

# Schools

## Group Summary

1	Group Summary	SB24-000228
---	---------------	-------------

## Hot Topic Briefs

2	Funding – recurrent and capital	SB24-000210
3	Funding - Building Boarding Schools on Country (BBSoc)	SB24-000212
4	National School Reform Agreement	SB24-000213
5	Priority cohorts - First Nations students	SB24-000214
6	Priority cohorts - students with disability	SB24-000215
7	Priority cohorts - regional and remote students	SB24-000216
8	Student wellbeing	SB24-000218
9	Student engagement	SB24-000219
10	Teacher Workforce	SB24-000221

# Schools

## 2024–25 Budget Estimates

Response/Facts
<p><b>SB24-000210 - Funding – recurrent and capital</b></p> <p><i>Recurrent School Funding</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Australian Government forecasts an estimated <b>\$126.4 billion over 2024–25 to 2027–28</b> in schools recurrent funding.</li> <li>• Compared to the 2023–24 Mid-Year Economic and Fiscal Outlook (MYEFO), 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>◦ Commonwealth funding for <b>government schools</b> is projected to be <b>\$0.9 billion higher</b> and funding for <b>non-government schools</b> is projected to be <b>\$1.0 billion higher</b> than MYEFO projected.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Over the life of the current National School Reform Agreement (NSRA), the Australian Government is providing <b>\$148.4 billion over 2019 to 2024</b> in recurrent funding (including <b>\$29.2 billion</b> during the one-year extension of the current NSRA in 2024).</li> </ul> <p><i>Report on Government Services (RoGS)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The 2024 RoGS reported the Commonwealth provided \$25.1 billion to all schools in 2021–22, an increase of \$2.9 billion (12.9%) from 2020–21.</li> <li>• Over 2012–13 to 2021–22, total public spending grew faster for non-government students while Commonwealth funding grew faster for government students. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Commonwealth funding for government schools increased by 67.2% per student between 2012–13 and 2021–22.</li> <li>◦ Commonwealth funding for non-government schools increased by 44.3% per student between 2012–13 and 2021–22.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><i>Schools Upgrade Fund (SUF)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The <b>\$284.29 million</b> SUF promotes equitable access to resources and facilities to support quality education.</li> <li>• The SUF has 3 components and will operate <b>over 2 years</b>, supporting schools to improve capital infrastructure. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Targeted Round – <b>\$30.69 million</b> over 2022–23 to 2023–24.</li> <li>◦ Open Round – <b>\$32 million</b> in 2022–23.</li> <li>◦ Round 2 - Government School Capital Funding – <b>\$215.8 million</b> in 2023–24.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><i>Capital Grants Program</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The CGP funding amount for 2024 is estimated to be <b>\$234.9 million</b> (final amount will be determined once the indexation rate is agreed mid-year).</li> <li>• The 2023 funding amount was \$215.8 million in 2023, the same as the Government School Capital Funding.</li> </ul>
<p><b>SB24-000212 – Funding – Building Boarding Schools on Country (BBSoc)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Under a revised scope agreed in Budget 2023–24, the Australian Government will contribute <b>\$70.8 million</b> for Studio Schools of Australia (SSA) over 2021–22 to 2025–26 to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ <b>Build one</b> new on-country residential middle-year Indigenous boarding school at <b>Manjali</b> (pronounced MARN-JA-LEE) <b>Studio School</b>, for Years 7–9, in the Kimberley region, WA.</li> <li>◦ <b>Upgrade one</b> existing Indigenous boarding school facility (Years 10–12) at <b>Yiramalay</b>, in the Kimberley region, WA.</li> <li>◦ Establish an Indigenous Education Research Centre (IERC) adjacent to the new school at Manjali.</li> <li>◦ Assist with <b>operational costs</b> associated with SSA’s delivery of the project.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• The scope of the measure was revised in response to significant increases in construction costs due to COVID-19 and broader supply issues.</li> <li>• SSA signed a construction contract for the Manjali Studio School and IERC with Hutchinsons Builders in March 2024. The contracted works, on signing, were to a value of \$44.48 million.</li> <li>• Construction works for the Manjali Studio School and IERC have commenced, for a Term 1, 2025 school opening.</li> </ul>

# Schools

## 2024–25 Budget Estimates

### SB24-000213 - National School Reform Agreement

- The current NSRA was extended by 12 months until the end of 2024. This has allowed time for the Review to Inform a Better and Fairer Education System (the Review) to occur, and for the Australian Government to negotiate the Better and Fairer Schools Agreement (BFSA) over 2024. The BFSA will commence on 1 January 2025.
- Education officials commenced multilateral discussions on the BFSA on 1 March 2024 and meet almost weekly.
- Representatives of the non-government school sector (Independent Schools Australia and the National Catholic Education Commission), the Coalition of Peaks and the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Corporation also attend meetings that focus on national reforms.
- The department has also held bilateral meetings with each jurisdiction, focusing on specific context and reforms. These meetings commenced the week of 6 March 2024 and continue to occur approximately fortnightly.
- BFSA negotiations are informed by a number of inputs, including the findings of the Review and the Productivity Commission's Review of the current NSRA.
- In December 2023, after considering the final report of the Review, Education Ministers agreed that negotiation of the BFSA will focus on 3 key outcomes: equity and excellence, wellbeing for learning and engagement, and a strong and sustainable workforce.
- 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%** of their fair funding level, funding **disadvantaged schools first**, and to **tie additional funding to reforms** that will improve student outcomes.

#### *Statements of Intent: Western Australia and the Northern Territory*

- On 31 January 2024, WA signed a Statement of Intent to fund all government schools in WA to 100% of the SRS by 2026.
  - The Australian Government will increase its share of funding from 20% to 22.5% of the Schooling Resource Standard (SRS), contingent on WA increasing its funding share to reach 77.5% in 2026. This represents an additional **\$785.4 million** investment from the Australian Government over the next 5 years.
- On 13 March 2024, the NT signed a Statement of Intent to fund all government schools in the NT to 100% of the SRS by 2029.
  - The Australian Government will increase its share of funding from 20% to 40% of the SRS, contingent on the NT committing to an SRS contribution of at least 60% by 2029. This represents an additional **\$736.7 million** investment from the Australian Government over the next 5 years. The NT has committed to investing at least an additional \$350 million over the same period.

# Schools 2024–25 Budget Estimates

## SB24-000214 - Priority cohorts - First Nations students

- In 2024, the Australian Government will provide an estimated **\$29.2 billion** in recurrent school funding. This includes **\$0.5 billion** through the Schooling Resource Standard Indigenous loading for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

### ***First Nations Education Budget Initiatives***

- The Government has invested more than \$110 million in initiatives to support First Nations children, students, and organisations.
- This investment includes significant new funding for peak education bodies, development of a new First Nations Education Policy and investments in targeted programs to address the education gap for First Nations students.

### ***Targeted Programs***

- Australian Indigenous Education Foundation (AIEF)** [NIAA until 2022/DoE from 2023] (\$52 million over 2022–23 to 2025–26 – DoE funding, this includes \$20 million for the 2025 school year announced in the 2024-25 Budget)
- AITSL Indigenous Cultural Responsiveness Initiative** (\$3.035 million from 2022–23 to 2025–26 for Phase 2)
- Aurora Education Foundation’s Redefining Indigenous Success in Education (RISE)** (\$1.5 million 2022–23 to 2023-24)
- City-Country Partnerships Program** (\$26 million over 2022–23 to 2023–24)
- Clontarf Foundation** [NIAA till 2022/DoE from 2023] (\$98.082 million over 2022–23 to 2026–27, this includes \$32.8 million for the 2025 school year as announced in the 2024-25 Budget)
- English Language Learning for Indigenous Children (ELLIC) trial** (\$14.723 million over 2017–18 to 2026–27)
- First Nations Education Policy** – commitment to develop a new Policy in partnership
- First Nations Languages Education Program** (\$14 million over 2022–23 to 2026–27)
- First Nations Teacher Strategy** – (\$2.4 million from 2024-25 to 2026–27)
- On-Country Learning** (part of the Government’s *Better, Safer Future for Central Australia* Plan) (\$40.4 million over 2023–24 to 2024–25)
- Scaling Up Proven Primary Reading Programs Measure** (\$25 million over 2021–22 to 2025–26)

### ***Partnership with NATSIEC***

- The National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Corporation (NATSIEC) is a newly formed First Nations Peak organisation with a focus on First Nations education outcomes.
- NATSIEC is a member of the Coalition of Peaks and, as a new national peak, the Department is supporting its establishment and working closely to strengthen our partnership approach.
- The Department is working in collaboration with the NIAA to support boarding options for First Nations students and their families through:
  - the Indigenous Boarding Design Review
  - the Central Australia Boarding Response Fund (\$18 million)
  - the Building Boarding Schools On-Country program (\$70.8 million)

# Schools

## 2024–25 Budget Estimates

### SB24-000215 - Priority cohorts - students with disability

- In 2023, almost 1 in 4 school students received an educational adjustment due to disability (ACARA, 2023).
- The Australian Government provides a student with disability loading as part of SRS recurrent funding. In 2024, the Australian Government will provide an estimated **\$3.7 billion** under the student with disability loading.
- Several major reviews were released in late 2023 which have implications for children and students with disability, including the Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability (DRC), the NDIS Review and the Review to Inform a Better and Fairer Education System.
  - The reviews shared common themes regarding inclusive education, including on workforce capability, improving evidence, data and reporting, funding transparency and accountability for students with disability.
  - The department is engaged with Department of Social Services (DSS) and other Commonwealth agencies on whole of government work in relation to these reviews.

### SB24-000216 - Priority cohorts - regional and remote students

- In 2024, around 737,000 full-time equivalent school students are studying in around 3,330 regional and remote schools.
- Students in regional, rural and remote areas are a priority equity cohort in recognition that school performance and educational opportunities decline with the level of remoteness.
- In 2024, the Australian Government is providing an estimated \$6.5 billion to regional and remote schools, which includes additional loadings of:
  - \$199.9 million for very small, small and medium sized schools recognising smaller schools cannot achieve the same efficiencies of scale as a large school.
  - \$600.9 million for regional and remote schools recognising it generally costs more to educate students in regional and remote schools than in metropolitan schools.
- The Australian Government provides further targeted investment to address specific challenges, including:
  - \$160 million to attract and retain teachers and school leaders through the Commonwealth Teaching Scholarships;
  - \$10.9 million to reduce the costs of secondary boarding, which provides an important option for families in regional and remote communities where there are limited secondary school options; and
  - \$26 million to support city-country partnerships between schools.
- **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.
- Reducing HELP debts for teacher, including early childhood teachers, in very remote areas.
- **The City-Country Partnerships** (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.

