

# Schools

## Group Summary

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## Hot Topic Briefs

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# Schools

## 2023–24 Additional Budget Estimates

Response/Facts
<b>SB24-000001 - Funding – recurrent and capital</b>
<p><i>Recurrent School Funding</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MYEFO 2023-24 reported an estimated <b>\$119.8 billion over 2023-24 to 2026-27</b> in schools recurrent funding.</li> <li>• Compared to the 2023–24 Budget, there is a <b>net increase of \$1.9 billion</b> in projected school funding over 2023–24 to 2026-27. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Funding for the <b>government sector</b> is projected to be <b>\$7.7 million higher</b> and funding for the <b>non-government sector</b> is projected to be <b>\$1.9 billion higher</b> than the 2023–24 Budget projected.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><i>Pathway to full and fair funding</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Government is working with state and territory governments to get every school to <b>100%</b> of its fair funding level through the next the next National School Reform Agreement (next NSRA).</li> <li>• State and territory funding contributions have been agreed for 2024, as part of the one-year extension of the current NSRA.</li> <li>• In 2024, the Australian Government is providing at least 20% of the SRS for government schools and at least 80% for non-government schools.</li> <li>• Over the life of the current NSRA, the Australian Government provided <b>\$119.2 billion over 2019 to 2023</b> in recurrent funding. This includes \$46.7 billion for government schools and \$72.4 billion for non-government schools.</li> <li>• The Commonwealth will provide a further <b>\$29.1 billion</b> during the one-year extension of the current NSRA in 2024 (a total of <b>\$148.2 billion over 2019 to 2024</b>).</li> </ul> <p><i>Cost of fully funding Public Schools</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In July 2023, The PBO published costings estimating that it would cost the Australian Government <b>\$4.7 billion</b> over the forward estimates (2023–24 to 2026–27) to increase the Commonwealth share of the SRS from 20% in 2023 to 25% in 2028 for the Government sector. The 10-year cost (2023–24 to 2033–34) of this policy change was estimated at <b>\$29.0 billion</b>.</li> <li>• Consistent with this PBO modelling, the value of a 5% increase in the Commonwealth’s SRS share for public schools in 2024 would cost an estimated <b>\$2.8 billion</b>.</li> </ul> <p><i>Schools Upgrade Fund</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ The <b>\$275.2 million</b> Schools Upgrade Fund promotes equitable access to resources and facilities to support quality education, and to keep students safe and well following disruptions due to Covid-19.</li> <li>○ The Fund has 3 components and will operate over 2 years <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Targeted Round - <b>\$21.6 million</b> over 2022–23 to 2023–24</li> <li>▪ Open Round - <b>\$32 million</b> in 2022-23</li> <li>▪ Government School Capital Funding - <b>\$215.8 million</b> in 2023–24.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

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## 2023–24 Additional Budget Estimates

### *Capital Grants Program*

- Funding is provided to assist non-government schools to improve capital infrastructure where they otherwise may not have access to sufficient capital resources.
- Funding of \$215.8 million was provided in 2023, with an estimated **\$227.2 million** to be provided in 2024.

### **SB24-000002 - Funding – assurance and compliance**

- Australian Government recurrent funding is available to all eligible schools, provided they meet requirements specified in the *Australian Education Act 2013* (the Act) and the Australian Education Regulations 2023 (the Regulations).
- State and territory governments have primary regulatory responsibility for schools, including non-government school registration and other requirements, as reflected in their own legislation governing the regulation of schools.
- The amount of funding provided to approved authorities is significant and its provision comes with responsibilities. The department has a robust assurance framework that provides for the monitoring of approved authorities' compliance with the Act and the Regulations.
- The department's compliance approach focuses on:
  - providing/promoting education and information
  - monitoring behaviour
  - considering risks and consequences of non-compliance or fraud
  - investigating suspected breaches and acting accordingly.
- The department will take necessary actions commensurate with the severity of the non-compliance. For example, varying the frequency of payments, and imposing conditions on approval.
- When non-compliance persists, the department will consider further action, including pausing of recurrent funding.
- The department also works collaboratively with state and territory regulators and other Commonwealth regulators in performing its assurance and compliance functions.
- The Government announced in the 2023–24 Budget, that it is strengthening policy and financial assurance and compliance oversight. This will help to ensure funding for non-government schools is appropriately spent on school education as outlined in the Act and the Regulations.
- Through this measure the department is:
  - increasing compliance activity by expanding the number of audits of approved authorities to ensure that taxpayer funds are being spent on school education.
  - improving data integrity by increasing the number of schools checked each year making sure we have a clear picture of student enrolments in non-government schools.
  - increasing use of data analytics to ensure recurrent funding is being appropriately used for school education and to identify approved authorities that may require further investigation.

# Schools

## 2023–24 Additional Budget Estimates

### SB24-000003 - Funding - Building Boarding Schools on Country (BBSoc)

- The Building Boarding Schools on Country (BBSoc) program is a measure under the Government’s Closing the Gap Implementation Plan, with **\$70.8 million** provided for a revised scope in the 2023-24 Budget.
- The key change was reducing the number of new remote boarding schools from three to one. The change responds to significant increases in construction costs, refined scope and broader supply issues, particularly in remote areas.
- Under the revised measure Studio Schools of Australia (SSA) will receive **\$16.2 million** to support **operational costs** associated with implementing the measure.
- There has been criticism of the Government’s decision not to proceed with 2 of the new schools originally announced by the previous government and also criticism regarding salaries of senior SSA executives.
- The Western Australian Independent Block Grant Authority is delivering the project on the department’s behalf and advised in August 2023 that funding agreements had been executed with Studio Schools Australia.
- Construction of the new school is expected to commence in early 2024 for a Term 1, 2025 opening date.

### SB24-000004 - National School Reform Agreement

#### *The next NSRA*

- The Australian Government is currently negotiating the next National School Reform Agreement with state and territory governments. The next Agreement will take effect from January 2025.
- As part of these negotiations, the Government is working with state and territory governments to put schools on a pathway to 100 per cent of their fair funding level and to tie additional funding to reforms that will improve student outcomes.
- Education Ministers have tasked AESOC to lead on negotiations.
  - The Agreement will be developed in partnership with the Coalition of Peaks and the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Advisory Committee.
  - The National Catholic Education Commission and Independent Schools Australia will be invited to attend and participate in meetings negotiating the Agreement.
- On 31 January 2024, a Statement of Intent demonstrating governments’ shared commitment to putting all government schools on a pathway to 100% of the SRS was announced with Western Australia.

#### *NSRA Review*

- On 11 December 2023, the Expert Panel’s report was published alongside a summary report prepared by the Australian Government.
- The Expert Panel considered that funding schools at 100% of the SRS was a prerequisite for improving student outcomes.
- The Report will be one input into the development and negotiation of the next NSRA and bilateral agreements with states and territories.

## Schools 2023–24 Additional Budget Estimates

- Other inputs include the Review of the National School Reform Agreement conducted by the Productivity Commission, the Disability Royal Commission, the NDIS Review, and the National Teacher Workforce Action Plan.

### *Extension of the current NSRA*

- The current NSRA has been extended until 31 December 2024.
- The extension does not change the Australian Government’s existing commitment for government school funding which is legislated under the *Australian Education Act 2013*.

### **SB24-000005 - Priority cohorts - First Nations students**

- In 2024, the Australian Government will provide an estimated \$29.1 billion in recurrent school funding. This includes **\$0.5 billion** through the Schooling Resource Standard loading for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students (total 264,913 students).
- Other targeted programs and initiatives that address the education gap for First Nations students include:
  - **On Country Learning** - (\$40.4 million over 2023–24 to 2024–25).
  - **City-Country Partnerships Program** (\$26 million over 2022–23 to 2023–24).
  - **Clontarf Foundation** (\$65.2 million over 2022–23 to 2024–25).
  - **First Nations Languages Education Program** (\$14.1 million over 2022–23 to 2025–26).
  - **First Nations Teacher Strategy** – Phase 2 – strategy finalisation and implementation.
  - The **Indigenous Boarding Design Review** and the **Assessment of Boarding Capacity and Options in Central Australia** – in collaboration with the National Indigenous Australians Agency (NIAA).
  - **Building Boarding Schools On Country program** (\$70.8 million).
  - **Australian Indigenous Education Foundation (AIEF)** (\$32 million over 2022–23 to 2024–25).
  - **AITSL Indigenous Cultural Responsiveness Initiative** (\$1.035 million in 2022–23 for activity in 2023–24).
  - **Scaling Up Proven Primary Reading Programs** (\$25 million over 2021–22 to 2025–26).
  - **English Language Learning for Indigenous Children (ELLIC) trial** (\$8.408 million over 2017–18 to 2021–22).

### *Productivity Commission’s Review of the National Agreement on Closing the Gap*

- The PC report, released on 7 February 2024, has highlighted the need for Government to increase the pace of action to close the gap.
- The Joint Council on Closing the Gap is due to formally respond to the PC’s report within six months, as specified in the National Agreement.
- The department supports shared decision-making and the delivery of measures to close the education gap and will continue to strengthen partnerships with First Nations stakeholders, including the NATSIEC and SNAICC — National Voice for our Children (SNAICC).

## Schools 2023–24 Additional Budget Estimates

### SB24-000006 - Priority cohorts - students with disability

- Currently, **24.2%** of school students receive an adjustment because of disability (ACARA, 2023).
- The Australian Government provides a student with disability loading as part of the Schooling Resource Standard (SRS) recurrent funding.
  - In 2024, an estimated **\$3.6 billion** will be provided for this loading. This is an increase to the estimated \$3.1 billion in 2023.
- The department:
  - Administers programs to support people with disability, including the **Positive Partnerships Program** and the **Higher Education Disability Support Program**.
  - Published a range of resources in 2023 to support better understanding and implementation of the *Disability Standards for Education 2005*.
- Several major reviews have been released with implications for students with disability, notably the **Royal Commission into Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability**, the **National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) Review**, and the **Review to Inform a Better and Fairer Education System**.
  - All 3 reviews made recommendations around building education sector capability to support students with disability and improving data and accountability.
  - The **NDIS Review** recommended new foundational supports be designed and delivered outside the NDIS.
  - The department is working with the Department of Social Services (DSS) and other agencies on whole of government considerations, including through Senior Executive Interdepartmental Committees.

### SB24-000007 - Priority cohorts - regional and remote students

- Regional and remote communities face considerable challenges, including:
  - attracting and retaining experienced staff
  - providing an adequate breadth of curriculum
  - access to extra-curricular opportunities.
- Student performance and educational opportunities decline with the level of remoteness, from measures of school attendance and retention to academic and post-school transition outcomes.
- In 2024, the Australian Government will provide an estimated **\$6.4 billion** to regional and remote schools. This includes an estimated \$200.4 million and \$598.7 million under the school size and school location loading respectively (total of 735,592 students).
- **The Commonwealth Teaching Scholarships Program** seeks to address teacher workforce shortages in regional, rural and remote areas.
- **The Commonwealth Regional Scholarship Program** aims to support families of boarding school students from regional, rural, and remote communities with the costs of education.
- **The City-Country Partnerships** (delivered by the Yatha Muru Foundation) incentivises and supports partnerships between remote schools with a high proportion of First Nations students and high-performing metropolitan schools.

## Schools

### 2023–24 Additional Budget Estimates

- **Regional and Remote Funding** The Australian Government provides additional loading for schools in regional and remote locations, recognising the additional costs required to educate students in regional and remote schools.
  - In 2024, the Australian Government will provide an estimated **\$6.4 billion** for regional and remote schools. This includes an estimated \$200.4 million and \$598.7 million under the school size and school location loading respectively (total of 735,592 students).

**SB24-000008 - Religious discrimination**

- The Government made an election commitment to introduce legislation that will:
  - Prevent discrimination against people of faith, including anti-vilification protections.
  - Act to protect all students from discrimination on any grounds.
  - Protect teachers from discrimination at work, while maintaining the right of religious schools to preference people of their faith in the selection of staff.
- On 4 November 2022, the Attorney-General announced the Australian Law Reform Commission (ALRC) would conduct an inquiry into exemptions for religious educational institutions in federal anti-discrimination law.
- In December 2023, the ALRC finalised its inquiry into Religious Educational Institutions and Anti-Discrimination Laws.
- The Attorney-General is considering the ALRC’s final report, and the Government will provide its response in due course.
- Questions on this legislation should be directed to the AGD.

**SB24-000009 - Student wellbeing**

- Wellbeing is a one of the three key focus areas for the next National School Reform Agreement.
- The Australian Government invests **\$84.4 million** annually in ongoing mental health and wellbeing supports for students and school communities:
- The Australian Government has invested **\$203.7 million** in the **Student Wellbeing Boost** – including one-off additional funding to schools and the Voluntary Mental Health Check Tool (VMHCT).
- The **National Student Wellbeing Program** replaced the National School Chaplaincy Program on 25 January 2023.
- On 19 October 2023, the Government announced **\$6 million** in one-off **social cohesion student wellbeing support** funds for mental health and wellbeing support to students of Jewish and Islamic faith in Australian schools.
  - 495 schools will receive this additional funding across all jurisdictions and education sectors.
- The Australian Government is providing funding of **\$77.6 million** (2023-24 to 2027-28) to states, territories, and non-government school systems to support delivery of expert-developed, high quality, evidence based and age-appropriate **consent and respectful relationships education** in primary and secondary schools.
- The use of e-cigarettes or vapes is a major concern across school communities, and the Department will continue to liaise with DoHAC on how newly implemented vaping reforms will impact the use of vapes in schools.

# Schools

## 2023–24 Additional Budget Estimates

### SB24-000010 - Student engagement

- Factors both within and outside the school gate can influence a student's level of engagement in schooling. Within the school gate, student engagement can be fostered through a supportive, inclusive, and productive learning environment.
- The issues of school refusal and class disruption are important to understand and address in order to support student engagement. National data on attendance, attainment and retention provide important insights but cannot tell us everything about student engagement and success.
- There was a significant drop from 2021 to 2022 in both student **attendance rates** (91% in 2021 to 87% in 2022), and student **attendance levels** (71% in 2021 to 50% in 2022). While there were substantial increases in 2023, national school attendance rates and levels have not returned to pre-2022 levels.
- There is a clear link between **attaining** a Year 12 certificate or equivalent qualification and improved social and economic outcomes for young people. The Year 12 or equivalent **attainment rate** for young people (aged 20-24) has increased over the last decade (from 86% in 2013 to 90% in 2023). However, rates have remained steady over the past 4 years.
- Apparent school **retention rates** have decreased between 2020 and 2022. 2023 retention data was released by the ABS on 14 February 2024. School retention rates alone should not be used as a measure for successful student outcomes.
- The Senate Education and Employment References Committee released the final report of its inquiry into the national trend of **school refusal** on 10 August 2023 and made 14 recommendations to better identify, manage, and respond to school refusal. The department is leading the Australian Government response to the Senate inquiry report on school refusal. The Government is currently considering the report and recommendations.
- The Senate Standing Committee on Education and Employment (the Committee) for inquiry released the final report of its inquiry into the issue of **increasing disruption** in Australian school classrooms on 7 February 2024. The Government will respond in due course.

### SB24-000011 - Student performance and learning

- **PISA 2022** results were released on 5 December 2023 and showed the gradual long-term decline in Australia's results (in Maths, Science and Reading) has **stabilised**, with no significant performance changes compared to the last cycle in 2018.
- Australia performed above the OECD average in all 3 domains (Maths, Science, and Reading) and fewer countries outperformed Australia compared to 2018.
- While positive, Australian students are still performing at a lower standard than 20 years ago.
- **NAPLAN 2023** results showed that nationally, across all domains (reading, writing, spelling, grammar and punctuation and numeracy), around two-thirds of students achieved ratings of 'Strong' or 'Exceeding' (i.e. proficient). Around one-third were rated as 'Developing' or 'Needs Additional Support' (i.e. not proficient). Around 10% of students were in the 'Needs Additional Support' category.



## Schools

# 2023–24 Additional Budget Estimates

### SB24-000012 - Teaching

- There is a teacher shortage in Australia. Too few people are becoming teachers and too many are leaving. Addressing this issue is a multipronged approach which includes: encouraging more people to become teachers; supporting our existing teacher workforce to stay; and attracting more overseas teachers to Australia.
- On 15 December 2022, all Education Ministers agreed to the National Teacher Workforce Action Plan (Action Plan) to address teacher workforce shortages. The Action Plan is focussed on improving supply, strengthening initial teacher education (ITE), keeping the teachers we have, elevating the profession and better understanding future workforce needs.
- The Australian Government is leading a number of key initiatives from the Action Plan, including the **Commonwealth Teaching Scholarships**, expansion of **employment-based pathways**, the **Workload Reduction Fund** and a **national communications campaign**.
- Also included as an action item is consideration of the recommendations from the Teacher Education Expert Panel (TEEP).
- The Commonwealth is investing **\$337 million** over four years from 2022–23 to 2025–26 to support NTWAP initiatives.

**Issue:** Funding – recurrent and capital  
**MYEFO Pg No.** 308 to 309  
**Contact:** Meg Brighton  
 Ph: s 22  
 Deputy Secretary

### Budget – School Funding – Recurrent and Capital

Financial year	2023–24 \$m	2024–25 \$m	2025–26 \$m	2026–27 \$m	Total \$m
<i>Recurrent funding (government and non-government) (Program 1.3 and 1.4)</i>					
Budget Allocation	28,465.4	29,448.4	30,443.4	31,462.2	119,819.5
Committed	28,465.4	29,448.4	30,443.4	31,462.2	119,819.5
Uncommitted	0	0	0	0	0
<i>Schools Upgrade Fund (government and non-government) (Program 1.5)</i>					
Budget Allocation	3.6	-	-	-	3.6
Treasury	215.8	-	-	-	215.8
Committed	219.4	-	-	-	219.4
Uncommitted	0	-	-	-	0
<i>Capital Grants Program (non-government) (Program 1.4)</i>					
Budget Allocation	225.4	232.4	241.1	247.4	946.4
Committed	225.4	232.4	241.1	247.4	946.4
Uncommitted	0	0	0	0	0

Source: Department of Education funding models as at MYEFO 2023-24.

Notes:

1. Recurrent funding estimates underpin the Quality Schools funding estimates published in the *Mid-Year Economic and Fiscal Outlook (MYEFO) 2023-24 paper*, pages 308-9.
2. Published Quality Schools funding estimates also include other non-recurrent funding components (e.g. Additional Support for Northern Territory Schools, Literacy Support for Tasmanian students, CAF, NGRSF, Capital Grants and Transition Funding SA Foundation for Non-government schools).
3. Pages 14-21 in *MYEFO Appendix C: annex A – Payments to the states* show the Quality School funding estimates for non-government schools as memorandum item in the table.
4. 2023-24 Portfolio Additional Estimates Statements (PAES) publishes components for program 1.3 and 1.4 on page 31 and program 1.5 on page 32. Special appropriations estimates under program 1.4 includes recurrent funding, adjustment funding for highly disadvantaged independent school students and capital grants.

### Key Points

#### Recurrent School Funding

- The Government is working with state and territory governments to get every school to **100%** of its fair funding level through the next National School Reform Agreement (next NSRA).
- The detail of these arrangements will be subject to negotiations with States and Territories.
- The Australian Government (2023–24 MYEFO) forecasts an estimated **\$119.8 billion over 2023–24 to 2026–27** in schools recurrent funding.

- School funding for both government and non-government sectors is projected to grow year-on-year over the forward estimates.
- On average, funding for the government sector will grow at 3.8% per year due to indexation and enrolment growth.
- This is faster than 3.1% average annual growth for the non-government sector over the same period.
- Funding is also growing faster for government schools on a per-student basis. Per student funding for the Government sector will increase 3.9% from 2023 to 2024 (now \$4,316) and funding for non-government school students will increase 2.9% (now \$11,955) over the same period.
  - Note: MYEFO figure does not incorporate 2023 government school census (enrolment and student characteristics due to timing).
- Compared to the 2023–24 Budget, there is a **net increase of \$1.9 billion** in projected school funding over 2023–24 to 2026–27.
  - Commonwealth funding for **government schools** is projected to be **\$7.7 million higher** and funding for **non-government schools** is projected to be **\$1.9 billion higher** than the 2023–24 Budget projected.
  - This overall change is primarily driven by the 2023 non-government school census update, which shows higher than expected growth in non-government sector total enrolments and students with disability enrolments in 2023.
  - Note that MYEFO 2023–24 does not incorporate the 2023 government schools census (enrolment and student characteristics) due to timing. Government school census updates will be reflected in Budget 2024–25. The change in government school funding in MYEFO was driven by indexation only.
  - Critically, Australian Government school funding allocated to schools and schooling systems are **based on actual enrolments** each year, not Budget projections.
  - School funding budget estimates fluctuate over time and are responsive to broader changes in our community, including the social and economic changes we have seen following the COVID-19 pandemic.
- For funding information related to First Nations students see [SB24-000005](#); for students with disability see [SB24-000006](#); and for regional and remote students see [SB24-000007](#).

### **NSRA extension**

- The current school funding agreement was extended for one year to allow time to complete the NSRA review and negotiate a new agreement.
- State and territory funding contributions for 2024 are reflected in this one-year extension of the current NSRA:
  - Jurisdictions are on track to fund **between 59% (NT) and 80% (ACT)** of the Schooling Resource Standard (SRS) for government schools in 2024.
  - When taken with the legislated Commonwealth share of at least 20%, this means government schools in the ACT will be the only schools committed to receive 100% of the SRS in 2024.
- In 2024, the Australian Government is providing at least 20% of the SRS for government schools and 80% for non-government schools.
- Over the life of the current NSRA, the Australian Government is providing **\$148.2 billion over 2019 to 2024** in recurrent funding (including **\$29.1 billion** during the one-year extension of the current NSRA in 2024).
- Refer to [SB24-000004](#) for more information on the next NSRA and current NSRA.

### **Cost of Fully Funding Public Schools**

- In July 2023, the Parliamentary Budget Office (PBO) published costings estimating that it would cost the Australian Government **\$4.7 billion** over the forward estimates (2023–24 to 2026–27) to increase the Commonwealth share of the SRS from 20% in 2023 to 25% in 2028 for the government sector (see [Attachment A](#)). The 10 year cost (2023–24 to 2033–34) of this policy change was estimated to be \$29.0 billion.
- The department was able to replicate the PBO costings, noting the PBO applies specific funding growth and rounding rule parameters.
- Using this PBO modelling, the value of a **5% increase** in the Commonwealth's SRS share for public schools in **2024** would cost an estimated **\$2.8 billion**.

**Report on Government Services (RoGS)**

- The 2024 RoGS data reported the Commonwealth provided \$25.1 billion to all schools in 2021–22, an increase of \$2.9 billion (12.9%) from 2020–21.
  - Departmental data reports that the Commonwealth provided \$24.7 billion in recurrent funding to all schools in 2021–22, an increase of \$3 billion from 2020–21. The RoGS figure is higher primarily because RoGS includes more categories of expenditure than our recurrent funding definition (e.g. Choice and Affordability Fund).
- Over 2012–13 to 2021–22, total public spending grew faster for non-government students while Commonwealth funding grew faster for government students.
  - Commonwealth funding for government schools increased by 67.2% per student between 2012–13 and 2021–22.
  - Commonwealth funding for non-government schools increased by 44.3% per student between 2012–13 and 2021–22.
  - Note: Commonwealth funding growth for non-government schools appears to be elevated when measured from a 2020–21 base (i.e. 11.9%) due to payments that would have fallen into that financial year being brought forward into the previous financial year as part of the Government’s response to COVID-19. This did not affect the total amount of funding for schools in calendar years.

**Capital School Funding****Schools Upgrade Fund**

- The **\$275.2 million** Schools Upgrade Fund promotes equitable access to resources and facilities to support quality education, and to keep students safe and well following disruptions due to COVID-19.
- The Fund has **3 components** and will operate **over 2 years** to support schools improve their school infrastructure.
  - Targeted Round: **\$21.6 million** over 2022–23 to 2023–24 (all sectors).
  - Open Round: **\$32 million** in 2022–23 (all sectors).
  - Government School Capital Funding: **\$215.8 million** in 2023–24.
- Departmental funding: **\$5.8 million** in 2022–23 (less than 2% of total funding).

### **Capital Grants Program**

- The Capital Grants Program (CGP) provides funding for non-government school communities to assist schools improve capital infrastructure where they otherwise may not have access to sufficient capital resources.
- CGP funding is appropriated on a calendar year basis and funding is indexed annually (mid-year). The CGP funding amount for 2024 is estimated to be **\$227.2 million** (final amount will be determined once the indexation rate is agreed mid-year).
- The 2023 funding amount was \$215.8 million in 2023, the same as the Government School Capital Funding.

### **Release of the Productivity Commission's Draft Report 'The Future for Giving'**

- The Productivity Commission's (PC) **draft report** was released for **public consultation** on 30 November 2023, with a closing date of 9 February 2024.
- The department is aware of a the PC's proposal to alter which charitable activities attract the Deductible Gift Recipient (DGR) status, which may impact some schools with Capital Building Funds.
- In recent media comments the Treasurer stated that "that's not something the Government was considering" in relation to changes to the DGR status of school building funds (Channel 9 news, 30 January 2024).
- Any questions about the report or process should be directed to the PC itself, or via Treasury.

### ***[If asked about support for capital works]***

- Non-government schools can apply for Commonwealth funding to improve school infrastructure through the CGP.
- CGP funding is supplementary to funds provided by non-government school authorities and school communities, which have the primary responsibility for providing, maintaining, and upgrading their school facilities.
- The Schools Upgrade Fund is also funding non-government school capital works through the targeted and open rounds of the Schools Upgrade Fund (combined total of \$53.6 million).

**Stakeholder Response**

Stakeholder	Response summary
The Opposition	Shadow Treasurer, the Hon Angus Taylor MP, and Shadow Minister for Education, Senator the Hon Sarah Henderson, released a joint statement urging the Australian Government to not adopt the PC draft recommendation relating to which charitable activities attract DGR status.
Australian Education Union (AEU)	<p>The AEU criticised the extension of the current NSRA, stating that the extension delays and denies public students the funding they need.</p> <p>The AEU is calling for the Australian Government to lift its contribution to 25% of the SRS for all states and 40% for the NT. It has also criticised the Government for allowing states and territories to include 4% of other non-recurrent funding towards their SRS contributions.</p>
Save our Schools (SOS)	<p>SOS advocates for a high-quality public education system and claims public schools are underfunded.</p> <p>SOS criticised the decision to delay the introduction of the next NSRA. It stated that the delay is an act of betrayal of underfunded public schools and disadvantaged students.</p>
The Greens	<p>The Greens criticised the extension of the NSRA. Arguing that the decision delays additional funding to schools and that the work had already been completed previously by David Gonski.</p> <p>The Greens advocate for providing 100% of the SRS to every public school from January 2025.</p>
Victoria, Queensland, South Australia and Tasmania	The Victorian, Queensland, South Australian and Tasmanian Education Ministers are advocating for the Australian Government to increase its funding to 25% of the SRS.
National Catholic Education Commission (NCEC)	The NCEC criticised the PC report's proposed reforms to the DGR system stating that it 'severely restrict the ability of faith communities to operate according to their ethos'.

**Media*****Prime Minister Must Keep his Promise on School Funding, AEU, Media release, 8 February 2024***

- A public, joint letter from principal, teacher and parent representatives was sent to the Prime Minister requesting the Australian Government contribute 25% SRS for government schools and remove the ability for jurisdictions to claim 4% of their SRS shares for expenditure not directly related to a student's educational needs by 2028 at the latest.
- In the letter, the signatories also urge the Australian Government to make a national investment in school infrastructure.
- The media release also notes "New figures from the Productivity Commission shows public school funding increased by 20.3% (or 2% per year) in real terms between 2012–13 and 2021–22. Private school funding from governments increased over the same period by 37%".

***Non-government schools and religious charities targeted in proposed tax grab, Shadow Treasurer, the Hon Angus Taylor MP, and Shadow Minister for Education, Senator the Hon Sarah Henderson, 2 January 2024***

- Urges the Australian Government to not adopt the PC report recommendations relating to DGR status, stating "this will just pass costs to families struggling with the cost of living".
- Similarly, *Christmas is a time for the renewal of Labor's commitments to faith communities and schools, the NCEC, 21 December 2023* reports that the PC report recommendations to relating to DRG status "severely restrict the ability of faith-based schools to operate according to their ethos".
- Any questions about the report or process should be directed to the PC, or via the Treasury.

***Private schools hike fees by 15%, The Australian, 18 December 2023***

- Reports that independent school fees are rising by up to 15% this year (2024) to offset rising expense of teacher salaries and operating costs in conjunction with a decline in the indexation of federal government funding for schools.
- Similarly, *Private school fees head north towards \$50,000 (Sydney Morning Herald, 9 January 2024)* reports that the fees of at least 20 NSW independent schools will be more than \$40,000 in 2024. *Fee hikes that could send parents broke (The Adviser, 9 January 202)* also reports that fees have increase by up to 6.2% in South Australia.



- The SRS is indexed by the higher of 3% or a floating composite rate that takes into account rising costs. The floating rate is based on 75% of the Wage Price Index and 25% of the Consumer Price Index.
- The Commonwealth has committed to commission the National School Resourcing Board to review the SRS indexation arrangements this year (2024) in the extension of the current NSRA.
- It is not the Australian Government's place to comment on the tuition fees set by individual schools. Non-government schools are independent organisations and their governing bodies are responsible for setting fee levels.

***Education Ministers must act on public school funding, AEU, 11 December 2023***

- Reports that only 1.3% of public schools are funded at 100% of the SRS. The AEU is calling for the Australian Government to lift its funding for public schools to 25% for most jurisdictions and 40% for the NT.
- The AEU also criticised the 4% allowable additional inclusion towards all states' and the NT's contributions to the SRS, calling it an 'accounting trick' that artificially inflates public school funding by \$2 billion a year.
- The AEU's quoted figure of 1.3% reflects that only ACT government schools are on average funded at 100% of the SRS in 2023.
- States and territories request that the current bilateral agreements recognise their boarder investment in education and agreed shares reflect jurisdictional economic and fiscal circumstances (e.g. costs and wage growth).
- As a result, the current bilateral agreements, except for the ACT, allow jurisdictions to include broader educational costs capped at 4% of the SRS for the government sector. This cap can include:
  - capital depreciation (all);
  - direct school transport (all except NSW); and
  - early childhood costs (NT and WA only).
- The Commonwealth is committed to working with state and territory governments to get every school on a path to 100% of its fair funding level.
- The Commonwealth is also working with state and territory Education Ministers on key targets and specific reforms that should be tied to funding in the next NSRA.

***South Australia leading education reform, Government of South Australia, 11 December 2023***

- Reports South Australia's focus is ensuring the next NSRA funds government schools at 100%, with the Australian Government funding the 5% shortfall.

