recurrent funding arrangements, to ensure every school has the funding it needs to support Indigenous students to achieve a quality education
- from 2014 to 2016 non-government boarding schools with large numbers of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander boarding students from remote or very remote areas are eligible to receive additional Australian Government recurrent funding. In 2015, 26 schools received funding under the initiative. It is estimated funding under the initiative will total well over $11.5 million.
- $22 million over four years to the Flexible Literacy for Remote Primary School Programme to address the disparity in literacy outcomes of children in remote primary schools and their metropolitan peers through the delivery of two proven literacy teaching approaches (Direct Instruction and Explicit Instruction). Although the majority of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples live in metropolitan areas, there is a higher population density of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in remote locations.

102. Under the National Partnership Agreement on Northern Territory Remote Aboriginal Investment (NTRAI) the Australian Government is investing $287 million over 7 years (2015–16 to 2021–22) in improving student outcomes in the Northern Territory. This includes $244 million to Government schools and $42.6 million to the non-government schools sector.

103. In addition, the Australian contributed to the construction of a 40-bed boarding facility in Wadeye and is contributing to the Northern Territory Government's construction of another facility in Nhulunbuy in Arnhem Land. The new Nhulunbuy facility is expected to accommodate 40 students and will become operational in 2017.

104. The Australian Government has committed significant resources through the Indigenous Advancement Strategy to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students to successfully transition into further education, training and employment. Australian Government funding supports a number of initiatives to assist young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people from regional and remote communities to access education and training. This includes mentoring initiatives such as the Australian Indigenous Mentoring Experience (AIME); intensive school-based academies to facilitate student participation in education (such as those delivered by the Clontarf Foundation and Role Models & Leaders Australia); and a range of scholarship

and mobility projects (such as those delivered by the Australian Indigenous Education Foundation).

### *Women and men in education*

105. Women have overtaken men in several key aspects of education performance. In general terms, girls out-perform boys during the school years in terms of levels of literacy and numeracy, retention to the end of secondary school (Year 12) and achievement in Year 12 (which increases the chances of entry into university). On the other hand, the post school experience of women and men in education, while different in character, is in many respects more equal.

106. In 2010, women represented 47.4 per cent of all government funded Vocational Education and Training (VET) students. Women tend to undertake higher level Certificates and have pass rates comparable to men.[1] Of all students undertaking higher education in 2005, 54.5 per cent were women and 45.5 per cent were men.

### *Rural and remote education*

107. The Australian Government recognises that rural, regional and isolated schools and communities have unique challenges in accessing appropriate compulsory education due to geographical isolation. The Government understands the need to support students who may find it difficult to access education and therefore may feel disconnected from education. This may involve particular challenges for governments of all levels, as well as community and stakeholder groups, teachers, education systems and society as a whole.

108. The Government is strongly committed to building a world-class education system that will equip all Australian children with the necessary skills to allow them to succeed in an increasingly competitive world. The Government is working with the states and territories to ensure that students from disadvantaged backgrounds have access to high quality education and experience the same educational opportunities as other students.

109. Australian Government funding for national education initiatives assists in meeting the needs of students in regional Australia. All jurisdictions are funded through a national needs-based funding model. This means that all schools and systems will have Commonwealth funding determined consistently, incorporating a base per student amount and additional funding (a loading) to target disadvantage, including remoteness.

110. These additional resources, or loadings, are allocated to schools and systems to provide for the needs of students who require extra support—such as those from lower income families, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, disadvantaged students with limited English skills and students with disabilities. There are also loadings to reflect the additional cost of operating smaller schools and schools in regional, rural and remote areas.

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[1] Source: Higher Ed' statistics Table 21: All students by Level of Course, Broad Field of Education and Gender, Full Year 2005.

111. While the Australian Government provides substantial funding to state and territory schools and works collaboratively with state and territory governments in developing national priorities for education, it does not have a direct role in the administration or operation of schools.

112. Additional support is also provided through targeted programs to families such as the Assistance for Isolated Children (AIC) Scheme which is managed by the Department of Social Services. The AIC Scheme is an ongoing program providing financial assistance to families of students who are unable to attend an appropriate government school on a daily basis because of geographical isolation. The underlying principle of the Scheme is that all Australian children should have reasonable daily access to an appropriate government school without regard to parents' income. State and territory education authorities also have support programs for their students who may be geographically isolated from education services.

113. The Australian Government continues to engage with a number of key rural and regional educational stakeholders to ensure their concerns and issues are taken into consideration in the development of policy and programs.

## Higher education

114. In 2016, the Australian higher education sector comprises 41 Australian universities, two branches of overseas universities and around 126 non-university providers of higher education. Universities educate around 95 per cent of Australian students enrolled in higher education.

115. The majority of Australian undergraduate students are enrolled in a Commonwealth supported place. The Australian Government contributes to the cost of these places through Commonwealth Grant Scheme funding. The amount of government funding varies according to the field of study and, in 2016, ranges from $2059 to $22,472.

116. Australian students contribute towards the cost of their education by paying a student contribution amount. Higher education providers are able to set student contributions within a range from $0 to a maximum set by the Australian Government. In 2016 the maximum annual student contributions range from $6256 for subjects including nursing, teaching and humanities to $10,440 for subjects including law, economics and medicine.