# Schools

## 2024–25 Budget Estimates

### SB24-000218 - Student wellbeing

- Wellbeing is a priority area in the development of the next Better and Fairer Schools Agreement.
- The Australian Government 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 received funds based on jurisdictional methodology for use by 31 March 2024. Final reports are due by 30 June 2024.
  - \$10.75 million for a Voluntary Mental Health Check Tool (*details below*).
  - \$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.
  - In 2023, 3,163 schools participated in the program.
  - The Commonwealth's contribution of **\$61.435 million** will be paid annually for 5 years from 2022–23 to 2026–27 - a total financial contribution of \$307.175 million.
- The Voluntary Mental Health Check Tool (now known as My Mind Check) is an election commitment under the Government's Student Wellbeing Boost. The tool will be a free, online, voluntary tool. The use of My Mind Check is on an opt-in basis at a jurisdiction, sector, school and student level. Opt-in consent will also be required from a parent or guardian.
- On 19 October 2023, the Australian Government announced **\$6 million** for social cohesion student wellbeing support for students of Jewish and Islamic faith in Australian schools. Schools could use the funds flexibly to support students, including by increasing access to psychologists, counsellors, and mental health and wellbeing supports.
- The Australian Government committed **\$83.5 million** over 6 years from 2022–23 to work in partnership with states, territories, non-government school systems, and subject matter experts, to support delivery of expert developed, evidence based and age-appropriate Consent and Respectful Relationships Education (CRRE) in primary and secondary schools.
- The Australian Government allocated **\$29.5 million** to Department of Health and Aged Care, in the 2023–24 Budget for a range of cessation resources, including an online hub and a mobile app.
- In July 2023, Education Ministers made a commitment to ban, restrict or manage the use of mobile phones by students for personal use in government schools. From Term 1, 2024 all state and territory governments have implemented policies which do not permit the use of mobile phones in government schools.

# Schools

## 2024–25 Budget Estimates

### SB24-000219 - Student engagement

- There is a clear link between attaining a Year 12 certificate or equivalent qualification and improved social and economic outcomes for young people.
- While there have been suggestions of a behaviour 'curriculum' to address classroom disruption, this is not something to be undertaken at a national level.
- There is a clear case for evidence-based, whole-school approaches that establish a comprehensive framework for explicitly teaching and managing student behaviour, so that students can focus on learning.
- The most recent indicators of student engagement shows medium term decline since before the disruption of the Covid-19 pandemic:
- While there were substantial **increases** in 2023, national school attendance rates and levels have not returned to pre-2022 levels.
  - The Year 12 or equivalent attainment rate for young people (age 20–24) was 86% in 2023.
  - School attendance rate was 89% in 2023.
  - Apparent retention rate from Year 10 to Year 12 was 78.7% in 2023.

#### **School attendance**

- 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, and
  - suggest evidence-based approaches that may assist in reversing the trend.
- AERO's report is going through final stages of approval.

#### **School Refusal**

- The Senate Education and Employment References Committee released its report on 10 August 2023 and made 14 recommendations to better identify, manage, and respond to school refusal.
- The Government response was tabled on 11 April 2024 and is publicly available on the department's website and the Parliament of Australia website.

#### **Classroom Disruption**

- 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 report on 7 February 2024.
- The Australian Government is investing in new resources and new microcredential courses to support teachers to effectively manage classroom behaviour.
  - The **\$3.5 million** 'Engaged Classrooms' project with AERO is providing teachers with evidence-based guidance and tools for effectively managing classrooms and creating safe and supportive environments focused on learning. A set of evidence explainers and adaptable best practice guides has already been published, and more resources will be released in 2024.
  - The **\$3.0 million** 'Microcredentials for Teacher Professional Development' project with the University of Adelaide is developing 3 free online evidence-based microcredentials. These will enable teachers and school leaders to upgrade their skills in classroom management, explicit teaching and teaching phonics, at no cost until the end of 2025. Registrations are open now, and the classroom management microcredential will be released in July 2024.

# Schools

## 2024–25 Budget Estimates

### SB24-000221 - Teacher Workforce

- Early commencement trends from some of the largest initial teacher education (ITE) providers from across Australia are showing mixed results. There has been a 1% increase in commencements in all ITE courses in 2024 compared to the same time in 2023. This is led by a 15% increase in Masters-level ITE commencements.
- 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 shortages.
- The NTWAP is focussed on improving supply, strengthening ITE, addressing workload, promoting the profession and improving our understanding of workforce needs.
- The Australian Government has allocated \$337 million over 4 years from 2022–23 to 2025–26 to support NTWAP initiatives.
- Key initiatives to address teacher workforce issues 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.
- 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 (TEEP).
  - From the end of 2025, all ITE courses will be required to meet core content requirements. A new ITE Quality Assurance Board (currently being established) will oversee implementation of this change.
- 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 on teacher wellbeing and student learning.
  - The Government is preparing a response to the inquiry.



**Issue:** Funding – recurrent and capital  
**PBS Pg No.** Pg 34-35: 1.3 Government Schools National Support  
Pg 36-37: 1.4 Non-government Schools National Support  
**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	2027–28 \$m	Budget/FEs \$m
<i>Recurrent funding (government and non-government) (Program 1.3 and 1.4)</i>						
Budget Allocation	28,763.8	29,791.5	30,985.0	32,205.4	33,445.5	126,427.4
Committed	28,763.8	29,791.5	30,985.0	32,205.4	33,445.5	126,427.4
<i>Schools Upgrade Fund (government and non-government) (Program 1.5)</i>						
Education	3.6	-	-	-	-	-
Treasury	224.9	-	-	-	-	-
Committed	228.5	-	-	-	-	-
<i>Capital Grants Program (non-government) (Program 1.4)</i>						
Budget Allocation	225.4	233.7	239.7	246.7	255.4	975.4
Committed	225.4	233.7	239.7	246.7	255.4	975.4

Source: Department of Education funding models as at 2024–25 Budget.

Notes:

- Budget/EFs refers to the period from 2024-25 to 2027–28.
- Recurrent funding and capital grants estimates underpin the Quality Schools funding estimates published in the *Federal Budget 2024-25, Federal Financial Relations, Budget Paper No.3*, pages 45-46.
- 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 and Transition Funding SA Foundation for Non-government schools).
- 2024–25 Portfolio Budget Statements (PBS) publishes components for program 1.3 and 1.4 on page 35 and 37 respectively, and program 1.5 on page 42-43. 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 on a pathway to **100%** of its fair funding level through the next National School Reform Agreement (next NSRA).
- To date, WA and NT Governments have signed Statements of Intent, committing to working with the Australian Government to get their government schools to 100% of the Schooling Resource Standard (SRS).
  - Over the next 5 years, the Australian Government will provide an additional estimated **\$785.4 million to WA** to help fully fund their government schools by 2026 and **\$736.7 million to the NT** to help fully fund their government schools by 2029.

- *Note that these figures are as at Budget 24–25 and differ to the announced estimates of \$777 million for WA and \$737 million for the NT. Due to future updates to enrolment and indexation projections, the estimated value of the additional Commonwealth contribution will continue to be subject to minor variations.*
- Refer to [SB24-000213](#) for more information on the next NSRA.
- The Australian Government forecasts an estimated **\$126.4 billion over 2024–25 to 2027–28** 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 3.6% per year while funding for the non-government sector will grow by 4.0%, both from 2023–24 base, due to indexation and enrolment growth.
- Commonwealth funding is still growing faster for government schools on a per-student basis.
  - Per student funding for the government sector increased 4.3% from 2023 to 2024 (now \$4,331) and for the non-government sector increased 3.2% (now \$12,001) over the same period.
  - On average, per student funding will increase at 3.4% per year for government schools between 2024 and 2028, compared to 2.7% for non-government schools over the same period.
- Compared to the 2023–24 Mid-Year Economic and Fiscal Outlook (MYEFO), 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 **\$0.9 billion higher** and funding for **non-government schools** is projected to be **\$1.0 billion higher** than MYEFO projected.
  - This overall change for government schools funding is primarily driven by the 2023 government school census update, which shows higher than expected student with disability enrolments for the sector in 2023.

- Change for non-government schools funding is driven by utilising the latest enrolment projection to estimate the sector's future funding, in response to the stronger growth of enrolments since 2020. The Department of Finance and state and territory governments were consulted on updated projections to form the 2024–25 Budget estimates.
- Critically, Australian Government school funding allocated to schools and schooling systems is **based on actual enrolments** each year, not Budget projections.
- School funding estimates fluctuate over time and are responsive to broader changes, including the social and economic changes we have seen following the COVID-19 pandemic.
- For funding information related to First Nations students see [SB24-000214](#); for students with disability see [SB24-000215](#); and for regional and remote students see [SB24-000216](#).

#### ***State and territory funding contributions***

- State and territory funding contributions for 2024 are reflected in the one-year extension of the current NSRA:
  - Jurisdictions are on track to fund **between 59% (NT) and 80% (ACT)** of the 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 **\$148.4 billion over 2019 to 2024** in recurrent funding (including **\$29.2 billion** during the one-year extension of the current NSRA in 2024).
- Information on agreed inclusions for the current NSRA is provided at [Attachment A](#).

#### ***SRS Indexation Review***

- Under the NSRA extension, the Commonwealth committed to commission the National School Resourcing Board (the Board) to review the SRS indexation arrangements.
- The Board presented its final report to the Minister for Education on 27 March 2024, and the report was tabled on 11 April 2024.

- Overall, the Board found that current indexation arrangements are considered appropriate and made 4 recommendations (summarised below):
  - An SRS indexation floor be maintained (*Recommendation 1*).
  - The current floor of 3% be maintained but the risks of potential over-compensation during low inflationary periods be considered and re-evaluate as necessary (*Recommendation 2*).
  - The current composite index split of 75% Wage Price Index (WPI) and 25% Consumer Price Index (CPI) should be retained, though further consultation on and examination of alternative composite indices be undertaken (*Recommendation 3*).
  - Further consultation be undertaken to examine alternative indexation timing arrangements (*Recommendation 4*).
- The Australian Government broadly supports all recommendations made by the Board and has agreed to consult with states and territories and the non-government sector on the most appropriate timing of indexation updates.
- The Board's final report and the Government's response is available on the Department's website.

### ***Report on Government Services (RoGS)***

- The 2024 RoGS 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 (SUF)*

- The **\$284.29 million** SUF promotes equitable access to resources and facilities to support quality education.
- The SUF has 3 components and will operate **over 2 years**, supporting schools to improve capital infrastructure.
- Targeted Round – **\$30.69 million** over 2022–23 to 2023–24.
  - Supporting **220** projects in 216 schools (government and non-government) ranging from \$3,000 to \$3.5 million that were announced as part of the Government's 2022 election commitments.
- Open Round – **\$32 million** in 2022–23.
  - An application-based round that resulted in supporting **1,337** projects with funding up to \$25,000, across government and non-government schools.
- Round 2 – Government School Capital Funding – **\$215.8 million** in 2023–24.
  - An application-based round for government schools that resulted in supporting **202** schools with minimum project funding of \$250,000.
  - Applications were open from 31 October 2023 and closed on 29 February 2024 with 2,270 applications seeking over \$2.8 billion in funding.
  - Funding will be received by States and Territories in May and June.

### *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 final CGP funding amount for 2024 is **\$234.9 million** (the final/indexed amount is subject to amendment of the Australian Education Regulations 2023, which is anticipated to occur around August 2024).
- The 2023 funding amount was \$215.8 million in 2023, the same as the Government School Capital Funding.