***States battle for more school funding, the Australian, 9 December 2023***

- Reports that the Australian Government is offering to lift Commonwealth funding for government schools to 22.5% of the SRS, equivalent to \$2.3 billion over 3 years.
- It also reports that the Queensland and Victorian Education Ministers are advocating for the Australian Government to increase its funding to 25% of the SRS.

***Greens write to Education Ministers urging full funding for public schools, the Greens, 6 December 2023***

- The Greens letter is calling for every public school to be funded at 100% of the SRS from January 2025.

***The private schools hiking fees to cover payroll tax, with worse to come, The Age, 10 October 2023***

- Reports that private schools are attributing fee rises of up 9.9% to the Victorian government's new payroll tax.
- The Commonwealth is providing at least 80% of the SRS for non-government schools in 2024, equating to an estimated \$17.9 billion.
- It is not the Department of Education's place to comment on the tax policies in individual jurisdictions or the tuition fees set by individual schools.

***Tasmania hosts Education Ministers from across Australia, 9 October 2023, the Tasmania Minister for Education, Roger Jaensch MP, 9 October 2023***

- The Tasmania Minister for Education, Roger Jaensch MP, states it is up to the Australian Government to meet its commitment to 100% by lifting its investment in government schools to 25% of the SRS.

**Attachments****Attachment A** – PBO costing of fully funding public schools

<b>Date Last Cleared</b>	12 February 2024
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Attachment A

Parliamentary  
Budget Office

## Policy costing

Fully funding Public Schools	
Person/party requesting the costing:	Mr Andrew Wilkie MP, Member for Clark
Date costing completed:	12 July 2023
Expiry date of the costing:	Release of the next economic and fiscal outlook report.
Status at time of request:	Submitted outside the caretaker period
	<input type="checkbox"/> Confidential <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Not confidential
<p>Summary of proposal:</p> <p>The proposal would increase the Australian government's share of funding for public schools from approximately 20% (some schools are funded at a slightly higher rate) of the Schooling Resource Standard (SRS) in 2023 to 25% in 2028.</p> <p>The Australian government's share of the SRS amount for each school would increase in equal proportions between 2024 and 2028.</p> <p>The policy would commence on 1 January 2024 and would be ongoing.</p>	

## Costing overview

The proposal would decrease the fiscal and underlying cash balances by around \$4.7 billion over the 2023-24 forward estimates (Table 1). This impact entirely reflects an increase in administered expenses associated with an increased share of the SRS for public schools provided by the Australian government.

The proposal would have an impact beyond the 2023-24 Budget forward estimates period. A breakdown of the financial implications (including separate public debt interest (PDI) tables) over the period to 2033-34 is provided at Attachment A.

The results of this analysis are sensitive to future enrolment growth (both its level and composition across schools), proportions of student priority cohorts and disadvantaged schools<sup>1</sup>, and indexation rates.

This costing only estimates impacts on the Australian government's funding commitments. While the Australian government's funding for public schools is set as a percentage of the SRS, state and territory governments are not obligated to fund the full remaining amount to ensure public schools

<sup>1</sup> Student priority cohorts and disadvantaged schools are provided with additional funding. Types of loadings are outlined on the Department of Education's [Schooling Resource Standard](#) website.

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are funded at 100% of their SRS. Therefore, under this policy there is no guarantee that state and territory governments would continue to provide the same levels of public school funding.

**Table 1: Fully funding Public Schools – Financial implications (\$m)<sup>(a)(b)</sup>**

	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	<b>Total to 2026-27</b>
Fiscal balance	-277.0	-847.0	-1,466.8	-2,123.9	<b>-4,714.7</b>
Underlying cash balance	-277.0	-847.0	-1,466.8	-2,123.9	<b>-4,714.7</b>

(a) A positive number represents an increase in the relevant budget balance; a negative number represents a decrease.

(b) PDI impacts are not included in the totals.

## Key assumptions

The Parliamentary Budget Office (PBO) has made the following assumptions in costing this proposal.

- In each calendar year, half of the funding provided to each state or territory would be provided in the first half of the year, with the remaining funding provided in the second half of the year.
- Any additional departmental costs associated with changing the level of funding for public schools would be funded from within the Department of Education's existing resources.

## Methodology

The Schools Recurrent Schools Funding Model, provided by the Department of Education, was used to calculate the additional Australian government funding that would be required through to the 2032 calendar year. The PBO then projected funding for each public school in 2033 and 2034 based on funding estimates from 2028 to 2032.

The increase in the Australian Government funding share of the SRS between the current level and 25% was evenly distributed from 1 January 2024 to 1 January 2028 for each school. From 2028 onwards, the Australian Government funding was fixed at 25% of the SRS.

Financial implications were rounded consistent with the PBO's rounding rules as outlined on the PBO Costings and budget information webpage.<sup>2</sup>

## Data sources

The Department of Education provided the School Recurrent Funding Model as at the *2023-24 Budget*.

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.pbo.gov.au/for-parliamentarians/how-we-analyse/pbo-rounding-rules>

Attachment A – Fully funding Public schools – financial implications

**Table A1: Fully funding Public Schools – Fiscal and underlying cash balances (\$m)<sup>(a)</sup>**

	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	2029-30	2030-31	2031-32	2032-33	2033-34	Total to 2026-27	Total to 2033-34
<b>Expenses</b>													
<b>Additional funding by state and territory</b>													
<i>New South Wales</i>	-80.0	-250.0	-440.0	-630.0	-850.0	-970.0	-1,010.0	-1,040.0	-1,080.0	-1,120.0	-1,160.0	-1,400.0	-8,630.0
<i>Victoria</i>	-70.0	-210.0	-360.0	-530.0	-710.0	-820.0	-860.0	-890.0	-930.0	-970.0	-1,000.0	-1,170.0	-7,350.0
<i>Queensland</i>	-61.0	-187.0	-323.0	-467.0	-621.0	-713.0	-738.0	-764.0	-793.0	-820.0	-847.0	-1,038.0	-6,334.0
<i>Western Australia</i>	-31.0	-94.0	-162.0	-235.0	-314.0	-361.0	-374.0	-387.0	-401.0	-415.0	-428.0	-522.0	-3,202.0
<i>South Australia</i>	-19.0	-57.0	-98.0	-141.0	-186.0	-212.0	-218.0	-225.0	-232.0	-239.0	-245.0	-315.0	-1,872.0
<i>Tasmania</i>	-6.2	-18.9	-32.1	-46.1	-60.7	-69.1	-70.9	-72.7	-74.6	-76.4	-78.2	-103.3	-605.9
<i>Northern Territory</i>	-5.6	-17.1	-29.4	-42.5	-54.2	-60.1	-62.2	-64.4	-66.7	-69.0	-71.1	-94.6	-542.3
<i>Australian Capital Territory</i>	-4.2	-13.0	-22.3	-32.3	-42.9	-49.2	-50.8	-52.4	-54.1	-55.7	-57.4	-71.8	-434.3
<b>Total – expenses</b>	<b>-277.0</b>	<b>-847.0</b>	<b>-1,466.8</b>	<b>-2,123.9</b>	<b>-2,838.8</b>	<b>-3,254.4</b>	<b>-3,383.9</b>	<b>-3,495.5</b>	<b>-3,631.4</b>	<b>-3,765.1</b>	<b>-3,886.7</b>	<b>-4,714.7</b>	<b>-28,970.5</b>
<b>Total (excluding PDI)</b>	<b>-277.0</b>	<b>-847.0</b>	<b>-1,466.8</b>	<b>-2,123.9</b>	<b>-2,838.8</b>	<b>-3,254.4</b>	<b>-3,383.9</b>	<b>-3,495.5</b>	<b>-3,631.4</b>	<b>-3,765.1</b>	<b>-3,886.7</b>	<b>-4,714.7</b>	<b>-28,970.5</b>

(a) A positive number for the fiscal balance indicates an increase in revenue or a decrease in expenses or net capital investment in accrual terms. A negative number for the fiscal balance indicates a decrease in revenue or an increase in expenses or net capital investment in accrual terms. A positive number for the underlying cash balance indicates an increase in receipts or a decrease in payments or net capital investment in cash terms. A negative number for the underlying cash balance indicates a decrease in receipts or an increase in payments or net capital investment in cash terms.

**Table A2: Fully funding Public Schools – Memorandum item: Public Debt Interest (PDI) impacts – Fiscal and underlying cash balances (\$m)<sup>(a)(b)</sup>**

	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	2029-30	2030-31	2031-32	2032-33	2033-34	Total to 2026-27	Total to 2033-34
<i>Fiscal balance</i>	..	-20.0	-60.0	-120.0	-210.0	-330.0	-460.0	-600.0	-750.0	-930.0	-1,110.0	-200.0	-4,590.0
<i>Underlying cash balance</i>	..	-20.0	-60.0	-110.0	-200.0	-310.0	-430.0	-570.0	-730.0	-890.0	-1,080.0	-190.0	-4,400.0

- (a) As this table is presented as a memorandum item, these figures are not reflected in the totals in the table above. This is consistent with the approach taken in the budget where the budget impact of most measures is presented excluding the impact on PDI. If the reader would like a complete picture of the total aggregate, then these figures would need to be added to the figures above. For further information on government borrowing and financing please refer to the PBO's online budget glossary<sup>3</sup>.
- (b) A positive number for the fiscal balance indicates an increase in revenue or a decrease in expenses or net capital investment in accrual terms. A negative number for the fiscal balance indicates a decrease in revenue or an increase in expenses or net capital investment in accrual terms. A positive number for the underlying cash balance indicates an increase in receipts or a decrease in payments or net capital investment in cash terms. A negative number for the underlying cash balance indicates a decrease in receipts or an increase in payments or net capital investment in cash terms.
- .. Not zero but rounded to zero.

<sup>3</sup> [Online budget glossary – Parliament of Australia \(aph.gov.au\)](https://aph.gov.au/online-budget-glossary)

**Issue:** Funding – assurance and compliance  
**Contact:** Meg Brighton  
Ph: s 22  
Deputy Secretary, Schools Group

## Key Points

- Australian Government recurrent funding is available to all eligible schools, provided they meet requirements specified in the *Australian Education Act 2013* (the Act) and the *Australian Education Regulations 2023* (the Regulations).
  - State and territory governments have primary regulatory responsibility for schools, including non-government school registration and other requirements, as reflected in their own legislation governing the regulation of schools.
- The amount of funding provided to approved authorities is significant and its provision comes with responsibilities.
- The department has a robust assurance framework that provides for the monitoring of approved authorities compliance with the requirements of the Act and the Regulations and takes action in instances of suspected breaches or when non-compliance is identified.
- The department's compliance approach focuses on:
  - providing/promoting education and information (assisting approved authorities and clarifying the requirements in the Act and the Regulations),
  - monitoring behaviour of approved authorities (to help the department identify non-compliance),
  - considering risks and consequences of non-compliance or fraud, and
  - investigating suspected breaches and acting accordingly.
- The department works closely with approved authorities where non-compliance is identified. When non-compliance cannot be or is not remedied through these mechanisms or is persistent, the department will take necessary actions commensurate with the severity of the non-compliance. For example, varying the frequency of payments, imposing conditions on approved authorities, pausing of recurrent funding in more serious instances of non-compliance.

### ***Strengthening non-government schools funding integrity***

- The Government announced in the 2023–24 Budget, that it is strengthening policy and financial assurance and compliance oversight. This will help to ensure funding for non-government schools is appropriately spent on school education as outlined in the Act and the Regulations.
- The department's risk-based assurance and compliance activities are data informed and are categorised as either 'randomly selected' or 'targeted'.
- Through our **improved data analytics** work we have observed a shift in the risk profile of non-government schools, resulting in **more** non-government schools being identified as **high risk of non-compliance**.
- This measure allows the department to further safeguard the Government's significant investment in school education by strengthening and expanding its regulatory assurance and compliance activities to **prevent, detect and respond** to non-compliance and fraud in the non-government school sector.
- Through this measure we are:
  - increasing our compliance activity by **expanding the number of audits** of approved authorities representing non-government schools to ensure that taxpayer funds are being spent on school education.
  - improving data integrity by **increasing the number of schools checked each year** making sure we have a clear picture of student enrolments in non-government schools.
  - increasing use of data analytics to **ensure recurrent funding is being appropriately used for school education** and to identify approved authorities that may require further investigation.
- The department continues to work collaboratively with state and territory regulators and other Commonwealth Regulators in performing its assurance and compliance functions.
- The department generally doesn't comment publicly on the specifics of individual compliance matters to ensure procedural fairness and avoid unnecessary disruption of investigations or case management.
- The department understands the importance of continuing to build public confidence in the regulatory regime and will consider the merits of further strengthening our compliance posture to release public information on regulatory action at the appropriate time – similar to that undertaken by other Commonwealth regulators.



### **Complaints Handling**

- The department has mechanisms in place for receiving feedback which is outlined on the department's [website](#).
- The department is committed to ensuring its management of complaints are fair, accessible, responsive, efficient and integrated. These principles are outlined in the Complaints Factsheet on the department's website at [www.education.gov.au/about-department/resources/complaints-factsheet](http://www.education.gov.au/about-department/resources/complaints-factsheet) (**Attachment A**).
- The department would not normally refer complainants back to a school they were making a complaint about.
- Depending on the nature of the complaint, the department may suggest the person raise their concerns with the relevant state or territory department or regulatory authority (i.e., in cases where they have jurisdiction to investigate).
- In some circumstances, the department may also directly refer the information to the relevant state or territory department for appropriate action.

### **Parents' National Education Union (Australia) Inc. (Charlotte Mason College)**

- In the August 2023 Non-Government School Census, Charlotte Mason College reported 326 student enrolments (of which 227 were for distance education).
- On 5 December 2023, the approved authority and governing body for the College, Parents' National Education Union (Australia) Inc, went into voluntary administration and appointed Paul Nogueira of Worrells Sunshine Coast as the Administrator.
- On 7 December 2023, the Queensland Non-State Schools Accreditation Board (the Board) issued a Notice to the governing body informing it that the Board had decided to cancel the College's accreditation under the state legislation *Education (Accreditation of Non-State Schools) Act 2017*.
  - The Board's decision had an effect date of 4 January 2024, unless the governing body applied to the Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal.
  - The Board has published media statements on this matter on 14 and 15 December 2023.
- The department understands a review of the Board's decision was not sought by the College's governing body.

- The newly appointed Administrator provided information to College staff on the Australian Government's Fair Entitlements Guarantee scheme and the process for making a claim. This scheme is administered by the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations.
- The Queensland Department of Education advised the department that they were providing a range of supports to assist families, teachers, and support staff. This included:
  - Assisting families to enrol their children in a local state school or state offered distance education school, and
  - Information for teachers and support staff on future employment options with the Queensland Department of Education.
- The first meeting of creditors occurred on 15 December 2023 and the second meeting of creditors scheduled for 18 January 2024 was adjourned under insolvency practice rules for a period of up to 45 business days. The department understands this was to allow the Administrator to make an application to the Supreme Court in regard to winding-up Parents' National Education Union (Australia) Inc.
- On 22 January 2024, a departmental delegate made a determination to revoke the approval of Parents' National Education Union (Australia) Inc as an approved authority under the Act with effect from 4 January 2024.

#### ***Brindabella Christian Education Limited (BCEL)***

- On 17 May 2021, a delegate for the Minister of Education made the decision that BCEL was not a fit and proper person under the requirements of the Act, and a number of conditions were imposed in relation to the school's governance and financial viability.
- On 11 June 2021, the department received an application made by BCEL to the Administrative Appeals Tribunal (AAT) for review of the department's Notice of Decision imposing the above conditions.
- The hearing commenced on 27 March 2023. On 30 March 2023, as part of the AAT hearing, the department and BCEL reached an agreement on a varied set of Conditions on Approval and Timeline of Conditions to those imposed on 17 May 2021.
- On 12 April 2023, the AAT agreed to the varied set of conditions and provided its final decision for this matter, which is publicly available on request through the AAT. The AAT did not alter the delegate's finding of May 2021 that BCEL did not comply with the fit and proper person requirements of the Act.

- Based on the **AAT decision**, **BCEL is required to meet a number of conditions** in relation to governance, financial management, and financial reporting. This includes quarterly reporting by BCEL to the department.
- The department is monitoring BCEL's compliance under the Act and the Regulations, including their obligations as outlined in the AAT Order of 12 April 2023.

### **Recent Question on Notice**

- [SQ23-001130](#) Compliance of Schools (**Attachment B**).
- [SQ23-000852](#) Letter to Studio Schools Australia (**Attachment C**).
- [SQ23-001011](#) Transparency of Approved Authorities (**Attachment D**).
- [SQ23-000077](#) Our Lady of the Sacred Heart Thamarrurr Catholic College (**Attachment E**).
  - Following this QoN, the department wrote to the Catholic Church of the Diocese of Darwin Property Trust Inc on 17 March 2023 (the approved authority of the school in Wadeye), seeking relevant background information and explanation in relation to the student attendance and funding matters raised by Senator Nampijinpa Price.
  - A response was provided to the department on 12 April 2023.
  - The department has not identified any concerns in relation to expenditure of Australian Government funding at the school or any compliance concerns in relation to policies and procedures regarding improving student attendance. The Diocese of the Darwin Property Trust Inc was informed of the department's review on 29 January 2024.

### **Media**

- For schools mentioned recently in the media on compliance matters, and actions taken by the department, see **Attachment F**.

### **Attachments**

- **Attachment A**: Complaints factsheet
- **Attachment B**: [SQ23-001130](#)
- **Attachment C**: [SQ23-000852](#)
- **Attachment D**: [SQ23-001011](#)
- **Attachment E**: [SQ23-000077](#)
- **Attachment F**: Schools mentioned recently in the media on compliance matters

<b>Date Last Cleared</b>	08 February 2024
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# Complaints Factsheet

## Principles

The Department of Education (department) welcomes feedback about its operations and services and is committed to ensuring its management of complaints are:

- **fair** – the department deals with complaints impartially, confidentially and with appropriate empathy. There are no adverse repercussions for making a complaint. The department is open about the process, advises complainants of progress, and, where appropriate, gives complainants the opportunity to respond and to seek internal review of complaint outcomes.
- **accessible** – information about how to make a complaint is easily available and complaints can be made using a variety of channels online, verbally and in writing.
- **responsive** – the department will assist or respond appropriately to all complainants including by extending special assistance to vulnerable people and those with particular needs as appropriate.
- **efficient** – complaints are resolved as quickly as possible and preferably, where appropriate, at the point of complaint or promptly upon referral to a line area. Complaints are handled in a way that is proportionate and appropriate to the matter being complained about.
- **integrated** – complaint management is integrated with the department's core business activities so that any lessons or systemic issues can be appropriately actioned.

## Making a complaint

Complaints may be made verbally or in writing. Contact details for the department are available on our website, including the department's complaint contact information.

Where a complaint has been lodged verbally and there is uncertainty about the situation, or if the complaint raises complex or serious matters, the department may encourage the complainant to submit the complaint in writing. This will assist the department to thoroughly investigate the complaint.

Where a complaint relates to a matter another organisation is better placed to investigate, the department may be able to assist a complainant to direct the complaint to a relevant organisation such as a service provider, state or territory agency or regulator.

## Referral to police or support services

Where a complaint raises a risk of significant harm to one or more individuals or an allegation of criminal conduct, the matter will generally be referred to the police or other appropriate authority.

## Anonymous complaints

The department will generally consider anonymous complaints; however, it may not be possible to properly investigate or respond. Where possible, the department will make complainants aware of these limitations.

## Confidential complaints

A complainant may prefer to keep their identity confidential. In such situations the department may need to discuss with the complainant how this could affect management of the complaint, including any investigation and resolution.

## Unreasonable complainant conduct

Where the department considers a complainant is engaging in unreasonable conduct the matter will be managed in accordance with the Commonwealth Ombudsman Unreasonable Complainant Conduct and the Practice Manual on Managing Unreasonable Complainant Conduct (a joint project of the Australian Parliamentary Ombudsmen).

Unreasonable complainant conduct can include:

- persistently asking for remedies which are unreasonable, disproportionate, or not possible
- insisting on speaking to the head of the department
- seeking to direct the department how to handle a complaint
- aggressive language or behaviour.

## Management of complaints

Where possible and appropriate, the department will endeavour to address complaints quickly and informally. For example, it may be possible to resolve a straightforward issue through feedback or providing information.

Where this is not possible, the process outlined below will generally be applied. However, as complaints vary widely in their nature and content, the department manages complaints on a case-by-case basis and not all steps in the process will be relevant for every complaint. There may also be specific procedures for complaints where a statutory scheme or program guideline applies to a complaint.

### 1. Acknowledgement

The department will acknowledge the complaint within five business days. The complainant will be provided an appropriate timeframe for a response and a contact for queries regarding the complaint.

### 2. Assessment

The complaint will be allocated and assessed.



### 3. Investigation

Where it is not possible for the department to resolve the complaint at the initial point of contact, an investigation may be undertaken. The purpose of an investigation is to resolve a complaint by reaching a fair and independent view on the issues raised. The investigation should resolve factual issues and consider options for complaint resolution.

### 4. Response

The department endeavours to provide clear and informative responses to complainants.

The length of time it takes for the department to investigate and respond to a complaint will depend on the nature and complexity of the issues involved. The complainant will be kept informed of progress with the investigation until the matter is finalised.

The response may include the particulars of an investigation, findings or decisions reached and any outcomes, remedies or action proposed. In some instances, the department may have limitations on the extent of the information that can be provided to complainants for example, to protect personal privacy.

If, following investigation, the department does not accept a claim in a complaint, the complainant will be provided an opportunity to comment on the proposed adverse finding before it is finalised. If a claim continues not to be accepted, this should be noted and explained.

### 5. Review

If a complainant would like further information or explanation about the complaint outcome, the staff member responsible for management of the complaint may be able to provide further explanatory material.

In some cases, it may be appropriate for the department to offer internal review of how the complaint was handled and resolved, taking into account any additional information provided by the complainant. External review options may also be available depending upon the nature of the complaint.

The complainant has the right to make a complaint to the Commonwealth Ombudsman's Office. The department will provide as much information as possible on request by the Commonwealth Ombudsman's Office.

Where the department has followed an appropriate complaints process and further correspondence continues to be received about the matters already investigated that does not raise new issues or provide new information, it may be appropriate to advise a complainant that no further correspondence will be entered into on those matters unless new evidence or information is provided.



## Standing Committees on Education and Employment

### QUESTION ON NOTICE Supplementary Budget Estimates 2023 - 2024

#### Outcome: Schools

#### Department of Education Question No. SQ23-001130

Senator Sarah Henderson provided in writing.

#### *Compliance of Schools*

#### Question

1. Please provide a copy of all letters sent to approved authorities in relation to the financial compliance of schools for the period 1, June 2022 to 26 October 2023.
2. How many approved authorities have been found to be non-compliant with the Act since 1 June 2022 to date.
  - a. Please provide a list of the approved authorities and specific schools that have been found to be non-compliant.
  - b. Please outline the compliance action taken for each of these breaches.

#### Answer

The Department of Education is responsible for administering the *Australian Education Act 2013* (the Act) and the *Australian Education Regulations 2023* (the Regulations). In doing so, it corresponds with around 900 approved authorities representing over 9,600 schools in regard to the requirement to provide information to the department annually, including financial compliance information.

Over the period 1 June 2022 and 26 October 2023, the department sent approximately 1,310 correspondences (401 letters and 909 emails) of a financial compliance nature in respect of the Act and Regulations.

The correspondence related to:

- Section 75 of the Act – Basic requirements for approval (body corporate or body politic, not-for-profit, financial viability and fit and proper person)
- Section 29 of the Regulations – Spending or committing to spend, financial assistance
- Section 34 of the Regulations – Certificate to be given to the Secretary (Acquittal certificate – annual process)
- Section 36 of the Regulations – Requirement relating to financial assistance and financial operations – non-government schools (Financial collections: Financial Questionnaire, Audited Financial Statements, Block Allocation Reports – annual process)
- Section 38 of the Regulations – Requirement for authorities or bodies for non-government schools to prepare and audited financial statements (annual process)
- Section 39A of the Regulations – Requirement to provide information and records.

The 909 emails were to non-government school approved authorities in relation to the commencement of the annual financial collections. An example of this correspondence is provided at **Attachment A**.

The department also wrote to state and territory departments of education as the approved authorities for government schools in relation to the commencement of the annual financial collections. An example of this correspondence is provided at **Attachment B**. Of the 401 letters, 31 are considered to be non-compliance letters for not meeting the requirements of the Act and Regulations.

Letters the department writes to approved authorities in regard to non-compliance or requesting information as part of its investigations in detecting non-compliance with the Act may contain sensitive and/or commercial information, which if released publicly may have a significant adverse impact on the proper and efficient conduct of the department's operations, including the ability to obtain similar information in the future. As all approved authorities for schools have access to appeal and natural justice provisions, it is not appropriate to make compliance letters or any responses public (including list of approved authorities for schools that have been found to be non-compliant) as it may prejudice investigations and any future actions taken by the department under the Act.

The nature of compliance actions in these letters included:

- Review of existing conditions on the approval of an approved authority under section 81 of the Act
- Consideration of new conditions on the approval of an approved authority under section 81 of the Act
- Findings of non-compliance of approved authorities under the Act and the Regulations with advice on how to become compliant with the requirements of the Act and Regulations
- Monitoring the severity of non-compliance and considering further compliance steps under the Act and the Regulations, and
- Altering the frequency and amounts of payments for Australian Government schools recurrent funding paid to the approved authority under section 25 of the Act.



**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Thursday, 27 April 2023 4:56 PM  
**To:** [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** Financial Accountability and Financial Questionnaire data collections open - due date 30 June 2023 [REDACTED]

Dear Approved Authority

The Financial Questionnaire (FQ) and Financial Accountability (FA) data collections are now available for completion via [SchoolsHUB](#). Please submit your FQ and FA by **30 June 2023**.

### **Reporting Requirements**

#### *FQ*

Completion of the FQ and submission of Audited Financial Statements is required for all approved authorities under the *Australian Education Act 2013* (the Act) and the *Australian Education Regulation 2013* (the Regulation).

The FQ must be submitted by an authorised representative and contain information on the financial operations of the authority and the school for the calendar year, in accordance with section 36 of the [Regulation](#).

Changes for this year's FQ collection are set out in the [FQ Data reporting guide](#).

#### *FA – Acquittal Certificate*

Completion of the Acquittal Certificate is required for all approved authorities under the [Act](#) and the [Regulation](#).

The Acquittal Certificate must be submitted by an independent qualified accountant and must confirm whether an amount equal to the sum of the financial assistance paid to the approved authority has been spent or committed to be spent, in accordance with section 29 of the Regulation.

Please arrange for an independent qualified accountant to complete the Acquittal Certificate via the FA data collection in [SchoolsHUB](#) by **30 June 2023**.

#### *Prescribed Circumstances*

Your organisation may have received Prescribed Circumstances funding from the Commonwealth between 2018 and 2022 under one or more the following measures:

- Adjustment assistance for ACT non-government schools
- 2018 System Weighted Average System Assistance
- 2019 System Weighted Average Benefit Assistance
- 2018 Low Growth Independent Assistance
- 2019 Low Growth Independent Assistance
- 2016 Census Data Arrangements
- Schools Upgrade Fund (Targeted)

Funding spent, or committed to be spent under these measures must be reported by your independent qualified accountant on the Acquittal Certificate.

### **Reporting assistance**

Further information on FQ and FA is available on the [SchoolsHUB help and support page](#).

For assistance with FQ and FA collections, please contact the [REDACTED] Team toll free on [REDACTED] or by emailing [REDACTED]

For assistance with the FA reporting of Schools Upgrade Fund (Targeted), please contact the [REDACTED] team by emailing [REDACTED]

For technical assistance using SchoolsHUB, including user registration and access support, please contact the [REDACTED] helpdesk on [REDACTED] or by emailing [REDACTED]. The helpdesk is available Monday to Friday between 9am-5pm AEST.

Thank you for your assistance.

Approved for circulation:

[REDACTED]

OFFICIAL



Australian Government  
Department of Education

Our Ref



Dear



**Ongoing policy and funding requirements for approved authorities for 2022 under the  
*Australian Education Act 2013 and the Australian Education Regulation 2013***

I am writing in relation to the Compliance Certificate and Financial Accountability information collections, in respect of the 2022 calendar year.

**FINANCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY**

Section 78 of the Act and sections 34 and 35 of the *Australian Education Regulation 2013* set out the financial accountability requirements for approved authorities, including states and territories.

The requirements for the approved authority are that it provides:

- a certificate (the Acquittal Certificate) that confirms the funds provided in 2022 under the Act have been spent, or committed to be spent, for the purpose of providing school education and implementing national policy initiatives for school education
- a report (the Block Allocation report) that sets out the amount of financial assistance allocated by the authority to its schools for 2022, broken down to base amount, per student amount, and by additional amounts allocated to target areas of additional need in line with your jurisdiction's needs-based funding arrangement.

I have attached a pre-populated Acquittal Certificate (Attachment B) and Block Allocation report (Attachment C) along with a set of instructions designed to assist your organisation in meeting its financial accountability requirements in respect of the 2022 calendar year.

PO Box 9880, Canberra ACT 2601 | Phone 1300 566 046 | [www.education.gov.au](http://www.education.gov.au) | ABN 12 862 898 150

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### WHAT I NEED TO DO

Please arrange for the documents to be completed by the Auditor-General, Chief Executive Officer or Chief Financial Officer of the State or Territory. The documents can also be completed by an independent third party, with the prior agreement by the Australian Government Minister for Education.

I request that your organisation provide the completed Acquittal Certificate by COB 30 June 2023 and the completed Block Allocation Report by COB 31 August 2023. Please return these items to

[REDACTED]

### COMPLIANCE CERTIFICATE

Under section 77 of *Australian Education Act 2013* (the Act), approved authorities, including states and territories, are required to meet specific policy requirements aimed at improving education outcomes. I am seeking your assurance that these requirements have been met.

To facilitate this, I have attached a Compliance Certificate (Attachment A), which contains a series of questions regarding 2022 calendar year activity in respect of these policy areas, for completion.

### WHAT I NEED TO DO

I request that your organisation provide the completed certificate, together with documentation in support of your compliance, to [REDACTED] by COB 29 September 2023.

Summary of due dates:

Document	Due Date
Acquittal Certificate	COB 30 June 2023
Block Allocation Report	COB 31 August 2023
Compliance Certificate	COB 29 September 2023

The Department's contact on the above processes and requirements is [REDACTED]  
Financial Assurance and Compliance, [REDACTED]

Yours sincerely

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

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## Standing Committees on Education and Employment

### QUESTION ON NOTICE Supplementary Budget Estimates 2023 - 2024

**Outcome: Schools**

**Department of Education Question No. SQ23-000852**

Senator Sarah Henderson on 26 October 2023, Proof Hansard page 50

#### ***Letter to Studio Schools Australia***

##### **Question**

Mr Cook: Sorry, Senator. Just to help with that question, we have asked for that in the letter. We've asked for policies regarding management of conflict of interest and related-party transactions.