117. Eligible students can access a HELP loan to defer payment of their tuition costs. HELP debts are required to be paid back only after an annual income threshold has been reached, $54,126 in 2015–16. HELP debts are indexed by the Consumer Price Index to maintain their real value but are otherwise interest free.

118. In November 2013 the Government commissioned a review of the demand driven funding system, in which the Government funds Commonwealth supported places for all bachelor level domestic students (except in medicine courses) accepted into public universities. The review found universities have responded to increased student demand by providing more places. The demand driven system has increased enrolments in higher education by low socio-economic status students, people from regional and remote areas, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

119. In higher education, the following groups have been identified as targets for Government support on the basis of their history of relative disadvantage in accessing higher education: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, people from low socioeconomic backgrounds, people with disabilities, and people from regional and remote areas.

### *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people*

120. Following on from the Review of Australia's Higher Education System (Bradley Review) and the 2012 Review of Higher Education Access and Outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People (Behrendt Review), the Australian Government and universities worked together to reform supplementary programs assisting Australia's 15,000 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander university students. The Indigenous Student Success in Higher Education measure was announced in the May 2016 Budget, at a total cost of $253.1 million over four years. The measure combines funding from the Indigenous Support Program; Commonwealth Scholarship Program; and tutorial support funded under the Indigenous Advancement Strategy into a single flexible program. From 1 January 2017, universities will have more capacity to design their scholarships, tutorial support and other assistance to ensure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students are enrolling, progressing and completing their awards in greater numbers.

121. Subsequent to the Review of Higher Education Access and Outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People, an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Higher Education Advisory Council (ATSIHEAC) was convened. ATSIHEAC comprised members with both depth and diversity of experience and expertise across: Indigenous education; research and research training; university governance; economics; business; public policy; the professions; and community engagement. The Council had majority Indigenous membership.

122. The Council's final advice was published on 10 December 2015 and includes recommendations to progress priority areas in Indigenous higher education. The Council also provided working papers on key areas of work, including:

- increasing the number of Indigenous academics
- outlining whole-of-university approaches to improving outcomes for Indigenous people at university
- Indigenous participation in science, technology, engineering, mathematics and business disciplines.

123. Work on implementation of the ATSIHEAC recommendations has been commissioned through projects funded under the Higher Education Participation and Partnerships Program. The National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Higher Education Consortium (NATSIHEC) is working on one project addressing each of the recommendations. The Australian Council of Business Deans (ABDC) is working on a project focused on Indigenous participation in business disciplines. NATSIHEC are expected to report in December 2016 while the ABDC project final report is due in December 2017. The Australian Government is working alongside these projects to implement the ATSIHEAC recommendations and to improve higher education access and outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

### *People from low socioeconomic backgrounds*

124. The Higher Education Participation and Partnerships Program (HEPPP) was established in 2010 to help ensure that Australians from low SES backgrounds who have the ability to study at university get the opportunity to do so. The program provides funding to eligible higher education providers to improve access, retention and completion rates of students from low SES backgrounds. The HEPPP has three components: Participation, Partnerships and the National Priorities Pool. The Participation component funds providers by formula based on the number of students from low SES backgrounds enrolled. The Partnerships component funds providers to undertake projects to raise the aspiration and capacity of students from low SES backgrounds to participate in higher education. Partners can include schools, state and territory governments, VET providers and community groups. The National Priorities Pool component provides funding to providers to undertake projects that support the more effective implementation of the HEPPP nationally and at the institutional level.

125. The HEPPP's objectives include achieving a target that by 2020, 20 per cent of higher education enrolments at the undergraduate level will be people from low SES backgrounds. In 2014, students from low SES backgrounds comprised 17.5 per cent of all domestic undergraduate students. Between 2011 and 2014 the number of commencing low SES students increased by 24 per cent from 51,591 to 64,160.

The Demand Driven System of access to higher education was introduced in 2012. Under the Demand Driven System, public universities determine how many domestic students they enrol in bachelor level courses (apart from medicine where places remain capped). The Australian Government funds Commonwealth supported places (CSPs) through the Commonwealth Grant Scheme to subsidise the tuition costs for these students. In addition, the Higher Education Loan Program provides income contingent loans to students with CSPs so they can borrow the remainder of their tuition costs and ensures they are not deterred from study by upfront costs. The Demand Driven System has provided greater access to university for students from disadvantaged backgrounds.

### *People with disabilities*

126. The Disability Support Program (DSP) was established in 2004 to increase access and participation in higher education by domestic students with disability. The DSP funds eligible higher education providers through three components: Additional Support for Students with Disabilities (ASSD), Performance-based Disability Support Funding and the Australian Clearinghouse on Education and Training (ADCET). The ASSD component is a payment providing partial reimbursement of the cost of educational support services and/or equipment for students with disability who have high cost needs. The Performance-based Disability Support Funding component provides funding for each institution based on the number of students with disability enrolled, adjusted for their retention and success ratios. The Australian Disability Clearinghouse on Education and Training (ADCET) component is a website that provides information and other resources designed to promote inclusive teaching and learning practices for people with disability. Between 2011 and 2014 the number of commencing students with disability increased by 41 per cent from 14,480 to 20,405.