## Attachments

[Attachment A](#) – Agreed inclusions in Bilateral Agreements

Date Last Cleared	30 May 2024
-------------------	-------------

### **Agreed Inclusions in Bilateral Agreements**

- The Schooling Resource Standard (SRS) is a measure of recurrent school funding and is not intended to be a complete measure of all school-related expenditure.
- During the negotiations for the existing bilateral agreements, states and territories emphasised the need to include other expenditure categories towards their contributions, to reflect their full investment in education.
- The Australian Government agreed to include broader costs capped at **4%** of the SRS for the government sector. This cap could include:
  - **capital depreciation** (all except ACT);
  - **direct school transport** (all except ACT and NSW); and
  - **early childhood costs** (NT and WA only; ACT and TAS recognised as part of broader contribution to education, but not counted as SRS contributions).
- The **ACT** is the only jurisdiction whose agreed shares only comprise recurrent funding provided to schools.
- Since 2018, all states and territories accounted for the full 4% cap on additional schooling expenditure if included in their bilateral agreement.
- In addition to the 4%, states and territories can include in their reported funding contributions: costs of education regulatory bodies and costs of reform measures agreed in bilateral agreements (excluding capital expenditure).
- For the 2024 funding year, it is estimated that the 4% of the SRS which states were able to use on these additional costs, accounted for **\$2.21 billion** nationally.

**Summary of Agreed inclusions in Bilateral Agreements**

	Costs up to 4% of the SRS				Regulatory costs	Reform costs (excluding capital expenditure)
	Capital Depreciation	Direct school transport	Preschool	Other		
NSW	Yes			- NSW Education Standards Authority	(included in 4% cap)	
VIC	Yes	Yes			- Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority - Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority	Yes
QLD	Yes	Yes			- Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority	Yes
SA	Yes	Yes			- SACE Board of SA - Education Standards Board	Yes
WA	Yes	Yes	Yes - kindergarten		- School Curriculum and Standards Authority - (former) Department of Education Services	Yes
TAS	Yes	Yes			- Office of the Tasmanian Assessment Standards and Certification - The Teachers Registration Board	Yes
ACT	(acknowledged as broader contribution)		(acknowledged as broader contribution)		(acknowledged as broader contribution)	(acknowledged as broader contribution)
NT	Yes	Yes	Yes - early childhood			Yes

\* As dictated by their individual bilateral agreement, states and territories may include their agreed additional cost types when calculating their actual SRS contribution.



**Table 2. Estimated value of the 4% cap for additional included expenditure – government sectors (\$ billion)**

	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
<b>NSW</b>	0.53	0.55	0.58	0.60	0.61	0.64	0.67
<b>Vic.</b>	0.39	0.42	0.44	0.46	0.49	0.52	0.55
<b>Qld.</b>	0.37	0.39	0.42	0.43	0.45	0.48	0.50
<b>SA</b>	0.12	0.13	0.13	0.13	0.14	0.15	0.15
<b>WA</b>	0.18	0.19	0.20	0.21	0.22	0.24	0.25
<b>Tas.</b>	0.04	0.04	0.04	0.04	0.05	0.05	0.05
<b>ACT</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
<b>NT</b>	0.03	0.03	0.04	0.04	0.04	0.04	0.04
<b>Total*</b>	<b>1.66</b>	<b>1.75</b>	<b>1.85</b>	<b>1.93</b>	<b>2.00</b>	<b>2.12</b>	<b>2.21</b>

\*Numbers may not add due to rounding.

Source: Department of Education's school funding models as at 17 November 2023.

Note: Each bilateral agreement except for the ACT allows for the inclusion of additional schooling expenditure up to a four per cent cap.

**Issue:** **Funding - Building Boarding Schools on Country (BBSoC)**  
**PBS Pg No.** PBS pg 44 (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

### Budget - Building Boarding Schools on Country

Financial year	2021–22	2022–23	2023–24	2024–25	2025–26	Total
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 First Nations 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 at **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**, in the Kimberley region, WA.
  - Establish an Indigenous Education Research Centre (IERC) adjacent to the new school at 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 (see [Attachment A](#) for more on project costs).
- SSA signed a construction contract for the Manjali Studio School and IERC with Hutchinsons Builders in March 2024. The contracted works, on signing, were to a value of \$44.48 million.
- Construction works for the Manjali Studio School and IERC have commenced, for a Term 1, 2025 school opening.

- The new school and IERC will be a mix of modular and prefabricated buildings constructed in Queensland and transported to site once the wet season ends (between May–October 2024) to support a streamlined construction process.
- The upgrade to the Yiramalay school is progressing, with enhancements to security, ablution facilities and ICT infrastructure completed in 2023.
- SSA is developing plans for further upgrades to Yiramalay facilities in 2024 and early 2025, including installation of a multi-purpose basketball court, oval and bore water upgrades, and provision of commercial laundry and associated grey-water sewage work.
- The department will continue working with the Block Grant Authority (Association of Independent Schools of Western Australia), on the delivery of the measure.
- 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%.*

#### ***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** First Nations 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 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 (Kimberley, WA), Roebourne (Pilbara, WA) Dhupuma (East Arnhem, NT), as well as a new school near Broome (Yawuru, WA).
- The department continues to work with SSA to deliver the BBSoc measure.

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

- The department wrote to SSA on 25 October 2023, as the approved authority for the Yiramalay Studio School, seeking information and records on financial operations, conflict of interests, organisation structure, salary levels, and a range of other costs to enable assessment of SSA compliance with the Act and Regulations.
- SSA provided a response to the department on 29 February 2024.
- The department is currently assessing the response.

**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](#): BBSoc change in project costs

<b>Date Last Cleared</b>	10 May 2024
--------------------------	-------------

Schools - Hot Topics (June 2024) - Hot Topic Briefs

Attachment A

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 (Oct 2023)	Not yet expended (April 2024)
<b>Project costs</b>					
New school – Manjali (MARN-JA-LEE) Studio School, Kimberley Region, WA	22.000	45.300	45.300		
New school - East Arnhem Region, NT	22.000	56.000	n/a		
New school - Pilbara Region, WA	22.000	64.000	n/a	52.000 <sup>5</sup>	0.000
Upgrade to existing Yirramalay Studio School	2.000	2.200 <sup>2</sup>	2.200		
Construction of an Indigenous Education Research Centre (IERC)	4.000	5.000	4.500 <sup>3</sup>		
<b>Total Construction costs</b>	<b>72.000<sup>1</sup></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>5</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<sup>4</sup></b>	<b>1.859</b>	<b>0.699</b>
<b>Total Project and Administration Costs</b>	<b>74.908</b>	<b>193.208</b>	<b>70.758<sup>4</sup></b>	<b>70.059</b>	<b>0.699</b>

1. In November 2021, \$6.800 million was re-allocated from Education to the NIAA.

2. The revised project scope for upgrades at Yirramalay requested \$2.2 million. The revised scope noted that other enhancements at Yirramalay, of approximately \$2.3 million, had been funded through the NIAA managed funding of \$6.8 million. These included enhancements to security, ablution facilities and ICT infrastructure.

3. SSA advised a revised total cost for the IERC of \$5 million. SSA noted a philanthropic donation of \$500,000 reduced the amount of Commonwealth funding required to \$4.5 million.

4. The NPP (revised scope) reflects project construction costs estimated at that time; it recognised final costs will be determined subject to tender evaluation.

5. The Western Australian Independent Block Grant Authority (BGA) is responsible for making payments to SSA in accordance with contractually agreed construction milestones. The BGA received \$60.05 million (\$52.0 million project costs and \$8.05 million SSA costs). Note: the \$16.2 million in SSA costs includes funding of \$6.8 million under the NIAA funding agreement and \$1.35 million in Special Circumstances funding provided to SSA in February 2023.

---

<b>Issue:</b>	<b>National School Reform Agreement</b>
<b>PBS Pg No.</b>	44-45 (Performance Measure for Agreement and review funding in National Schools Reform)
<b>PAES Pg No.</b>	32 (Review funding in National Schools Reform)
<b>MYEFO Pg No.</b>	308 (Quality Schools partnership payment)
<b>Contact:</b>	<b>Meg Brighton</b> Ph: s 22 Deputy Secretary

## Key Points

### ***Negotiation of the Better and Fairer Schools Agreement (BFSA)***

- The next National School Reform Agreement (NSRA), known as the Better and Fairer Schools Agreement (BFSA), will be a joint agreement between the Australian Government and state and territory governments to lift student outcomes across Australian schools.
- The current NSRA was extended by 12 months until the end of 2024. This has allowed time for the Review to Inform a Better and Fairer Education System (the Review) to occur, and for the Australian Government to negotiate the BFSA over 2024. The BFSA will commence on 1 January 2025.
- Education officials commenced multilateral discussions on the BFSA on 1 March 2024 and meet almost weekly. There have been 14 meetings to date.
- Representatives of the non-government school sector (Independent Schools Australia and the National Catholic Education Commission), the Coalition of Peaks and the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Corporation also attend meetings that focus on national reforms. They have attended 4 meetings to date.
- The department has also held bilateral meetings with each jurisdiction, focusing on specific context and reforms. These meetings commenced the week of 6 March 2024 and continue to occur approximately fortnightly.
- BFSA negotiations are informed by a number of inputs, including the findings of the Review and the Productivity Commission's Review of the current NSRA.
- Discussions between the Australian Government and state and territories on the BFSA are confidential. Disclosure of information could prejudice negotiations.

*What reforms are being considered as part of negotiations for the next agreement?*

- The Review's final report included a range of recommendations to reform the education system and is a basis for negotiations.
- In December 2023, after considering the final report of the Review, Education Ministers agreed that negotiation of the BFSA will focus on 3 key outcomes 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.
- Education Ministers have also agreed that the BFSA must deliver on the Alice Springs (Mparntwe) Education Declaration.
- The 11 December 2023 Education Ministers Meeting (EMM) Statement on the Review and the BFSA is at [Attachment A](#).
- The specific content of the agreement, including reforms, are subject to ongoing negotiations with jurisdictions and remain confidential.

#### ***School funding in the BFSA***

- 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%** of their fair funding level, funding **disadvantaged schools first**, and to **tie additional funding to reforms** that will improve student outcomes.
- In terms of the BFSA, state and territory funding shares will be subject to negotiations.
- For further information on school funding see [SB24-000210](#).

#### ***Statements of Intent: Western Australia and the Northern Territory***

- On 31 January 2024, WA signed a Statement of Intent ([Attachment B](#)) to fund all government schools in WA to 100% of the SRS by 2026.



- The Australian Government will increase its share of funding from 20% to 22.5% of the SRS, contingent on WA increasing its funding share to reach 77.5% in 2026. This represents an additional **\$785.4 million** investment from the Australian Government over the next 5 years.
- On 13 March 2024, the NT signed a Statement of Intent ([Attachment C](#)) to fund all government schools in the NT to 100% of the SRS by 2029.
- The Australian Government will increase its share of funding from 20% to 40% of the SRS, contingent on the NT committing to an SRS contribution of at least 60% by 2029. This represents an additional **\$736.7 million** investment from the Australian Government over the next 5 years. The NT has committed to investing at least an additional \$350 million over the same period.
- Negotiations on school funding contributions are ongoing with the remaining jurisdictions.