We've already asked Studio Schools to provide information on that.

Senator HENDERSON: Can we have a copy of that letter, please? Do you have a copy of that letter you could provide now?

Mr Cook: I have my notes on this one. We are happy to take it on notice and maybe give it to you later this afternoon.

Senator HENDERSON: Are you able to provide it to us during the lunch break?

Mr Cook: I've answered in relation to that.

Senator HENDERSON: Does any of your officials here have a copy of the letter?

CHAIR: Mr Cook said he would get a copy to you as soon as possible.

Mr Cook: Yes. We've just got notes on this one. Sorry. That's all.

CHAIR: Why don't we see if we can get it when we come back from the break, from one of your assistants, if not sooner?

Mr Cook: Sure.

##### **Answer**

The department wrote to Studio Schools of Australia on 25 October 2023 as the approved authority for Yiramalay Studio School seeking information on financial operations, organisational structure, salary levels and a range of other costs such as transport. The purpose of the letter is to allow the department to assess the approved authority's compliance with the requirements of the *Australian Education Act 2013* and *Australian Education Regulations 2023*.

Information the department requests as part of its investigations may contain sensitive and/or commercial information, which if released publicly may have a significant adverse impact on the proper and efficient conduct of the department's operations, including the ability to obtain similar information in the future. As all approved authorities have access to appeal and natural justice provisions, it is not appropriate to make the compliance letter or any response public as it may prejudice the investigation and any future actions.

## Standing Committees on Education and Employment

### QUESTION ON NOTICE Supplementary Budget Estimates 2023 - 2024

#### Outcome: Schools

#### Department of Education Question No. SQ23-001011

Senator Penny Allman-Payne provided in writing.

Also, refer to previous hearing Question No. SQ22-000214.

#### *Transparency of approved authorities*

#### Question

1. Can the department outline what, if any, reporting requirements the department places on approved authorities for Catholic and Independent schools in each state and territory to ensure that Commonwealth recurrent funding is distributed appropriately.
2. What proactive measures does the department take to audit the use of Commonwealth funds provided to Catholic and Independent approved authorities?
3. What penalties or sanctions are available to the department in the event of breaches?
4. In April this year there was a report in the Sydney Morning Herald that two New South Wales private schools (Al Amanah College and The Lakes Christian College) were required to repay state government funding after they were found to be operating for profit.
  - a. Were they also required to repay their Commonwealth funding?
  - b. If not, why not?
  - c. What remedies are available for the department in instances where schools are found to be operating for profit?

#### Answer

The Department of Education (the department) administers the *Australian Education Act 2013* (the Act) and has a robust assurance framework that provides for the monitoring of approved authorities' compliance with the requirements of the Act and the *Australian Education Regulations 2023* (the Regulations).

1. Section 78(5) of the Act allows approved system authorities (both government and non-government) to distribute the Commonwealth calculated recurrent funding in accordance with their own needs-based funding arrangement.

Section 36 of the Regulations outlines requirements relating to financial assistance and financial operations of non-government schools. This includes an annual submission of the total amount of financial assistance paid in accordance with the Act that is allocated by the authority to a school for the year, and information showing how the amounts for a school were determined in accordance with the authority's needs-based funding arrangement.

2. The financial assistance reporting requirements for non-government approved authorities are outlined in sections 34, 36 and 38 of the Regulations, and includes the submission of following:
  - **Acquittal certificate** (s34 of the Regulations) due on or before 30 June annually must state:
    - The amount of financial assistance paid to the authority or body in accordance with the Act in the year that has been spent or committed to be spent in accordance with the Act and Regulations

- Whether interest earned on financial assistance paid to the authority or body in accordance with the Act has been spent or committed to be spent in the year in accordance with the Act and Regulations.
- **Financial questionnaire** (s36 of the Regulations) due on or before 30 June annually (as determined by the Minister or the Minister's delegate) must include data that includes income, expenditure, assets, liabilities and other financial information.
- **Audited Financial Statements** (s38 of the Regulations) due on or before 30 June annually with the financial questionnaire must:
  - Be prepared in accordance with Australian Accounting Standards that relate to any money received by the authority or body in a year.
  - Be audited in accordance with the Australian Auditing Standards and generally accepted auditing practices.
- **Block Allocation Report** (s36 of the Regulations) due on or before 30 June annually (as determined by the Minister or the Minister's delegate) from approved system authorities includes information on the distribution of Australian Government recurrent funding by approved authorities to its schools.

The department safeguards the Commonwealth's investment in school education through data informed and risk-based assurance and compliance activities designed to prevent, detect and respond to non-compliance and fraud.

The department has improved its data analytics to better identify risks of non-compliance with the basic requirements under the Act for approved authorities to receive Commonwealth recurrent funding. For example, approved authorities operate on a not-for-profit basis, are financially viable, and fit and proper persons.

In response to [SQ22-000214](#) (2022–23 Budget estimates October and November), the department provided information on key financial assurance and compliance activities undertaken by the department for non-government approved authorities.

3. The department has processes for monitoring the compliance of approved authorities with the legislative requirements and, if necessary, taking appropriate action in instances of non-compliance. As part of the department's assurance and compliance processes it has established working relationships with the state and territory education departments as well as the state and territory regulators to collaborate on important matters.

The Minister and the Minister's delegate(s) (departmental official(s)) have a number of administrative options under the Act to respond to an approved authority that is not compliant with the Act:

- varying the authority's approval under section 81 of the Act, to:
  - remove a school from that approval (so that the approved authority will not receive Commonwealth funding for that school)
  - impose conditions on the approval of the authority aimed at addressing the non-compliance (failure to comply with which would be further non-compliance, enabling other administrative action to be taken)
- revoking the authority's approval under section 81 of the Act (resulting in the authority ceasing to be paid any Commonwealth funding for its schools)
- altering the frequency and amounts of payments of Commonwealth schools funding paid to the authority for a year under section 25 of the Act
- suspending some or all of the payment of Commonwealth schools funding until the non-compliance is addressed under section 110 of the Act

- seeking repayment of Commonwealth schools funding under section 110 of the Act, in circumstances where the non-compliance involves misuse of that funding (for example where there is evidence it was not used for the purposes of school education, or evidence of profit-taking by owners or operators of the school, including related parties).

With the exception of altering payment amounts and frequency of annual recurrent funding entitlements, these decisions are subject to formal internal review (where made by a delegate of the Minister) and external merits review by the Administrative Appeals Tribunal.

Any compliance action taken by the department would need to be commensurate with the severity of any non-compliance with the Act.

4. State and territory governments are responsible for the provision of school education in their jurisdictions, including registering and regulating schools (both government and non-government) in accordance with their own legislation governing the regulation of schools.

The requirements under state and territory legislation are not necessarily the same as the requirements under the Commonwealth legislation.

- a. No.
- b. Section 75(3) of the Act outlines not-for-profit requirements of the Act. The department's own investigations to assess the compliance status of the approved authorities representing the respective schools found no evidence of non-compliance with the requirements of section 75(3) of the Act.
- c. (c) See response to question 3 above.



## Standing Committees on Education and Employment

### QUESTION ON NOTICE Supplementary Budget Estimates 2022 - 2023

#### Outcome: Schools

#### Department of Education Question No. SQ23-000077

Senator Jacinta Nampijinpa Price on 16 February 2023, Proof Hansard page 62

Also, refer to previous hearing Question No. SQ22-000214.

#### *School attendance in Wadeye*

##### Question

Senator NAMPIJINPA PRICE: Thank you. In the community of Wadeye, there is a school that receives \$18 million of funding a year. The reported enrolment average has been about 24 per cent, and only about 1 per cent of students attend 90 per cent of the time in that particular school. Eighteen million dollars is a lot of money when literally one student is attending 90 per cent of the time and the average is 24 per cent. How is the department keeping the Northern Territory education department accountable for ensuring children are attending school regularly?

Dr Bruniges: It's a very good question, Senator. If you're not at school, you're not learning. I'm very clear in my view about the importance of school attendance. How do we hold governments to account? For the receipt of money, we have a block grant authority sheet that comes in that is school by school, saying how much money on each of the variables comes in, and that's signed off by the chief executive. We then also do some audits that Mr Hardy has spoken to if there's something that comes to our attention that we should look at. We do rely on those block grant authorities. And in the non-government sector there are also financial statistical returns that are signed off by a CPA that come in from the non-government sector. If there is an issue with a particular school in that block grant authority, I think Mr Hardy has just been through a risk assessment if there is something untoward—and that clearly sounds untoward to me. We would lift the bonnet and have a look, and have a close look at whether that \$18 million has gone on salary components—where has it gone? Has it reached the school site? Is it still sitting in a department? How much is overheads and so forth? So if there's some concern there, we're more than happy to have a look at it.

Senator NAMPIJINPA PRICE: If you could look at that and provide the outcome on notice, that would be really beneficial.

##### Answer

There is only one school in the Wadeye community. This school is 'Our Lady of the Sacred Heart Thamarrurr Catholic College' (the school). The Catholic Church of the Diocese of Darwin Property Trust Inc (CCDDPT) is the approved authority responsible for operation of the school.

The *My School* website provides information that supports national transparency and accountability of Australia's school education system through publication of nationally consistent school-level data. It complements other reporting measures aimed at ensuring schools and school systems are accountable to parents and to the broader community.

The school profile publicly available on the *My School* website reports:

- total Australian Government recurrent funding in 2021 of \$17.7 million
- Semester 1, 2022 student attendance rate of 26 per cent
- Semester 1, 2022 student attendance level (proportion of students attending 90 per cent or more of the time) was 2 per cent
- 40 full-time equivalent teaching staff in 2022
- 67.5 full-time equivalent non-teaching staff in 2022.

The school's audited Special Purpose Financial Report – 31 December 2021 is publicly available on the Australian Charities and Not-for profits Commission website at [www.acnc.gov.au/charity/charities/0cb1ccfd-38af-e811-a960-000d3ad24282/documents/](http://www.acnc.gov.au/charity/charities/0cb1ccfd-38af-e811-a960-000d3ad24282/documents/).

The schools' reported expenditure for 2021 is as follows:

Description	\$m
Salaries	9.3
Staff costs	1.8
Tuition expenses	0.3
Building and grounds	1.3
Depreciation	1.6
Other expenses	2.9
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>17.2</b>

The Australian Government provides financial assistance to all approved authorities for schools under the *Australian Education Act 2013* (the Act) for the purpose of providing school education. Section 29 of the Australian Education Regulation 2013 (the Regulation) outlines the requirements for spending provided under the Act. The Act and the Regulation require approved authorities to spend, or commit to spend, recurrent funding for the purpose of providing school education at a school for which the approved authority is approved.

The department has not identified any issues with the CCDDPT's 2021 financial acquittal certificate and is not aware of any funding assurance or compliance issues with the school in the community of Wadey.

States and territories have constitutional responsibility for the administration of schools, including attendance. The department does not have a direct oversighting role. The *Education Act 2015* (NT) covers mandatory enrolment and attendance requirements for the Northern Territory. Under the current National School Reform Agreement, all governments have committed to increasing the proportion of students attending school ninety per cent or more of the time, including students from priority groups.

The department has written to the approved authority seeking further detailed information on the school's student attendance and expenditure incurred in 2021 and 2022, and a copy of the letter has been provided to the Northern Territory's Department of Education.

## Schools Referenced Recently in Public on Compliance Matters

School / Approved Authority	Description
<p><b>Charlotte Mason College</b> Approved Authority: Parent's National Education Union (Australia) Inc.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• On 2 January 2024, NT News published an article that Brisbane College probed over falsified census data.</li> <li>• On 14 December 2023, NT News published an article that Charlotte Mason College's true financial state revealed after sudden closure.</li> <li>• On 12 December 2023, The Brisbane Times published an article that school's shock closure leaves families six weeks to enrol kids elsewhere.</li> <li>• On 7 December 2023, the Queensland Non-State Schools Accreditation Board (NSSAB) resolved to revoke the accreditation of Charlotte Mason College (effective from 4 January 2024) due to governance and financial management issues.</li> <li>• On 5 December 2023, Charlotte Mason College entered voluntary administration.</li> </ul> <p><b>Action(s) taken:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The department continues to liaise with NSSAB and the Administrators.</li> <li>• On 12 January 2024, the department confirmed with NSSAB that the approved authority did not seek a review of its decision.</li> <li>• On 22 January 2024, the department revoked approval of Parents' National Education Union (Australia) Inc as the approved authority under the Australian Education Act 2013, with effect from 4 January 2024.</li> <li>• All approved authorities in receipt of Australian Government funding for schools must comply with requirements of the Act and the Regulations.</li> <li>• The department will not comment further on the specifics of assurance and compliance matters.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Yiramalay Studio School</b> Approved Authority: Studio Schools of Australia Ltd</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• On 26 October 2023, <a href="#">Sky News Australia</a> published Indigenous educational charity under fire in Senate Estimates.</li> <li>• On 25 October 2023, The Australian published an article that answers sought on charity exec pay.</li> </ul> <p><b>Action(s) taken:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• On 25 October 2023, the department wrote to Studio Schools of Australia Ltd seeking further information on the published article.</li> <li>• On 21 November 2023, the approved authority provided a response.</li> <li>• On 5 December 2023, the department met with the approved authority to seek further clarification to its response.</li> <li>• The department is currently assessing the information provided. It is not appropriate for the department to comment further on this matter while it is still undertaking its compliance review.</li> </ul>

School / Approved Authority	Description
<p><b>St Paul's School (Bald Hills)</b></p> <p>Approved Authority: Anglican Schools Commission Queensland</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• On 27 September 2023, The Courier Mail published an article that Parents' fees threat after principal sacked.</li> <li>• On 26 September 2023, The Courier Mail published St Paul's principal role in limbo as new leaders appointed/</li> <li>• On 14 September 2023, The Courier Mail published an article that the Principal of St Paul's School in Bald Hills and the School Council have been sacked.</li> <li>• On 14 September 2023, The Daily Telegraph stated that thousands of angry parents and students were protesting against the Anglican Schools Commission Queensland's decision of sacking the principal.</li> <li>• On 13 March 2023, the Anglican Schools Commission Queensland contacted the department raising concerns regarding the Principal of St Paul's School's proposed commercialising the "Realms of Thinking" pedagogical framework. The approved authority provided information to the department for review and sought advice on compliance.</li> </ul> <p><b>Action(s) taken:</b> s 37(1)(a), s 47G(1)(a)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• On 16 September 2023, the approved authority advised the department that an interim Principal had been engaged for the school.</li> <li>• The department does not provide advice to schools about the employment of individuals.</li> </ul>

School / Approved Authority	Description
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>On 18 September 2023, the approved authority provided the department with an update on actions being undertaken.</li> <li>The approved authority provided further information to the department on 28 December 2023.</li> <li>The department is continuing to engage with the approved authority on requirements of the Act and Regulations.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Cranbrook School</b></p> <p>Approved Authority: Cranbrook School</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>On 20 June 2023, The Australian published an article about the Cranbrook Principal's trip to Paris.</li> </ul> <p><b>Action(s) taken:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>On 29 June 2023, the department wrote to Cranbrook School seeking further information on the published article.</li> <li>On 26 July 2023, Cranbrook School requested the department for an extension until 4 August 2023 to respond.</li> <li>On 3 August 2023, a response was received.</li> <li>The department has assessed the information and records provided and has not identified any compliance concerns under the Act or Regulations.</li> <li>The department wrote to the school on 25 September 2023 advising that no compliance action is being considered.</li> </ul>
<p><b>St Bridget's School</b> <b>St John's School</b> <b>St Joseph's School</b> <b>St Mary Magdalen's School.</b></p> <p>Approved Authority: Catholic Education Commission of Victoria</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>On 19 June 2023, The Herald Sun reported St Joseph's Primary School, Black Rock, could be closed after a review along with three other schools: St Bridget's School, Balwyn North; St John's Primary, Clifton Hill; and St Mary Magdalen's, Chadstone.</li> </ul> <p><b>Action(s) taken</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>On 29 June 2023, the department wrote to the approved authority and the Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (VRQA) seeking information on developments at the schools, including next steps about the reported closures.</li> <li>On 25 August 2023, the approved authority notified the department that the above four schools were to close at the end of 2023, as well as another school in regional Victoria (St Brendan's School, Dunnstown). The advice also noted that a full range of support is being provided to assist families with enrolments at other school including one-on-one support for families.</li> <li>On 1 September 2023, the VRQA responded to the department's letter. The VRQA noted that the approved authority had advised that a dedicated team has been established to offer tailored assistance to the families.</li> <li>On 14 September 2023, the department received a letter from the Catholic Education Commission Ltd confirming the closure of five Victorian catholic schools, taking effect at the end of the 2023 school year.</li> <li>On 4 January 2024, the approved authority confirmed to the department the closure of the 5 schools at the end of 2023. The</li> </ul>

School / Approved Authority	Description
	<p>department has updated its records to reflect the closure of the schools.</p>
<p><b>Tasmanian Catholic Education Office</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• On 17 June 2023, the Daily Telegraph reported concerns about inappropriate behaviour by the Executive Director of the Tasmanian Catholic Education Office (TCEO).</li> </ul> <p><b>Action(s) taken</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• On 4 July 2023, the department wrote to the TCEO seeking relevant information and explanation in relation to the article, including the outcomes of any internal investigations.</li> <li>• On 25 August 2023, TCEO responded to the department's letter.</li> <li>• Following an assessment of the response provided, the department further wrote to TCEO on 16 November 2023.</li> <li>• On 15 December 2023, a response was provided to the department.</li> <li>• The department is currently assessing the information provided.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Brindabella Christian College</b></p> <p>Approved Authority: Brindabella Christian Education Limited</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• On 1 February 2024, The Canberra Times reported that Brindabella Christian College has been reported to the tax office after it failed to pay superannuation to staff for nine months.</li> <li>• On 31 January 2024, <a href="#">The Riot Act</a> reported that the car park next to Brindabella Christian College has reopened after the Supreme Court granted a stay on ACAT orders to close the car park as the school prepares for an appeal on 21 February 2024.</li> <li>• On 8 December 2023, <a href="#">The Riot Act</a> reported that ACAT orders Brindabella Christian College to close car park.</li> <li>• On 15 November 2023, The Canberra Times reported that the ACT Civil and Administrative Tribunal ordered the Brindabella Christian College to close the car park.</li> <li>• On 30 October 2023, The Canberra Times reported that Brindabella Christian College did not get approval for demountable classrooms.</li> <li>• On 12 September 2023, The Riot Act reported that Brindabella Christian College is using uncertified structures as classrooms.</li> <li>• On 8 August 2023, The Canberra Times reported on new buildings works at Brindabella Christian College amid \$2.8 million loss in 2021.</li> <li>• On 27 April 2023, The Canberra Times reported that Brindabella Christian College will refer officials to the Commonwealth's national anti-corruption commission.</li> <li>• On 23 April 2023, The Canberra Times reported that Brindabella Christian College must expand its board, and review its finances.</li> <li>• On 31 March 2023, The Canberra Times reported that the College and the department reached an agreement at the Administrative Appeals Tribunal. The article noted Brindabella Christian College</li> </ul>

School / Approved Authority	Description
	<p>will improve its financial management and governance structure as part of an agreement with the federal Education Minister.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• On 28 March 2023, The Canberra Times reported that the Administrative Appeals Tribunal has been told the proprietors of the College have accumulated up a \$4.8 million debt to the Australian Tax Office.</li> </ul> <p><b>Action(s) taken:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• On 17 May 2021, a delegate for the Minister of Education made the decision that BCEL was not a fit and proper person under the requirements of the Act, and a number of conditions were imposed in relation to school's governance and financial viability.</li> <li>• On 11 June 2021, the department received an application made by BCEL to the Administrative Appeals Tribunal (AAT) for review of the department's Notice of Decision imposing the above conditions.</li> <li>• The hearing commenced on 27 March 2023. On 30 March 2023, as part of the AAT hearing, the department and BCEL reached an agreement on a varied set of Conditions on Approval and Timeline of Conditions to those imposed on 17 May 2021.</li> <li>• On 12 April 2023, the AAT agreed to the varied set of conditions and provided its final decision for this matter, which is publicly available on request through the AAT. The AAT did not alter the delegate's finding of May 2021 that BCEL did not comply with the fit and proper person requirements of the Act.</li> <li>• Based on the AAT conditions, BCEL is required to meet a number of conditions in relation to governance, financial management, and financial reporting. Quarterly reporting by BCEL to the department is also required under the AAT conditions. The department is monitoring BCEL's progress with the implementation of the AAT conditions to ensure they are meeting their obligations as outlined in the AAT order.</li> <li>• The department has written to BCEL on a number of occasions since the AAT orders were issued as part of its monitoring process on the implementation of the AAT orders. This includes in relation to the frequency of Australian Government recurrent payments.</li> <li>• <b>s 37(1)(a), s 47G(1)(a)</b></li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• On 2 February 2024, the department wrote to BCEL requesting information for the department to access BCEL's compliance with the requirements of the Act and the AAT conditions.</li> </ul>

School / Approved Authority	Description
<p><b>Our Lady of the Sacred Heart Thamarrurr Catholic College</b></p> <p>Approved Authority: Catholic Church of the Diocese of Darwin Property Trust Inc</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>During the 2022-23 Supplementary Budget Estimates hearing held on 16 February 2023 (Education and Employment Legislation Committee), Senator Nampijinpa Price raised matters with the department about a school in the community of Wadeye. Specifically, that a school in the community of Wadeye “receives \$18 million of funding a year” and that its reported “enrolment average has been about 24 per cent, and only about 1 per cent of students attend 90 per cent of the time in that particular school”. The Senator also stated that \$18 million “is a lot of money when literally one student is attending 90 per cent of the time and the average is 24 per cent.”</li> </ul> <p><b>Action(s) taken:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The department wrote to the approved authority on 17 March 2023, seeking relevant background information and explanation in relation to the student attendance and funding matters raised by Senator Nampijinpa Price.</li> <li>A response was provided to the department on 12 April 2023.</li> <li>The department assessed the information provided by the approved authority and did not identify any non-compliance concerns in relation to expenditure of Australian Government funding at the school. Also, the department did not identify any compliance concerns in relation to policies and procedures regarding improving student attendance.</li> <li>The Diocese of the Darwin Property Trust Inc was informed of the department’s review on 29 January 2024.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Sydney Catholic Schools</b></p> <p>Approved Authority: Catholic Schools NSW Limited</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>On 19 April 2023, <a href="#">ABC News</a> published an article entitled “Sydney Catholic Schools paid almost 400k to a firm linked to a mysterious Arthur Thorogood. Did he even exist?”</li> </ul> <p><b>Action(s) taken:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>On 21 April 2023, the department wrote to the approved authority seeking information on the matters raised in the ABC News article.</li> <li>On 26 May 2023, a detailed response was provided to the department.</li> <li><b>s 37(1)(a), s47G(1)(a)</b></li> </ul>
<p><b>The Lakes Christian College</b></p> <p>Approved Authority: Christian Community Ministries Ltd</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>On 5 April 2023, The Daily Telegraph reported that a Christian private school in Sydney’s west, The Lakes Christian College, had been ordered to repay the NSW government \$3.8 million after it was found to have been operating “for profit”. The repayment amount was upheld by the NSW Supreme Court on 27 March 2023. A 2020 investigation by the NSW authorities into the finances of the college ruled that transfers of school property to a trust, as well as loan payments made to the school’s operation, made it ineligible to receive government funding.</li> </ul>



School / Approved Authority	Description
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The investigation by the NSW Non-Government Schools Not-For-Profit Advisory Committee resulted in the then-education Minister Sarah Mitchell declaring the school “non-compliant” with regulations and ordered the school pay back \$3.8 million in government funding.</li> </ul> <p><b>Action(s) taken:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The department examined the issues raised in the NSW Supreme Court decision and wrote to the approved authority on 16 May 2023 seeking further information in relation to the for-profit issues and related party transactions. A response was received on 29 June 2023.</li> <li>On 25 September 2023 the department wrote to the approved authority with an update on the progress of the assessment.</li> <li>On 9 November 2023, the department issued a follow up letter to the approved authority seeking further information.</li> <li>On 20 December 2023, the department received the approved authority’s supporting documents, which are currently being reviewed.</li> <li>Based on the department’s review, it does not consider the approved authority for Lakes Christian College to be operating for profit under section 75 of the Act.</li> <li>State and territory governments have primary regulatory responsibility for schools, including non-government school registration and other requirements, as reflected in their own legislation governing the regulation of schools. NSW’s assessment that the school was operating for profit was in relation to its own legislation and interpretation.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Minarah College (formerly Green Valley Islamic College)</b></p> <p>Approved Authority: Green Valley Islamic College Ltd (GVICL)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>On 8 March 2023, Minarah College reported on their Facebook page that the College Board believes it is critical for the community is made aware that the State and Federal governments are seeking full independence of the College without any control or influence over its management by the Muslim League of NSW or the Shuraa Council to continue receiving funding and that there are several negative consequences that the College may lose its registration.</li> </ul> <p><b>Action(s) taken:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>On 22 December 2022, the department wrote to the approved authority requesting further information relating their compliance with the Act and the Regulations, and financial administration.</li> <li>On 17 February 2023, the approved authority provided a response. <b>s 37(1)(a), 47G(1)(a)</b></li> </ul>

School / Approved Authority	Description
	s 37(1)(a), 47G(1)(a)
<p><b>King’s School</b></p> <p>Approved Authority: The Council of the King’s School</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>On 24 June 2022, the <a href="#">Sydney Morning Herald</a> published an article “Plan for plunge pool at headmaster’s residence at King’s fuels tension.”</li> <li>The article stated that “Plans for a plunge pool to be built for the headmaster’s residence at The King’s School have fuelled tension among parents over the school’s spending priorities and reignited debate about taxpayer funding for private education”. It also reported on an overseas trip by its headmaster to attend the Henley Royal Regatta in Britain.</li> <li>On 14 February 2023, The Daily Telegraph reported that King’s School has been ordered to ditch plans to build a plunge pool at the headmaster’s residence because the project was an illegitimate use of the school’s money. The private two-by-three metre pool to be built at headmaster Tony George’s house on campus was approved by the school’s council in June 2022 but has been stopped after concerns were raised with the Non-Government Schools Not-For-Profit Advisory Committee. The committee monitors how private schools use their finances – including their allocated government funding.</li> </ul> <p><b>Action(s) taken:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The department wrote to the school’s approved authority on 29 June 2022 seeking an explanation on the issues raised in the media.</li> <li>The department wrote to the school’s approved authority on 31 January 2023 noting that the department will further review the matter once a final decision is made by the NSW authorities.</li> </ul> <p>s 37(1)(a), s 47G(1)(a)</p>

School / Approved Authority	Description
	<p>s 37(1)(a), 47G(1)(a)</p>
<p><b>East Preston Islamic College</b></p> <p>Approved Authority: East Preston Islamic College Limited</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>On 9 February 2023, <a href="#">The Age</a> reported that the principal of an inner-north Melbourne private school that began the school year by withholding its teachers' pay has been stood down due to alleged misconduct, prompting outpouring of support from staff, who are calling for his reinstatement. Neil Hasankolli, principal of East Preston Islamic College, has been stood down by the school's new board, days after the board withheld wages from its teachers and support staff.</li> <li>The new board, which has been locked in a legal dispute with the former board, claimed it could not pay staff until the former board authorised the release of funds. All members of the former board were purged in a vote late last year.</li> <li>On 1 May 2023, <a href="#">The Age</a> reported that "dozens of staff at a troubled independent school in Preston refused to go to work last week following the firing of two principals". The article also noted that "Victoria's schools regulator is reviewing governance at the low-fee school, and its authorised officers were on-site last week".</li> </ul> <p><b>Action(s) taken:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The department is liaising with Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (VRQA) on this matter. s 37(1)(a), s 47G(1)(a)</li> </ul> <p>s 37(1)(a), s 47G(1)(a)</p>

School / Approved Authority	Description
	s 37(1)(a), s 47G(1)(a)
<p><b>Redfield College</b>  <b>Tangara School for Girls</b>  <b>Montgrove College</b>  <b>Wollemi College</b></p> <p>Approved Authority:  PARED Ltd</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• On 28 January 2023, <a href="#">The Sydney Morning Herald</a> published an article (War of words erupts between Opus Dei schools and ABC) that reported on serious allegations at PARED Ltd operated schools in relation to student education, health of students, sex discrimination matters and teaching of the school curriculum.</li> <li>• The article was based on ABC Four Corners investigation into claims made by former students and their families at schools operated by PARED Ltd related to opposing consent education, encouraging students to make decisions contrary to medical advice, harm to students as a result of their education, homophobia, and religious recruitment practices.</li> </ul> <p><b>Action(s) taken:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The department wrote to the approved authority on 31 January 2023 seeking clarification on the media reports and whether the approved authority is compliant under section 28 of the Regulations (fit and proper person), and section 42 of the Regulations (implementation of the Australian Curriculum).</li> <li>• Separately, the department wrote to the NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) on 31 January 2023, requesting that it keeps the department informed of the progress and outcomes of its investigation into PARED Ltd.</li> <li>• On 17 February 2023, the approved authority provided a response to the department (with further information provided on 22 and 23 February 2023).</li> <li>• s 37(1)(a), 47G(1)(a)</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The department is undertaking its own assessment of information it has available to it. s 37(1)(a), 47G(1)(a)</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• s 37(1)(a), 47G(1)(a)</li> <li>•</li> </ul>

School / Approved Authority	Description
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="464 349 751 383">• s 37(1)(a), 47G(1)(a)</li><li data-bbox="464 439 480 461">•</li></ul>

**Issue:** **Funding - Building Boarding Schools on Country (BBSoc)**  
**PBS Pg No.** PBS pg 45 (Under Schools Support Closing the Gap Initiatives)  
**MYEFO Pg No.** Budget Paper 2, pg 100-101 (Under First Nations – supporting education outcomes)  
**Contact:** **Meg Brighton**  
 Ph: s 22  
 Deputy Secretary, Schools Group

### Budget - Building Boarding Schools on Country

Financial year	2021–22 \$m	2022–23 \$m	2023–24 \$m	2024–25 \$m	2025–26 \$m	Total \$m
Budget Allocation	7.107	54.660	8.292	0.524	0.175	70.758
Committed	7.107	54.660	8.292	0.524	0.175	70.758
Uncommitted	0	0	0	0	0	0

### Key Points

- The BBSoc measure will create an additional 78 boarding places for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students from remote and very remote areas, closer to their home communities.
- Under a revised scope agreed in Budget 2023–24, the Australian Government will contribute **\$70.8 million** for Studio Schools of Australia (SSA) over 2021–22 to 2025–26 to:
  - Build **one new** on-country residential middle-year Indigenous boarding school, **Manjali** (pronounced MARN-JA-LEE) **Studio School**, for Years 7–9, in the Kimberley region, WA.
  - **Upgrade one** existing Indigenous boarding school facility (Years 10–12) at **Yiramalay**, also in the Kimberley region, WA.
  - Establish an Indigenous Education Research Centre (IERC) adjacent to the new school (Manjali).
  - Assist with **operational costs** associated with SSA’s delivery of the project.
- The scope of the measure was revised in response to significant increases in construction costs due to COVID-19 and broader supply issues, particularly in remote areas (See [Attachment A](#) Budget factsheet).