### *People from rural and remote areas*

127. Funding for teaching, learning and research for regional headquartered universities increased from $1.11 billion in 2007 to an estimated $1.99 billion in 2016 (an increase of 79 per cent). Research funding for regional headquartered universities increased from $117 million in 2007 to an estimated $170 million in 2016 (an increase of 45 per cent).

128. The Government's investments have resulted in an increase in regional participation. Undergraduate Commonwealth supported places at regional headquartered universities have increased from 62,634 equivalent full-time student load (EFTSL) in 2007 to an estimated 89,012 EFTSL in 2016 (an increase of 42 per cent).

## Vocational Education and Training

129. Vocational education and training is an area of shared responsibility between the Australian Government and the state and territory governments.

130. The Australian Government takes a national leadership role in vocational education and training. It works with the states and territories to ensure national frameworks are in place to achieve high quality outcomes for vocational education and training students, and to achieve national consistency and coherence.

131. The Australian Government works directly with industry, including the peak industry associations of employer and employee groups, to ensure that the vocational education and training system is responsive to industry needs.

132. The key features of Australia's national training system are:

- Competency-based training. The system is based on industry defined competencies that make up the skills and knowledge required to participate in a chosen industry field/career. Qualifications are made of combinations of competencies that can be accumulated to reach exit point qualifications ranging from Certificate I to Advanced Diploma;
- Strong industry focus. The vocational education and training system sets out formal mechanisms for industry engagement through active participation in industry advisory arrangements at all levels of decision making and in the development of industry endorsed training packages. Training Packages ensure relevance for industry and are sets of nationally endorsed standards and qualifications for recognising and assessing people's skills. A training package describes the skills and knowledge needed to perform effectively in the workplace. They cover the full range of Australian industries including, but not limited to, aviation, community services, electrical, engineering, music, maritime, manufacturing, tourism, and business;
- A diverse provider market. Training is provided by public, private and community-based training organisations;
- Quality assurance and regulation arrangements are in place to ensure the quality of the vocational education and training system so that it produces the skills the Australian workforce needs and to ensure regulators have the necessary tools to protect the interests of all students undertaking training in Australia. Key elements include: national standards governing the operation of

training providers and the quality of training and assessment outcomes; a standards framework for qualifications—the Australian Qualifications Framework; and registration, regulation and monitoring of the performance of registered training providers through the Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA). ASQA regulates all registered training organisations except those that operate solely in Victoria and Western Australia and that do not offer services to international students; and

- Income contingent loans (for Diploma and above level qualifications). The Australian Government administers the VET FEE-HELP loan scheme to make higher level vocational education and training more accessible to students who may not otherwise have had access. These debts are repaid through the taxation system once a student's repayment income is above the compulsory repayment threshold.

### *Australian Apprenticeships*

133. The Australian Apprenticeships Incentives Program (formerly New Apprenticeships) was introduced in 1998 with the aim of developing a more skilled Australian workforce that delivers long-term benefits for our nation and our international competitiveness.

134. Australian Apprenticeships combine time at work with training and can be full-time, part-time or school-based, are available to anyone of working age and are available in a variety of certificate levels in more than 500 occupations across Australia, in traditional trades, as well as a diverse range of emerging careers in most sectors of business and industry.

135. There were 278,600 Australian Apprentices in-training as at 31 December 2015.

## International education

### *Australia Awards—Endeavour Scholarships and Fellowships*

136. The Endeavour Scholarships and Fellowships are a part of the whole-of-government Australia Awards initiative which was announced in November 2009. The Australia Awards bring together scholarships and fellowships administered by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade the Department of Education and Training and the Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research.The Australia Awards have been established to maximise the benefit to Australia of its extensive scholarship programs, and to support enduring ties between Australia and our neighbours. Further information is available at www.AustraliaAwards.gov.au.

137. The Endeavour Scholarships and Fellowships are merit-based scholarships and fellowships providing opportunities for Australians to undertake study, research or professional development overseas and for overseas citizens to do the same in Australia.

138. The Endeavour Scholarships and Fellowships aim to:

- develop ongoing educational, research and professional links between individuals, organisations and countries

- increase the skills and global awareness of high achieving individuals from Australia and overseas
- contribute to Australia's reputation as a high quality provider of education and training and a leader in research and innovation
- increase the productivity of Australians through international study, research or professional development experience.

139. The Endeavour Scholarships and Fellowships categories include:

- Endeavour Postgraduate Scholarship
- Endeavour Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Scholarship
- Endeavour Research Fellowship, including:
  - Endeavour Australia Cheung Kong Research Fellowship
  - Endeavour Research Fellowship for Indigenous Australians
  - Endeavour Australia India Education Council Research Fellowship
- Endeavour Vocational Education and Training Scholarship
- Endeavour Executive Fellowship

***Australia Awards—Endeavour Mobility Grants***

140. The Australian Government is committed to providing support for more Australians to study overseas as part of their Australian qualification. Australian Government support for student mobility goes back to the University Mobility in the Asia and the Pacific exchange program (established in the 1990s) and has grown to include short-term and semester-based mobility for higher education and vocational education and training students.

141. Endeavour Mobility Grants comprise a suite of programs that provide funding to Australian tertiary education institutions to facilitate the outward mobility of Australian students globally. The programs also support inward overseas students to undertake semester exchange in Australia. Students receive grants to support their participation in short-term programs (less than six-months) including practicums, clinical placements, internships and volunteer projects as well as semester exchange programs.