*What will happen if not all jurisdictions sign up to the BFSA by the end of 2024?*

- Under the *Australian Education Act 2013*, states and territories must be party to a national agreement to receive federal funding. The Australian Government is committed to working with all states and territories this year to develop and formalise the agreements needed for funding to be paid in January 2025.

*Will the Australian Government increase its additional funding offer?*

- The Australian Government has committed to working with state and territory governments to put all schools on a pathway to full and fair funding, at 100% of the SRS. Several jurisdictions have called for additional funding for government schools. However, with the exception of WA and the NT, funding arrangements are still subject to negotiation with states and territories.
- For more on recurrent school funding, see [SB24-000210](#).

## Media

- ***NSW Education Minister Prue Car's demand for Anthony Albanese, The Daily Telegraph, 27 March 2024***

Request for the Australian Government to fund 25% of the SRS in light of the budget situation due to losing money from GST funding.

- ***To assert Western Australian public schools will be fully funded by 2026 is simply not true, The Guardian, 2 February 2024***

- Article identifying that “accounting tricks allow the WA government to claim non-school expenditures as part of its SRS funding share for public schools”.

- ***How one state deal reignited Australia’s school funding wars, The Sydney Morning Herald, 31 January 2024***

In response to WA statement of intent, article states “five states have banded together to demand the federal government double how much extra cash it will pump into public schools”.

- **States battle for more school funding, The Weekend Australia, 9 December 2023**

The article has joint statements from the then Qld Minister Grace Grace and Vic Minister Ben Carroll advocating the Australian Government lift its share of funding to 25%.

## Attachments

[Attachment A](#) – EEM Statement on the Review and the BFSA

[Attachment B](#) – Western Australia Statement of Intent

[Attachment C](#) – Northern Territory Statement of Intent

Date Last Cleared	21 May 2024
-------------------	-------------



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.



## 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



**Australian Government**



## Statement of Intent

### Better and Fairer Schools Agreement

**"We are committed to ensuring every Northern Territory 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 Northern Territory Government have jointly committed to achieving a Schooling Resource Standard (SRS) of 100 per cent over the life of the Agreement. The Commonwealth commits to increase its contribution to 40 per cent of the SRS for Northern Territory Government schools. The Northern Territory Government, as the primary funders of government schools, commits to achieving an SRS contribution of at least 60 per cent, and see that the most disadvantaged schools receive additional funding first. The Northern Territory Government commits to implementing its response to the Review of Secondary Education without delay as well as implementing the findings of the Review of Effective Enrolment by 2025.

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 Northern Territory 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

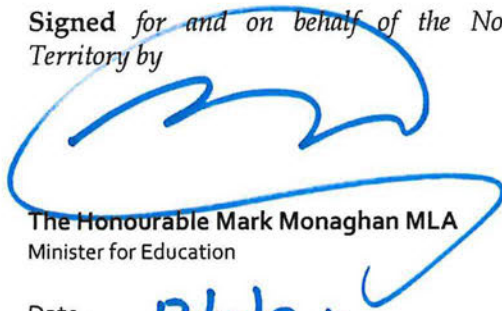


The Honourable Jason Clare MP  
Minister for Education

Date:

13/3/24

Signed for and on behalf of the Northern  
Territory by



The Honourable Mark Monaghan MLA  
Minister for Education

Date:

13/3/24

**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, with attainment of a Year 12 qualification or equivalent a key determinant in social and economic outcomes.
- In 2023 there were close to 265,000 First Nations students across the country, accounting for 6.5% of all students.
- While there has been progress towards meeting Closing the Gap targets, we know that more effort is needed to accelerate outcomes.
  - The 2021 Census results show that 68.1% of First Nations 20-24 year-olds have attained a Year 12 or equivalent qualification. This is an increase of 4.9% (from 63.2% in 2016) but is insufficient to meet the trajectory required to achieve the Closing the Gap target of 96% by 2031.
  - 2023 NAPLAN results indicate that around a third of First Nations students nationally 'need additional support' compared to just under 10% of all students. This increases up to two thirds, the more remote a student resides. Analysis by AERO indicates that Year 3 students who perform below learning expectations are at a high risk of continuing to perform at that level throughout their schooling. Data shows that First Nations students are more likely to be below learning expectations in Year 3 and are over-represented among those students who are consistently below expectations from Years 3 to 9.
- Productivity Commission's Review of the National Agreement on Closing the Gap (released on 7 February 2024) highlights the need to increase pace of action and work in partnership with First Nations.
- In 2024, the Australian Government will provide an estimated **\$29.2 billion** in recurrent school funding. This includes \$0.5 billion through the Schooling Resource Standard Indigenous loading for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.
- The next National School Reform Agreement, known as the Better and Fairer Schools Agreement (BFSA), is an opportunity to drive real improvements in student outcomes ([SB24-000213](#) refers).
  - Under the BFSA, the Australian Government will invest at least an additional estimated **\$736.7 million** from 2025 to 2029 in Northern Territory public schools.



- This means Northern Territory public schools will reach the full and fair funding level 2 decades earlier than they would under current settings.
- This includes recurrent school funding, efforts to strengthen partnership, and other targeted measures.
- First Nations peoples are under-represented in both initial teacher education enrolment data collections and teacher workforce data collections. Additionally, the percentage of **First Nations educators** is significantly lower (2%) than the percentage of First Nations students (6.5%).
  - All Education Ministers recognise the need to work collaboratively to resolve this problem together and have publicly committed to developing a First Nations Teacher Strategy.

#### ***First Nations Education Budget Initiatives***

- The Government has invested more than \$110 million in initiatives to support First Nations children, students, and organisations.
- This investment includes significant new funding for peak education bodies, development of a new First Nations Education Policy and investments in targeted programs to address the education gap for First Nations students.

#### ***Partnership with NATSIEC***

- The National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Corporation (NATSIEC) is a newly formed First Nations Peak organisation with a focus on First Nations education outcomes.
- NATSIEC is a member of the Coalition of Peaks and, as a new national peak, the department is supporting its establishment and working closely to strengthen our partnership approach.
- Engagement with NATSIEC and the Coalition of the Peaks will inform the development of the Better and Fairer Schools Agreement.

**Targeted Programs**

- **Australian Indigenous Education Foundation (AIEF)** [NIAA until 2022/DoE from 2023] (\$52 million over 2022–23 to 2025–26 – DoE funding, this includes \$20 million for the 2025 school year announced in the 2024-25 Budget.) – provides scholarships to improve First Nations 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.
  - The 2022 AIEF annual report states the program had a combined 95% retention and Year 12 completion rate.
- **AITSL Indigenous Cultural Responsiveness Initiative** (\$3.035 million from 2022–23 to 2025–26 for Phase 2)–This toolkit (developed in partnership with teachers, First Nation education experts and community) 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. Total users of the Intercultural Development Self-Reflection Tool was 7,520 (as at 27 September 2023).
- **City-Country Partnerships Program** (\$26 million over 2022–23 to 2023–24) – supports partnerships between high-performing metropolitan schools and remote schools with a high proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. The Yadha Muru Foundation continues to work with partner schools, with 16 approved partnerships totalling \$16.479 million as of 8 May 2024.
- **Clontarf Foundation** [NIAA till 2022/DoE from 2023] (\$98.590 million over 2022–23 to 2026–27, this includes \$32.8 million for the 2025 school year as announced in the 2024-25 Budget) – 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.
- **English Language Learning for Indigenous Children (ELLIC) trial** (\$14.723 million over 2017–18 to 2026–27) – codesigned with the Stronger Smarter Institute and Indigenous communities, to improve English language outcomes for children in the Year Before Fulltime Schooling (YBFS), in up to 100 schools nationally in remote and very remote locations, for whom English is an additional language or dialect (EAL/D).
- **First Nations Education Policy** – the Government has committed to the development of a new First Nations Education Policy to

- complement state and territory First Nations education strategies and Closing the Gap Implementation Plans. This work will be conducted in partnership with key First Nations education stakeholders.
- **First Nations Languages Education Program** (\$14 million over 2022–23 to 2026–27) – 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 closed on 28 February 2024. A total of 144 EOIs were received. Grant guidelines have been released and the grant round opened on 20 March 2024 to invited communities.
  - **First Nations Teacher Strategy** – (\$2.4 million from 2024–25 to 2026–27) a **deliverable under** the National Teacher Workforce Action Plan (Action 10) to address the significant underrepresentation of First Nations peoples in both initial teacher education enrolment and the teacher workforce.
  - The department commenced funding of the **National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Principals Association (NATSIPA)** in 2023. NATSIPA was formed in 2010 and is the professional association for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander principals. The organisation supports, develops, and builds capacity to promote quality Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leaders. NATSIPA signed a three-year contract with the department in 2024, totalling \$160,425.
  - **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.
  - **Scaling Up Proven Primary Reading Programs Measure** (\$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:
    - Increasing the number of participating schools from 10 to 20 within the Good to Great Schools Australia (GGSA) Pilot Program, which is being delivered over 3 years from 2021–22 to 2024–25.
    - Implementing MultiLit (Making Up Lost Time in Literacy) Program in 42 schools from 2021–22 to 2024–25.
    - Implementation of the Scaling Up Success in Remote Schools Program by the Western Australia Department of Education in a network of 14 remote and disadvantaged schools in the

Goldfields and Midwest regions of WA with a high proportion of First Nations students.

- The department has engaged the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) to undertake an **Evaluation of Closing the Gap Schools Initiatives under target 5**, to assess the design, implementation, reach and impact of the following initiatives:
  - City Country Partnerships
  - Building Boarding Schools on Country
  - Good to Great Schools Australia Pilot Program
  - Scaling Up Proven Primary Reading Programs Measure which includes:
    - Good to Great Schools Australia Pilot Program expansion
    - The Making up for Lost Time in Learning (MultiLit) Program
    - Expansion of the Kimberley Schools Project
- The Government acknowledges the strong desire in First Nations communities for children to learn at home **On-Country**, or nearby. The Government also understands the importance of choice for families and communities in supporting children through their education.
- **Boarding** continues to be an important education pathway for First Nations students from remote areas. For some, boarding is an opportunity to access secondary education that best suits their interests and aspirations.
- The department is working in collaboration with the NIAA to support boarding options for First Nations students and their families through:
  - The **Indigenous Boarding Design Review**, an opportunity to examine the barriers facing First Nations students from remote areas when accessing secondary schooling. The Review is in the final stages of completion with findings being prepared for Government to consider.
  - The **Central Australia Boarding Response Fund** which will provide \$18 million (administered by NIAA) to build new and improve existing boarding facilities in Central Australia for First Nations students from remote Northern Territory communities. An open and competitive grants process is currently in development and is expected to open mid-year 2024. This funding is in response to the **Assessment of Boarding Capacity and Options in Central Australia**.
  - The **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, upgrading the existing Yiramalay Studio School, and establish a new Indigenous Education and Research Centre.