- Construction of the new Manjali Studio School and the IERC is expected to commence in 2024 for a Term 1, 2025 school opening.
  - The school and IERC will be a mix of modular and pre-fabricated buildings constructed in Queensland and transported to site once the wet season ends (between May–October 2024) to support a streamlined construction process.
  - Exact timing on the start of construction is subject to SSA finalising negotiations with a preferred tenderer.
- This measure contributes to Closing the Gap Target 5: *By 2031, increase the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people (aged 20-24) attaining Year 12 or equivalent qualification to 96%.*
- The National Indigenous Australians Agency (NIAA) has been working with the department and SSA on implementation of this measure.

### ***Project rescope and implementation***

- The previous government committed \$74.9 million over 2021–2022 to 2025–2026 for BBSoc to:
  - Build **3 new** on-country residential middle-year First Nations boarding schools (Years 7–9) – Windjana/Bandilngan (pronounced BUN-DIL-YARN) (Kimberley, WA; now the Manjali school); Roebourne (Pilbara, WA) and Dhupuma (East Arnhem, NT).
  - **Upgrade** the **existing** Indigenous boarding school facility (Years 10–12) at **Yiramalay** (Kimberley, WA).
  - Construct an **Indigenous Education Research Centre** (to be located near Manjali) to provide a program of professional development for staff.
- There were significant delays in implementation due to COVID-19 border closures, unseasonably wet weather, finalising state government land and planning approvals, and finalising Indigenous Land Use Agreements.
- SSA first advised the department of the potential for project delays due to site and land tenure issues in February 2022 and provided an update in April 2022 which included a revised project workplan and revised school opening dates.
- SSA advised the department in July 2022 that it faced significant cost pressures, and the scope of the measure was becoming unviable within the original funding envelope.

- In late August 2022, SSA further advised that it faced increased operational and administrative costs, in part due to uncertainty about the trajectory of new student enrolments and because of variable enrolment numbers at the Yiramalay School, post COVID-19.
- The total funding shortfall to complete the original project, as advised by SSA in late 2022, was in the order of \$118 million.
- In May 2023, SSA advised its intention to build the new boarding school at an alternative site to the previously announced Bandilngan location in WA following the significant flood event affecting viability of originally planned site in the Kimberley region in January 2023.
- On 10 August 2023, the Minister for Education agreed to the new Manjali Studio School site at Kurrajong, approximately 55 km from Bandilngan and around 10 km from the existing Yiramalay Studio School.
- See [Attachment B](#) for more on project changes in project costs.

### **SSA project expansion plans**

- The SSA website identifies the schools intended to be built in addition to Yiramalay under their intended system of Studio Schools: Manjali (Kimberly, WA), Roebourne (Pilbara, WA) Dhupuma (East Arnhem, NT), as well as a new school near Broome (Yawuru, NT).
- The department continues to work with SSA to deliver the BBSoc measure.

### **Operational information requested from SSA – in respect to Yiramalay Studio School**

- On 25 October 2023, the department wrote to SSA, as the approved authority for the Yiramalay Studio School, seeking information on financial operations, conflict of interests, organisation structure, salary levels, and a range of other costs such as transport ([SQ23-000852](#) refers).
- The purpose of the letter was to assess SSA's compliance with the *Australian Education Act 2013* and its regulations in respect of requirements to receive Australian Government recurrent funding for Yiramalay Studio School. This investigation is still ongoing.
- It is not appropriate to comment on this process as it may prejudice the investigation and any future actions.
- See [Attachment C](#) for a list of relevant SSA QoNs from recent Estimates hearings.



**Media**

- *Education charity bosses' fat salaries revealed, The Weekend Australian, 21 October 2023***  
The article notes a 'charity that uses taxpayers' money to build schools for poor Aboriginal children' has paid two top executives \$815,000 over 18 months and highlights other expenditure items. The article is based on financial reports lodged by SSA and published on the Australian Charities and Not-for-Profit Commission website.
- *Labor's 'lies' on boarding schools, The Daily Telegraph, 19 October 2023***  
The article outlines claims from Senator Henderson that Minister Clare did 'not tell the truth' in relation to the Coalition 'not allocating enough funding' for the BBSoc measure. The article suggests that concerns about funding only arose after Labor came into government.
- *Yes to a Voice but No to a boarding school, The Daily Telegraph, 10 August 2023***  
The article notes that two new boarding schools planned for East Arnhem Land in the NT and the Pilbara region in WA (around Roebourne) will not be built because of the rescoping of the measure.
- *Blame Game as schools defunded, The Daily Telegraph, 10 August 2023***  
The article notes a boarding school that would have provided educational services for East Arnhem Land's Yolngu people is not proceeding. Minister's Clare's response was that the previous Coalition government did not allocate enough funding to deliver on their commitment to build these schools.

**Attachments**

- [Attachment A](#): Budget factsheet
- [Attachment B](#): BBSoc change in project costs
- [Attachment C](#): List of relevant QoNs Nov 2022 - Oct 2023

<b>Date Last Cleared</b>	09 February 2024
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Australian Government  
Department of Education



**Budget**  
2023–24

## First Nations – supporting education outcomes

### Building Boarding Schools On-Country

Studio Schools of Australia will build a new middle year secondary boarding school at Bandilngan (Windjana Gorge) in the Kimberley, upgrade their existing Yiramalay Studio School, and establish a new Indigenous Education and Research Centre.

This measure revises the scope of the Building Boarding Schools On-Country program.

Construction costs have increased across Australia, particularly in remote areas. This has significantly impacted what is possible within the Building Boarding Schools On-Country program.

#### Why is this important?

Supporting boarding options reduces the challenges that students from remote communities face in accessing school while staying connected to Country and family.

Programs that support student engagement and pathways to further education and employment are critical to retention and longer-term success of First Nations students.

The Building Boarding Schools On-Country program contributes to Closing the Gap Target 5: *By 2031, increase the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people (aged 20-24) attaining Year 12 or equivalent qualification to 96 per cent.*

#### Who will benefit?

In line with community agreements in place, the Bandilngan site has been nominated by Studio Schools Australia as the most appropriate location for constructing a new Studio School.

When constructed, the school will support up to 78 middle years (Years 7 to 9) students and provide a supportive and culturally safe learning environment on-Country.

#### How much will it cost?

The Government is committing \$70.8 million to deliver the revised program scope, with savings of \$4.2 million to be redirected to other measures within the Education portfolio.

**BBSoc project costs**

(\$ million excl. GST)

	Original funding allocation (Oct 2021)	Revised costs advised SSA (Nov 2022)	Budget 2023-24 (May 2023)	Expended to date (Feb 2024)	Not yet expended (Feb 2024)
<b>Project costs</b>					
New school – Manjali (MARN-JA-LEE) Studio School, Kimberley, WA	22.000	45.300	45.300		
New school – Dhupuma, East Arnhem Region, NT	22.000	56.000	n/a		
New school – Roebourne, Pilbara Region, WA	22.000	64.000	n/a	52.000 <sup>4</sup>	0.000
Upgrade to existing Yiramalay Studio School	2.000	2.200	2.200		
Construction of an Indigenous Education Research Centre (IERC)	4.000	5.000	4.500 <sup>2</sup>		
<b>Total Construction costs</b>	<b>72.000</b>	<b>172.500</b>	<b>52.000</b>	<b>52.000</b>	<b>0.000</b>
<b>Other Administration Costs</b>					
SSA costs	n/a	18.200	16.200	16.200 <sup>3</sup>	0.000
Block Grant Authority Administration	0.450	0.450	0.500	0.500	0.000
Program Evaluation	0.520	0.520	0.520	0.170	0.350
Departmental Administration	1.538	1.538	1.538	1.189	0.349
Unallocated (contingency)	0.398	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
<b>Total administration costs</b>	<b>2.908</b>	<b>20.708</b>	<b>18.758</b>	<b>1.859</b>	<b>0.699</b>
<b>Total Project and Administration Costs</b>	<b>74.908<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>193.208</b>	<b>70.758</b>	<b>70.059</b>	<b>0.699</b>

1. In November 2021, \$6.8 million was re-allocated from Education to the NIAA. The \$6.8 million administered by the NIAA is represented in the \$16.2 million SSA costs under Budget 2023-24.
2. SSA advised a revised total cost for the IERC of \$5 million. SSA noted a philanthropic donation of \$500,000 which reduced the amount of Commonwealth funding required to \$4.5 million.
3. The \$16.2 million SSA costs includes the \$6.8 million administered by the NIAA, \$1.35 million special circumstances funding, and \$8.005 million operational expenses for SSA managed under arrangements with the Australian Independent Schools Western Australia (AISWA; BGA).
4. The BGA is responsible for making payments to SSA in accordance with contractually agreed construction milestones. The Western Australian Independent Block Grant Authority (BGA) has received \$60.05 million (\$52.0 million project costs and \$8.05 million SSA costs) in anticipation of the construction contract being signed in December 2023.

PDMS	QON	Topic
<b>October 2023</b>		
<a href="#">SQ23-000852</a>	28	<b>Request for a copy of compliance letter</b> Notes dept wrote to SSA for information to assess compliance. Not appropriate to make letter or response public – may prejudice future action
<a href="#">SQ23-000853</a>	29	<b>Copy of NIAA and SSA funding agreement</b> <b>Att A</b> Head agreement <b>Att B</b> Project Schedule
<a href="#">SQ23-000854</a>	30	<b>Breakdown of \$16.2m SSA operational support funding</b> Table that identifies the three (3) tranches of funding under the \$16.2 million and what each was for. Updates SQ23-000679.
<a href="#">SQ23-000855</a>	31	<b>When did department first become aware of issues?</b> <b>Att A</b> 10 Feb 2022, Internal dept email advising delays <b>Att B</b> 1 April 2022, Email to SSA (Drennen) requesting info <b>Att C</b> 8 April 2022, Response email from SSA (Drennan) advising revised opening dates for schools
<a href="#">SQ23-000856</a>	32	<b>Advice to previous government about cost escalations</b> Advice on 3 updates provided to Office of Minister McKenzie on project status over 29 Nov 21 - 14 April 22
<a href="#">SQ23-000857</a>	33	<b>Request for SSA Business Case (in relation to salary costs)</b> Response notes long standing practice not to disclose information that informed proposals considered by Cabinet.
<a href="#">SQ23-000858</a>	34	<b>Request for details about charter flights</b> <b>Att A</b> Charter flight and details for each flight provided by SSA
<a href="#">SQ23-000861</a>	37	<b>Chronology of Building code changes (energy efficiency)</b> Chronology of national building code changes (energy efficiency) and timeframes of adoption of those changes by the WA government. Includes information as it impacts on cost
<a href="#">SQ23-000862</a>	38	<b>Request to table SSA's 2021 Financial Plan (salary costs)</b> Requested document refers to SSA System Business and Operational Plan Sept 2021). Response refers to SQ23-001127; business cases not provided - long standing practice not to disclose information that informed proposals considered by Cabinet (consistent with SQ23-000857)

<a href="#">SQ23-001127</a>	300	<p><b>Seven questions covering requests for business cases, agreements, maintenance costs, invoices, staffing</b></p> <p>Business cases not provided - long standing practice not to disclose information that informed proposals considered by Cabinet (consistent with SQ23-000857, SQ23-000862)</p> <p>Information on Yiramalay upgrade works referred to SQ23-001129, noting department has no invoices.</p> <p><b>Att A</b> SSA Remuneration information (salary costs)  <b>Att B</b> SSA/Yiramalay positions and assurance checks  <b>Att C</b> Volunteer arrangements/ benefits</p>
<a href="#">SQ23-001128</a>	301	<p><b>Request for a copy of compliance letter</b></p> <p>Duplicate ask, refers to SQ23-000852</p>
<a href="#">SQ23-001129</a>	302	<p><b>Request for workplans, corro with Board and conflicts</b></p> <p>Latest SSA workplan and all correspondence with SSA Board members provided. Notes department has requested information from SSA on board member conflict of interests.</p> <p><b>Att A</b> Copy of latest version of SSA workplan  <b>Att B</b> SSA Board (Drennen) email advice 24 July 2022  <b>Att C</b> SSA Board (Westacott) email to Sec. Bruniges 31 Oct 2022  <b>Att D</b> SSA Board (Westacott) Email to Sec. Cook, 26 Jan 2023  <b>Att E</b> SSA Board (Drennen) Email to Sec. Cook, 2 June 2023  <b>Att F</b> SSA Board (Gunning) Text message to departmental staff, 14 June 2023  <b>Att G</b> SSA Board (Westacott) Emails with Sec. Cook, 23 June - 4 July 2023  <b>Att H</b> SSA Board (Westacott) Email with Sec. Cook, Nov 2023</p>
<a href="#">SQ23-001131</a>	304	<p><b>Breakdown of \$16.2m SSA operational support funding</b></p> <p>Three questions: refers to SQ23-000854 for breakdown of \$16.2, and refers to SQ23-000853 for funding agreements.</p> <p>Request for SSA submissions re \$16.2 funding not provided - long standing practice not to disclose information that informed proposals considered by Cabinet (consistent with SQ23-001127, SQ23-000862 and SQ23-000857).</p>
<a href="#">SQ23-001133</a>	306	<p><b>When was Minister advised about cost increases?</b></p> <p>Refers to the chronology of building code changes (SQ23-000861) and notes the long standing practice not to disclose information that informed proposals considered by Cabinet (consistent with SQ23-001127, SQ23-000862 and SQ23-000857, and SQ23-001131).</p>

<a href="#">SQ23-001134</a>	307	<b>What assurances were sought on cost increase prices?</b> Response notes advice from BGAs and substantiated by the ABS Producer price index, Non residential building construction data. Question is similar to Q6 of SQ23-000679
<b>June 2023</b>		
<a href="#">SQ23-000380</a>	194	<b>Original &amp; revised capital costs for BBSoc infrastructure</b> Comparison table of original and revised costs and confirms capital costs in the revised scope measure
<a href="#">SQ23-000381</a>	195	<b>Revised measure reduces places for boarding students</b> Education primarily S&T responsibility. Information on Government funding to improve indigenous education outcomes
<a href="#">SQ23-000679</a>	223	<b>List of 13 questions - measure cost changes &amp; increases</b> Includes 2 tables - comparison table of original and revised measure costs (also in SQ23-000380) and table showing delivery costs (roughly the \$16.2)  <b>Att A</b> 24 July 2022, SSA email advising cost increases (\$22-\$45.3m) <b>Att B</b> Sept 22 SSA Briefing paper detailing cost increases <b>Att C</b> Quantity Surveyor report that informed revised costs <b>Att D</b> IERC info (System Business & Operational Plan 2021)
<a href="#">SQ23-000813</a>	424	<b>Details of \$16.2 million SSA support funding</b> Text description of the \$16.2m funding eg for architect fees, engineering advice, planning approval etc
<b>November 2022</b>		
<a href="#">SQ22-000311</a>	111	<b>7 questions about Studio Schools original measure</b> Amount of funding committed and delivery arrangements. Location of schools, student numbers and timeframes to open

<b>Issue:</b>	<b>National School Reform Agreement</b>
<b>PBS Pg No.</b>	45 (Review funding included in National Schools Reform)
<b>MYEFO Pg No.</b>	308 (Quality Schools partnership payment)
<b>Contact:</b>	<b>Meg Brighton</b> Ph: <a href="#">s 22</a> Deputy Secretary

## Key Points

### ***Negotiation of the next National School Reform Agreement***

- The Australian Government is currently negotiating the next National School Reform Agreement (the Agreement) with state and territory governments. The next Agreement will take effect from January 2025.
- As part of these negotiations, the Australian Government is working closely with the state and territory governments to put all schools on a **pathway to 100 per cent** of their fair funding level, funding **disadvantaged schools first**, and to **tie additional funding to reforms** that will improve student outcomes.
- The Government provides funding to state and territory governments and the non-government sector according to the Schooling Resource Standard (SRS) and funding shares developed following the 2011 comprehensive review of school funding led by David Gonski AM (the Gonski Review).
- In 2024, under the one-year extension to the National School Reform Agreement, the Australian Government is meeting its funding commitments by providing at least 20% of the SRS for government schools and 80% for non-government schools.
- State and territory governments and non-government approved system authorities allocate Commonwealth and other funding based on their own needs-based funding models.
- For further information on school funding see [SB24-000001](#).
- Following Education Ministers Meeting (EMM) on 11 December 2023, Education Ministers released a joint statement ([Attachment A](#)) confirming that:
  - The next Agreement will focus on three key outcomes: **equity**; **wellbeing** for learning and engagement; and a strong and **sustainable workforce**.
  - Ministers are committed to working together to get every school to a minimum of 100% of the SRS.
- Education Ministers have tasked the Australian Education Senior Officials Committee (AESOC) to lead on negotiations.

- The Agreement will be developed in partnership with the Coalition of Peaks and the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Advisory Committee.
- The National Catholic Education Commission and Independent Schools Australia will be invited to attend and participate in meetings negotiating the Agreement.
- Discussions between the Australian Government and state and territories on the next Agreement are confidential. Disclosure of information could prejudice negotiations.

### ***Statement of Intent***

- On 31 January 2024, a Statement of Intent demonstrating a shared commitment to putting all government schools on a pathway to 100 per cent of the SRS was announced with **Western Australia**.
  - Media release at [Attachment B](#) and Statement of Intent published on 8 February 2024 at [Attachment C](#).
- Under the agreement, the most disadvantaged public schools in Western Australia will be fully funded first. This represents an additional **\$777.4 million** investment by the Australian Government in Western Australian government schools from 2025 to 2029.
- The Statement of Intent outlines the Commonwealth's commitment to provide 2.5% additional SRS funding by 2026, contingent on Western Australia increasing their contribution by 2.5% over this period, and tying the funding to reforms agreed in the Agreement.
- Discussions with remaining jurisdictions on their Statements of Intent are underway.

### ***National School Reform Agreement Review (NSRA Review)***

- On 15 December 2022, Commonwealth and state and territory Education Ministers agreed to establish a panel of experts to undertake a review to inform the next National School Reform Agreement (NSRA). This was publicly announced on 16 December 2022.
- On 31 October 2023, the Panel delivered its final report to Education Ministers. States and territories were provided with the opportunity to consider and correct any inaccuracies prior to publication.
- On 11 December 2023, the Expert Panel's final report was published alongside a summary report prepared by the Australian Government.



## **The Report**

- The final report identified 7 reform directions underpinned by specific and evidence-based recommendations and targets for prioritised through the next Agreement.
- The Expert Panel considered that funding schools at 100% of the SRS was a prerequisite for improving student outcomes.
- The final report made a number of recommendations for reform including:
  - Implementation of multi-tiered system of support models with access to catch-up small group tutoring.
  - Consistent screening of student literacy and numeracy progress in year 1 to ensure students.
  - High quality and evidence-based professional development for principals and educators focusing in areas such as behaviour management training and trauma-informed practice.
  - Comprehensive curriculum support including access to fully sequenced, high-quality and quality assured resources.
  - Improved principal and teacher attraction and retention initiatives such as strengthened career pathways and greater recognition.
  - Strengthening links between schools and community and health services so that students' social and health needs are met.
  - Supporting teacher and student wellbeing in schools.
- The final report will be one input into the development and negotiation of the next Agreement and bilateral agreements with states and territories.
- Other inputs include the Review of the NSRA conducted by the Productivity Commission, the Disability Royal Commission, the NDIS Review, and the National Teacher Workforce Action Plan.

## **Extension of the current NSRA**

- The current NSRA has been extended until 31 December 2024.
- The extension does not change the Australian Government's existing commitment for government school funding which is legislated under the *Australian Education Act 2013*.
- The extension does not change the Government's commitment to **continue providing at least 20% of the SRS for government schools** in 2024.
  - The Commonwealth will provide \$29.1 billion in total recurrent funding during the one-year NSRA extension.

- This is an increase of more than \$1 billion from the estimated \$27.8 billion provided in 2023.
- Under the extension, all states and territories either maintained or increased their 2023 SRS funding commitments for government schools in 2024.
- Some non-government schools are in the process of transitioning to 100% of the SRS by 2029. This is a legislated transition that remains unchanged.
- Refer to [SB24-000001](#) for more information about schools recurrent funding.

### Stakeholder Response

Stakeholders	Response summary
Associations	<p><a href="#">31/1/24</a> – Australian Education Union (AEU) welcomed Western Australian becoming the first state to commit to fully funding public schools, but said there needs to be a bigger commitment to close the inclusion of 4% of costs not directly related to the education of students in schools, such as capital depreciation.</p> <p><a href="#">11/12/23</a> – AEU Federal President, Correna Haythorpe, reflected on the Report’s recommendation to fully fund all public schools, stating that ‘there can be no excuse for further inaction and delay by governments.’ ‘There needs to be new signed agreements that deliver full funding by 2028, at the latest.’</p> <p>09/12/23 – Correna Haythorpe discussed that urgent investment is required for smaller class sizes, additional support for students with complex needs and those at risk of falling behind. ‘New bilateral agreements next year must deliver full not fake funding to public schools’ (highlighting that accounting tricks have been used to artificially inflate funding)</p> <p>14/11/2023 – A member of the AEU submitted a Freedom of Information request seeking access to “copies of letters sent...to state and territory education ministers in the last month which refer to school funding.” These letters were exempt under the Commonwealth-State relations exemption.</p> <p>2/8/23 – AEU launched the For Every Child campaign with the aim of securing full funding by 2028 to allow public schools to reduce class sizes, increase the one-to-one support for students and provide more time and classroom assistance for teachers.</p>

Rep Body/ies	N/A
Opposition	<p><a href="#">31/1/24</a> – Shadow Minister for Education Sarah Henderson questioned why reforms such as evidence-based teaching methods and Year 1 phonics checks have not been mandated and if the Australian Government would be able to see all government schools on a pathway to full and fair funding given the additional funding required from the other states and territories.</p> <p>6/9/23 – Ms Henderson claimed that funding to government schools had been cut under the Labor Government, and that there needs to be an investment in the things that will help students and teachers to excel, evidence-based teaching and learning, fixing the overcrowded curriculum and improving initial teacher education. Stresses the growing teacher shortage crisis, particularly across regional Australia.</p> <p>11/4/23 – Commenting on the Education Policy Outlook in Australia report by the OECD, Shadow Minister for Education Sarah Henderson claimed the Government is ‘caught up in a vortex of education reviews,’ delaying action to lift standards in classrooms.</p>
Greens	<p><a href="#">01/2/2024</a> – claimed the Australian Government should “...eliminate dodgy accounting tricks...” from SRS funding by removing the inclusion of 4% of costs not directly related to the education of students in schools. Also called on the Australian Government to fund government schools at 25% SRS.</p> <p>06/12/23 – The Greens sent correspondence to the Education Ministers urging them to fully fund public schools. ‘We urge them to seriously consider the PISA report and agree to fully fund public schools at the start of the next National School Reform Agreement’.</p> <p>06/12/23 – The Greens say OECD data showing Australia’s most disadvantaged school students falling further behind their more privileged peers should be the wake-up call Labor needs to finally deliver full funding to public schools. The average performance of Australian students continuing to trend downwards, Australia’s school system is increasingly unequal.</p> <p>20/11/23 – The Greens have backed AEU calls for Commonwealth, states and territories to close the public school funding gap, but have called for greater ambition and urgency. The Greens say funding should be delivered at the start of the next Agreement, in January 2025.</p> <p>23/8/23 - Argue that the NAPLAN results are evidence that Australia’s two-tiered school system is contributing to</p>

	disadvantage and are calling for an overhaul of the approach to school funding.
Independents	N/A

## Media

- *Prime Minister Must Keep his Promise on School Funding, AEU, Media release, 8 February 2024***

A public, joint letter from principal, teacher and parent representatives was sent to the Prime Minister requesting the Australian Government contribute 25% SRS for government schools and remove the ability for jurisdictions to claim 4% of their SRS shares for expenditure not directly related to a student's educational needs by 2028 at the latest.

In the letter, the signatories also urge the Australian Government to make a national investment in school infrastructure.

The media release also notes "New figures from the Productivity Commission shows public school funding increased by 20.3% (or 2% per year) in real terms between 2012–13 and 2021–22. Private school funding from governments increased over the same period by 37%".
- *A Battle is brewing over public school funding, ABC, 2 January 2024***

The article provides the responses from other state and territory Education Ministers to the announcement of the Statement of Intent with Western Australia, rejecting the offer and requesting the Australian Government 25% SRS share for government schools.
- *'Deliberate lie': education lobby group says 'landmark' school agreement falls short of 100% funding, The Guardian, 1 February 2024***

The article quotes the AEU, the Greens and Trevor Cobbold, Save Our Schools, who raise concerns about allowing states and territories to claim 4% of their SRS shares for government schools for expenditure including transport, capital depreciation, regulatory bodies and preschools. The article says Minister Clare declined to comment on the remove of the 4% during negotiations.
- *Clare to states on school funding: 'There are no blank cheques', Financial Review, 12 December 2023***

The article suggests a battle between education ministers, over funding for public schools while narrowing the performance gap, may

turn into a debacle with little tangible return. Minister Clare states that the Report made it plain that the growing gap between the rich and poor, largely a result of segregation of children based on wealth into non-government and government schools, was unacceptable.

Professor Glenn Savage from the University of Melbourne stated that ‘the overwhelming evidence is that inequality is impacting student outcomes, and we have to address it.’ The article questioned how public schools would get to 100 per cent of expected funding.

- ***Full funding for all public schools must happen urgently – independent review, The Educator Online, 12 December 2023***  
The article summarised the key points within the Report and highlighted the Report's findings that urgent action is needed to address glaring funding gaps in Australia's schools. Minister Clare stated “we've got to fix that funding gap, level the playing field so that all schools and all kids are properly and fairly funded in our schools.” The AEU Federal President Correna Haythorpe stated that ‘new school funding agreements were delayed 12 months...there can be no excuse for further inaction and delay by governments’.
- ***Education minister vow to fix chronic school underfunding but questions remain over cost sharing, The West Australian, 11 December 2023***  
The article summarised the current school funding shortfalls and the funding gap of \$6.6 billion that has not yet been addressed. The article referenced the Review and the negotiations for the next Agreement. The article includes quotes from the Federal Education Minister and the AEU Federal President. Minister Clare stated that ‘most public schools aren't fully funded’. The AEU President, Correna Haythorpe, stated that the review showed the urgent need for full funding in ‘the strongest possible terms’.

## Attachments

**Attachment A** – 11 December EMM Statement

**Attachment B** – Media release with Western Australia on the Statement of Intent

**Attachment C** – Statement of Intent with Western Australia

<b>Date Last Cleared</b>	12 February 2024
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**Australian Government**  
**Department of Education**



## **Education Ministers Meeting**

11 December 2023

# **EMM Statement**

## **Better and Fairer Education System Review and the next National Education Funding and Reform Agreement**

Ministers received the Expert Panel report into the National School Reform Agreement (NSRA) and thanked the panel for their work.

Having considered this report, Ministers agreed that the next NSRA must deliver on the Alice Springs (Mparntwe) Education Declaration.

The Alice Springs (Mparntwe) Education Declaration set a joint vision for a world class education system that encourages and supports every student to be the very best they can be, no matter where they live or what kind of learning challenges they may face.

Australia's future social and economic prosperity is reliant on an excellent and equitable education system.

There is much work to do to fulfil this commitment, which Ministers re-affirmed today. This work will be the focus of the next NSRA.

The next NSRA is expected to focus on the following three key outcomes the education system must strive for in order to ensure all young Australians access an education which supports them to reach their full potential.

1. **Equity and Excellence** – schools and education systems are equipped to provide equitable learning opportunities to all students.
2. **Wellbeing for learning and engagement** – students are provided with appropriate support, experiences, teaching and resources to positively and confidently engage in learning.
3. **A strong and sustainable workforce** – teachers and non-teaching school staff are supported to innovate and be at their best to ensure young Australians thrive in their education. A sustainable workforce means that the Australian community recognises the value teachers

bring to students, communities and the economy, more Australians consider a career in teaching, and there is a high retention rate.

The next NSRA will identify the reforms requiring a coordinated national effort but recognises each jurisdiction's unique context, and across all sectors, to progress these key outcomes.

The report is one of a number of inputs to the next agreement.

All Australian Education Ministers are committed to closing the gap in educational outcomes, and delivering an education system that supports young Australians of all backgrounds to achieve their full educational potential.

Full funding for every school is crucial to achieving a more equitable education system. Education Ministers are committed to working together to get every school to a minimum of 100% of the Schooling Resource Standard (SRS).

A detailed summary of the [Summary report](#) can be found on the Department of Education website.



Date: 31 January 2024

## Australian and WA Governments agree to fully and fairly fund all Western Australian public schools

Ministers:

The Hon Jason Clare MP

Minister for Education

The Hon Roger Cook MLA

Premier of Western Australia

The Hon Dr Tony Buti MLA

WA Minister for Education; Aboriginal Affairs; Citizenship; and Multicultural Interests.

Western Australia will be the first State in Australia where all public schools are fully and fairly funded.

The Australian and Western Australian Governments today signed a Statement of Intent to increase funding for all public schools in Western Australia from 95 per cent of the School Resourcing Standard (SRS) to 100 per cent by 2026.

This is a landmark day in the history of public education in Western Australia.

Under the agreement, the most disadvantaged public schools in WA will be fully funded first. This represents an additional \$777.4 million investment by the Albanese Government in Western Australian public schools from 2025 to 2029.

As part of the landmark deal, the Cook Government commits to investing at least an equivalent amount over this period, bringing total additional investment in public schools to \$1.6 billion.

Currently, the Commonwealth provides 20 per cent of the funding for public schools. This will now increase to 21.25 per cent in 2025 and to 22.5 per cent in 2026 in Western Australia.

The Western Australian Government, as the primary funders of WA public schools, will contribute 77.5 per cent of the funding.

The Statement of Intent provides a basis for the negotiation of the next National School Reform Agreement and associated bilateral agreement, which will tie funding to reforms that will help students catch up, keep up and finish school.



The Albanese Government welcomes Western Australia's decision to work together to fully fund public schools.