142. The program aims to:

- support undergraduate, postgraduate and vocational education and training students to study globally as part of their qualification, where the study is for academic credit or is otherwise a mandatory component of the student's course
- create opportunities for students to engage globally with other students, institutions and employers
- strengthen institutional capacity to collaborate and partner with overseas education providers.

143. All Australian higher education providers (approved under the *Higher Education Support Act 2003*) and registered training organisations (registered by the Australian Skills Quality Authority or state regulator to deliver vocational education and training services) are eligible to apply for funding. Institutions may use their own process to select eligible students. Program guidelines encourage equal opportunity, and the selection criterion requires a response on how the institution's mobility program will encourage and support the participation of students from identified disadvantaged backgrounds.

### *International Qualification Recognition*

144. Australia is party to several recognition conventions in relation to qualifications in higher education, including drafting of the Global Convention on the Recognition of Higher Education Qualifications, and is guided by the principles which stipulate that students and workers should have access to fair, non-discriminatory, consistent and transparent processes for the evaluation of their overseas qualifications.

# Annex A—Data and Reporting

### *NAPLAN 2011 Results*

- Overall, the 2011 NAPLAN results show that around 90 per cent of Australian students in Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 are performing at or above the national minimum standard in reading, writing, language conventions (spelling, grammar and punctuation) and numeracy.
- 2011 is the second year that NAPLAN data has been available showing achievement and gain for the same cohort of students i.e. the same cohort of students who sat the tests in 2008 also sat the tests in 2010, and those who sat in 2009 also sat in 2011.

### *Gain*

- The national report includes data showing the increase in achievement for students in each state and territory who were first assessed in 2009 and then again in 2011 (student 'gain').
- In 2011 the greatest gain is 93.9 mean scale scores in Numeracy for the 2009–2011 Year 3–5 cohort.

### *Mean Scale Scores*

- Nationally the results between 2010 and 2011 are stable. Most changes in mean scale scores were minor and not statistically significant.
- The results between 2008 and 2011 are also stable with small changes in mean scale scores. The exceptions are the following that both show statistically significant improvements:
  - Year 3 Reading
  - Year 5 Numeracy

### *Percentage At or Above the National Minimum Standard*

- In 2011 for Reading and Numeracy, 93.7 per cent of Australian students are estimated to be achieving at or above the national minimum standard.
- The greatest change from 2010 to 2011 is an increase of 1.6 percentage points for Year 9 Reading and from 2008 to 2011 the greatest change is for Year 3 Reading and Year 5 Numeracy of an increase of 1.7 percentage points.

### *Indigenous students*

- In 2011, nationally across Reading and Numeracy 74.9 per cent of Indigenous students are at or above the national minimum standard compared to 94.8 per cent for non-Indigenous students.
- In 2011 statistically significant improvements were made in both Year 3 Numeracy and Year 9 Reading for Indigenous students.
- The greatest narrowing of the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students occurred in Year 9 Reading of approximately 7 mean scale scores.

- Since 2010, the gap between the percentages of Indigenous and non-Indigenous students at or above the national minimum standard has narrowed slightly in all but Year 5 Reading. The largest decrease in the gap of 5.9 and 6.4 percentage points occurred in Year 3 Numeracy and Year 9 Reading respectively.

***Geolocation***

- Students in metropolitan areas outperformed students in all other geolocations. By far the widest gap is between students from remote and very remote geolocations of 29.1 per cent at or above the national minimum standard for Reading and Numeracy.

***Indigenous Student Status by Geolocation***

- In 2011, the national mean scale scores for Indigenous students in all geolocations are below the national mean scale score for very remote non-Indigenous students
- Nationally, Indigenous very remote students in Year 5 Reading (321.6 mean scale scores) are performing below the Year 3 Reading non-Indigenous metropolitan students (425.7 mean scale scores).

***Gender***

- In 2011, as in 2010, females performed better than males in Reading at all year levels
- In 2011, as in 2010, males performed better than females in Numeracy at all year levels.

***NAP Sample Assessments Testing and Reporting***

National sample assessments allow nationally comparable reporting on the progress of students in priority areas of schooling using agreed key performance measures.

- The NAP Sample Assessments test students' skills and understanding in Science Literacy, Civics and Citizenship and Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) Literacy. Only samples of students in Years 6 and 10 participate in these assessments (Year 6 only for Science Literacy), which are held on a rolling three-yearly basis. Sample Assessments began in 2003 with Science Literacy, Civics and Citizenship in 2004 and ICT Literacy in 2005. This pattern continues with ICT literacy tested in 2011 and science literacy to be tested in 2012.
- Student performance in the sample assessments is described using proficiency levels. The proficient standard is a challenging level of performance, with students needing to demonstrate more than minimal or elementary skills to be regarded as proficient.
- Student achievement is reported at the national, state and territory level and by selected student background characteristics—sex, Indigenous status, parental education and occupation, language background and geographic location.
- Assessing and reporting on science literacy, civics and citizenship and ICT literacy enables us to better understand and improve on our students' skills and knowledge in these important areas.