### Media

**There's \$110 million for Indigenous education in the budget. But where's the evidence it will work? The Conversation, 17 May 2024.**

Article is critical of the perceived gender inequity of funding for " a relatively small number of young Indigenous people" and describes the Clontarf program model as based on "Eurocentric and paternalistic values". It also highlights the research on, and funding for partnerships with First Nations Communities and the need to change the way governments listen to First Nations peoples when making funding allocations.

### Attachments

[Attachment A](#) – Financial tables

Date Last Cleared	29 May 2024
-------------------	-------------

**BUDGET GST Excl.**

Financial year \$m	2022– 23	2023– 24	2024– 25	2025– 26	2026– 27	2027– 28	Total
AIEF	6.000	16.000	20.000	10.000			52.000
AITSL Indigenous Cultural Responsiveness Initiative	1.035		1.000	1.000			3.035
Aurora Redefining Indigenous Success in Education	1.500						1.500
Building Boarding Schools On- Country <sup>1</sup> #	54.660	8.292	0.524	0.175			63.651
City-Country Partnerships <sup>2</sup> #	18.103	7.448	0.019				25.57
Clontarf Foundation	16.065	32.884	33.034	16.607			98.590
ELLIC	0.100	0.270	2.473	1.923	1.099		5.865
First Nations Languages Education Program	0.442	3.001	10.199	0.384			14.026
First Nations Teacher Strategy	0.354		1.579	0.691	0.097		2.721
NATSIEC			1.000	3.072	4.190	4.278	12.540
NATSIPA		0.027	0.053	0.053	0.027		0.160
On-Country Learning	30.000	10.000					40.000
Scaling Up Proven Primary Reading Programs <sup>3</sup> #	7.169	7.169	6.464	4.545			25.347

# The Evaluation of 2021 CTG Implementation Plan Schools activities totals \$1.6m over 22-23 to 25-26.

<sup>1</sup> Includes Departmental & Administered (incl. evaluation). Does not include \$6.9m from 21-22 that was reallocated from Education to the NIAA to enable the project to commence.

<sup>2</sup> Includes Departmental & Administered (incl. evaluation). Does not include \$0.348m departmental from 21-22.

<sup>3</sup> Includes Departmental & Administered (incl. evaluation). Includes 24-25 Budget amount for Good to Great Schools Australia. Does not include \$3.250m from 21-22.

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

## Key Points

- The Australian Government is committed to supporting accessible and inclusive education for school students with disability in Australian schools.
- In 2023, almost 1 in 4 school students, or around 990,000 students, received an educational adjustment due to disability (ACARA, 2023).
- The Australian Government provides a student with disability loading as part of SRS recurrent funding:
  - In 2024, the Australian Government will provide an estimated **\$3.7 billion** under the student with disability loading.
  - The loading is based on the Nationally Consistent Collection of Data on School Students with Disability (NCCD), which records information on the level of reasonable adjustment students with disability are provided to access and participate in learning.
  - Schools and school systems have the flexibility to determine how best to allocate recurrent funding to support their students.
- Under *the Disability Standards for Education 2005* (the Standards), all education providers are required to provide reasonable adjustments for students with disability, so they can access and participate in learning on the same basis as students without disability.
  - The education provider determines the reasonable adjustment in consultation with the student and their parents/carers.
  - Work is underway to look at bringing early childhood education and care (ECEC) under the Standards.
- The department provides targeted funding for initiatives and programs to support education outcomes for students with disability, including:
  - Publication of resources commissioned by the Department to support better understanding of obligations under the Standards;
  - Positive Partnerships Program;
  - Higher Education Disability Support Program.

## Reform environment

- Several major reviews were released in late 2023 which have implications for children and students with disability, including the Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability (DRC), the NDIS Review and the Review to Inform a Better and Fairer Education System.

- The reviews shared common themes regarding inclusive education, including on workforce capability, improving evidence, data and reporting, funding transparency and accountability for students with disability (see [Attachment A](#) for a summary of the reviews findings).
- All governments have committed to respond to joint DRC recommendations by mid-2024.
- A Government response to the NDIS review is also expected to be released in 2024.
- The department is engaged with Department of Social Services (DSS) and other Commonwealth agencies on whole of government work in relation to these reviews.
- This includes ensuring the education sector is carefully considered and involved throughout design and implementation of new foundational supports; learning outcomes and inclusion will remain the priority for schools and educators.
- States and territories regulate and operate schools and any future reform action will need to involve jurisdictions.

#### ***Students with Disability Loading Settings Review***

- In 2020, the department commissioned PWC to conduct a review of Students with Disability Loading Settings which concluded in December 2022.
- On 8 November 2023, Senator Henderson requested a copy of the review report (**SQ23-001132**):
  - On 22 December 2023, the response 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 review report and associated briefings was moved by Senator Allman-Payne and agreed to by the Senate.
  - On 26 February 2024, the Minister for Education responded to the Order with a Public Interest Immunity claim on the basis that disclosure of the review would adversely impact relations between the Commonwealth and states and territories.
  - On 27 February 2024, the Senate rejected the Public Interest Immunity claim. The Minister maintains his claim.



**Media**

- ***Why the states and territories are clashing with the federal government over the NDIS, ABC News, 21 May 2024***

Article outlines states concern with pace and cost of NDIS reforms, including foundational supports. Refers to joint state submission to Inquiry the NDIS amendment Bill.

- ***Council for the Australian Federation Submission to the Senate Standing Committee on Community Affairs: National Disability Insurance Scheme Amendment (Getting the NDIS Back on Track No. 1) Bill 2024, May 2024***

Submission outlines states concerns on the NDIS Bill, including the pace of change with the risk of changes before improvement made to ecosystem. Among other recommendations is that NDIS amendments commence after implementation of foundational supports has been agreed with states.

- ***Why the Guardian is investigating the deep failings in Australia's school system, The Guardian, 29 April 2024***

Article outlines the poor outcomes and experiences of students with disability in education, with a report education is at a "crisis point".

**Attachments**

[Attachment A](#) – Summary of Key Findings and Actions from Reviews

Date Last Cleared	29 May 2024
-------------------	-------------

Summary of Findings from Key Reviews			
<b>Name</b>	<b>Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability (DRC)</b> (recommended national actions re inclusive education)	<b>National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) Review (education related recommendations and actions)</b>	<b>Review to Inform a Better and Fairer Education System (disability findings)</b>
<b>Review period</b>	April 2019 – September 2023	October 2022 – December 2023	December 2022 – December 2023
<b>Chairs</b>	Commission chaired by the Honourable Ronald Sackville AO KC	Independent Panel co-chaired by Professor Bruce Bonyhady AM and Ms Lisa Paul AO PSM	Expert Panel chaired by Dr Lisa O'Brien AM
<b>Workforce capability</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review and amend teacher standards and develop an inclusive education capability framework (7.8)</li> <li>Expand the National Teacher Workforce Action Plan to strengthen initial teacher education in inclusive education and attract/retain expertise (7.8)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Capacity building program for families and caregivers of children with development concerns and disability, with mainstream services building capacity to identify concerns and navigators for families (1.8)</li> <li>Greater training of staff to support inclusion (2.5)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Deliver on commitment under Australia's Disability Strategy to build capability in delivery of inclusive education (2D)</li> </ul>
<b>Improving evidence, data and reporting</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improve comparable data collection and reporting (7.9)</li> <li>Inclusive education research (7.9)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish new outcomes framework spanning foundational and NDIS supports, with targets (23.1)</li> <li>Invest in actions to improve disability data quality and sharing (23.4)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Disaggregate and report students with disability data (5C)</li> <li>Measuring learning progress where standards assessment not appropriate (5C)</li> <li>Provide transparency on levels of support for students with disability; review NCCD, publish on Myschools (6B)</li> </ul>
<b>Funding</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Refine NCCD levels of adjustment and funding (7.12)</li> <li>Review disability loading settings and funding every 5 years (7.12)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Publicly report on student with disability loading each schools receive and its use (2.5)</li> <li>Invest in foundational supports outside NDIS (1)</li> <li>Invest in mainstream, foundational and specialist supports for children (6.1)</li> <li>Agree new funding arrangements to share costs in the disability support ecosystem (20.2)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Task independent resourcing body with collecting and reporting on approved authorities school funding models and expenditure; includes loadings (6A)</li> </ul>

<p><b>Accountability</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Amend the <i>Disability Discrimination Act 1992</i> to cover 'suspension and exclusion' and expulsions (7.2)</li> <li>Consider amending <i>Disability Standards for Education 2005 (DSE)</i> to improve policy and procedures on reasonable adjustments (7.3)</li> <li>Consider amending the DSE to support student/parent participation in decisions (7.6)</li> <li>Include complaint management in DSE (7.10)</li> <li>Develop a National Roadmap to Inclusive Education (7.13)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Unified approach to disability rights and inclusion legislations; includes assessing effectiveness and appropriateness of DSE (2.1)</li> <li>Trial DSE performance reporting (2.3)</li> <li>Protect the right to inclusive education for children with disability and development concerns; strengthen legislative instrument on accountability for inclusion (2.5)</li> <li>Create a new compact between governments (20)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strengthen accountability of approved authorities for compliance with DSE (6B)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Other mainstream system matters</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Alternative recommendations on special/segregated education (7.14 and 7.15)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop plan to better connect NDIS with schools</li> <li>Cease in-kind arrangement, personal care in school and special school transport (2.16)</li> <li>Govts agree joint action plan to reduce and eliminate restrictive practices (18.1)</li> <li>Disability IGA; include commitments and targets for improving inclusivity of mainstream services (20.1)</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Current status</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A Commonwealth DRC Taskforce, led by DSS, is coordinating the Australian Government's response; the department is working closely with the taskforce.</li> <li>On 5 March 2024, the Australian Government and state and territory Disability Ministers (excluding the Tasmanian Government which was in caretaker) released a joint statement committing to working together and respond to joint DRC recommendations by mid-2024.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>National Cabinet agreed to the joint development and commissioning of new Foundational Supports (FS).</li> <li>FS are to be delivered outside of the NDIS, including through schools and early childhood services where appropriate, phased in over time.</li> <li>The department is working closely with PM&amp;C and DSS to ensure the education sector is carefully considered and involved throughout design and implementation.</li> <li>The department is represented on the FS children's working group.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Australia Government and state and territory governments are currently engaged in negotiations on a new national agreement.</li> </ul>

**Other reviews:**

- **Education Ministers Meeting Communique (11 December 2023):** Ministers committed to working together to meet the needs of students with disability in education, and agreed an initial priority was to identify opportunities for national collaborative action. Ministers also discussed the recently released NDIS Review final report. Ministers will work together to consider the recommendations that have impacts for children and students with disability.
- **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.
- **The Productivity Commission's review Into Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC)** is to be delivered to the Government in June 2024. The Government will look to take tangible action as soon as possible after this and will make announcements about how it will reform the sector in ways that will help chart the path to universal ECEC and achieve the vision of a system that is affordable, accessible, and inclusive to all children. Future reform will be carefully considered and informed by the PC inquiry, the ACCC inquiry, the Early Years Strategy, the NDIS Review, and the Disability Royal Commission.