Currently, no public school in Australia, except for schools in the ACT, is at the full and fair funding level.

The Albanese Government is committed to working with all states and territories to get all public schools on a path to 100 per cent of the SRS.

**Quotes attributable to WA Premier Roger Cook:**

"Every Western Australian school student deserves access to a quality education.

"WA schools have received high levels of State funding under my Government and, thanks to our sound financial management, we have been able to invest in new and improved school infrastructure across the State.

"This new landmark agreement with the Federal Government takes support for our schools to the next level - ensuring no child in a West Australian public school is left behind."

**Quotes attributable to Australian Minister for Education Jason Clare:**

"This is a landmark day for public education in Western Australia.

"Western Australia's decision to work with the Australian Government to fully fund public schools will deliver a better and fairer education system for the West.

"The Statement of Intent underlines our shared commitment to put all WA schools on a pathway to full and fair funding and invest in the reforms that will help children catch up, keep up and finish school.

"I look forward to working with all states and territories to properly fund our schools and build a better and fairer education system for all Australians."

**Quotes attributable to WA Minister for Education Dr Tony Buti:**

"This agreement will create a stronger public education system in WA.

"The increase in funding will drive real improvements in outcomes for all students, especially for students from low socio-economic backgrounds; regional, rural, and remote Australia; students with disability; First Nations students and students from a language background other than English.

“Any reforms will focus on improving equity and excellence in schools, supporting the wellbeing of students and teachers, and providing a strong and sustainable workforce of teachers and non-teaching school staff.”

**[ENDS]**

## Statement of Intent

### Better and Fairer Schools Agreement

**"We are committed to ensuring every Western Australian public school is on a path to reach 100 per cent of the Schooling Resource Standard – the fair funding level."**

Australia has a good education system but it can be better and fairer.

To ensure all schools get on a pathway to full and fair funding, the Commonwealth and Western Australian State Government have jointly committed to achieving a Schooling Resource Standard (SRS) of 100 per cent in 2026, up from 95 per cent currently. The Commonwealth commits to provide Western Australian government schools with an additional 2.5 per cent of SRS, increasing its contribution to 22.5 per cent. The Western Australian Government, as the primary funders of government schools, commits to achieving an SRS contribution of at least 77.5 per cent, and see that the most disadvantaged schools receive additional funding first.

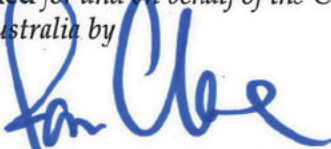
This funding will drive reforms that help improve outcomes for all students, especially for students from low socio-economic backgrounds; regional, rural and remote Australia; students with disability; First Nations students and students from a language background other than English. That is why we agree that the additional Commonwealth funding will be tied to reforms that ensure no child in a Western Australian public school is held back or left behind.

Recognising the key role that education plays in improving social equity, lifting social and economic outcomes for individuals and their communities, all governments are committed to working in partnership to negotiate the next Better and Fairer Schools Agreement. Our governments acknowledge the importance of continuing our commitments made under the National Agreement on Closing the Gap by ensuring reforms tied to additional funding under the next Better and Fairer Schools Agreement contributes to meeting those commitments.

To represent a shared commitment to improving Australia's education system, national commitments will be contained within the next Better and Fairer Schools Agreement Heads of Agreement. Reform that supports the needs and local context of individual States and Territories will be agreed through Bilateral Agreements. Working together, these new agreements will build our education system into one where every child can meet their potential.

The Parties have confirmed their commitment to this agreement as follows:

Signed for and on behalf of the Commonwealth of Australia by



The Honourable Jason Clare MP  
Minister for Education

Date: 31 January 2024

Signed for and on behalf of the state of Western Australia by



The Honourable Dr Tony Buti MLA  
Minister for Education

Date: 31 January 2024

**Issue:** Priority cohorts - First Nations students  
**Contact:** Meg Brighton  
 Ph: s 22  
 Deputy Secretary

## Key Points

- Education is a key foundation to supporting improved wellbeing and life outcomes; First Nations students often experience poorer outcomes.
- To address educational inequity and respond to commitments within the National Agreement on Closing the Gap, the Australian Government is investing in First Nations education outcomes in a range of ways.
  - This includes recurrent school funding, efforts to strengthen partnership and other targeted measures.
- In 2024, the Australian Government will provide an estimated **\$29.1 billion** in recurrent school funding.
  - This includes \$0.5 billion through the Schooling Resource Standard loading for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students (total 264,913 students).
- The department is working closely with the new peak body, the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Corporation (NATSIEC), to strengthen our partnership approach.
- The next National School Reform Agreement is an opportunity to drive real improvements in student outcomes, with a particular focus on students who are most at risk of falling behind and in need of more assistance – including First Nations students.
- The Expert Panel undertaking the review to inform a Better and Fairer Education System — which included First Nations member Ms Dyonne Anderson, President of the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Principals Association (NATSIPA) — visited more than 90 schools across Australia, including more than 30 schools with a majority of First Nations students and provided a range of recommendations relating to First Nations education.

### ***Productivity Commission's Review of the National Agreement on Closing the Gap was released on 7 February 2024***

- The Productivity Commission has highlighted the need for Government to increase the pace of action to close the gap.
- The Joint Council on Closing the Gap, with members from the Australian Government and the Coalition of Peaks, will carefully consider the Productivity Commission's recommendations. Joint

Council is due to formally respond to the Productivity Commission's report within six months, as specified in the National Agreement.

- The department is not explicitly mentioned in the report, however, departmental initiatives including the Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) Policy Partnership and ECCD Sector Strengthening Plan are referenced in the supporting paper, and the Connected Beginnings program is referenced as 'a positive example of change and shared decision making'.
- The department supports shared decision-making and the delivery of measures to close the education gap and will continue to strengthen partnerships with First Nations stakeholders, including the NATSIEC and SNAICC — National Voice for our Children (SNAICC).

### ***Closing the Gap Annual Report 2023 and Implementation Plan 2024***

- The Australian Government's Closing the Gap Annual Report 2023 and Implementation Plan 2024 will be presented to the Parliament on 13 February.
- The Annual Report provides details of the progress made in 2023 — such as the On-Country Learning measure and City-Country Partnerships approved in 2023 — and the Implementation Plan outlines actions to be implemented in 2024 to support First Nations education outcomes — such as developing a new school funding agreement and progressing formal partnership agreement with NATSIEC.

### ***Targeted programs to address the education gap for First Nations students (see budget table at [Attachment A](#))***

- **On-Country Learning** (part of the Government's *Better, Safer Future for Central Australia* Plan) (\$40.4 million over 2023–24 to 2024–25) – supports schools in Central Australia to improve school attendance and education outcomes. Every operating school in Central Australia is receiving additional funding and is working to implement initiatives in line with their School Action Plan.
- **City-Country Partnerships Program** (\$26 million over 2022–23 to 2023–24) – supports the establishment of formal partnerships between high-performing metropolitan schools and remote schools with a high proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. The Yatha Muru Foundation continues to work with partner schools, with 12 approved partnerships totalling \$12.251 million as of 5 February 2024.
- **Clontarf Foundation** [NIAA till 2022/DoE from 2023] (\$65.2 million over 2022–23 to 2024–25) – extends Commonwealth support at existing levels for services offered by the Clontarf Foundation.

The extension will see up to 12,500 First Nations boys and young men supported in more than 140 academies across Australia.

- **First Nations Languages Education Program** (\$14.1 million over 2022–23 to 2025–26) – supports local First Nations community and school partnerships to teach First Nations languages in primary schools. Expressions of Interest for the program opened on 7 December 2023 and will close on 28 February 2024. Grant guidelines are expected to be released shortly.
- **First Nations Teacher Strategy** – The development of a First Nations Teacher Strategy was included within the National Teacher Workforce Action Plan (Action 10) to address the significant under-representation of First Nations peoples in both initial teacher education enrolment and the teacher workforce.
- In collaboration with the National Indigenous Australians Agency (NIAA), the **Indigenous Boarding Design Review** and the **Assessment of Boarding Capacity and Options in Central Australia**, provides an opportunity to examine the barriers facing First Nations students when accessing secondary schooling.
- **Building Boarding Schools On-Country program** (\$70.8 million) – to build a new remote boarding school in Western Australia through the Studio Schools of Australia model, upgrade the existing Yiramalay Studio School, and establish a new Indigenous Education and Research Centre ([SB24-000003](#) refers).
- **Australian Indigenous Education Foundation (AIEF)** [NIAA until 2022/DoE from 2023] (\$32 million over 2022–23 to 2024–25 – DoE funding) – provides scholarships to improve Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students' access to a quality education, supporting more than 350 students per year, by removing the financial barriers that may prevent Indigenous students from pursuing their education with an AIEF Partner School.
- **AITSL Indigenous Cultural Responsiveness Initiative** (\$1.035 million in 2022–23 for Phase 2 activity in 2023–24) – Throughout Phase 1 of this Initiative, AITSL worked collaboratively and consulted with the teaching profession, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education experts, students, families, and communities to develop a professional learning toolkit. The toolkit provides resources to support the cultural responsiveness of teachers and leaders to enhance their teaching practice. Phase 2 focuses on maximising implementation uptake of the resources and tools developed through the first phase of the Initiative.

- **Scaling Up Proven Primary Reading Programs** (\$25 million over 2021–22 to 2025–26) – expanded 3 targeted literacy programs to support teacher professional practice and improve early literacy outcomes for Indigenous students. This includes:
  - Implementing MultiLit (Making Up Lost Time in Literacy) Program in 42 schools from 2021–22 to 2024–25.
  - Increasing the number of participating schools from 10 to 20 within the Good to Great Schools Australia (GGSA) Pilot Program. The pilot program will be delivered in schools over 3 years from 2021–22 to 2024–25.
  - Implementing the Western Australia Department of Education Scaling Up Success in Remote Schools Program in a network of 14 remote and disadvantaged schools with a high proportion of First Nations students.
- **English Language Learning for Indigenous Children (ELLIC) trial** (\$8.408 million over 2017–18 to 2021–22) – co-designed with the Stronger Smarter Institute and Indigenous communities, to improve English language outcomes for children in the Year Before Fulltime Schooling (YBFS), for whom English is an additional language or dialect (EAL/D).

## Media

- There has been substantial media coverage of the release of the Final Report Productivity Commissions Review of the National Agreement on Closing the Gap including:

### [Damning assessment of governments to implement the National Agreement on Closing the Gap - ABC News, 7 February 2024](#)

- For acting lead convener of the Coalition of Peaks, Catherine Liddle, the findings don't come as a surprise. "It reinforces what we have been saying all along, and that is that governments aren't trying hard enough to implement the radical change needed for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to thrive." ..... "One of the things that the coalition would like to call for is a dedicated Closing the Gap fund, and [have] that fund enshrined in legislation and directed to the Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations." ... "The only people who are ever held accountable are our own communities," she said. "The only people that ever suffer for the government's failure to act in the way that it should is Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people."

[Closing the Gap will fail without 'fundamental change', scathing report finds | Indigenous Australians | The Guardian, 7 February 2024](#)

- Catherine Liddle, said governments nationwide “are still not meaningfully giving us a voice in the decisions that affect our lives”. Liddle urged the government to announce a major funding injection in that response.

**Attachments**

[Attachment A](#) – Budget table

<b>Date Last Cleared</b>	08 February 2024
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### First Nations measures - Budget GST EXCL

Financial year Administered	2022–23	2023–24	2024–25	2025–26	Total
Building Boarding Schools on Country Committed	\$54,660,000	\$8,292,000	\$524,000	\$175,000	\$70,758,000 <sup>1</sup>
Scaling Up Proven Primary Reading Programs Measure Committed	\$7,168,750	\$7,168,750	\$3,818,750	\$1,900,000	\$20,056,250
ELLIC Committed	\$100,000	\$270,000	N/A	N/A	\$370,000
City Country Partnerships Committed	\$18,103,533	\$7,448,444	\$19,000	N/A	\$25,570,977
Clontarf Foundation Committed	\$16,065,000	\$32,658,000	\$16,432,000	N/A	\$65,745,000
First Nations Languages Education Committed	N/A	\$7,723,000	\$4,650,000	\$150,000	\$12,523,000
First Nations Teacher Strategy Committed	\$354,335	N/A	N/A	N/A	\$354,335
Indigenous Cultural Responsiveness Initiative Committed	\$1,035,000	N/A	N/A	N/A	\$1,035,000
Aurora RISE initiative Committed	\$1,500,000				
AIEF Committed	\$6,000,000	\$16,000,000	\$10,000,000		\$32,000,000

<sup>1</sup> Includes \$7.107million committed in 2021-22

Attachment A

Departmental Only	2022–23	2023–24	2024–25	2025–26	Total
Indigenous Boarding Design Review**	N/A	\$300,000*	N/A	N/A	N/A

\*Departmental ASL funding only

\*\*In addition to administered funds from the National Indigenous Australians Agency

**Issue:** Priority cohorts - students with disability  
**Contact:** Meg Brighton  
Ph: s 22  
Deputy Secretary

### Key Points

- Students with disability are experiencing lower educational attainment. Among people aged 20 to 24, 68% of people with disability had completed year 12 or equivalent, compared with 85% of people without disability (AIHW, 2022).
- Currently, 24.2% of school students receive an adjustment because of disability (ACARA, 2023).
- All schools in Australia are required under the *Disability Standards for Education 2005* (the Standards) to provide reasonable adjustments for students with disability, so they can participate and learn on the same basis as students without disability.
  - In 2023, a range of resources commissioned by the department were published to support better understanding of obligations under the Standards.
- To support students with disability, the Australian Government provides a student with disability loading as part of SRS recurrent funding:
  - In 2024, the Government will provide an estimated \$3.6 billion under the student with disability loading, for 694,019 FTE students). The Government will also provide an estimated \$21.1 billion in base funding for schools in 2024.
  - The loading is based on the Nationally Consistent Collection of Data on School Students with Disability (NCCD), which records information on students with disability based on the level of educational adjustment they are provided to access and participate in learning.
  - Teachers use their professional judgement to determine the level of educational adjustment required. Formal diagnosis of disability is not required.
  - Schools and school systems have the flexibility determine how best to allocate disability loading funding to support their students.
- The department also continues to deliver programs to support people with disability, including the Positive Partnerships Program and the Higher Education Disability Support Program.

### ***Reform environment***

- Several major reviews have been released over recent months which have implications for children and students with a disability, including the Disability Royal Commission, the NDIS Review and the Review to Inform a Better and Fairer Education System.
- The 3 reviews contain findings and recommendations that are relevant to education.
- The NDIS Review also recommended new foundational supports be designed and delivered outside the NDIS, including through childcare and school settings where appropriate.
- The department is working with Department of Social Services (DSS) and other Commonwealth agencies on whole of government considerations, and Education Ministers have committed to working together to identify opportunities for national collaborative action.
- States and territories regulate and operate schools and any future reform action will need to involve jurisdictions.
- AESOC has been tasked with providing advice to EMM in 2024 on proposed national priorities for action to support children and students with disability.

### ***Students with Disability Loading settings review***

- In 2020, following the National School Resourcing Board report on the student with disability loading, the department commissioned PWC to conduct a review of Students with Disability Loading Settings which concluded in December 2022.
  - The review report has not been publicly released. While it provides useful insights, further evidence is required to make a persuasive case for any change to the loading. A priority is working with jurisdictions to address a lack of national data and reporting on students with disability.
  - The response to [SQ23-001132](#) from Senator Henderson requesting a copy of the review report stated, “Public release of the Students with Disability Loading Settings Review would, or could reasonably be expected to, impact negotiations for the next National Education Funding and Reform Agreement”.
- On 8 February 2024, an **Order for the Production of Documents** requiring the tabling of the Students with Disability Loading settings review and associated briefings was moved by Senator Allman-Payne and agreed to by the Senate.
- The motion requires the Minister representing the Minister for Education (Senator Watt) to provide the specified documents by no later than 12.00pm, Monday 26 February 2024.

## Key Facts

### *Disability Royal Commission (DRC)*

- The DRC released its final report on 29 September 2023, with a range of school focused recommendations, including around data collection and reporting, enforcing rights under the *Disability Standards for Education 2005*, disability education workforce development, and dissenting views on special schools.
- There were no specific DRC recommendations aimed at early childhood education and care (ECEC) or higher education.
- A Commonwealth DRC Taskforce has been established, led by DSS, to coordinate the Australian Government's response. The department is working closely with the Taskforce.
- The DRC recommended all jurisdictions respond to the DRC report recommendations by end of March 2024.

### *NDIS Review*

- The NDIS Review report was published on 7 December 2023. It has recommended improving accessibility of mainstream services, improved data and accountability, and creating a joined-up ecosystem of supports.
- National Cabinet has agreed to initial actions in response to the NDIS Review, including developing and funding Foundational Supports outside the NDIS in a range of settings, including schools and early childhood services.
- Funding for foundational supports will be delivered through Federal Funding Agreements, with costs split 50-50 (capped for states) and final details to be settled through Treasurers.
- It will be important to develop a clear definition of foundational supports to determine the nature of activities to be funded.
- The delivery of foundational supports will be phased in over time, following considered design work and consultation. The transition period is to be determined.
- Joint design work is being led through DSS and PM&C with oversight by First Ministers.
- Inter-jurisdictional governance arrangements are being established.
- The department is working closely with DSS to ensure the education sector is carefully considered and involved throughout the design and implementation development.

### *NSRA Review*

- The Review to Inform a Better and Fairer Education System was published on 11 December 2023. It included findings related to supporting inclusion and outcomes for students with disability, which are largely consistent with the findings of other reviews that relate to this cohort.
- Specific issues raised in the review include a lack of national performance data on the outcomes of students with disability and the need for school systems to deliver greater inclusion and support for this cohort.

### *COVID Review*

- The department undertook a Review of the impact of COVID-19 on school students with disability in 2022 and 2023, in consultation with students and other stakeholders. The final report is in the process of being settled. Its findings will be considered alongside other reviews.

### *Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC)*

- An interim report of the Productivity Commission's inquiry into Australia's ECEC system was released on 23 November 2023, which made recommendations with implications for children with disability including:
  - Amend the Disability Standards for Education 2005 (Cth) to include all services within the ECEC sector.
  - Amendments to the Inclusion Support Program (ISP) to improve the accessibility, funding, and administrative burden.
  - Improve coordination of inclusion funding between governments to reduce complexity for services and families.
  - The Australian and state and territory governments should contribute to professional development for the ECEC workforce to deliver more inclusive education, including for children with disability, developmental delay or additional needs.
- The second interim report of the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission's (ACCC) inquiry into Australia's ECEC system was released on 1 October 2023, which recommended further consideration and consultation on changes to the Childcare Subsidy and existing hourly rate cap mechanism, with consideration be given to the additional costs associated with providing childcare services to children with disability and/or complex needs.

- Future government reform will be carefully considered and informed by the Productivity Commission’s inquiry, the ACCC inquiry, the Early Years Strategy, the National Disability Insurance Scheme Review, and the Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability.

## Media

- **Prime Minister Media Release - Meeting of National Cabinet – the Federation working for Australia, Media Release, 6 December 2023**

Media release following National Cabinet announcing reforms to secure the future of the NDIS, including a decision to jointly design additional Foundational Supports.

- **NDIS review released, calling for more disability support outside scheme to ensure sustainability, ABC News, 7 December 2023**

Provides an overview of the final independent report of the NDIS Review, including key recommendations.

- **What happens to the kids the NDIS can’t help any more? AFR, 8 December 2023**

Article on the impacts of the NDIS Review findings on autistic children, including the increased pressure on schools to do more.

- **Hopes students with disability will benefit from new public school funding deal, SBS News, 14 December 2023**

Article on views from stakeholders, such as the Australian Education Union, on the NSRA Expert Panel Review’s findings on students with disability. Advocates argue that funding and cultural factors are issues in better supporting students with disability.

## Attachments

[Attachment A](#) – DRC Response - Whole-of-Government talking points - 5 Feb 2024

Date Last Cleared	12 February 2024
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## DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICE

Attachment A

### ADDITIONAL ESTIMATES 2023-24

#### TITLE: DISABILITY ROYAL COMMISSION

##### Strategic Narrative

- The Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability (DRC) undertook an expansive examination of the matters affecting the lives and experiences of Australians with disability.
- The DRC final report was delivered to the Governor-General on 28 September 2023. The Australian Government tabled the final report in parliament on 29 September 2023.
- The DRC made 222 recommendations on how to improve laws, policies, structures and practices to ensure a more inclusive and just society that supports the independence of people with disability and their rights to live free from violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation.
- Due to the significance of the DRC in shaping the future for all people with disability in Australia, it would be inappropriate for the Government to rush its response.
- The Government is carefully considering the final report before commenting on individual recommendations.
- The Government is committed to engaging and consulting with people with disability, their families, carers, representative organisations, service providers, unions and the broader community to inform Government decision making on reform and change.
- The Australian Government has established a Commonwealth Disability Royal Commission Taskforce – a work unit within the Department of Social Services.
  - The Taskforce is interfacing with all departments and agencies across the Commonwealth with responsibility for policies and programs that intersect with the findings and recommendations.
  - The Taskforce is also engaging and consulting with people with disability, their families and carers, service providers, unions and others to gauge views in relation to the recommendations and implementation issues.



**DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICE**

Attachment A

- It is also supporting engagement with states and territories in relation to recommendations with joint responsibilities between the Commonwealth and states and territories.
  - The Disability Reform Ministerial Council (DRMC), and the senior officials working groups that report to the DRMC, will oversee this work.
  - The Taskforce has also established an Inter-Jurisdictional Committee that will support engagement of Commonwealth, state and territory officials, and development of Government responses to the DRC final report.
- Oversight will include liaison with other portfolio areas responsible for progressing DRC recommendations through their existing Commonwealth/state governance arrangements (for example, other ministerial councils).
- While the DRC has been an important and valuable examination of issues impacting people with disability, it has also been traumatising for many in the disability community.
- Free counselling support services for people with disability engaging with the DRC were in place since it commenced. This service ended on 31 December 2023.
- There are still a wide range of disability support services available including the Disability Gateway, National Disability Advocacy Program, and the National Disability Abuse and Neglect Hotline.

**KEY HEADLINE FACTS AND FIGURES**

- On 5 April 2019, the then Prime Minister, the Hon Scott Morrison MP, announced the Disability Royal Commission (DRC).
- The DRC delivered an interim report on 30 October 2020.
- The Chair of the DRC, Commissioner Ronald Sackville AO KC, sought and was granted an extension on the final report to 29 September 2023.
- The DRC's final report was handed to the Governor-General on 28 September 2023.

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- The DRC's final report was tabled in parliament and publicly released on 29 September 2023.
- In the 2019-20 Budget, the then Government committed \$527.9 million over 3 years to fully fund the DRC (see **Attachment A** for details).
- The department received:
  - \$102.9 million in administered funding over 3 years to 2021-22 for advocacy and counselling support services for people participating in, and affected by, the DRC; and
  - \$13.9 million in departmental funding to 2021-22 for the management of advocacy support and counselling services, and for engagement with, and participation in, the DRC.
- On 24 November 2021, the then Government agreed to an additional \$71.4 million in funding for the Social Services Portfolio. Of that, the department received:
  - \$43.0 million in administered funding over 2 years to 2023-24 for advocacy and counselling support services; and
  - \$6.8 million in departmental funding for the staffing, legal and communications activities associated with the department's:
    - delivery of the disability support services;
    - engagement with the DRC, including providing evidence, participating in hearings and other required activities; and
    - development and distribution of a variety of stakeholder engagement and communications products.
- A total of \$599.3 million has been committed to the expenditure of the DRC. Questions on DRC expenditure (aside from advocacy and counselling services) should be directed to the Attorney-General's Department.
- On 29 September 2023, the Government announced the establishment of the Commonwealth DRC Taskforce. \$4.25 million over two years has been committed to fund the Taskforce.

**DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICE**

Attachment A

**Timeline of recent or significant events**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Event</b>
<b>19 January 2024</b>	Public consultation process on Disability Royal Commission Response closed on DSS Engage
<b>16 January 2024</b>	Workshops with senior government officials commenced
<b>28 November 2023</b>	Public consultation on Disability Royal Commission Response opened on DSS Engage
<b>29 September 2023</b>	Disability Royal Commission final report tabled in the Australian Parliament and publically released
<b>28 September 2023</b>	Disability Royal Commission final report provided to the Governor-General
<b>15 September 2023</b>	Ceremonial closing hearing
<b>8 – 10 May 2023</b>	Public hearing 33: Violence, abuse, neglect and deprivation of human rights: A Case Study
<b>13 – 17 February 2023</b>	Public hearing 32: Service Providers Revisited (formerly listed as public hearing 31)
<b>12 – 16 December 2022</b>	Public hearing 31: Vision for an inclusive Australia (formerly listed as public hearing 32)
<b>21 – 25 November 2022</b>	Public hearing 30: Guardianship, substituted and supported decision making
<b>24 – 28 October 2022</b>	Public hearing 29: The experiences of violence against, abuse, neglect and exploitation of people with disability from culturally and linguistically diverse communities
<b>10 – 14 October 2022</b>	Public hearing 28: Violence against and abuse of people with disability in public places
<b>19 September 2022 – 6 October 2022</b>	Public hearing 27: Conditions in detention in the criminal justice system
<b>29 August - 2 September 2022</b>	Public hearing 26: Homelessness, including experience in boarding houses, hostels and other arrangements

## DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICE

Attachment A

## Recent media coverage

Date	Source	Item
6 January 2024	Courier Mail	<u>We Can't Take the Choice Away</u>
22 December 2023	The Australian	<u>Peak body hits back at disability royal commission recommendations</u>
15 December 2023	The Daily Advertiser	<u>Fears NDIS changes will muddy waters</u>
8 December 2023	The Conversation	<u>Taken together, the NDIS review and the royal commission recommendations could transform disability housing</u>
5 December 2023	Sydney Morning Herald	<u>Give us the choice, parents of special needs pupils say</u>
13 November 2023	ABC News	<u>If special schools close, students with disability need more inclusive mainstream education, experts say</u>
25 October 2023	ABC News	<u>Why closing special schools is such a complex topic important to so many families</u>
1 October 2023	ABC News	<u>'Disability-led' response to royal commission recommendations is key, SA advocates say</u>
1 October 2023	The Australian	<u>'Cycle of segregation' must be ended sooner: Greens senator Jordon Steele-John</u>
30 September 2023	The Daily Telegraph	<u>Shocking tales of abuse of disabled</u>
29 September 2023	The Sydney Morning Herald	<u>The old institutions are gone, but the segregation debate has a long way to go</u>
29 September 2023	ABC News	<u>Federal Government creates taskforce to respond to Disability Royal Commission</u>

## DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICE

Attachment A

Date	Source	Item
29 September 2023	Australian Financial Review	<a href="#"><u>Pay disabled workers minimum wage by 2034: royal commission</u></a>
29 September 2023	The Guardian	<a href="#"><u>Disability advocates urge faster phase-out of segregated education following royal commission report</u></a>
29 September 2023	The Guardian	<a href="#"><u>New Disability Rights Act needed to end abuse and exploitation, royal commission finds</u></a>
29 September 2023	The Australian	<a href="#"><u>Reforms 'may dash hopes of trim NDIS'</u></a>
6 September 2023	The West Australian	<a href="#"><u>Action must be taken now on royal commission findings</u></a>
5 September 2023	The Sydney Morning Herald	<a href="#"><u>Neglect for brothers 'preventable', govt may consider compensation</u></a>
10 May 2023	The West Australian	<a href="#"><u>Disability commission finds litany of care failings   The West Australian</u></a>
10 May 2023	ABC News	<a href="#"><u>Disability royal commission hears multiple government agencies failed to intervene in neglect of Brisbane teens with autism</u></a>
9 May 2023	The Guardian	<a href="#"><u>NDIA admits missing red flags in case of malnourished brothers found in house with dead father   Disability royal commission   The Guardian</u></a>

<b>Issue:</b>	<b>Priority cohorts - regional and remote students</b>
<b>PBS Pg No.</b>	Page 29 - Commonwealth Regional Scholarship Program Page 45 - City to Country Partnerships
<b>Contact:</b>	<b>Meg Brighton</b> Ph: s 22 Deputy Secretary, Schools Group

## Key Points

- Regional and remote communities face considerable challenges, including:
  - attracting and retaining experienced staff
  - providing an adequate breadth of curriculum
  - access to extra-curricular opportunities.
- Student performance and educational opportunities decline with the level of remoteness, from measures of school attendance and retention to academic and post-school transition outcomes.
- The Australian Government supports equitable access to education for students from regional and remote areas through:
  - Initiatives to attract and retain teachers and school leaders.
  - Funding to schools through the school location loading, recognising the higher costs to deliver schooling outside metropolitan areas.
  - Specific support to reduce the costs of secondary boarding and incentivising partnerships between city and country schools.
- The department develops sound policy and programs in this space by engaging with stakeholders such as the Regional Education Commissioner, education authorities, boarding associations, and parent advocacy groups.
- Boarding schools are an important option for families in regional and remote communities due to limited local secondary school options.

### ***Commonwealth Teaching Scholarships – attracting teachers to regional and remote locations***

- The Commonwealth Teaching Scholarships Program seeks to address teacher workforce shortages in regional, rural and remote areas.
- Scholarships of up to \$40,000 per student are available for full-time undergraduate initial teacher education (ITE) students (\$10,000 per year for a 4-year qualification) and up to \$20,000 for full-time postgraduate ITE students (\$10,000 per year for a 2-year qualification). In return for the scholarship, recipients will be required to teach for a period up to 4 years once they graduate.

- A top-up payment of \$2,000 may be available for scholarship recipients who undertake their final practical placement in a remote area.
- Applications for Round One of the Commonwealth Teaching Scholarships Program closed on 14 January 2024. A total of **3,183 applications** have been received.

### ***Extra funding for schools in regional and remote locations***

- The Australian Government provides additional loading for schools in regional and remote locations, recognising the additional costs required to educate students in regional and remote schools.
- In 2024, the Australian Government will provide an estimated \$6.4 billion to regional and remote schools.
  - This includes an estimated \$200.4 million and \$598.7 million under the school size and school location loading respectively (total of 735,592 students).
  - The size loading provides extra funding for medium, small and very small schools. It recognises smaller schools cannot achieve the same efficiencies of scale as a large school.