### *International Student Assessments*

When assessed against their peers in the OECD, Australian school children achieve well above average in reading, maths and science

- Through the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) it is possible to track and compare the performance of Australian 15 year olds since the year 2000.
- In reading literacy Australia saw a decline in both its absolute and relative performance between PISA 2003 and PISA 2006. Performance in PISA 2009 was unchanged from 2006.
- In mathematical literacy Australia has recorded a slight, but gradual, decline in performance since PISA 2003.
- The performance of Australian 15 year-old students in scientific literacy was steady between PISA 2006 and PISA 2009.

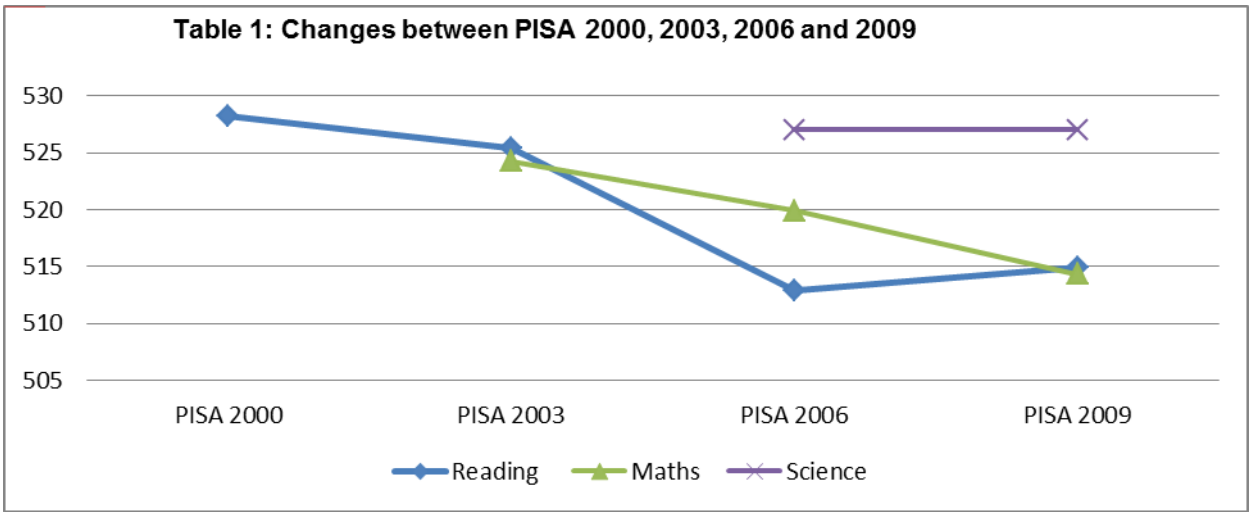
In addition to PISA, Australia also participates in trends in TIMSS and PIRLS.

- In TIMSS 2006, Australian students performed above average for Year 4 and Year 8 science and in Year 4 mathematics. The results for Year 8 mathematics results were equal to the OECD average.
- Australia's participation in international assessments forms part of the National Assessment Program (NAP). Participation in international assessments provides information on the progress of Australian school students relative to other countries and assists education systems to identify strengths and weaknesses in policy and practice.
- The Australian Government has introduced a number of reforms through the National Education Agreement and National Partnerships that will help ensure Australia remains a top achiever in international assessments.
- Many of the reforms introduced have focused on disadvantaged students and the impact of these policies may become evident in future cycles of PISA.

### *PISA*

- The PISA 2009 international report was released on 7 December 2010 and showed that Australian students continue to perform well internationally.
- The results for PISA 2009 show that since the last assessment cycle (PISA 2006), Australia's performance in science literacy has remained steady and Australia appears to have arrested any further decline in reading performance (see Table 1).
- Notwithstanding the changes in mathematical literacy since 2006 are not statistically significant, the results do show that Australia's performance is continuing to decline. Twelve countries or partner economies outperformed Australia in mathematical literacy in PISA 2009 compared with four in PISA 2003.

***Graph 1: Changes between PISA 2000, 2003, 2006 and 2009***




- The PISA results also show that Australia has a 'tail' of underperformance linked to disadvantage. The 'tail' of underperformance in Australian schools is concentrated amongst students from low socio-economic status (SES) families and Indigenous students. The results also show that the reading performance of Australian students at the high end of the achievement scale has declined between 2003, 2006 and 2009.

***TIMSS / PIRLS***

- In TIMSS 2006–07 Australian students achieved above average results for science in Year 4 and Year 8, and for mathematics in Year 4. Year 8 mathematics results were equal to the OECD average.
- Australian students sat TIMSS (Year 4 and 8) and PIRLS (Year 4) assessments during 2010. The results from these assessments will be reported in late 2012.