<b>Issue:</b>	<b>Priority cohorts - regional and remote students</b>
<b>PBS Pg No.</b>	N/A
<b>Contact:</b>	<b>Meg Brighton</b>
	Ph: s 22
	Deputy Secretary, Schools Group

## Key Points

- See [Attachment A](#) for budget breakdown.
- In 2024, around 737,000 full-time equivalent school students are studying in around 3,330 regional and remote schools.
- Students in regional, rural and remote areas are a priority equity cohort in recognition that school performance and educational opportunities decline with the level of remoteness<sup>[1]</sup> (see [Attachment B](#) for key data).
- NAPLAN data shows that students from priority equity cohorts are more likely to be below learning expectations in Year 3.
- Analysis by AERO (based on NAPLAN results from 2008-2021) found that fewer than 1 in 5 students who were below minimum NAPLAN reading and numeracy standards in Year 3 catch up and stay caught up by Year 9 (17% in reading and 19% in numeracy). This is based national minimal standards, pre NAPLAN 2023.
- In 2024, the Australian Government is providing an estimated \$6.5 billion to regional and remote schools, which includes additional loadings of:
  - \$199.9 million for very small, small and medium sized schools recognising smaller schools cannot achieve the same efficiencies of scale as a large school.
  - \$600.9 million for regional and remote schools recognising it generally costs more to educate students in regional and remote schools than in metropolitan schools.
- The Australian Government provides further targeted investment to address specific challenges, including:
  - \$160 million to attract and retain teachers and school leaders through the Commonwealth Teaching Scholarships.
  - \$10.9 million to reduce the costs of secondary boarding, which provides an important option for families in regional and remote communities where there are limited secondary school options.
  - \$26 million to support city-country partnerships between schools.

<sup>[1]</sup> Productivity Commission (2022), [Review of the National School Reform Agreement: study report](#), p. 21.

- The National Teacher Workforce Action Plan includes a range of measures that will help support regional communities with teacher shortages, including:

#### ***5,000 Commonwealth Teaching Scholarships over 5 years***

- 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 four-year qualification) and up to \$20,000 for full-time postgraduate ITE students (\$10,000 per year for a two-year qualification).
- In Round One, 1,000 conditional offers made, and of those that meet the requirements of the conditional offer, 629 have signed Scholarship Agreements.
- 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.

#### ***Pilots of new pathways into teaching under the High Achieving Teachers (HAT) Program***

- The expansion of the HAT Program will provide 1,500 more places to encourage more professionals to switch careers to teaching, with the aim to get teachers into the schools most in need, including regional, rural and remote schools.
- In June 2023, La Trobe University was contracted to deliver the first 105 of the HAT places as part of a pilot of Nexus program into primary schools.
- The Australian Government is running an open competitive grant opportunity for the remaining 1,395 places which opened on 24 April 2024. The closing date was extended by 2 weeks to 5 June 2024 due to high interest in the grant opportunity. The Grant is available on GrantConnect.

#### **Other Government initiatives**

- Reducing Higher Education Loan Program (HELP) debts for teachers, including early childhood teachers, in very remote areas, where teachers who have completed 4 years working in a very remote school, preschool or centre-based day care service may be eligible for a reduction of their accumulated HELP debt. Eligible teachers may also have their HELP indexation waived for each eligible day of teaching on or after 14 February 2019.
- From July 2025, students undertaking a higher education course in teaching may be eligible for the new Commonwealth Prac

Payment (CPP) to help them manage the costs associated with undertaking a mandatory placement.

- Eligible students will be able to access \$319.50 per week (benchmarked to the single Austudy rate) while they're undertaking a placement, with the payment to be means-tested to target the students who need it the most.
- The department regularly engages with stakeholders, including the Regional Education Commissioner, education authorities, boarding associations, and parent advocacy groups.

### **Commonwealth Regional Scholarship Program**

- The Commonwealth Regional Scholarship Program (CRSP) supports families of boarding school students from regional, rural, and remote communities with the costs of boarding.
- Applications for the nationwide intake were open between 23 October to 26 November 2023.
- On 30 January 2024, Assistant Minister Chisholm announced all 100 scholarships have been awarded, starting in time for Term 1, 2024.
- The pilot program received significant demand, with 353 applications submitted for the national intake.
- Program administration totals \$1.3 million over 2023–2030.
  - In response to a Senate question on 26 October 2023, program administration and setup information is provided in **SQ23-000864**.
- The department is commencing an internal evaluation of the program's outcomes and additional places for future years will be considered.

### **City-Country Partnerships**

- The 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 Yadhya Muru Foundation continues to work with partner schools, with 16 approved partnerships totalling \$16.479 million as of 23 May 2024.

### **Attachments**

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

[Attachment B](#) – Regional and remote school students in Australia

<b>Date Last Cleared</b>	29 May 2024
--------------------------	-------------

### 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





## What do we know about school students in remote or regional areas?



### HOW MANY STUDENTS ARE IN REMOTE OR REGIONAL AREAS?

According to ABS Schools Australia, in 2023 there were 72,290 full-time equivalent students in remote areas and 1,017,837 in regional areas (around 2 per cent and 25 per cent of all school students respectively).

Did you know that Australia is divided into five remoteness areas for reporting purposes?

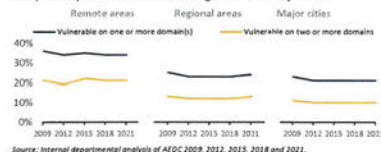
These areas are defined using a measure of relative access to services, based on the Accessibility and Remoteness Index of Australia (ARIA).  
 We have grouped these areas into three: major cities, regional areas (inner and outer regional combined) and remote areas (remote and very remote combined).

### WHAT ABOUT RURAL AREAS?

Did you know Australia is also divided into four 'sections of state' based on population size, but these areas are rarely used for reporting purposes?  
 We can group these into two: urban ('major urban' and 'other urban'), with 1,000 or more people, and rural areas ('bounded localities' and 'rural balance').

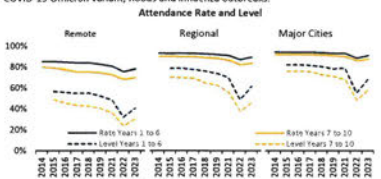
### ARE CHILDREN READY FOR SCHOOL?

In their first year of school, children in remote areas are more likely to be developmentally vulnerable than those in regional areas or major cities.



### WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT STUDENT ATTENDANCE PATTERNS?

Students in remote areas are less likely to attend school than students in regional areas or major cities, particularly in Years 7 to 10. Generally, the share of students who attend school regularly (90 per cent of the time or more) has dropped since 2015, regardless of their location. According to ACARA, the attendance rates fell in 2022 due to the COVID-19 Omicron variant, floods and influenza outbreaks.

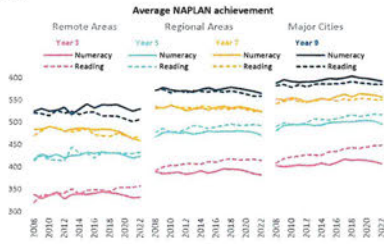


Note: Comparable data are not available for earlier years.  
 Attendance Levels is the percentage of students with above 90 per cent attendance  
 Source: Internal departmental estimates derived from National Report on Schooling (ACARA) data portal.

### HOW DO STUDENT OUTCOMES COMPARE?

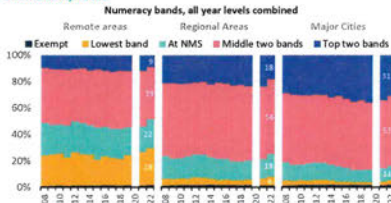
While some improvements are observed, NAPLAN results for students in remote areas are much lower than for those in regional areas or major cities.

NAPLAN scores represent the level of student achievement in each subject or learning area.



Source: Internal departmental estimates derived from ACARA NAPLAN 2008 to 2022.  
 Overall student achievement is reported by grouping NAPLAN scores into bands. The lowest band reflects achievement below the national minimum standard (NMS) and the highest band reflects the highest scores. Using these bands together with student participation numbers, we can report on levels of student achievement across all year levels combined.

In 2022, 70 per cent of students in remote areas scored at or above the NMS for numeracy, compared to 92 per cent of students in regional areas and 95 per cent of students in major cities.



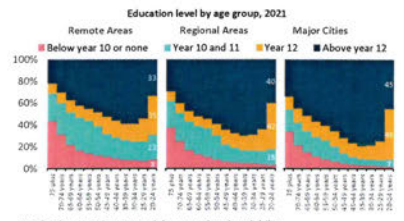
Source: Internal departmental estimates derived from ACARA NAPLAN 2008 to 2022, and ABS Schools Australia 2014 and 2022.

PISA results for science, reading and mathematics at age 15, show that while the difference in performance has been stable over time, students in remote areas are a year or more behind those in regional areas and over three years behind those in major cities.  
 Source: ACER PISA 2022: Reporting Australia's results.

Are you interested in knowing how living in remote Australia can influence Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students' learning?  
 See our remote indigenous student dashboard for more information.

### ARE EDUCATION LEVELS OF YOUNG ADULTS CHANGING?

Those who moved through the school system more recently are achieving higher levels of education than previous generations, but young adults in remote areas tend to achieve much lower levels of education than those in regional areas or major cities.



Note: People may not choose to remain in one area throughout their lives.  
 Source: ABS 2021 Census of Population and Housing.

### WHAT ABOUT EMPLOYMENT PROSPECTS?

As well as achieving lower levels of education, adults in remote areas have lower employment prospects than those in regional areas or major cities. People with Year 12 or a higher qualification are mostly employed regardless of their location. People with low or no formal education are slightly more likely to be employed if they live in a major city or regional area than a remote area.

Labour force participation and employment, 2021

People aged 20 to 74	Remote areas	Regional areas	Major cities
Labour force participation	71%	69%	73%
Employment by education level			
Year 12 or higher	97%	97%	96%
Lower than Year 10 or did not go to school	88%	92%	91%

Source: ABS 2021 Census of Population and Housing.

### WHAT'S NEXT IN THE NATIONAL SCHOOL REFORM AGREEMENT?

The Productivity Commission released a review of the National School Reform Agreement (NSRA) in December 2022. The Commission reports that, partly due to their early stages of development, the NSRA National Policy Initiatives are unlikely to have impacted student outcomes thus far, with declining results in Numeracy and mixed results in Reading for Remote students. For the next NSRA, the Commission recommends focussing on directly lifting student outcomes (including in student wellbeing) and creating transparent and accountable state-specific targets for academic achievement.  
 Source: Review of the National School Reform Agreement

**Issue:** Student wellbeing  
**Contact:** Meg Brighton  
 Ph: s 22  
 Deputy Secretary

### Budget – Australian Government’s ongoing support for mental health and wellbeing in schools:

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

Financial year	2022–23 \$m	2023–24 \$m	2024–25 \$m	2025–26 \$m	2026–27 \$m	2027–28 \$m	Total \$m
<i>Consent and Respectful Relationships Education measure</i>							
Budget Allocation (Administered)	0	20.367	20.367	20.367	8.250	8.250	77.600
Committed	0	12.188	12.188	12.188	4.937	4.937	46.438
Uncommitted	0	8.179	8.179	8.179	3.313	3.313	31.162
<i>National Consent Survey</i>							
Budget Allocation (Administered)	4.000	1.000	0	0	0	0	5.000
Committed	4.000	1.000	0	0	0	0	5.000
Uncommitted	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

### Key Points

- Student wellbeing and learning outcomes are interdependent and mutually reinforcing.
- Positive mental health and wellbeing is a crucial foundation for achievement, engagement, and attendance outcomes for students.