### ***Commonwealth Regional Scholarship Program***

- The Commonwealth Regional Scholarship Program (CRSP) aims to better support families of boarding school students from regional, rural, and remote communities with the costs of education.
- On 15 March 2023, the Assistant Minister for Education, Senator the Hon Anthony Chisholm, announced that 100 scholarships will be available for up to 6 years.
- On 30 January 2024, Assistant Minister Chisholm announced that all 100 scholarships have been awarded, starting in time for Term 1, 2024.
- Applications for the nationwide intake were open between 23 October to 26 November 2023.
- All scholarship applicants were informed of the outcome in December 2023 and January 2024.
- Program administration totals \$1.3 million over 2023–2030. Refer to [SQ23-000864](#) for administrative and setup information.
- The pilot program received significant demand, with 353 applications submitted for the national intake and already 260 enquiries regarding opportunities for future scholarships.

- The outcomes of the program will now be evaluated and additional places for future years will be considered.

### **City-Country Partnerships**

- The City-Country Partnerships (CCP) (delivered by the Yadha Muru Foundation) incentivises and supports partnerships between remote schools with a high proportion of First Nations students and high-performing metropolitan schools.
- Current activities include, but are not limited to, the sharing of evidence-based literacy and mental health interventions, assistance to re-invigorate Trade Training Centres, professional development and support, online interactive lessons, health assessments and cross-cultural visits.
- As of 5 February 2024, 12 partnerships have been approved, (from different jurisdictions and sectors), and totalling \$12.251 million in funding.

### **Stakeholder Response**

Stakeholder	Response summary
Isolated Children's Parents' Association (ICPA)	The ICPA strongly supports the introduction of the CRSP and have provided input into the design of program. The ICPA are advocating for an increase to the Assistance for Isolated Children Scheme, which they claim does not adequately assist families due to the rising cost of boarding (see Media section below). This is a matter for the Minister for Social Services.

### **Media**

- ***Boarding school costs weigh heavily on 13-year-old after scholarship rejection - ABC News - 3 February 2024.***

This article covers the rising costs of boarding school and the impact of this on geographically isolated children and their families.

It includes an interview with a family who were unsuccessful in their CRSP application and an interview with Louise Martin, Federal President of the Isolated Children's Parents' Association.

### **Attachments**

[Attachment A](#) – CRSP and CCP budgets

Date Last Cleared	08 February 2024
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**Budget - Commonwealth Regional Scholarship Program**

Financial year	2023–24	2024–25	2025–26	2026–27	Total
Budget Allocation	\$2.25m	\$1.7m	\$1.7m	\$1.7m	\$10.85m GST excl. over 7 years (2023–24 to 2029–30)
Committed	\$2.25m	\$1.7m	\$1.7m	\$1.7m	\$7.35m GST excl. (2023–24 to 2026–27)
Uncommitted	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

**Budget – City to Country Partnerships**

Financial year	2021-22	2022–23	2023–24	2024–25	Total
Budget Allocation Element 1 – Grant Agreement	N/A	\$17,569,000	\$7,035,000	N/A	\$24,604,000
Budget Allocation Element 2 – Evaluation	N/A	\$256,553	\$131,444	N/A	\$387,000
Total Committed	N/A	\$17,825,553	\$7,166,444	N/A	\$24,991,000
Departmental Costs	\$348,000	\$278,000	\$282,000	\$19,000	\$927,000
Total (Administered and Departmental)	\$348,000	\$18,103,553	\$7,448,444	\$19,000	\$25,918,000

**Issue:** Religious discrimination

**Contact:** Meg Brighton  
Ph: s 22  
Deputy Secretary

## Key Points

***Handling note: Religious discrimination legislation reform is the responsibility of the Attorney-General's Department (AGD) and questions on this legislation should be directed to AGD. Questions on state/territory anti-discrimination law should also be referred to the relevant jurisdiction.***

- The Government made an election commitment to introduce legislation that will:
  - Prevent discrimination against people of faith, including anti-vilification protections.
  - Act to protect all students from discrimination on any grounds.
  - Protect teachers from discrimination at work, while maintaining the right of religious schools to preference people of their faith in the selection of staff.
- As these rights interact in complex ways, they required careful consideration.
- On 4 November 2022 the Attorney-General announced the ALRC would conduct an inquiry into exemptions for religious educational institutions in federal anti-discrimination law. We understand the Government has received the ALRC's report and expect it will be tabled in due course.
- The Attorney-General has publicly indicated a draft Religious Discrimination Bill will be prepared by July 2024.
- Pending any outcomes of the ALRC process, the position from a schooling perspective is that:
  - Faith based schools play an important role in our education system, and it is important to preserve religious freedom in the education context.
  - Parents have the right to choose the school that they believe best meets the needs of their children.
- For more on social cohesion measures, see [SB24-000050](#).

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***Australian Government commitment to religious discrimination reform***

- Questions on this legislation should be directed to the AGD.
- The ALRC inquiry is a first step towards implementing the Government's commitment to extending anti-discrimination protections to more Australians, including to people of faith and to staff and students in religious schools.
- This legislation will be drafted in a manner that does not remove existing legal protections against other forms of discrimination.

***When will the Government release/respond to the ALRC's report?***

- This is a matter for the Attorney-General.

***Religious exemptions in the Sex Discrimination Act 1984***

- Under the *Sex Discrimination Act 1984*, it is unlawful to discriminate against a person on the grounds of their sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, intersex status, marital or relationship status, pregnancy or potential pregnancy, or breastfeeding.
  - However, section 38 of the *Sex Discrimination Act* currently includes exemptions that permit religious schools to discriminate on these grounds in relation to the employment of teachers and other staff (including contract workers).
  - Section 38 also permits religious schools to discriminate on the grounds of sexual orientation, gender identity, marital or relationship status or pregnancy in relation to the admission, treatment and expulsion of students.
- The ALRC's Terms of Reference required the ALRC to have regard to section 38 of the *Sex Discrimination Act* when considering reforms to implement the Government's commitments.
- The Government is carefully considering the ALRC's recommendations.

**Media**

- *Firing staff for sexual ethics at stake, The Sydney Morning Herald, 8 January 2024***

The article highlights the demand from religious organisations to keep current exemptions that allow private schools to discriminate on the basis of sexuality, marital status or gender, because of their religious views. It also states that these demands are a “looming test for the Minns government as it seeks to balance their concerns with a push from crossbench MP Alex Greenwich to prevent gay students and teachers from being expelled or fired by religious schools on the basis of their sexuality”.
- *Government’s religious discrimination bill faces heat over its effectiveness, Sky News, 5 January 2024***

The article outlines concern that the government's new religious discrimination bill will fail unless there are frameworks to allow for freedom of speech and protection against vilification.
- *Unions warn on religious work bias, The Australian, 3 January 2024***

Union leaders have raised concern over signals from Labor that it will introduce religious discrimination laws in the first half of this year, arguing the focus should be on cost of living and not on rules that could allow bosses to hire staff based on their faith.
- *Little faith in law to tackle hate, The Australian, 2 January 2024***

The article reports the faith-leaders has warned that “Labor’s new religious discrimination bill will fail unless it allows freedom of speech but also protects against vilification”, and that conservative Christian groups hoped “the legislation would ensure faith based organisations such as schools maintained the freedom to preference the employment of staff who supported the organisation’s religious ethos.”

<b>Date Last Cleared</b>	16 January 2024
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**Issue:** Student wellbeing**Contact:** Meg Brighton  
Ph: s 22  
Deputy Secretary**Key Points**

- Strengthening student engagement and learning outcomes are critical aspects of overall improvements to student wellbeing and vice versa. Using a whole of school approach and in partnership with the school community, schools can develop a safe and inclusive environment that promotes student mental health and wellbeing.
- The Australian Government invests \$84.4 million annually in **ongoing** mental health and wellbeing supports for students and school communities:

Financial year	2022–23 (\$m)	2023–24 (\$m)	2024–25 (\$m)	2025–26 (\$m)	2026–27 (\$m)	Total (\$m)
National Student Wellbeing Program (DoE)	\$61.435	\$61.435	\$61.435	\$61.435	\$61.435	\$307.175
Be You (DoHAC)	\$23.000	\$23.000	\$23.000	\$23.000	\$23.000	\$115.000
Total	\$84.435	\$84.435	\$84.435	\$84.435	\$84.435	\$422.175

- In recent years, the wellbeing of students and school communities has been impacted by emerging challenges including the Hamas-Israel conflict, COVID-19, mobile phone and personal device use in schools, vaping, school-based violence, and the increasing trend of school refusal.
- In addition to ongoing funding, the Australian Government has invested **\$203.7 million** in the Student Wellbeing Boost – including one-off additional funding to schools and the Voluntary Mental Health Check Tool.
- Wellbeing is a priority area for the next National Education Funding Reform Agreement.

- The *Health and Physical Education* learning area in the Australian Curriculum aims to develop the knowledge, understanding and skills to enable students and schools to learn about, and foster, wellbeing and social cohesion. Similarly, the *Intercultural and Ethical Understanding General Capabilities* enables young people to value diversity, develop interfaith and intercultural understanding.

**Social Cohesion** ([SB24-000050](#) refers)  
*Support for Jewish and Islamic students*

- On 19 October 2023, the Government announced \$6 million in one-off social cohesion student wellbeing support funds for mental health and wellbeing support to students of Jewish and Islamic faith in Australian schools.
- Funding for schools is to be delivered by state and territory governments for use by 31 March 2024 through a variation to the existing Student Wellbeing Boost Schedule to the Federation Funding Agreement Education and Skills.
- Schools will be able to use the funds flexibly including by increasing access to psychologists, counsellors, and mental health and wellbeing supports and programs within schools.
- 495 schools will receive this additional funding across all jurisdictions and education sectors.

**Wellbeing Tool** ([SB24-000049](#) refers)

- The Voluntary Mental Health Check Tool (VMHCT) is a 2022 election commitment under the Government's Student Wellbeing Boost to support student outcomes following the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The VMHCT is an online survey for students to self-report how they are coping and enable schools to undertake an assessment of their students' mental health and wellbeing, and provided assistance as needed to students at risk of declining mental health.
- The Department will be seeking all jurisdictions' endorsement prior to the VMHCT being made available in schools.

**Wellbeing Boost and Supports** ([SB24-000049](#) refers)

- The Australian Government has committed **\$203.7 million** towards the **Student Wellbeing Boost** for 2 years from 2022–23 to 2023–24:
  - \$192 million in additional one-off funding to schools to support their students' mental health and wellbeing. All eligible schools will receive on average \$20,000 for use by March 2024.
  - \$10.75 million for a Voluntary Mental Health Check Tool.
  - \$1 million in departmental funding to administer the measure.

- The **National Student Wellbeing Program (NSWP)** replaced the National School Chaplaincy Program (NSCP) on 25 January 2023
  - The NSWP allows schools the option to hire a qualified Student Wellbeing Officer or Chaplain, giving greater flexibility to schools to decide what is best suited to support the wellbeing of their students and school communities.
  - The Commonwealth’s annual contribution of **\$61.435 million** will continue throughout the life of the Schedule—a total financial contribution of \$307.175 million over 5 years (2023–2027).

**Consent and Respectful Relationships Education (RRE)**  
([SB24-000051](#) refers)

- The Australian Government is providing funding of **\$77.6 million** (2023–24 to 2027–28) to states, territories, and non-government school systems to support delivery of expert-developed, high quality, evidence based and age-appropriate RRE in primary and secondary schools.
- Activities will commence in 2024 following negotiation of a Federation Funding Agreement schedule.

**Vaping in schools** ([SB24-000049](#) refers)

- Vaping is a society wide health issue led by the Department of Health and Aged Care (DoHAC).
- On 2 May 2023 the Minister for Health and Aged Care, the Hon Mark Butler MP, announced major regulatory reform regarding vapes aimed at reducing availability. DoHAC will lead further reforms to be progressively implemented throughout 2024.
- The use of e-cigarettes or vapes is a major concern across school communities, and the Department will continue to liaise with DoHAC on how newly implemented vaping reforms will impact the use of vapes in schools.

## Media

- **University of Queensland, Life Ed bolster education efforts for schoolchildren in war on vaping, Herald Sun, 8 January 2024**  
E-cigarette companies using social media influencers to preach to Queensland kids and circumvent advertising laws will be the target of new federally funded vaping research.
- **Parents angry at activist teachers, Herald Sun, 7 January 2024**  
Concerns for student wellbeing have been raised as Teachers for Palestine plans to hold a forum discussing “the genocide in Gaza” before the start of the school year.

- ***Anxious teens turn to vaping as parents urged to talk to their children, The Age, 11 October 2023***  
Researchers examining vaping rates in Australian teenagers have detected clear links between vaping and mental health challenges including anxiety disorders, higher perceived stress levels, depressive symptoms and suicidal ideation.
- ***Study finds one in four Australian teens have vaped, with many wrongly believing it will ease anxiety, ABC News, 11 September 2023***  
A study of more than 4,000 teenagers published in the Medical Journal of Australia has found one in four have vaped, with researchers warning they hold the mistaken belief that it helps with stress and anxiety.

<b>Date Last Cleared</b>	17 January 2024
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**Issue:** Student engagement  
**PBS Pg No.:** Program 1.5 – Early Learning and Schools Support. PBS pg. 45  
**Contact:** Meg Brighton  
 Ph: s 22  
 Deputy Secretary

### Budget – Engaged Classrooms Resources

Financial year	2022–23 \$'000	2023–24 \$'000	2024–25 \$'000	2025–26 \$'000	2026–27 \$'000	Total \$'000
Budget Allocation	1,750	1,750	-	-	-	3,500
Committed	1,750	1,750	-	-	-	3,500
Uncommitted	-	-	-	-	-	-

### Key Points

- Factors both in and outside the school gate can influence a student’s level of engagement in schooling.
- Within the school gate, student engagement can be fostered through a supportive, inclusive, and productive learning environment.
- The issues of school refusal and class disruption are important to understand and address in order to support student engagement.
- National data on attendance, attainment and retention provide important insights but cannot tell us everything about student engagement and success.

### Attendance

- There was a significant drop from 2021 to 2022 in both student attendance rates (91% in 2021 to 87% in 2022), and student attendance levels (71% in 2021 to 50% in 2022).<sup>1</sup>
- While there were substantial increases in 2023, national school attendance rates and levels have not returned to pre-2022 levels.
  - Student attendance rates rose from 87% in 2022 to 89% in 2023. **Attendance rate** is defined as the number of actual full-time equivalent student-days attended by full-time students in Years 1-10 as a percentage of the total number of possible student-days attended in Semester 1.

<sup>1</sup> Data is from the National Report on Schooling in Australia data portal: ACARA National Student Attendance Data Collection.

- Student attendance levels rose from 50% in 2022 to 62% in 2023. **Attendance level** is defined as the proportion of full-time students in Years 1-10 whose attendance rate in Semester 1 is equal to or greater than 90%.<sup>2</sup>
- In the 5 years from 2015 to 2019 (prior to the COVID-19 pandemic), there was a small but consistent decline in national attendance rates (92.6% in 2015 to 91.4% in 2019).<sup>3</sup> All states and territories and school sectors (government and non-government) experienced a drop in attendance rates over this period.
- At the 27 February 2023 Education Ministers Meeting, Ministers tasked the Australian Education Research Organisation (AERO) to:
  - investigate and explain the decline in student attendance
  - suggest evidence-based approaches that may assist in reversing the trend.
- AERO's final report is expected to be provided to Education Ministers by early April 2024.

### ***Attainment – 20-24 year olds who gained a Year 12 certificate, or equivalent, or AQF Certificate III or higher***

- There is a clear link between attaining a Year 12 certificate or equivalent qualification and improved social and economic outcomes for young people.
- The Year 12 or equivalent attainment rate for young people (aged 20-24) has increased over the last decade (from 86% in 2013 to 90% in 2023). However, rates have remained steady over the past 4 years.
- The current National School Reform Agreement set a target to increase the proportion of young people (age 20-24) attaining Year 12 or equivalent or Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) Certificate III to 96% by 2031.
- This commitment includes lifting First Nations students' Year 12 or equivalent attainment to 96% by 2031. In 2021, the attainment rate for First Nations students was 68%.

### ***Retention***

- Apparent school retention rates have decreased between 2020 and 2022. 2023 retention data was due to be released by the ABS on 14 February 2024 and will be considered by the department.

<sup>2</sup> Data is from the National Report on Schooling in Australia data portal: ACARA National Student Attendance Data Collection.

<sup>3</sup> Data is from the National Report on Schooling in Australia data portal: ACARA National Student Attendance Data Collection.

- School retention rates alone should not be used as a measure for successful student outcomes.
- Attainment rates are a more useful measure to consider student outcomes, as attainment rates capture a range of pathways to achieving a Year 12 or equivalent qualification, or an AQF Certificate level III or above.
- Apparent school retention rates are calculated by the percentage of full-time Year 12 enrolments divided by full-time enrolments from the base year level in the relevant calendar year.
  - The apparent retention rate from Year 10 to Year 12 was 79.0% in 2022.
  - This was a decrease from 81.6% in 2021.

### **School Refusal**

- School refusal is a form of non-attendance related to anxiety about going to school.
  - It is linked to a range of complex personal factors including mental health and wellbeing, neurodiversity and disability, bullying and cyberbullying, family circumstances and the classroom environment.
- The Senate Education and Employment References Committee released its final report on 10 August 2023 and made 14 recommendations ([Attachment A](#) refers) to better identify, manage, and respond to school refusal.
- The Department of Education is leading the Australian Government response to the Senate inquiry report on school refusal.
- The Government is currently considering the report and recommendations.

### **Classroom Disruption**

- Recent research indicates increasing levels of low order disruption in the classroom, as well as more serious incidents of violent and/or threatening behaviour.
- On 28 November 2022, the Senate referred '*The issue of increasing disruption in Australian school classrooms*' to the Education and Employment Reference Committee (the Committee) for inquiry and report. The Committee released its:

- interim report on 1 December 2023.<sup>4</sup>
- final report on 7 February 2024.<sup>5</sup>
- The OECD Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) Index of disciplinary climate asks students to indicate how frequently disruptive behaviours occurred in their classroom.
  - Higher values in the index indicate a more positive disciplinary climate. In 2022, Australia's score on the index was -0.24, compared to -0.2 in 2018. This is significantly lower than the OECD average of 0.02 in 2022.
- 2022 Australian Teacher Workforce Data (ATWD) results<sup>6</sup> show classroom factors as one of the top 3 most cited categories of reasons for intending to leave the teacher workforce prior to retirement, which includes 'facing challenges with student behaviour management'.
- The Australian Government requested AERO develop evidence-based guidance and tools to support teachers in effectively managing classrooms and creating safe and supportive environments focused on learning (costing \$3.5 million).
  - The first suite of resources is available on the AERO website and includes easily accessible evidence explainers and adaptable best practice guides.

## Media

- **Report on Government Services 2024, Part B, Productivity Commission, 5 February 2024**

The Report on Government Services (RoGS) provides information on the equity, effectiveness and efficiency of government services in Australia. Part B includes performance reporting for school education. The release of Part B generated a number of media articles, with a focus on student retention and attendance (refer below).

<sup>4</sup> Senate Education and Employment Committees, Parliament of Australia (December 2023), *The issue of increasing disruption in Australian school classrooms*. ([www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary\\_Business/Committees/Senate/Education\\_and\\_Employment/DASC/Interim\\_Report](http://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/Senate/Education_and_Employment/DASC/Interim_Report))

<sup>5</sup> Senate Education and Employment Committees, Parliament of Australia (February 2024), *The issue of increasing disruption in Australian school classrooms*. ([The issue of increasing disruption in Australian school classrooms – Parliament of Australia \(aph.gov.au\)](http://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/Senate/Education_and_Employment/DASC/Interim_Report))

<sup>6</sup> ATWD National Trends – Teacher Workforce. ([www.aitsl.edu.au/research/australian-teacher-workforce-data/atwdreports/national-trends-teacher-workforce](http://www.aitsl.edu.au/research/australian-teacher-workforce-data/atwdreports/national-trends-teacher-workforce))

- ***One in five students dropping out of school, Australian Financial Review, 6 February 2024, by Julie Hare – Education Editor***

Synopsis: School dropout rates before the end of year 12 have reached a 10-year high, with one in every five students nationally not completing their full 13 years of basic education. At the same time, attendance rates of students in years 7 to 10 have declined dramatically, particularly in government schools.

The department identified a significant error (later rectified by the paper):

- What was initially published:

*‘In government schools, fewer than one in four students who start year 10 go on to complete year 12. For non-government schools, the figure is a healthier 87.2 per cent.’*

- The error:

The data for apparent retention for Years 10 to Year 12 in government schools is 73.5%. The statement should be *‘...approximately one in four students who start year 10 do not go on to complete year 12.’*

In addition, the department notes the following statement contained in the AFR article:

*‘At the same time, attendance rates of students in years 7 to 10 have declined dramatically, particularly in government schools.’*

While this statement is accurate for the period from 2015-2023, it is not accurate for the period 2022-2023, which saw a bounce-back from 82.8% in 2022 to 84.0% in 2023.

- ***Truancy, dropout rates at record high, The Australian, 6 February 2024, by Natasha Bitá – Education Editor***

Synopsis: Teenagers are playing truant and dropping out of school at record rates, as state and territory governments short-change the public schools struggling with a growing number of disadvantaged students. One in four high school students – and half of all Indigenous teenagers – are failing to finish Year 12. One in three primary school students and half of all high school kids skipped a month of classes last year, damning new data reveals.

- ***Australian school attendance and retention rates in long-term decline, report shows, The Guardian, 6 February 2024, by Caitlin Cassidy – Higher education reporter***

Synopsis: The Productivity Commission's report on government services showed school attendance and retention rates remained on their trajectory of long-term decline. In 2023 86.4% of students from year seven to 10 regularly attended school, down from 91.2% in 2015. By Year 12 the retention rate for full-time students was just 79% - the lowest in the past 10 years of data being reported.

- ***Don't blame COVID-19 for Truancy, Australian Financial Review, 8 February 2024, by Glenn Fahey***

Synopsis: Australian school students' sliding attendance is a symptom of greater structural problems facing the education system – namely school refusal; parent's tolerating truancy; governments failing to value attendance as an outcome.

The department notes the article posits that over the past two years, about 45 per cent of students missed a day of school per fortnight. While this is broadly correct, the use of averaging hides the significant difference between the 2023 result (61.6%), and the 2022 result (49.9%).

- ***'Parents to blame' for slumping school attendance rates, Australian Financial Review, 9 February 2024, by Julie Hare***

Synopsis: Lax parental attitudes towards regular school attendance, including taking holidays during term, birthday exemptions and mental health days, are contributing to the rising tide of absenteeism. AERO describes poor school attendance as "a national issue".

## Attachments

### Attachment A – School Refusal Recommendations

Date Last Cleared	09 February 2024
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## **List of Recommendations: Senate inquiry into the national trend of school refusal and related matters**

*Released by the Education and Employment References Committee on 10 August 2023*

### **Recommendation 1**

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6.18 As an initial step in the broader school refusal research agenda, the committee recommends that Education Ministers task the Australian Education Research Organisation with research into:

- the drivers and prevalence of school refusal in Australia; and
- the use, cost, and effectiveness of school refusal interventions used in Australia and overseas, including flexible approaches to school education.

6.19 This research should inform the Australian Education Research Organisation's advice to Education Ministers on the causes of declining school attendance and evidence-based approaches to support educational outcomes (arising from the 27 February 2023 Education Ministers Meeting). It should also inform future school refusal research projects, as well as the development of national school refusal resources (see Recommendation 2). This research should also inform the establishment of a nationally agreed definition of school refusal (see Recommendation 6).

### **Recommendation 2**

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6.20 The committee recommends that the Australian Government work with state and territory education authorities and the non-government school sector to develop and promote resources about school refusal, once a nationally agreed definition has been established, for parents, teachers and school leaders.

6.21 These resources should be informed by the research undertaken by the Australian Education Research Organisation as part of Recommendation 1.

### **Recommendation 3**

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6.24 The committee recommends that state and territory governments review their child health and development screening programs to identify opportunities to improve early identification of autism, ADHD, specific learning disorders, and anxiety disorders, in order to provide the classroom support these students might need.

### **Recommendation 4**

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6.25 The committee recommends that state and territory education authorities and the non-government school sector identify opportunities for earlier identification of students at risk of school withdrawal, particularly at key school transition points. This may include—but should not be limited to—analysis of school absence data and the use of screening tools.

6.26 The committee encourages state and territory education authorities and the non-government school sector to broaden data collection to account for differences in attendance. The committee acknowledges that there is a difference between absences due to truancy, school withdrawal, or school refusal.

**Recommendation 5**

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6.37 The committee recommends that state and territory education authorities and the non-government school sector investigate ways to increase the flexibility of education delivery, including by:

- identifying ways to enhance flexibility in mainstream school settings for children going through school refusal;
- facilitating easier access to distance education and home schooling for students experiencing school refusal; and
- facilitating the provision of more alternative and specialist school settings that cater for students experiencing school refusal.

**Recommendation 6**

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6.38 The committee recommends that Education Ministers develop a national action plan on school refusal (national action plan), informed by research that has been conducted by the Australian Education Research Organisation (see Recommendation 1). The national action plan should be developed within 12 months and should include:

- a nationally agreed definition and terminology for school refusal;
- a nationally consistent approach to recording school absences, as well as an agreed approach to public reporting of school refusal absences;
- a nationally agreed approach to messaging in relation to school attendance, school refusal, and the recording of school absences;
- a nationally agreed approach to provide support to parents and students going through school refusal by increasing accessibility and awareness of alternative methods of schooling;
- a national commitment to prioritise implementation of the Unique Student Identifier (USI) and agreement about how the USI will be used to identify students at risk of school refusal, facilitate information sharing about those students, and support research into school refusal;
- nationally agreed research priorities, as well as an information sharing and dissemination strategy, particularly to reduce stigma and support understanding of school refusal;
- agreement that a multi-tiered system of support approach be used to guide approaches to, and investments in, school refusal interventions (noting this would be implemented largely at a local level); and
- agreed roles and responsibilities, an implementation timeline, key performance indicators, and a monitoring and evaluation strategy.

6.39 Development of the national action plan should be a collaborative process involving health and education professionals, service providers, and people with lived experience of school refusal—with a particular focus on neurodivergent young people and those with mental health challenges. The national action plan should also align with existing national strategies, where appropriate, and be informed by the recommendations of this inquiry.



6.40 The committee encourages the expert review panel on the National School Reform Agreement to take into consideration the recommendations of this report.

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**Recommendation 7**

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6.41 The committee recommends that the Australian Government work with state and territory governments to identify ways to improve awareness and understanding of school refusal—once a nationally agreed definition has been established—within the health sector, with a particular focus on general practice, psychiatry, psychology and other relevant allied health fields.

6.42 Once a nationally agreed definition has been established, the committee would welcome the option to embed school refusal training within relevant tertiary education courses, as well as ongoing professional development requirements.

6.43 To that end, the committee encourages the Australian Institute of Teaching and School Leadership to work with state and territory regulatory authorities to ensure teacher education and training courses incorporate modules on school refusal, once a nationally agreed definition has been established. This could include modules for ongoing professional development requirements.

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**Recommendation 8**

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6.51 The committee recommends that state and territory education authorities and the non-government school sector review and update current messaging about the importance of school attendance to ensure that it:

- reflects a nuanced view of attendance that does not further alienate families dealing with school refusal; and
- provides information about how to access support for attendance difficulties such as school refusal; and
- recognises that for some students, where attendance is not possible, that delivering tailored educational outcomes through an alternative method of schooling is the priority.

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**Recommendation 9**

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6.57 The committee recommends that state and territory education authorities and the non-government school sector work together to develop resources to support the use of trauma-informed practices in schools, so they can implement best-practice methods to support students to continue with their education.

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**Recommendation 10**

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6.58 The committee recommends that state and territory education authorities and the non-government school sector work together to develop and promote stable and ongoing resources to support effective family engagement. This should include the provision of specialist family engagement support staff in schools.

**Recommendation 11**

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6.64 The committee acknowledges that the process of receiving a formal disability diagnosis is expensive and can have extended wait times. To this end, the committee recommends that state and territory education authorities and the non-government school sector work together to identify and implement measures to build the capacity of schools to provide reasonable adjustments for students in line with the requirements of the Disability Standards for Education 2005. This could include the provision of additional specialist support staff in schools and/or providing teachers with the opportunity to acquire Universal Design in Learning skills through additional professional development.

**Recommendation 12**

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6.70 The committee recommends that the Australian Government work with state and territory governments to identify and promote effective models for collaboration between the education and health sectors in relation to school refusal.

**Recommendation 13**

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6.74 The committee recommends that the Australian Government work with state and territory governments to explore funding sources for an independent peer support network for families and schools going through school refusal to receive resources and support. This could include improving resources for parents, including a 'one-stop shop' for information about school refusal and the support options available to students and families.

6.75 The committee recognises the current situation where there is no nationally recognised school refusal advocacy and support group for parents. To this end, the committee encourages the Australian Government to consider the importance of such support groups for parents.

**Recommendation 14**

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6.76 The committee recommends that the Australian Government investigate increasing the number of subsidised mental health care visits for students experiencing school refusal.

**Issue:** Student performance and learning  
**Contact:** Meg Brighton  
Ph: s 22  
Deputy Secretary, Schools Group

## Key Points

- Student performance and learning are central to preparing young people to achieve their life goals.
- Since 2012, overall Year 12 certification rates have increased by 3.3 percentage points, from 73% in 2012 to 76.3% in 2022.
  - However, gaps remain for equity groups
  - For instance, in 2022, Year 12 certification rates for remote/very remote areas were 55.5%, compared to 79.4% in major cities; and the rate for low socio-educational status (SES) was 69.7% compared to 82.9% for high SES.
- Over the last decade, the Year 12 (or equivalent) attainment rate has increased from 85.7% in 2013 to 89.6% in 2023. It has remained steady over the past 4 years.

## ***Literacy and Numeracy Performance in International and National Assessments***

- National literacy and numeracy results in international and national assessments have shown that over 50% of students are meeting expectations. There are a small cohort of students (one in ten according to NAPLAN) that require additional support.
- Performance gaps between equity cohorts are reflected in both international and national assessments.
  - Stronger results tend to align with students from the highest socio-educational backgrounds, in urban areas, or from non-First Nations backgrounds.
  - As a result, equity is one of three core outcome areas of focus for the Better and Fairer Schools Agreement (the Agreement).

## ***PISA 2022 Results***

- PISA 2022 results were released on 5 December 2023 and showed the gradual long-term decline in Australia's results (in Maths, Science and Reading) has **stabilised**, with no significant performance changes compared to the last cycle in 2018 (details on PISA results are at [Attachment A](#)).