## *General school education data*

### *Table 1: Schools and Students by sector; 2015*

| Level | Gov. | Catholic [1] | Other | Total Non-Gov. | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Number of Schools** | | | | | |
| Primary | 4774 | 1235 | 215 | 1450 | 6224 |
| Secondary | 1032 | 324 | 53 | 377 | 1409 |
| Combined | 504 | 139 | 680 | 819 | 1323 |
| Special | 329 | 39 | 80 | 119 | 448 |
| **Total** | **6639** | **1737** | **1028** | **2765** | **9404** |
| *Schools with* [2] | | | | | |
| Primary Students | 5278 | 1374 | 895 | 2269 | 7547 |
| Secondary Students | 1536 | 463 | 733 | 1196 | 2732 |
| **Number of full-time students** | | | | | |
| Primary | 1,484,249 | 403,910 | 246,917 | 650,827 | 2,135,076 |
| Secondary | 942,011 | 361,147 | 292,460 | 653,607 | 1,595,618 |
| **Total** | **2,426,260** | **765,057** | **539,377** | **1,304,434** | **3,730,694** |
| **Number of full-time equivalent (FTE) students** [3] | | | | | |
| Primary | 1,485,532 | 404,010 | 247,068 | 651,079 | 2,136,611 |
| Secondary | 948,177 | 361,273 | 292,781 | 654,054 | 1,602,231 |
| **Total** | **2,433,710** | **765,284** | **539,849** | **1,305,132** | **3,738,842** |
| **Number of full-time indigenous students** | | | | | |
| Primary | 105,112 | 11,039 | 4,532 | 15,571 | 120,683 |
| Secondary | 61,740 | 9,846 | 6,530 | 16,376 | 78,116 |
| **Total** | **166,852** | **20,885** | **11,062** | **31,947** | **198,799** |

***Table 2: Student enrolments, number of schools and teaching staff full-time equivalent and student to teacher ratios: 2005–2015***

| Full-time Student Enrolments | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Sectors** | **2005** | **2010** | **2013** | **2014** | **2015** |
| Government | 2,246,087 | 2,282,357 | 2,355,715 | 2,387,529 | 2,426,260 |
| Non-Government | 1,102,052 | 1,204,522 | 1,268,890 | 1,286,236 | 1,304,434 |
| Total | 3,348,139 | 3,486,879 | 3,624,605 | 3,673,765 | 3,730,694 |
| Government-Ratio | 67.1% | 65.5% | 65.0% | 65.0% | 65.0% |
| Non-Government-Ratio | 32.9% | 34.5% | 35.0% | 35.0% | 35.0% |
| **Number of Schools** | | | | | |
| **Sectors** | **2005** | **2010** | **2013** | **2014** | **2015** |
| Government | 6929 | 6743 | 6661 | 6651 | 6639 |
| Non-Government | 2694 | 2725 | 2732 | 2738 | 2765 |
| Total | 9623 | 9468 | 9393 | 9389 | 9404 |
| Government-Ratio | 72.0% | 71.2% | 70.9% | 70.8% | 70.6% |
| Non-Government-Ratio | 28.0% | 28.8% | 29.1% | 29.2% | 29.4% |
| | | | | | |
| **Teaching Staff** | | | | | |
| **Full-Time Equivalent** | **2005** | **2010** | **2013** | **2014** | **2015** |
| Male | 75,544 | 76,828 | 77,628 | 77,618 | 78,376 |
| Female | 160,250 | 174,594 | 183,957 | 186,447 | 190,824 |
| Total | 235,794 | 251,422 | 261,585 | 264,065 | 269,200 |
| Ratio Males | 32.0% | 30.6% | 29.7% | 29.4% | 29.1% |
| | | | | | |
| **Student to teacher ratios** | | | | | |
| **Primary** | **2005** | **2010** | **2013** | **2014** | **2015** |
| Government | 16.1 | 15.4 | 15.4 | 15.4 | 15.3 |
| Non-Government | 16.6 | 16.5 | 16.1 | 16.2 | 15.7 |
| Total | 16.2 | 15.7 | 15.6 | 15.6 | 15.4 |
| | | | | | |
| **Secondary** | **2005** | **2010** | **2013** | **2014** | **2015** |
| Government | 12.4 | 12.3 | 12.4 | 12.5 | 12.7 |
| Non-Government | 11.9 | 11.7 | 11.5 | 11.5 | 11.7 |
| Total | 12.2 | 12.0 | 12.0 | 12.1 | 12.3 |

***Table 3: Retention Rates by gender and Indigenous status: 2005–2015***

| Retention Rates (%) | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Year 7/8 to Year 12** | **2005** | **2010** | **2013** | **2014** | **2015** |
| Male | 69.9 | 73.2 | 77.8 | 80.0 | 80.7 |
| Female | 81.0 | 83.0 | 85.6 | 85.6 | 87.4 |
| Total | 75.3 | 78.0 | 81.6 | 83.6 | 84.0 |
| **Year 10 to Year 12** | | | | | |
| Male | 71.5 | 74.1 | 77.4 | 79.5 | 79.7 |
| Female | 81.6 | 82.9 | 84.1 | 85.7 | 85.9 |
| Total | 76.5 | 78.5 | 80.7 | 82.5 | 82.7 |
| **Indigenous students** | | | | | |
| Year 7/8 to Year 12 | 39.5 | 47.2 | 55.1 | 59.4 | 59.4 |
| Year 10 to Year 12 | 45.3 | 52.5 | 55.8 | 60.4 | 60.6 |
| **Non-Indigenous students** | | | | | |
| Year 7/8 to Year 12 | 76.6 | 79.4 | 82.9 | 84.8 | 85.2 |
| Year 10 to Year 12 | 77.5 | 79.5 | 81.9 | 83.6 | 83.8 |
| **Gap between Indigenous and Non-Indigenous students** | | | | | |
| Year 7/8 to Year 12 | 37.1 | 32.2 | 27.8 | 25.4 | 25.8 |
| Year 10 to Year 12 | 32.2 | 27.0 | 26.1 | 23.2 | 23.2 |

***Year 12 or equivalent attainment***

COAG targets aim to have 90 per cent Year 12 or equivalent attainment by 2015 and at least halve the gap in Indigenous Year 12 or equivalent attainment by 2020.