- In recent years, the wellbeing of students and school communities have been impacted by emerging challenges including the conflict in the middle east, pandemic and natural disasters, use of mobile phones and personal devices, vaping and school-based violence.
- The Government is investing half a billion dollars into student wellbeing.
- Wellbeing is a priority area in the development of the next Better and Fairer Schools Agreement.

### ***Wellbeing Boost and Supports***

- The Australian Government 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 received funds based on jurisdictional methodology for use by 31 March 2024. Final reports are due by 30 June 2024.
  - \$10.75 million for a Voluntary Mental Health Check Tool (*details below*).
  - \$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.
  - In 2023, 3,163 schools participated in the program.
  - The Commonwealth's contribution of **\$61.435 million** will be paid annually for 5 years from 2022-23 to 2026-27 – a total financial contribution of \$307.175 million.

### ***Voluntary Mental Health Check Tool***

- The Voluntary Mental Health Check Tool (VMHCT) is an election commitment under the Government's Student Wellbeing Boost.
- The VMHCT, to be known as My Mind Check, is a point in time digital survey for students to reflect on their mental health and wellbeing.
- The tool will be a free, online, voluntary tool. The use of My Mind Check is on an opt-in basis at a jurisdiction, sector, school and student level. Opt-in consent will also be required from a parent or guardian.

- My Mind Check will provide participating schools information about their students' mental health and wellbeing and enable schools to ensure students get the support they need.
- Data entered into the My Mind Check platform will be accessible only to nominated, authorised staff at the individual school level, in addition to authorised members of the Macquarie University My Mind Check team.
- The department has contracted Macquarie University to develop the tool and help schools as they use My Mind Check. The tool will be available from Term 2, 2024.
- The department and Macquarie University are engaging closely with states and territories, Independent Schools Australia, and the National Catholic Education Commission to seek their support before offering the product to schools in their sector.

#### ***Social Cohesion – Wellbeing Support for Jewish and Islamic students***

- On 19 October 2023, the Australian Government announced \$6 million for social cohesion student wellbeing support for students of Jewish and Islamic faith in Australian schools. Schools could use the funds flexibly to support students, including by increasing access to psychologists, counsellors, and mental health and wellbeing supports.
- Funding for schools was delivered through state and territory governments through a variation to the existing Student Wellbeing Boost Schedule to the Federation Funding Agreement Education and Skills. Final reports from jurisdictions are due by 30 June 2024.
- Schools had to spend, or commit to use, the funds by 31 March 2024. Information on how schools spent the funds will be available 30 June 2024 when final milestone reports are due.
- 495 schools received this additional funding across all jurisdictions and education sectors.
- Of the \$6m, \$5.75m went to schools and \$0.25m went to departmental funding to administer the measure.

#### ***Social Cohesion - Together for Humanity***

- Together for Humanity (TFH) has been provided \$8.1 million (2021-22 to 2024-25) through the Connected Youth and Communities Initiative) to deliver activities to build intercultural and interfaith understanding through:
  - the intercultural understanding grants program
  - teacher professional development,

- school and online programs,
- inter-school cooperation activities,
- research
- Through the 2024 Budget, TFH will receive an additional \$4 million over two years (2024-25 and 2025-26).
- This funding boost will allow TFH to increase activities aimed at addressing all forms of discrimination in schools, in particular activities aimed at addressing Islamophobia and antisemitism in schools.

### ***Consent and Respectful Relationships Education (CRRE)***

- The Australian Government committed \$83.5 million over 6 years from 2022–23 to work in partnership with states, territories, non-government school systems, and subject matter experts, to support delivery of expert developed, evidence based and age-appropriate CRRE in primary and secondary schools. This includes:
  - \$77.6 million to be provided to states and territories and non-government school systems via a Federation Funding Agreement Schedule. As of 27 May 2024, the Schedule has been countersigned by the ACT, NT and NSW. (The Schedule is available online at the Federal Financial Relations website: [Consent and Respectful Relationships Education | Federal Financial Relations.](#))
  - \$5.9 million to support the delivery of CRRE, which includes:
    - a National Respectful Relationships Education Expert Working Group to inform and guide the measure; established in May 2023.
    - a rapid review into current delivery approaches in jurisdictions and schools to identify best-practice, gaps and areas for improvement; completed in October 2023.
    - development of a Respectful Relationships Education (RRE) framework to guide schools with the delivery of RRE; anticipated to be available to schools by mid-2024; and
    - an independent evaluation of the CRRE measure; anticipated to commence in 2026-27.
  - The Australian Government is providing \$5 million over 2 years from 2022–23 to the Australian Human Rights Commission to deliver a national survey to explore secondary school students' experiences of consent education. The survey is expected to be delivered in late 2024.

**Vaping in schools**

- To address vaping in schools, at the 6 July 2023 Education Ministers Meeting (EMM), Ministers agreed to:
  - continue to work together at a national level to develop and implement mechanism to address vaping in schools
  - to work with Health Ministers on a national education campaign that educates young people on the harms of e-cigarettes
  - to involve students in the design of the campaign.
- At the 26 April 2024 EMM, Education Ministers discussed the progress made towards addressing the prevalence of vaping in schools, including education campaigns that target young people, parents and educators on the harms posed by the marketing and use of e-cigarettes.
- In February and March 2024 the Hon Mark Butler MP, Minister for Health and Aged Care, and the Hon Jason Clare MP, Minister for Education, and state and territory Health and Education Ministers, signed letters to school principals across Australia. These letters encourage schools to direct students seeking help to Quitline and for suspected nicotine dependence, advise families to consult their GPs.
- The department has also published a number of freely available vaping resources on the Student Wellbeing Hub targeted at educators, parents and students about the harms of vaping.
- The Australian Government allocated \$29.5 million to Department of Health and Aged Care, in the 2023-24 Budget for a range of cessation resources, including an online hub and a mobile app.

**Mobile phones in schools**

- In July 2023, Education Ministers made a commitment to ban, restrict or manage the use of mobile phones by students for personal use in government schools.
- From Term 1, 2024 all state and territory governments have implemented policies which do not permit the use of mobile phones in government schools.
- Exemptions are available for approved reasons including health monitoring, medical, learning, disability or wellbeing reasons.
- Mobile phones have been identified by the Senate Inquiry into *The issue of increasing disruption in Australian school classrooms* as one of the drivers of disruptive behaviour in the classroom.

- The nationally consistent approach of managing mobile phones in schools will contribute towards addressing these issues and improving student engagement and behaviour.

## Media

- ***Demand for new youth anti-vaping program surges as Parliament considers world leading vaping reforms, 10 April 2024***

A joint media release with the Hon Mark Butler MP, Minister for Health and Aged Care, and the Hon Jason Clare MP, Minister for Education to announce a research trial program aimed at reducing the number of students vaping and smoking which has been taken up by 250 high schools across Australia.

- ***The kids are not alright: Is Australia in the midst of a youth mental health crisis? 13 Feb 2024, SBS News***

The Household, Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia Survey has found that loneliness and distress have increased since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, and that school-aged students are struggling with resilience and wellbeing.

- ***Reading harder for bullied, tired and hungry students, 24 Jan 2024, Australian Council for Educational Research News***

The latest report on the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) has found 37% of year 4 students in Australia experience multiple challenges in their school life that affected their reading performance.

The proportion of Australian students reporting these negative experiences was greater than the average of 25% across other countries that participated in the study.

Date Last Cleared	29 May 2024
-------------------	-------------

**Issue:** Student engagement  
**PBS Pg No.** p45, Program 1.5 – Early Learning and Schools Support  
**PAES Pg No.** p32, Program 1.5 – Early Learning and Schools Support  
**Contact:** Meg Brighton  
 Ph: s 22  
 Deputy Secretary

### Budget – Engaged Classrooms Resources

Financial year	2022–23	2023–24	2024–25	2025–26	2026–27	Total
Budget Allocation (\$m)	1,750	1,750	-	-	-	3,500
Committed (\$m)	1,750	1,750	-	-	-	3,500
Uncommitted (\$m)	0	0	0	0	0	0

### Key Points

- Several factors both in and outside school can influence a student’s level of engagement in schooling, which can then impact attendance, attainment and retention.
- Within the school, student engagement can be fostered through a supportive, inclusive, and productive learning environment.

### School attendance rates

- The most recent indicators of student engagement show **medium term decline** since before the disruption of the Covid-19 pandemic.
- While there were substantial **increases** in 2023, national school attendance rates and levels have not returned to pre-2022 levels.
  - The Year 12 or equivalent attainment rate for young people (age 20–24) was 86% in 2023.
  - School attendance rate was 89% in 2023.
  - Apparent retention rate from Year 10 to Year 12 was 78.7% in 2023.
  - Data for 10 years is provided at [Attachment A](#).
- 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, and
  - suggest evidence-based approaches that may assist in reversing the trend.



AERO's report is going through final stages of approval.

### ***School Refusal***

- The issues of school refusal and classroom disruption are important to understand and address in order to support student engagement.
- School refusal is a form of non-attendance related to the inability of a young person to attend school due to a severe negative emotional reaction 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 classroom environment.
- The Senate Education and Employment References Committee released its report on 10 August 2023 and made 14 recommendations to better identify, manage, and respond to school refusal.
- The Government response ([Attachment B](#) refers) was tabled on 11 April 2024 and is publicly available on the [department's website](#) and the [Parliament of Australia website](#).
- The Government indicated in its response it will work with state and territory governments, the non-government sector, families, school communities and peer supports on implementation of the recommendations.
- Senator Penny Allman-Payne has written to Minister Clare regarding SCA. QoNs from Senator Penny Allman-Payne on this topic are [SQ24-000301](#) and [SQ24-000304](#).

### ***Classroom Disruption***

- While there have been suggestions of a behaviour 'curriculum' to address classroom disruption, the selection of a behaviour curriculum model or approach is a matter for jurisdictions, sectors and individual schools in collaboration with their local community and in response to local needs.
- There is a clear case for evidence-based, whole-school approaches that establish a comprehensive framework for explicitly teaching and managing student behaviour, so that students can focus on learning.
- Teachers and school leaders should feel supported to implement effective rules, routines and expectations to manage classroom behaviour at the school level.
- Recent research indicates increasing levels of low order disruption in the classroom, as well as more serious incidents of violent and/or threatening behaviour.