- Australia performed above the OECD average in all 3 domains (Maths, Science, and Reading) and fewer countries outperformed Australia compared to 2018. While positive, Australian students are still performing at a lower standard than 20 years ago.
- Low SES students are the equivalent of around 5 years of schooling behind high SES students in PISA, and First Nations students are around 4 years of schooling behind other students.
- PISA 2022 also highlighted that school culture and behaviour have deteriorated since 2018, including in areas of disciplinary climate, truancy rates, teacher support and staff shortages.
  - Of note, Australia's disciplinary climate remains below the OECD average. Between 2018 and 2022, Australia fell from 69<sup>th</sup> to 71<sup>st</sup> on the index. This has direct implications for student learning and outcomes.
  - Between 2018 and 2022, reported incidences of truancy increased in Australia. For Australia, this increased from 33% of students in 2018 to 49% in 2022, with truancy defined as the percentage of students who reported that they skipped at least some classes in the 2 weeks prior to the PISA test. For reference, the OECD average was around 31% in 2022, and 21% in 2018.
  - Additional details will be available once the Australian National PISA Report is released in May.

### **NAPLAN**

- Consistent with PISA 2022 and previous NAPLAN cycles, NAPLAN 2023 results highlighted the educational disadvantage faced by some students.
- Nationally, across all domains (reading, writing, spelling, grammar, punctuation and numeracy), around two-thirds of students achieved NAPLAN ratings of 'Strong' or 'Exceeding' (i.e. proficient).
  - Around one-third were rated as 'Developing' or 'Needs Additional Support' (i.e. not proficient).
  - Around 10% of students were in the 'Needs Additional Support' category.
- There was considerable variation across equity groupings:
  - Girls generally outperformed boys in literacy, boys generally outperformed girls in numeracy.
  - Around one-third of First Nations students 'Need Additional Support'.

- Around a quarter of students with parents who did not finish high school (Year 11 equivalent and below) 'Need Additional Support' (compared to around 3% of students with parents with a higher level of education).
- Less than 30% of students in very remote schools are rated as 'Strong' or 'Exceeding' in any domain or year level, while at least 60% of students in major city schools are rated 'Strong' or 'Exceeding' across almost all domains and year levels.

### *Links to the Better and Fairer Schools Agreement*

- The Expert Panel's Report from the Review into a Better and Fairer Education System, *Improving Outcomes for All*, used NAPLAN results to illustrate differences in performance across equity groups and other students. It highlighted:
  - Parental education as an influential determinant of educational proficiency.
  - That students from equity groups are 3 times more likely to fall behind their peers in literacy and numeracy.
  - Emphasised the compounding effect on outcomes for students belonging to more than one equity group.
- The Expert Panel's report provided recommendations to help students who are falling behind to catch-up, and ensure they develop foundational literacy and numeracy skills. They include:
  - Consistent screening of student literacy and numeracy progress in Year 1 to ensure students with additional learning needs are identified early and provided with learning support.
  - Implementation of a multi-tiered system of support models with access to catch-up small group tutoring to ensure no student is left behind.
  - More support for teachers to use high-quality and evidence-based classroom instruction to best support students and maximise their achievement.
- The Report is one of a number of inputs being considered in the development of the next Agreement, but specific reforms will be subject to negotiations between Education Ministers in 2024.
- The Minister has spoken publicly about the need to provide students who fall behind at school with additional support to help them catch-up to their peers when they are young and keep up throughout their schooling, so they have a better opportunity to succeed in life.

- The Minister has also spoken publicly about his wish for results to be delivered to schools and parents in Term 2 in future years. ACARA, ESA and Test Administration Authorities are working together to achieve this.
- More national results are included at [Attachment B](#).
- Individual student results were released to parents in July/August. Individual school results on NAPLAN performance were released publicly in December 2023 on the *My School* website.
- NAPLAN 2024 will take place between 13-25 March 2024 with results available to parents around the middle of the year.

### ***My School***

- On 15 December 2023, ACARA released additional educational outcomes data on *My School*, relating to
  - 2023 school profile and population data
  - 2023 NAPLAN data for each school
  - 2023 attendance data for semester one
  - 2022 financial information
  - 2022 VET in school data
  - 2022 senior secondary outcomes.
- Most media relating to *My School* was focussed on local school performance. However, some large media organisations produced league tables based on NAPLAN results – which is against the terms of use of the *My School* website.

### **Media**

In a speech in Parliament on 7 December 2023, Senator Henderson stated that:

- ‘our schools are in freefall’ and pointed to the longer-term decline in PISA, and student proficiency in both PISA and NAPLAN results
- ‘one in three Australian students failed the most recent (2023) NAPLAN test’
- ‘government must do much more including ensuring that the NSRA delivers meaningful reforms to school standards’.

### ***PISA 2022 results***

- Media commentary tended either neutral or positive with the focus on Australia’s improvements internationally, noting performance is still lower than when PISA first started.

### **NAPLAN 2023 Results**

- Media commentary converged on a theme that one in three students nationally 'failed' NAPLAN in 2023.

### **Attachments**

[Attachment A](#) – Table on PISA 2022 results

[Attachment B](#) – Table on NAPLAN national results and equity cohorts

<b>Date Last Cleared</b>	05 February 2024
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### PISA 2022 Results

The average performance of Australian 15-year-old students in reading, mathematical and scientific literacy has significantly declined over the past 22 years in PISA.

However, between 2018 and 2022, there were no statistically significant changes in student performance across domains, halting the trend of constant decline every cycle.

The below table represents student performance over time and are the average scores overall and per area of assessment.

**Table 1.A – Australia’s average overall Average Performance**

Domain	2000	2003	2006	2009	2012	2015	2018	2022	Change*
Maths	-	524	520	514	504	494	491	487	- 37**
Science	-	-	527	527	521	510	503	507	- 20**
Reading	528	525	513	515	512	503	503	498	- 30**

**Source:** *PISA 2000, 2003, 2006, 2009 and 2012 National Reports (ACER), PISA 2015: A first look at Australia’s results (ACER), PISA 2018, PISA 2022: Reporting Australia’s Results (ACER)*

**Notes:** *Numbers may not add exactly due to rounding*

*\*Changes are calculated for each domain from the first year it was the major domain (2000 for reading literacy; 2003 for mathematical literacy; and 2006 for scientific literacy).*

*\*\*Indicates change is statistically significant.*



**Table 1.B – Australia’s average performance in mathematical literacy, PISA 2003-2022**

	2003	2006	2009	2012	2015	2018	2022	Change*
<b>Average score</b>	524	520	514	504	494	491	487	- 37**
<b>% high performing students</b>	20	16	16	15	11	10	12	- 8 ppt**
<b>% low performing students</b>	14	13	16	20	22	22	26	12 ppt**
<b>Number of countries that significantly outperformed Australia</b>	4/40	8/57	12/65	16/65	19/72	23/79	9/81	-
<b>Overall country rank</b>	11/40	13/57	15/65	19/65	25/72	29/79	17/81	-
<b>Overall OECD country rank</b>	8/29	9/30	9/30	12/34	18/35	24/36	13/38	-

Source: PISA 2000, 2003, 2006, 2009 and 2012 National Reports (ACER), PISA 2015: A first look at Australia’s results (ACER), PISA 2018, 2022: Reporting Australia’s Results (ACER)

Notes: Numbers may not add exactly due to rounding.  
 \*Changes are calculated from 2003, the first time that mathematical literacy was the major domain.  
 \*\*Indicates change is statistically significant.

Table 1.C – Australia’s average performance in scientific literacy, PISA 2006-2022

	2006	2009	2012	2015	2018	2022	Change*
<b>Average score</b>	527	527	521	510	503	507	- 20**
<b>% high performing students</b>	15	14	14	11	9	13	- 2 ppt**
<b>% low performing students</b>	13	12	13	18	19	20	7 ppt**
<b>Number of countries that significantly outperformed Australia</b>	3/57	6/65	7/65	9/72	12/79	8/81	-
<b>Overall country rank</b>	8/57	10/65	16/65	14/72	17/79	10/81	-
<b>Overall OECD country rank</b>	6/30	6/30	10/34	8/35	12/36	6/38	-

Source: PISA 2000, 2003, 2006, 2009 and 2012 National Reports (ACER), PISA 2015: A first look at Australia’s results (ACER), PISA 2018, 2022: Reporting Australia’s Results (ACER).

Notes: Numbers may not add exactly due to rounding.

\*Changes are calculated from 2006, the first time that science became the major domain.

\*\*Indicates change is statistically significant.

Table 1.D – Australia’s average performance in reading literacy, PISA 2000-2022

	2000	2003	2006	2009	2012	2015	2018	2022	Change*
<b>Average score</b>	528	525	513	515	512	503	503	498	- 30**
<b>% high performing students</b>	18	15	11	13	12	11	13	13	- 5 ppt**
<b>% low performing students</b>	12	12	14	14	14	18	20	21	9 ppt**
<b>No. of countries that significantly outperformed Australia</b>	1/31	1/40	5/56	6/65	9/65	11/72	10/79	8/81	-
<b>Overall country rank</b>	4/31	4/40	7/56	9/65	14/65	16/72	16/79	12/81	-
<b>Overall OECD country rank</b>	4/27	4/29	6/29	6/30	9/34	13/35	12/36	8/38	-

Source: PISA 2000, 2003, 2006, 2009 and 2012 National Reports (ACER), PISA 2015: A first look at Australia’s results (ACER), PISA 2018, 2022: Reporting Australia’s Results (ACER)

Notes: Numbers may not add exactly due to rounding.

\*Changes are calculated from 2000, the first-time reading literacy was the major domain.

\*\*Indicates change is statistically significant.

**National Results and Equity Cohorts***(Source: NAPLAN 2023 National Report – Departmental Summary)***Table A.1: Proficiency by Domain at National level, 2023 (per cent)**

Year	Domain	Not Proficient (excl. exempt)		Proficient	
		Needs Assistance	Developing	Strong	Exceeding
3	Reading	9.1	22.2	48.5	18.3
	Numeracy	10.0	23.5	52.4	12.3
	Writing	6.1	16.0	66.9	9.1
	Grammar & Punctuation	13.3	30.5	45.7	8.6
	Spelling	11.1	26.2	44.1	16.7
5	Reading	7.0	17.2	52.9	21.3
	Numeracy	9.3	21.4	55.8	12.0
	Writing	9.6	22.6	54.7	11.5
	Grammar & Punctuation	10.1	24.3	50.8	13.1
	Spelling	8.7	20.7	48.4	20.6
7	Reading	9.0	21.0	49.3	19.2
	Numeracy	9.3	22.0	54.5	12.6
	Writing	10.9	25.1	47.7	14.8
	Grammar & Punctuation	10.6	23.9	50.2	13.8
	Spelling	7.5	18.2	50.9	21.8
9	Reading	10.6	24.7	45.9	16.9
	Numeracy	10.2	24.1	54.0	9.9
	Writing	12.1	28.1	40.5	17.6
	Grammar & Punctuation	12.9	29.4	42.4	13.5
	Spelling	7.9	19.4	52.9	18.0

*\*In 2023, new proficiency levels with four levels of achievement have replaced the previous ten-band structure and NMS*

**Table A.2: Proficiency by Domain and First Nations status at National level, 2023 (per cent)**

Year	Domain	First Nations				Non-First Nations			
		Not Proficient (excl. exempt)		Proficient		Not Proficient (excl. exempt)		Proficient	
		Needs Assistance	Developing	Strong	Exceeding	Needs Assistance	Developing	Strong	Exceeding
3	Reading	30.5	31.6	30.8	4.2	7.5	21.5	49.9	19.4
	Numeracy	34.2	32.0	28.9	2.0	8.2	22.8	54.3	13.0
	Writing	25.9	28.3	41.5	1.5	4.7	15.0	68.9	9.7
	Grammar & Punctuation	40.0	34.3	21.6	1.2	11.2	30.3	47.6	9.2
	Spelling	34.7	30.4	27.4	4.7	9.4	25.9	45.4	17.6
5	Reading	27.7	28.7	36.2	4.7	5.5	16.4	54.1	22.5
	Numeracy	34.3	30.9	30.7	1.5	7.5	20.7	57.6	12.7
	Writing	32.7	30.9	31.4	2.2	7.9	22.0	56.5	12.2
	Grammar & Punctuation	36.1	32.5	26.8	1.9	8.2	23.8	52.6	13.9
	Spelling	28.2	28.5	34.9	5.6	7.3	20.2	49.3	21.7
7	Reading	32.6	30.9	30.0	3.8	7.3	20.3	50.7	20.2
	Numeracy	35.0	32.1	28.6	1.5	7.4	21.3	56.5	13.4
	Writing	35.7	31.6	26.7	3.2	9.1	24.6	49.3	15.6
	Grammar & Punctuation	37.2	31.6	26.4	2.0	8.7	23.4	51.9	14.6
	Spelling	25.1	27.5	38.3	6.2	6.3	17.5	51.9	22.9
9	Reading	33.0	34.9	25.7	3.1	9.0	24.0	47.4	17.9
	Numeracy	34.7	35.3	25.8	0.9	8.4	23.3	56.1	10.6
	Writing	37.4	34.1	21.0	4.3	10.2	27.6	41.9	18.5
	Grammar & Punctuation	38.8	36.1	19.9	2.0	11.0	28.9	44.0	14.4
	Spelling	24.4	30.1	37.8	4.5	6.7	18.6	54.0	19.0

*\*In 2023, new proficiency levels with four levels of achievement have replaced the previous ten-band structure and NMS*

**Table A.3: Proficiency by Domain and Gender at National level, 2023 (per cent)**

Year	Domain	Male				Female			
		Not Proficient (excl. exempt)		Proficient		Not Proficient (excl. exempt)		Proficient	
		Needs Assistance	Developing	Strong	Exceeding	Needs Assistance	Developing	Strong	Exceeding
3	Reading	10.7	24.4	46.3	16.1	7.4	20.0	50.8	20.6
	Numeracy	9.3	21.3	51.9	15.1	10.8	25.8	52.9	9.2
	Writing	8.1	19.1	63.2	7.1	4.0	12.7	70.8	11.3
	Grammar & Punctuation	15.0	31.6	42.9	8.1	11.5	29.5	48.6	9.3
	Spelling	12.5	26.2	42.2	16.6	9.7	26.2	46.1	16.8
5	Reading	8.7	18.9	50.9	19.4	5.2	15.4	55.0	23.3
	Numeracy	8.6	19.0	55.3	15.0	9.9	24.0	56.2	8.8
	Writing	12.4	25.1	51.1	9.2	6.6	19.9	58.5	13.9
	Grammar & Punctuation	12.3	25.9	47.8	11.9	7.8	22.6	54.0	14.4
	Spelling	10.3	21.2	46.6	19.8	7.0	20.2	50.2	21.5
7	Reading	11.3	22.2	46.8	17.8	6.6	19.8	51.9	20.7
	Numeracy	9.2	19.7	53.8	15.3	9.4	24.4	55.3	9.9
	Writing	14.4	28.3	44.1	11.3	7.2	21.7	51.6	18.4
	Grammar & Punctuation	13.5	25.8	46.6	12.1	7.6	21.9	53.9	15.6
	Spelling	9.2	19.6	48.5	20.7	5.7	16.7	53.5	23.0
9	Reading	13.4	25.5	43.3	15.4	7.7	23.9	48.7	18.4
	Numeracy	10.4	22.3	53.1	11.9	9.9	26.0	54.9	7.8
	Writing	16.1	31.5	37.2	13.0	7.9	24.5	44.0	22.4
	Grammar & Punctuation	16.6	30.9	38.7	11.5	8.9	27.9	46.2	15.6
	Spelling	9.7	20.6	50.6	16.8	5.9	18.1	55.4	19.3

*\*In 2023, new proficiency levels with four levels of achievement have replaced the previous ten-band structure and NMS*

**Table A.4: Proficiency by Domain and Parental Education at National level, 2023 (per cent)**

Year	Domain	Year 11				Bachelor			
		Not Proficient (excl. exempt)		Proficient		Not Proficient (excl. exempt)		Proficient	
		Needs Assistance	Developing	Strong	Exceeding	Needs Assistance	Developing	Strong	Exceeding
3	Reading	27.3	33.7	31.6	3.4	3.2	14.7	52.3	28.5
	Numeracy	30.5	34.5	29.3	1.7	3.5	15.6	59.5	20.1
	Writing	21.3	27.9	45.2	1.7	1.8	9.4	73.0	14.5
	Grammar & Punctuation	36.2	36.8	21.9	1.1	5.2	23.3	55.7	14.5
	Spelling	30.6	30.0	29.6	5.8	4.5	20.9	48.9	24.4
5	Reading	23.5	30.5	38.2	3.9	2.1	9.3	53.8	33.8
	Numeracy	29.5	33.1	32.0	1.5	2.9	12.8	62.8	20.5
	Writing	26.2	30.6	36.5	2.8	3.7	15.9	61.1	18.2
	Grammar & Punctuation	31.2	35.0	28.1	1.8	3.2	15.5	58.1	22.1
	Spelling	23.9	27.7	37.5	7.0	3.4	14.7	50.3	30.5
7	Reading	28.7	33.1	31.2	3.3	2.7	12.0	53.0	31.4
	Numeracy	30.0	33.7	30.8	1.7	2.6	12.7	62.1	21.7
	Writing	30.0	32.8	29.9	3.5	4.2	18.0	53.9	23.0
	Grammar & Punctuation	32.9	34.1	27.2	1.9	3.3	15.0	57.5	23.3
	Spelling	22.0	27.0	39.9	7.4	2.9	12.1	51.8	32.3
9	Reading	28.2	36.0	28.0	3.3	3.4	14.9	51.9	28.8
	Numeracy	28.1	35.9	30.0	1.5	3.0	13.7	64.0	18.2
	Writing	29.9	35.5	24.9	5.3	4.7	20.5	46.6	27.3
	Grammar & Punctuation	33.5	37.5	22.0	2.5	4.3	19.8	51.3	23.6
	Spelling	20.7	29.1	39.3	6.4	3.0	12.2	55.9	27.9

*\*In 2023, new proficiency levels with four levels of achievement have replaced the previous ten-band structure and NMS*

**Table A.5: Proficiency by Domain and Language Background at National level, 2023 (per cent)**

Year	Domain	LBOTE				Non-LBOTE			
		Not Proficient (excl. exempt)		Proficient		Not Proficient (excl. exempt)		Proficient	
		Needs Assistance	Developing	Strong	Exceeding	Needs Assistance	Developing	Strong	Exceeding
3	Reading	8.1	19.9	48.2	21.3	9.4	23.2	48.8	17.1
	Numeracy	9.8	20.7	50.3	16.7	9.9	24.7	53.6	10.3
	Writing	5.2	12.4	66.4	13.5	6.4	17.5	67.2	7.3
	Grammar & Punctuation	10.8	26.0	47.6	13.1	14.2	32.6	45.0	6.7
	Spelling	8.0	18.4	45.5	25.5	12.4	29.7	43.6	12.9
5	Reading	6.9	15.3	49.8	25.7	6.9	17.9	54.3	19.6
	Numeracy	8.7	17.4	52.2	19.5	9.3	23.0	57.5	8.8
	Writing	7.2	16.8	56.4	17.5	10.5	25.0	54.2	9.0
	Grammar & Punctuation	8.7	19.8	49.5	19.8	10.6	26.2	51.6	10.3
	Spelling	5.9	13.7	45.9	32.2	9.8	23.6	49.5	15.8
7	Reading	8.7	18.5	47.2	23.8	9.0	21.9	50.2	17.6
	Numeracy	8.5	17.9	51.2	20.6	9.4	23.5	55.9	9.7
	Writing	8.6	20.6	49.1	19.9	11.6	26.7	47.3	13.0
	Grammar & Punctuation	9.5	19.9	48.5	20.3	10.8	25.3	51.0	11.5
	Spelling	5.9	12.7	46.9	32.8	8.1	20.2	52.5	17.8
9	Reading	10.3	22.6	44.1	20.6	10.6	25.3	46.6	15.8
	Numeracy	8.9	20.1	51.5	17.2	10.5	25.4	55.0	7.5
	Writing	10.2	24.7	40.9	21.9	12.6	29.1	40.4	16.3
	Grammar & Punctuation	11.5	25.2	41.2	19.7	13.2	30.7	42.9	11.6
	Spelling	6.4	14.4	49.2	27.6	8.3	21.0	54.2	14.9

*\*In 2023, new proficiency levels with four levels of achievement have replaced the previous ten-band structure and NMS*

<b>Issue:</b>	<b>Teaching</b>
<b>PBS Pg No.</b>	23
<b>MYEFO Pg No.</b>	235 (Strong Beginnings Fund)
<b>Contact:</b>	<b>Meg Brighton</b>
	Ph: s 22
	Deputy Secretary

## Key Points

- There is a teacher shortage in Australia. Too few people are becoming teachers and too many are leaving.
- All education ministers recognise this critical issue and there is significant work underway to address it. Having a highly qualified teacher in front of every classroom is essential to the success of all students and the future of our economy.
- Addressing this issue is a multipronged approach which includes: encouraging more people to become teachers; supporting our existing teacher workforce to stay; and attracting more overseas teachers to Australia.
  - See [Attachment A](#) for a fact sheet on the teaching workforce in Australia.
- On 15 December 2022, Education Ministers agreed to the National Teacher Workforce Action Plan (NTWAP), which sets out 27 short, medium and long-term actions to address teacher shortages.
- The NTWAP is focussed on improving supply, strengthening ITE, addressing workload, promoting the profession and improving our understanding of workforce needs.
  - See [Attachment B](#) for fact sheet on Initial Teacher Education.
- Key initiatives include additional university places, Commonwealth Teaching Scholarships, expansion of employment-based pathways, Workload Reduction Fund, prioritising visas for overseas teachers, and a national communications campaign.
- The Australian Government has allocated \$337 million over 4 years from 2022–23 to 2025–26 to support NTWAP initiatives. See [Attachment C](#) for a summary of NTWAP Actions.
- Education Ministers are monitoring the implementation of the NTWAP Actions at every Education Ministers Meeting.
- *Additional information:* see [Attachment D](#) for information on current teacher salaries by jurisdiction.
- Further to the NTWAP, at the December 2023 Education Ministers Meeting, Ministers committed to a range of actions to progress the recommendations of the Teacher Education Expert Panel.



- From the end of 2025, all ITE courses will be required to meet core content requirements. A new ITE Quality Assurance Board (yet to be established) will oversee implementation of this change.
- See [Attachment E](#) for a summary of TEEP recommendations.
- In November 2023, the Senate Committee on Education and Employment released an interim report on its *Inquiry into the Issue of Increasing disruption in Australian School Classrooms*. The report highlights the impact of disruption in teacher wellbeing and student learning.

## Stakeholder Response

Stakeholder	Response summary
Opposition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Senator Henderson has recently commented on Commonwealth Teaching Scholarships, saying the policy is a “direct attack on one third of Australian schools which are independent or catholic and discriminates against parents who send their children to non-government schools”.</li> <li>● Senator Henderson has also called on the Government to address escalating classroom disruption, saying teachers spend an estimated 15% of lesson time dealing with behaviour, and inadequate teaching training is hampering the ability of teachers to manage classroom disruptions.</li> <li>● After EMM in December 2023, she said Education Ministers have “absolutely no plan.” She said student teachers and teachers were leaving their courses and classrooms in droves because they are not being supported. She said they have received inadequate training from their universities and some universities should be defunded.</li> </ul>
Greens	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● On 6 December 2023, Senator Allman-Payne tweeted results from the 2022 PISA report stating it confirms what education experts, parents, teachers and unions have been saying for years: “The gap between advantaged and disadvantaged students is widening. Kids from disadvantaged families now lag their advantaged peers by five years.”</li> </ul>
National Catholic Education Commission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● NCEC has expressed disappointment about the Commonwealth Teaching Scholarships requiring graduates to fulfil their return of service obligations in government schools and early learning settings.</li> </ul>
Independent Schools Australia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● ISA has expressed disappointment about the Commonwealth Teaching Scholarships requiring graduates to fulfil their return of service obligations in government schools and early learning settings.</li> </ul>

**Media**

- ***Public school system facing staffing crisis as more and more teachers say they want out, ABC News, Specialist Reporting Team, 25 November 2023***

A new Australian Education Union survey of public school teachers found 39% of early career educators were planning to leave the profession within a decade. The same survey in 2020 found just 18% of new teachers wanted to quit within the same time frame.

- ***Teachers no option but to make it up, The Australian, Natasha Bitá, 26 November 2023***

Australia's school curriculum is too vague and confusing for teachers who have to "invent their own" lessons and are not clear about what they need to teach, education ministers have been warned by the nation's official education research body.

- ***Students out of control as class turns to chaos, The Australian, Natasha Bitá, 1 December 2023***

Out of control students have sexually assaulted and threatened to kill teachers, punched classmates, and dealt drugs in the playground as classrooms grow dangerously chaotic, a Senate inquiry has warned.

- ***Back to class for top teachers, The Daily Telegraph, Elidh Sproul Mellis, 7 December 2023***

Deputy principals and other six-figure salaried teachers in leadership positions have been ordered back into the classroom, in a bid to reduce the number of classes being merged or left unsupervised amid a statewide teacher shortage (NSW).

- ***Schools to ask kids to learn from home as teacher shortage reaches crisis level, The Daily Telegraph, Susie O'Brien and Suzan Delibasic, 9 December 2023***

Victoria's education staffing shortage is reaching new crisis levels, with some schools receiving no applicants at all for vital teaching jobs despite millions paid in financial incentives. It comes as 9 in 10 principals have warned that some classrooms won't have teachers next year, leaving schools to collapse classes, team-teach in halls and ask students to learn at home on certain days.

- ***Education Ministers unite to demand Albanese government fix teacher shortages, The Guardian, Adeshola Ore, 31 January 2024***

State and territory education ministers have joined forces to demand the Commonwealth implement a suite of major reforms to fix the nation's teacher shortages, after all jurisdictions except WA rejected a landmark education funding agreement.

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## Attachments

**Attachment A** – FS09 – The teaching workforce in Australia

**Attachment B** – FS10 – Initial Teacher Education

**Attachment C** – NTWAP actions

**Attachment D** – Teacher salaries

**Attachment E** – Teacher Education Expert Panel recommendations

<b>Date Last Cleared</b>	08 February 2024
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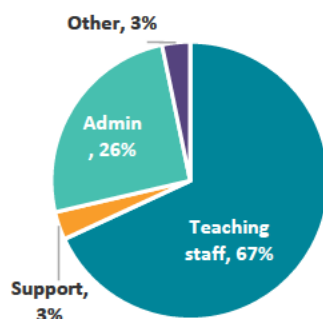


## Fact Sheet: The teaching workforce in Australia

FS09 – 2023

### Full-time equivalent staff in schools by function and sector, 2022

67% of staff in Australian schools are teaching staff.



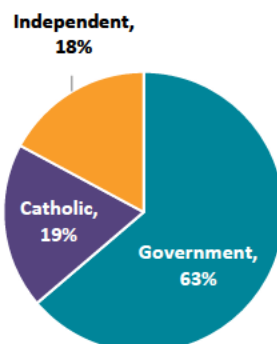
Function	Government	Catholic	Independent	Total
Teaching staff	193,932	58,666	54,631	307,228
Specialist support staff	6,962	2,865	6,051	15,878
Administrative/clerical staff (includes teacher aides and assistants)	78,112	20,285	20,579	118,976
Building operations, general maintenance and other staff	4,986	3,674	6,306	14,966
<b>Total</b>	<b>283,991</b>	<b>85,489</b>	<b>87,567</b>	<b>457,047</b>

Source: ABS (2023) Schools Australia 2022, Table 51a (as of 10 November 2023)

Note: \* Total staff FTE may not add to the sum of the function values due to rounding.

### Full-time equivalent teaching staff by jurisdiction and sector, 2022

63% of full-time equivalent teaching staff are in government schools.



	Government		Catholic	Independent	Total**	State and Territory share % ***
	FTE	%*				
NSW	55,877	61	19,206	16,291	91,373	30
Vic	50,961	62	16,587	14,810	82,357	27
Qld	43,135	66	11,170	10,741	65,045	21
WA	20,700	65	5,190	6,107	31,997	10
SA	12,844	62	3,599	4,288	20,732	7
Tas	4,337	66	1,183	1,018	6,538	2
ACT	3,502	62	1,314	866	5,682	2
NT	2,576	74	418	511	3,505	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>193,932</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>58,666</b>	<b>54,631</b>	<b>307,228</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: ABS (2023) Schools Australia 2022, Table 51a (as of 10 November 2023)

Note: \* Percentage of teachers in government schools out of total teachers in the jurisdiction.

\*\* Total staff FTE may not add to the sum of the State/Territory values due to rounding.

\*\*\* State/Territory percentages may not add to 100% due to rounding.



## Full-time equivalent teaching staff by school level, gender and sector, 2022

72% of full-time equivalent teaching staff are female. While the proportion of male teachers is higher in secondary and independent schools, female teachers outnumber male teachers in these schools.

	Government	Catholic	Independent	Total
<b>Primary schools</b>				
<b>Total teaching staff</b>	<b>108,825</b>	<b>26,875</b>	<b>20,397</b>	<b>156,096</b>
<b>Female</b>	89,111	22,711	16,191	<b>128,013</b>
<b>Male</b>	19,714	4,164	4,206	<b>28,084</b>
<b>Female %</b>	82	85	79	<b>82</b>
<b>Secondary schools</b>				
<b>Total teaching staff</b>	<b>85,107</b>	<b>31,791</b>	<b>34,234</b>	<b>151,132</b>
<b>Female</b>	53,232	19,457	20,138	<b>92,826</b>
<b>Male</b>	31,875	12,334	14,096	<b>58,306</b>
<b>Female %</b>	63	61	59	<b>61</b>
<b>All schools</b>				
<b>Total teaching staff</b>	<b>193,932</b>	<b>58,666</b>	<b>54,631</b>	<b>307,228</b>
<b>Female</b>	142,343	42,168	36,329	<b>220,839</b>
<b>Male</b>	51,589	16,498	18,302	<b>86,389</b>
<b>Female %</b>	73	72	66	<b>72</b>

Source: ABS (2023) Schools Australia 2022, Table 51a (as of 10 November 2023)

Notes: \* Total FTE may not add to the sum of the category values due to rounding.

## Full-time equivalent student-teacher ratio by school level and sector, 2022

In 2022, across all schools there were 13.1 students to every teacher.

The 0.7 decrease in the student-teacher ratio across all schools from 2012 to 2022 has been driven by the decrease in primary schools, whilst the ratio in secondary schools has remained consistent.

Year	Government	Catholic	Independent	Total
<b>Primary schools</b>				
<b>2012</b>	15.2	17.4	14.6	15.5
<b>2021</b>	14.4	15.4	14.0	14.5
<b>2022</b>	14.3	15.2	14.0	14.4
<b>Secondary schools</b>				
<b>2012</b>	12.3	12.7	10.3	12.0
<b>2021</b>	12.4	12.2	10.5	11.9
<b>2022</b>	12.3	12.2	10.4	11.8
<b>All schools</b>				
<b>2012</b>	13.9	14.9	12.0	13.8
<b>2021</b>	13.6	13.6	11.8	13.3
<b>2022</b>	13.4	13.6	11.7	13.1

Source: ABS (2023) Schools Australia 2022, Table 53a (as of 10 November 2023)



## Selected characteristics of teachers and school leaders in Australia, 2018

In 2018, more teachers were working on a full-time basis in secondary schools compared with primary schools.