***General population***

The most recent data show that the Year 12 or equivalent attainment rate was 88.4 per cent in 2015.

***Table 4: Year 12 or equivalent attainment rates for 20–24 year olds, 2005 to 2015***

| Gender | 2005 | 2008 | 2010 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Male | 78.3% | 81.3% | 82.4% | 84.3% | 82.6% | 86.3% |
| Female | 84.1% | 87.3% | 88.9% | 89.2% | 89.4% | 90.1% |
| **Australia** | 81.2% | 84.2% | 85.6% | 86.7% | 86.1% | 88.4% |

***Indigenous***

Progress has been made since 2008 in the proportion of Indigenous young people attaining a Year 12, or equivalent qualification. Attainment rates for Indigenous 20–24 year olds have increased substantially since 2008, and the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous attainment rates has narrowed

**Year 12 or equivalent attainment rates for 20–24 year olds by Indigenous status, 2008 and 2014-15**

| Indigenous status | 2008[1] | 2014–15[2] | Change^ since 2008 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Indigenous | 45.4 % | 61.4 % | 16.0 |
| Non-Indigenous | 85.0 % | 86.4 % | 1.4 |
| **Gap** | **39.6 %** | **25.0 %** | **–14.6** |

**Table 3: Participation in vocational education and training (VET) by student groups, 2006 and 2010**

| | 2006 | | 2010 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Number of students ('000) | Share of VET | Number of students ('000) | Share of VET |
| Males | 878.2 | 52.4% | 942.2 | 52.4% |
| Females | 795.7 | 47.5% | 852.0 | 47.4% |
| Major Cities* | 909.8 | 54.3% | 966.6 | 53.7% |
| Regional* | 640.3 | 38.2% | 680.8 | 37.8% |
| Remote* | 44.1 | 2.6% | 43.4 | 2.4% |
| Very Remote* | 33.6 | 2.0% | 37.6 | 2.1% |
| Indigenous | 67.8 | 4.0% | 83.2 | 4.6% |
| Students with a disability | 102.4 | 6.1% | 110.1 | 6.1% |
| TOTAL | 1676.0 | 100% | 1799.0 | 100% |

Source: NCVER
*Accessibility/Remoteness Index of Australia (ARIA)

| Indigenous | Number of students | Share of vet students |
|---|---|---|
| 2003 | 58,087 | 3.37% |
| 2004 | 56,661 | 3.55% |
| 2005 | 62,894 | 3.8% |
| 2006 | 67,841 | 4.0% |
| 2007 | 70,902 | 4.3% |
| 2008 | 73,913 | 4.3% |
| 2009 | 74,758 | 4.4% |
| 2010 | 83,223 | 4.6% |

### *Participation in higher education*

As shown in Figures 1 and 2, there has been strong growth across most equity groups from 2011–2014. Students with disability, those from low socio-economic backgrounds, Indigenous students and students from a Non English speaking background have all grown at a faster rate than all commencing domestic students.

**Figure 1 Growth in Commencing Domestic Students by Equity Group, 2011–2014**

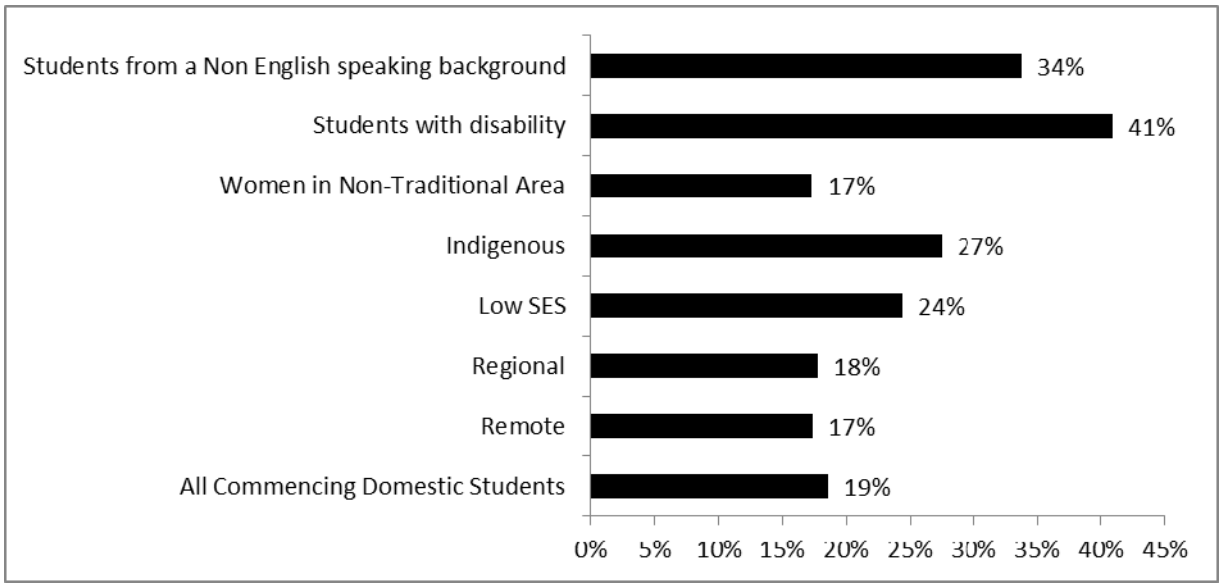
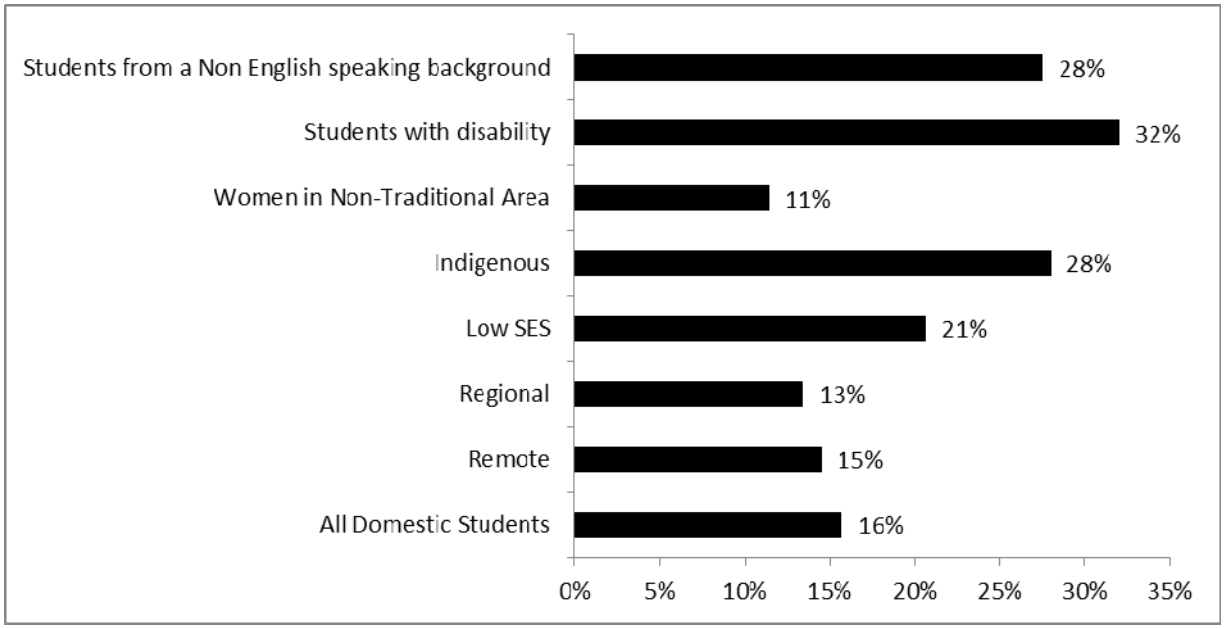



**Figure 2: Growth in All Domestic Students by Equity Group, 2011–2014**



## Commencing Domestic Students[(a)] by Equity Group, 2011 to 2014

| Equity Group | 2011 | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Students from a Non English speaking background | 12,891 | 14,667 | 15,328 | 17,249 |
| Students with disability | 14,480 | 16,728 | 18,212 | 20,405 |
| Women in Non-Traditional Area | 52,137 | 56,316 | 58,175 | 61,156 |
| Indigenous | 5359 | 5809 | 6247 | 6829 |
| Low SES (SA1 measure)[(b)] | 51,591 | 56,972 | 60,900 | 64,160 |
| Regional (2011 ASGS)[(c)] | 70,465 | 75,012 | 78,374 | 83,002 |
| Remote (2011 ASGS)[(c)] | 3422 | 3660 | 3717 | 4016 |
| **All Commencing Domestic Students** | **340,429** | **365,856** | **386,241** | **403,629** |

## All Domestic Students[(a)] by Equity Group, 2011 to 2014

| Equity Group | 2011 | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Students from a Non English speaking background | 30,595 | 33,432 | 35,297 | 39,023 |
| Students with disability | 42,111 | 46,493 | 50,079 | 55,605 |
| Women in Non-Traditional Area | 146,654 | 151,709 | 157,926 | 163,409 |
| Indigenous | 11,753 | 12,595 | 13,723 | 15,043 |
| Low SES (SA1 measure)[(b)] | 124,393 | 133,681 | 143,680 | 150,078 |
| Regional (2011 ASGS)[(c)] | 172,356 | 180,217 | 188,531 | 195,557 |
| Remote (2011 ASGS)[(c)] | 7809 | 8121 | 8578 | 8943 |
| **All Domestic Students** | **875,913** | **921,186** | **972,292** | **1,013,831** |

Source: Department of Education and Training (2015) *Selected Higher Education Statistics—2014 Student Data.* Table 2.1: Commencing and All Domestic Students[(a)] by Equity Group, 2001 to 2014.

(a) Data excludes students where permanent home address is overseas.
(b) Low SES SA1 measure is based on a geocoded SA1 (Statistical Area 1), with the SES value derived from the 2011 SEIFA Education and Occupation Index for SA1, where SA1s in the bottom 25 per cent of the population aged 15–64 being classified as Low SES. Reported figures in the 2012 Australia country report were based on postcodes and collection districts, and are not directly comparable.

(c) Regional and Remote categories derived from ASGS.