	Teachers		Principals	
	Primary	Secondary	Primary	Secondary
<b>Average Age</b>	42.0 years	42.1 years	51.6 years	51.3 years
<b>Average teacher experience*</b>	15.2 years	15.2 years	20.4 years	23.2 years
<b>Average experience in current school**</b>	7.7 years	8.3 years	4.1 years	4.7 years
<b>Full time %</b>	73.5	83.9	97.2	99.8
<b>Satisfied with job %</b>	91.4	90.0	94.6	98.1

Source: OECD Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS) 2018 Results

Notes: \* Years of experience as a teacher, does not include years of experience in other education and non-education roles.

\*\* Refers to years working as a teacher or principal in current school, respectively.

## Teacher shortages in Australian schools in 2018

In 2018, less than 20% of principals reported a shortage of teachers affecting student learning.

Principals reporting that shortages of the following staff hindered the school's capacity to provide quality instruction 'quite a bit' or 'a lot'	Primary %	Secondary %
<b>Qualified teachers</b>	11.7	15.5
<b>Special needs teachers</b>	18.8	17.8
<b>Vocational teachers</b>	3.2	16.9
<b>Support staff</b>	13.2	6.6

Source: OECD Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS) 2018 Results, Volume 1





## Fact Sheet: Initial Teacher Education (ITE)

FS10 – 2024

**Definition of the count of ITE commencements and enrolments:** Where a student undertakes more than one course within a given year, the course with the highest load is published in the Higher Education Statistics Collection. The commencement and enrolment data contained in this fact sheet therefore only include students where their ITE course has the highest load. Where a student undertook more than one course within a given year, and the ITE course did not have the highest load, that student has not been counted. In the case where a student was doing more than one ITE course, that student has been counted only once.

**Data note:** Due to a restructure of Bachelor of Education courses at Southern Cross University (SCU), many continuing ITE students have been counted as commencing students in the 2022 data. The numbers for commencing and continuing ITE students are therefore substantially over and under reported respectively in 2022. This impacts the SCU, New South Wales and National ITE data. No other time points are affected. Numbers should be used with caution in any time series comparisons.

### ITE enrolments, commencements and completions by citizenship category, 2013-2022

In 2022, there were 90,028 students enrolled in ITE courses in Australia.

Between 2013 and 2022, total annual enrolments increased by 13%, however total annual commencements decreased by 6%.

Completions fell by more than 2% between 2013 and 2022.

	2013	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	Change 2013-22	
							Number	%
<b>Enrolments</b>								
<b>Domestic Students</b>	77,476	84,426	82,388	84,163	89,383	85,469	7,993	10.3
<b>Overseas Students</b>	2,147	3,730	4,659	4,875	4,728	4,559	2,412	112.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>79,623</b>	<b>88,156</b>	<b>87,047</b>	<b>89,038</b>	<b>94,111</b>	<b>90,028</b>	<b>10,405</b>	<b>13.1</b>
<b>Commencements</b>								
<b>Domestic Students</b>	28,612	25,799	25,269	27,246	29,797	26,201	-2,411	-8.4
<b>Overseas Students</b>	983	1,732	2,097	1,775	1,541	1,475	492	50.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>29,595</b>	<b>27,531</b>	<b>27,366</b>	<b>29,021</b>	<b>31,338</b>	<b>27,676</b>	<b>-1,919</b>	<b>-6.5</b>
<b>Completions</b>								
<b>Domestic Students</b>	16,987	16,472	15,225	14,314	15,076	16,311	-676	-4.0
<b>Overseas Students</b>	916	953	1,011	1,032	1,169	1,144	228	24.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>17,903</b>	<b>17,425</b>	<b>16,236</b>	<b>15,346</b>	<b>16,245</b>	<b>17,455</b>	<b>-448</b>	<b>-2.5</b>

Source: Higher Education Statistics Collection (Department of Education)

### ITE student enrolments and commencements by course type, 2022

In 2022, primary teacher education had the highest share of enrolments (35%), followed by secondary teacher education (29%).

Most commencements were in primary education (33%).

ITE course type	Enrolments		Commencements	
	Students	%	Students	%
<b>Teacher Education: Early Childhood</b>	13,994	15.5	4,473	16.1
<b>Teacher Education: Primary</b>	31,947	35.4	9,097	32.8
<b>Teacher Education: Secondary</b>	25,866	28.7	7,711	27.8
<b>Teacher Education*</b>	5,548	6.2	1,526	5.5
<b>Other Teacher Education**</b>	12,824	14.2	4,899	17.7
<b>Total<sup>#</sup></b>	<b>90,179</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>27,706</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: Higher Education Statistics Collection (Department of Education)

Notes: \*Includes teacher education programmes not specifically categorised. Students may be enrolled in one or more different specialisations.

\*\*Includes students studying ITE in the fields of VET, Higher Education, Special Education, English as a Second Language Teaching and Teacher Education not elsewhere classified.

# Where a student is doing a combined course, they are counted twice, once in each ITE field. As a result, the total counts are higher than the actual number of students.

### Domestic<sup>A</sup> undergraduate ITE student commencements by equity group, 2013-2022

Between 2013 and 2022, the number of Indigenous ITE commencements grew by 17%. However, Indigenous students represent only 3% of commencements.

Equity group	2013	2019	2020	2021	2022	Change 2013-22	
						Number	%
<b>Indigenous</b>	527	518	598	625	618	91	17.3
<b>Low SES*</b>	4,117	3,861	3,953	4,961	4,390	273	6.6
<b>Regional**</b>	5,537	4,590	4,625	5,096	4,975	-562	-10.1
<b>Remote**</b>	253	274	243	222	220	-33	-13.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>19,496</b>	<b>17,877</b>	<b>18,814</b>	<b>20,734</b>	<b>19,493</b>	<b>-3</b>	<b>0.0</b>

Source: Higher Education Statistics Collection (Department of Education)

Notes: <sup>A</sup>Data excludes students where permanent home address is overseas.

\*Students are classified as being from a low socio-economic status (SES) background if their home address is in an area in the bottom 25 per cent of the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) SEIFA Education and Occupation Index for 15-64 year olds. For 2013, the low SES measure is based on the Statistical Area 1 of a student's home address in 2013 and for all other years, the measure is based on a student's home address at the commencement of study.

\*\*Regional and remote data are based on a student's home address postcode, with regional and remote categories derived from the ABS's Australian Statistical Geography Standard (ASGS) classification.

### Domestic ITE student commencements by course level, 2013-2022

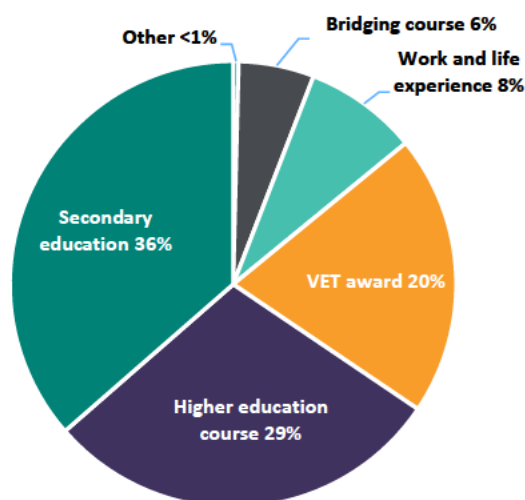
Between 2013 and 2022, postgraduate students decreased their share of commencements from 32% to 26%.

Course level	2013	2019	2020	2021	2022	Change 2013-22	
						Number	%
<b>Undergraduate</b>	19,525	17,898	18,837	20,752	19,513	-12	-0.1
<b>Postgraduate</b>	9,087	7,371	8,409	9,045	6,688	-2,399	-26.4
<b>% Postgraduate commencements</b>	31.8	29.2	30.9	30.4	25.5	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>28,612</b>	<b>25,269</b>	<b>27,246</b>	<b>29,797</b>	<b>26,201</b>	<b>-2,411</b>	<b>-8.4</b>

Source: Higher Education Statistics Collection (Department of Education)

### Domestic undergraduate ITE student commencements by basis of admission, 2022

There are different pathways into ITE programs. The most common basis of admission for undergraduate ITE students is through secondary education - or Year 12 (36%) followed by a higher education course (complete or incomplete) (29%).



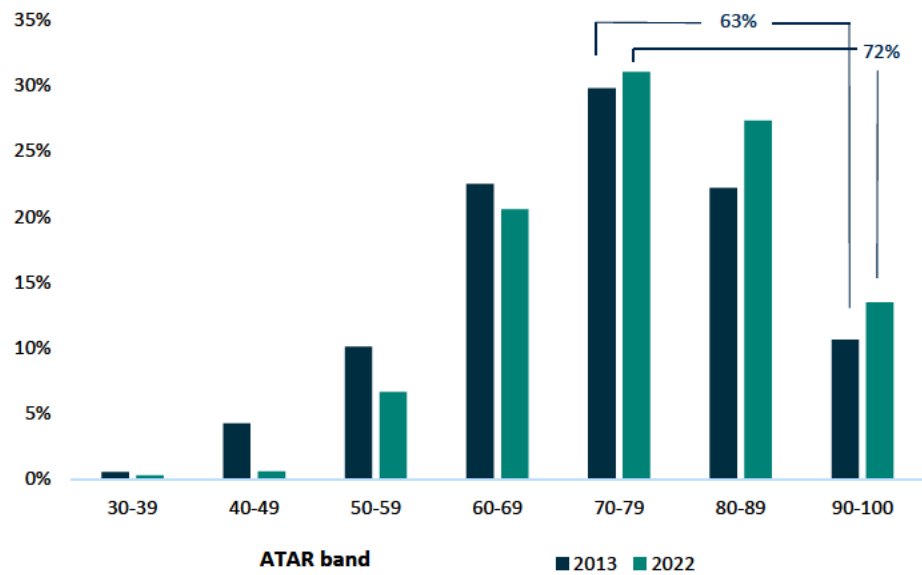
Source: Higher Education Statistics Collection (Department of Education)





### Domestic undergraduate ITE student commencements admitted on the basis of secondary education by ATAR (Australian Tertiary Admission Rank) band<sup>^</sup>, 2013 and 2022

From 2013 to 2022, the proportion of undergraduate students admitted on the basis of secondary education with an Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR) of 70 or more increased from 63% to 72%.



Source: Higher Education Statistics Collection (Department of Education)

Note: <sup>^</sup>ATARs are not a category of admission on their own but are one selection criterion used by higher education providers. The majority of ITE students do not have an ATAR recorded with their admission. Around a third of all commencing undergraduate ITE students had an ATAR recorded.



## Content of Initial Teacher Education course and preparedness for teaching, 2018

Even though a wide variety of content and practice is covered in ITE, not all teachers feel well prepared to teach these elements when they start their career as a teacher.

They felt least prepared for teaching in multicultural or multilingual settings.

	Primary		Secondary	
	Included in ITE	Felt well prepared	Included in ITE	Felt well prepared
	%	%	%	%
<b>Content of some or all subjects taught</b>	91.0	54.6	91.2	68.4
<b>Pedagogy of some or all subjects taught</b>	91.2	56.0	91.8	62.9
<b>General pedagogy</b>	95.2	62.3	95.6	65.4
<b>Classroom practice in some or all subjects taught</b>	92.5	60.8	93.0	65.2
<b>Teaching in a mixed-ability setting</b>	74.9	35.7	74.3	38.3
<b>Teaching in a multicultural or multilingual setting</b>	59.0	26.3	58.7	27.1
<b>Teaching cross-curricular skills</b>	63.2	33.9	66.3	37.2
<b>Use of ICT for teaching</b>	58.7	30.2	64.7	39.3
<b>Student behaviour and classroom management</b>	81.2	42.8	83.6	45.2
<b>Monitoring students' development and learning</b>	79.2	40.4	76.8	41.9

Source: OECD Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS) 2018 Results, Volume One



**National Teacher Workforce Action Plan – Funding and expenditure status as at 12 February 2024**

Action	Description	Lead	Progress	Funding allocation to end of financial year 2025-26	Status of expenditure
1a	More teaching places at universities	Aus Gov	Complete	\$159 million in Commonwealth funding	Fully allocated
1b	Improved data collection to inform prioritisation of ITE places	Vic and NSW	Underway	Victoria and NSW have commenced work on their activities.	N/A
2	5,000 teaching scholarships	Aus Gov	Underway	\$56.2 million in Commonwealth funding	Nil Scholarships begin in 2024
3	1,500 more High Achieving Teaching Program places	Aus Gov	Underway	\$68.3 million in Commonwealth funding	\$7.9 million committed
4a	Prioritise visa processing for qualified teachers	Aus Gov	Complete*	In-kind: The department is working with Home Affairs to set priority timeframes for processing visas for teachers and to amplify promotional activities to attract more overseas teachers	N/A
4b	Streamline overseas skills recognition	States and territories	Complete*	In-kind: All States and Territories are contributing resources in efforts to streamline regulatory processes	N/A
5	Prioritise conditional or provisional registration to increase the supply of teachers.	Aus Gov	Underway	\$212,000 in Commonwealth funding to prioritise conditional or provisional registration to increase the supply of teachers and update the Framework for Teacher Registration in Australia.	Fully allocated
6	Increasing the number of permanent teachers	States and territories, and national peaks	Complete*	In-kind: States and territories and non-government peaks are working on strategies and actions to boost the number of permanent teachers and reduce casualisation	N/A
7	Better use of teachers who are	States and territories	Complete*	In-kind: States and territories are working on strategies to attract former teachers back into the profession	N/A

\*National work on this action has completed. States and territories continue to work on this action, but for the purposes of the National Teacher Workforce Action Plan, it has been recorded as complete.

Action	Description	Lead	Progress	Funding allocation to end of financial year 2025-26	Status of expenditure
	registered but not employed				
8	Teacher Education Expert Panel (TEEP)	Aus Gov	Complete	The department supported the work of the Expert Panel, which delivered its final report to Government on 30 June 2023.	\$907,988 expended
9	Framework to recognise previous study, work experience and skills that may be transferable to teaching	Aus Gov	Underway	The department is working with the Australian Council of Deans of Education via a variation to an existing contract to develop the framework to better recognise prior learning and experience. No new funding allocated to the project.	N/A
10	First Nations teacher strategy	Aus Gov	Delayed	\$500,000 in Commonwealth funding allocated and \$354,335 has been expended to support an initial phase of design work.	\$354,335 expended
11	LANTITE trial of additional test attempts and improved feedback  Review of Accreditation Standard 3.5 to specify where in a course an ITE student should sit the LANTITE.	Aus Gov	Underway	The Australian Government has worked with all states and territories on the development and implementation of the trial, supported by ACER who were provided \$640,000 (GST excl) in additional Commonwealth funding to undertake the trial. <i>No funding was allocated for this action under the NTWAP.</i>  AITSL has been tasked with reviewing the Accreditation Standard 3.5 to specify where in a course an ITE student should sit the LANTITE.	Australian Government funding for ACER and AITSL is fully allocated.
12	Teacher Workload Reduction Fund (WRF)	Aus Gov	Underway	\$26 million in Commonwealth funding allocated through the Budget (the amount will be increased to \$30 million with jurisdictions having committed to contribute funding for Action 23 – see below)	\$4 million expended

\*National work on this action has completed. States and territories continue to work on this action, but for the purposes of the National Teacher Workforce Action Plan, it has been recorded as complete.

Action	Description	Lead	Progress	Funding allocation to end of financial year 2025-26	Status of expenditure
13	Reduce teacher workloads	States and territories, and national peaks	Complete*	In-kind: States and territories and non-government peaks are developing a range of measures such as reducing administrative burden, undertaking audits of what can be simplified and removed from teacher workloads, and employing additional support staff	N/A
14	AITSL to develop guidelines on mentoring and induction for early career teachers and new school leaders	AITSL	Underway	\$1.05 million in Commonwealth funding to develop draft guidelines	Fully allocated
15a	Improved teacher career pathways	States and territories, and national peaks	Underway	In-kind: States and territories and non-government peaks are developing a range of measures including professional development opportunities, developing fast track programs, bringing in new education support programs, participation in the HALT program.	N/A
15b	AITSL to provide advice to Ministers on the development of a principal accreditation system	AITSL	Complete	\$200,000 in Commonwealth funding to enable AITSL to consult with stakeholders and provide advice to EMM on the development of an accreditation system aligned with the Principal Standard.	Fully allocated
16	Improve First Nations cultural responsiveness resources for teachers	States and territories, national peaks and ITE providers	Complete*	In-kind: States and territories, non-government peaks and ITE providers are reviewing their cultural responsiveness resources and toolkits, ensuring alignment with the curriculum and enhancing promotion of these resources.	N/A
17	Streamline HALT process	Aus Gov	Underway	AITSL has developed a framework to streamline HALT certification processes and will provide advice to Ministers on achieving the target of 10,000 HALTs or equivalent in the current financial year.	\$740,000 committed  Commonwealth share is \$370,000

\*National work on this action has completed. States and territories continue to work on this action, but for the purposes of the National Teacher Workforce Action Plan, it has been recorded as complete.

Action	Description	Lead	Progress	Funding allocation to end of financial year 2025-26	Status of expenditure
18	Develop microcredentials and Expand the Quality Teaching Rounds (QTR)	Aus Gov	Underway	\$10 million in Commonwealth funding	\$4.430 million expended
19	Examine how to support implementation of the national curriculum.	ACARA	Underway	\$3 million in Commonwealth funding	\$3 million fully committed to ACARA
20	Teacher Workload Impact Assessment tool	Aus Gov	Underway	In-kind: The Department is developing a draft tool for consultation ahead of implementation	N/A
21	Effective use of ITE students, teaching assistants and non-teaching staff	Queensland	Underway	Queensland Department of Education is taking policy development in relation to the effective use of non-teaching staff in schools, supported by AITSL who will be provided \$300,000 from all jurisdictions	Soon to be allocated
22	Teacher retention strategies	Aus Gov	Delayed	\$99,813 in Commonwealth funding	\$99,813 expended
23	Targeted national campaign to raise the status and value the role of teachers	Aus Gov	Underway	\$10 million (\$5 million from the Commonwealth, remainder from jurisdictions)	\$1,987,438 committed
24	Encourage members of the public to nominate teachers for Medals of the Order of Australia	Aus Gov	Underway	In-kind: The Department is working with the Office of the Governor-General to develop strategies and resources to promote nomination of more teachers	N/A
25	Better teacher demand data	AITSL	Underway	\$4.442 million for Actions 25, 26, 27 in total (\$2.221m from the Commonwealth, remainder from jurisdictions)	Australian Government

\*National work on this action has completed. States and territories continue to work on this action, but for the purposes of the National Teacher Workforce Action Plan, it has been recorded as complete.

Action	Description	Lead	Progress	Funding allocation to end of financial year 2025-26	Status of expenditure
26	Better teacher supply data		Underway	\$180,000 from AG for aggregated data modelling work to support delivery of Action 25.	funding for AITSL is fully allocated.
27	Better data on teacher wellbeing and career intentions		Underway	\$500,000 from AG to support early work in 2022-23 to support delivery of Action 27.	

\*National work on this action has completed. States and territories continue to work on this action, but for the purposes of the National Teacher Workforce Action Plan, it has been recorded as complete.

**Teacher Salaries in Australia (current as at January 2024)**

State/territory	Lowest salary (and level)	Highest salary (and level)	Date salary based on	EBA start date	EBA end date	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024 (proposed)
<b>NSW<sup>1*</sup></b>	\$85,000 (Step 1 (Graduate))	\$129,948 (Highly Accomplished /Lead)	09/10/2023	09/10/2023	31/12/2027	2.50%	2.28%	2.29%	2.53%	8.00% - 12.00%
<b>Vic<sup>2</sup></b>	\$77,248 (Classroom Teacher Range 1-1)	\$125,735 (Leading Teacher Range 3-2)	01/01/2024	17/08/2022	31/12/2025	3.25%	np	2.00%	2.00%	2.00%
<b>Qld<sup>3</sup></b>	\$71,986 (Band 1, Step 1)	\$138,607 (Lead Teacher)	01/07/2023	15/12/2022	30/06/2025	2.50%	2.50%	4.00%	4.00%	3.00%
<b>WA<sup>4</sup></b>	\$78,397 (Increment 2.1)	\$125,850 (Level 3.2 Teacher)	6/12/2022	07/12/2022	05/12/2023	\$1,000	3.00%	3.00%	n/a	n/a
<b>SA<sup>5</sup></b>	\$74,769 (Band 1, Step 1)	\$124,393 (Lead Teacher)	01/05/2022	07/04/2020	07/04/2023	2.35%	2.35%	2.35%	n/a	n/a
<b>Tas<sup>6</sup></b>	\$68,516 (Band 1 Level 1)	\$118,262 (Advanced Skills Band 2)	01/03/2023	20/05/2022	19/06/2025	-	2.10%	2.35%	3.50% (plus one-off payment of \$1,000)	3.00%
<b>ACT<sup>7</sup></b>	\$84,978 (Level 1)	\$121,038 (Experienced Level 8)	27/1/2024	07/07/2022	26/03/2026	3.00%	3.00%	1.50%	1.00% (plus \$3,000)	2.50% (plus \$1,500)
<b>NT<sup>8</sup></b>	\$84,191 (Classroom Teacher 1)	\$181,006 (Senior Teacher 8)	11/10/2023	18/01/2023	11/10/2024	-	3.00%	3.00%	3.00%	n/a

np – Not published

n/a – Not available

<sup>1</sup> Source: [Crown Employees \(Teachers in Schools and Related Employees\) Salaries and Conditions Award 2022 - November 2023 variation](#)

<sup>2</sup> Source: [Teacher Class Salaries in Victorian Government Schools](#)

<sup>3</sup> Source: [Department of Education State School Teachers' Certified Agreement 2022, Queensland Industrial Relations Commission.](#)

<sup>4</sup> Source: [School Education Act Employees' \(Teachers and Administrators\) General Agreement 2021](#)

<sup>5</sup> Source: [Enterprise Agreements and Awards \(aeusa.asn.au\)](#) As at December 2023, negotiations for new EBA currently underway, an offer to increase salaries by 13 per cent over four years with a ballot closing on 15 December 2023.

<sup>6</sup> Source: [Teachers Agreement 2023 Reflects new pay structure commencing 27 January 2024](#)

<sup>7</sup> Source: [Education-Directorate-Teaching-Staff-Enterprise-Agreement-2023-2026.pdf \(act.gov.au\)](#)

<sup>8</sup> Source: [NTPS Non-contract Principals, Teachers and Assistant Teachers 2021 – 2024 Enterprise Agreement.](#)



**Strong Beginnings: Report of Teacher Education Expert Panel – implementation summary**

Rec	Proposed actions/milestones	EMM to consider	Authority and funding committed	Additional comments
<p><b>1:</b> Establish core content and mandate in national accreditation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recommendation has been implemented: AITSL has published an addendum to the accreditation standards and procedures mandating the core content.</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>At the 11 December 2023 EMM</b> Ministers approved the Addendum to the Accreditation of initial teacher education programs in Australia: Standards and Procedures, noting in some jurisdictions further steps will be required to embed the additional standards.</li> </ul>	<p>The Panel has identified the core content for ITE programs which covers what every teacher should learn in ITE to be prepared for the classroom and best support students. The core content reflects the knowledge and evidence-based practices that support ITE students in meeting the Graduate Teacher Standards and have the greatest impact on student learning. The Panel has defined four types of core content:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The brain and learning</li> <li>Effective pedagogical practices</li> <li>Classroom management</li> <li>Responsive teaching</li> </ol>
<p><b>2:</b> Embed core content in initial teacher education programs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>AITSL to settle an appropriate communication plan with Teacher Regulatory Authorities.</li> <li>The core content must be embedded in all Initial Teacher Education programs before the end of 2025.</li> </ul>			
<p><b>3:</b> Strengthen national quality and consistency of initial teacher</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Board to be established as agreed by Ministers.</li> <li>Board to commence operations in 2024.</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>At the 11 December 2023 EMM</b> Education Ministers agreed to establish an Initial Teacher Education Quality Assurance Oversight Board (Board) to strengthen the national quality and consistency of ITE programs. Ministers</li> </ul>	

Rec	Proposed actions/milestones	EMM to consider	Authority and funding committed	Additional comments
education programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Board to provide a report to EMM annually.</li> </ul>		will be asked to consider AESOC's advice on other members of the Board in early 2024.	
<b>4:</b> Establish nationally consistent, transparent indicators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Direct the new quality assurance board, once established, to consult with stakeholders and develop an approach to reporting on nationally consistent transparent indicators in line with the Panel's advice, including timing and funding arrangements for implementation in 2024.</li> </ul>		<b>At the 11 December 2023 EMM</b> Education Ministers agreed the Board will consult with the sector and develop an approach to reporting on nationally consistent, transparent indicators.	
<b>5:</b> Streamline reporting requirements in the Accreditation Standards and Procedures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>AG to commission AITSL to update standard 6.3 in the Accreditation Standards and Procedures.</li> <li>AITSL to provide its advice for Ministers consideration in 2024.</li> </ul>		<b>At the 11 December 2023 EMM</b> Education Ministers agreed that the Australian Government commission AITSL to update standard 6.3 in the Accreditation Standards and Procedures to action this recommendation).	The nationally consistent transparent indicators (Recommendation 4) will be used to streamline accreditation requirements.
<b>6:</b> Establish a Transition Fund to support embedding of core content.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Australian Government to establish the Strong Beginnings Fund, including both the Transition Fund and the Excellence Fund, in 2024.</li> </ul>		<b>At the 11 December 2023 EMM</b> Education Ministers noted that the Australian Government will establish the Strong Beginnings Fund to support ITE providers to embed core content and foster a culture of continuous improvement.	Amendments are being prepared to administer the fund through the Other Grants Guidelines under the <i>Higher Education Support Act 2003</i> .  Under the Transition Fund, the Australian Government will provide \$4.6 million of grants to ITE providers in 2023-24 to
<b>7:</b> Establish an Excellence Fund to improve the				

Rec	Proposed actions/milestones	EMM to consider	Authority and funding committed	Additional comments
quality of initial teacher education programs			In the 2023-24 MYEFO, the Australian Government allocated \$7.1 million over four years to the Strong Beginnings Fund.	help them embed core content in their programs. The Excellence Fund will open in 2025 to assist high performing, and rapidly improving providers to take a leadership role in implementing best practice across the sector. The grants will total \$2.5 million between 2025 and 2027, with \$1 million per year ongoing after that.
<b>8:</b> Establish system-wide coordination of practical experience delivery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>State and territory ministers to progress improvements within their jurisdictions and report back by June 2024.</li> </ul>	June 2024	<b>At the 11 December 2023 EMM</b> Education Ministers agreed that state and territory Education Ministers will progress TEEP recommendation 8 in their own jurisdictions and report back to Ministers by June 2024.	
<b>9:</b> Develop national guidelines for high-quality practical experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>AITSL has been commissioned to develop draft guidelines, with consultation taking place in early 2024.</li> <li>AITSL to bring the guidelines for Ministers' approval by June 2024.</li> </ul>	June 2024	<p><b>At the 6 July 2023 EMM</b> Education Ministers agreed in-principle to all 14 recommendations from the Panel's Final Report, with four recommendations agreed for immediate action. This included developing guidelines to improve the quality of practical experience.</p> <p>\$2.085 million over two years has been committed to support AITSL's implementation of TEEP recommendations, including the development of national</p>	National guidelines should be developed to provide clear expectations and advice for consistent high-quality practical experience. The guidelines would build on existing practical experience resources already being used in some jurisdictions.

Rec	Proposed actions/milestones	EMM to consider	Authority and funding committed	Additional comments
			guidelines to improve the quality of practical experience in teaching.	
<b>10:</b> Increase systemic investment in practical experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>State and territory ministers to progress improvements within their jurisdictions and report back by June 2024.</li> </ul>	June 2024	<b>At the 11 December 2023 EMM</b> Education Ministers agreed that state and territory Education Ministers will progress this in their own jurisdictions and report back to Ministers by June 2024.	
<b>11:</b> Ensure professional recognition for mentor teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>State and territory ministers to progress improvements within their jurisdictions and report back by June 2024.</li> <li>AITSL to provide advice by March 2024 for certifying authorities and employers about creating conditions for aspiring Highly Accomplished and Lead Teachers (HALTs) to mentor pre-service teachers and utilise this experience in HALT applications.</li> </ul>	June 2024	<b>At the 11 December 2023 EMM</b> Education Ministers agreed that state and territory Education Ministers will progress this in their own jurisdictions and report back to Ministers by June 2024. They also agreed that AITSL will develop advice on HALTs by March 2024.	States and territories have responsibility for progressing professional recognition in their teacher registration requirements.
<b>12:</b> Develop and expand mid-career pathway programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The AG is developing a process to engage providers to deliver pilots of innovative employment-based pathways into teaching under the High Achieving Teachers (HAT) Program. This includes pilots that may attract mid-career</li> </ul>		<b>At the 11 December 2023 EMM</b> Education Ministers agreed that recommendation 12 will in part be implemented through the HAT Program Expansion Pilots. As allocated in the Federal October 2022-23 Budget, funding of \$70.9 million from 2023-24 to 2026-27 will be used for the expansion of the HAT Program.	

Rec	Proposed actions/milestones	EMM to consider	Authority and funding committed	Additional comments
	professionals into the teaching profession.			
<b>13:</b> Promote mid-career pathways	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The 'Be that teacher' campaign website has been launched. On the call-to-action page, it includes information on mid-career pathways.</li> <li>Providers engaged to deliver the HAT Program Expansion Pilots will promote the HAT Program to mid-career professionals.</li> </ul>		<b>At the 11 December 2023 EMM</b> Education Ministers agreed this recommendation be implemented through opportunities in the 'Be that teacher' campaign and through the HAT Program Expansion Pilots to further promote teaching to potential mid-career entrants to the profession.	
<b>14:</b> Build the evidence base for mid-career pathways	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>AITSL will use the Australian Teacher Workforce Data (ATWD) collection (including survey of teachers) to build the evidence base.</li> <li>Providers engaged to deliver the HAT Program Expansion Pilots will be required to collect robust data on participants and outcomes and conduct an evaluation of their pilots.</li> </ul>		<b>At the 11 December 2023 EMM</b> Education Ministers noted that improving the evidence base in relation to mid-career programs will be progressed through the HAT Program Expansion Pilots as providers will be required to collect robust data on participants and outcomes and conduct an evaluation of their pilots. TEEP Recommendation 14 will also be progressed through AITSL's ongoing work on the ATWD collection (including survey of teachers).	