- Education Ministers have agreed addressing disruptive behaviour is of paramount importance and will continue to discuss the issue at their next meeting.
- 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 report on 7 February 2024.
  - A summary of the report is at [Attachment C](#).
- The 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.
  - Volume II of the PISA report, released in May 2024, provided further detail broken down by state and jurisdiction.
- 2022 Australian Teacher Workforce Data (ATWD) results 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 is investing in new resources and new microcredential courses to support teachers to effectively manage classroom behaviour.
  - The \$3.5 million 'Engaged Classrooms' project with AERO is providing teachers with evidence-based guidance and tools for effectively managing classrooms and creating safe and supportive environments focused on learning. A set of evidence explainers and adaptable best practice guides has already been published, and more resources will be released in 2024.
  - The \$3.0 million 'Microcredentials for Teacher Professional Development' project with the University of Adelaide is developing 3 free online evidence-based microcredentials.
  - These will enable teachers and school leaders to upgrade their skills in classroom management, explicit teaching and teaching phonics, at no cost until the end of 2025. Registrations are open now, and the classroom management microcredential will be released in July 2024.

**Media**

- **Editorial, 'Chaotic classrooms don't work', *The Australian*, 22 May 2024.**  
ACER identified several serious problems using recent PISA data. Students in independent and Catholic school reported better disciplinary climates than public school peers. Indigenous students, particularly in Northern Territory, are not feeling safe. Chaotic classrooms contributed to poor outcomes in maths. Levels of perseverance across Australia are lower than the OECD average.
- **Joel Erikson, 'Heartbreaking graph shows what's really wrong in Aussie classrooms', *The Daily Telegraph*, 23 May 2024.**  
ACER report using OECD PISA data highlights that Australian students suffer some of the highest rates of bullying and classroom disruption in the world. Significant differences in experiences reported by gender. While boys are disproportionately impacted by deteriorating behaviour, girls are struggling the most with wellbeing.
- **Mridula Amin and Sascha Ettinger-Epstein, 'The Kids Who Fear School: A growing crisis of school refusal is gripping Australia, leaving families in a hidden struggle', *ABC News*, 29 April 2024.**  
Accompanies Four Corners episode (below) and profiles students and their parents. Highlights the challenges for students and parents.
- **'The Kids Who Can't Go to School', *Four Corners*, *ABC iView*, 29 April 2024.**  
Profiles 3 children experiencing school can't (neurodivergent, learning needs, or mental health challenges) and the journeys of their primary caregivers to support their children back into school. Features MacKillop Education in Geelong and NSW Department of Education pilot program for students with chronic attendance issues.

**Attachments**

[Attachment A](#) – Key data on student engagement for all schools.

[Attachment B](#) – School Refusal recommendations and Australian Government response (AGR).

[Attachment C](#) – The issue of increasing disruption in Australian school classrooms: Report – summary.

Date Last Cleared	29 May 2024
-------------------	-------------

## Key data on student engagement for all schools

### 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.
  - 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.

### Attendance, Semester 1, Years 1–10 (%), for all schools, all sectors

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020 <sup>#</sup>	2021	2022	2023
Attendance rate	92.7	92.6	92.5	92.4	91.9	91.4	-	90.9	86.5	88.6
Attendance level	-	77.8*	77.7*	77.1*	75.2	73.1	-	71.2	49.9	61.6

Source: ACARA, National report on Schooling in Australia data portal

<sup>#</sup> School attendance data for 2020 has not been published due to inconsistencies in the data as a result of the varying health advice and schooling arrangements across the country in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

\* Data on student attendance levels could not be collected for NSW government schools prior to 2018. This likely resulted in increased national results for 2015 to 2017<sup>4</sup>.

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

<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.

<sup>4</sup> Attendance trends from 2015 show that NSW has a lower attendance rate. It should be noted that NSW updated their IT systems in 2018. This means that that attendance rates from NSW are not directly comparable with other jurisdictions 2014–2017. Reference: ACARA notes and caveats: For 2014–2017, NSW government school data has not been collected on a comparable basis with other states and territories. Therefore, comparisons with other jurisdictions for earlier years should be made with caution. [Student attendance \(acara.edu.au\)](https://www.acara.edu.au)

**School refusal**

- As identified by the Senate Committee in its final report, there is no nationally consistent definition of school refusal or nationally consistent, accurate reporting and collection of absences related to school refusal.
- School refusal data is not disaggregated from attendance data and the proportion of absenteeism that relates directly to school refusal is currently not known.
- Evidence from the Senate inquiry reflects that while students' experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic intensified the issue, the rates of school refusal were increasing prior to the pandemic (QB24-000062 refers).
- Australian Greens commissioned Lonergan poll of 1,003 parents and found that 2 in 5 families are experiencing school refusal.<sup>5</sup>
- In future, the unique student identifier for school students could potentially link data to create longitudinal datasets, providing insights and evidence to tailor interventions and improve student outcomes (EC23-001595 refers).

**Attainment – 20–24 year olds who gained a Year 12 certificate, or equivalent, or Australian Qualifications Framework Certificate III or higher**

- The Year 12 or equivalent attainment rate for young people (age 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%.

**Estimated Year 12<sup>#</sup> certification rate (%)**

	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Year 12 certification rate	74.0	72.0*	75.0	76.0	79.0	78.7	72.5*	76.4	79.1	76.3

Source: ACARA, National report on Schooling in Australia data portal

# Assessment, reporting and criteria for obtaining a year 12 or equivalent certificate varies across jurisdictions.

\* In 2019 Queensland had a “half cohort” complete year 12. In 2014, Western Australia had a “half cohort” complete year 12 making the year 12 certifications for these years significantly lower.

<sup>5</sup> Senator Penny Allman-Payne, Media release, 8 November 2023, [media.greens.org.au/t/y-e-xaddjd-ikirmhyit-i/](https://media.greens.org.au/t/y-e-xaddjd-ikirmhyit-i/).

**Attainment rate<sup>#</sup>, 20–24 year olds having completed Year 12, or equivalent, or a Certificate III or higher (%)**

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Attainment rate	84.9	87.1	89.2	86.4	88.8	88.2	89.4	89.5	90.1	89.6

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Survey of Education and Work

<sup>#</sup> These results have a margin of error that is typically 0.4 to 0.7.

**Apparent retention rate (%) for all schools, all sectors**

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Year 7/8 <sup>#</sup> to Year 12	83.6	84.0	84.3	84.8	84.5	84.0	83.6	83.1	80.5	79.1
Year 10 to Year 12	82.5	82.7	82.9	83.3	82.8	82.0	82.1	81.6	79.0	78.7

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Department of Education

# The starting grade of secondary school varied by jurisdiction before 2022.

N.B.

- Apparent 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 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.

## Attachment B

**Summary list of Recommendations and Australian Government response:  
Senate inquiry into the national trend of school refusal and related matters**

- *Education and Employment References Committee report tabled on 10 August 2023*
- *Australian Government response tabled by Minister for Education on 11 April 2024*

<b>Senate Recommendation</b>	<b>Response</b>
1) Education Ministers task AERO 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.	<i>Agree in principle</i>
2) Australian Government work with state and territory education authorities and the non-government school sector to develop and promote resources about school refusal	<i>Noted</i>
3) 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	<i>Noted</i>
4) State and territory education authorities and the non-government school sector identify opportunities for earlier identification of students at risk of school withdrawal	<i>Noted</i>
5) State and territory education authorities and the non-government school sector investigate ways to increase the flexibility of education delivery	<i>Noted</i>
6) Education Ministers develop a national action plan on school refusal, informed by AERO research (see Recommendation 1)	<i>Noted</i>
7) Australian Government work with state and territory governments to identify ways to improve awareness and understanding of school refusal	<i>Supported in-principle</i>
8) State and territory education authorities and the non-government school sector review and update current messaging about the importance of school attendance	<i>Noted</i>
9) 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	<i>Noted</i>
10) 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	<i>Noted</i>
11) 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	<i>Noted</i>
12) Australian Government work with state and territory governments to identify and promote effective models for collaboration between the education and health sectors	<i>Noted</i>
13) 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	<i>Noted</i>
14) Australian Government investigate increasing the number of subsidised mental health care visits for students experiencing school refusal	<i>Noted</i>
Australian Greens Senators' Additional Comments 15–19) 5 additional recommendations	<i>Noted</i>





## **Australian Government**

Australian Government response to the  
*Senate Standing Committees on Education and Employment*  
report:

*The national trend of school refusal and related matters*

APRIL 2024

## Overview

The Australian Government (the Government) thanks the Senate Education and Employment References Committee (Committee) for its work on the inquiry into the national trend of school refusal and related matters.

The Government welcomes the opportunity to respond to the inquiry and acknowledges and thanks those individuals who shared their personal experiences and the contribution they have made to this inquiry.

The Government is committed to ensuring that every Australian child enjoys the benefits of education. School refusal is a concern for the mental health and wellbeing impacts on young Australians educational engagement and attendance.

The response to the Committee's recommendations has been coordinated by the Department of Education, in consultation with the following Government agencies:

- Department of Health and Aged Care (DoHAC)
- National Indigenous Australians Agency (NIAA)
- Department of Social Services (DSS).

The Government recognises that working with states and territories and the non-government education sector is key to implementing effective and holistic policy improvements that respond to the issue of school refusal. While the Government plays a leadership role in setting and delivering on national priorities in school education, the administration of schools is the constitutional responsibility of state and territory governments. The Government acknowledges work is continuing across all sectors to address school refusal, as noted in the Committee's report. The Government will continue to work in partnership with states and territories to explore potential opportunities to improve school refusal issues, including progressing work through existing national education policy forums and intergovernmental architecture.

## *Language used*

The Australian Government Response reflects the language and terminology used by the Committee. The Government understands that many view the term 'school refusal' as misrepresenting a student's absence from school as a deliberate choice. However, it notes the current lack of consensus around preferred terminology and has chosen to use the term 'school refusal' throughout this report.

The Government also respects that preferred ways of self-describing are highly personal choices for the autistic and wider neurodivergent community. This response will use identity first language to align with the language used by the Committee.

### **Recommendation 1**

***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.***

***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).***

#### *Agree in principle*

The Australian Government recognises the importance of expanding the evidence base of school refusal research and the importance of establishing a strong foundation for which to base and inform future research and initiatives, such as a nationally agreed definition of school refusal.

In February 2023 Education Ministers, through the Education Ministers Meeting (EMM), commissioned the Australian Education Research Organisation (AERO) to investigate the causes of declining attendance and provide advice to Ministers on evidence-based approaches that support attendance. The Government notes that AERO's research into school attendance has already progressed. AERO's interim report was due to be provided to Education Ministers in late 2023, with the final report due to Education Ministers in the first half of 2024.

The Government will work within the existing EMM architecture to consider subsequent research into school refusal, which may build on AERO's findings in relation to school attendance. Further research activities may include consultation with youth mental health research organisations to share existing work in the school refusal space, or further research commissioned through EMM.

## **Recommendation 2**

***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.***

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

### *Noted*

The Government acknowledges the responsibility of this recommendation is shared between the Government, state and territory education authorities and the non-government school sector. The Government will continue to engage with state and territory governments and the non-government school sector, for example through Education Ministers Meeting, to respond to this recommendation.

The Government will continue to update the Student Wellbeing Hub with new resources on school refusal for parents, teachers and school leaders.

The Government funds the Student Wellbeing Hub, which provides a range of freely available information and resources for educators, students, parents and families to assist to create and maintain a safe and supportive school environment. The Student Wellbeing Hub includes resources on a range of topics, including mental health, physical wellbeing, bullying and cyberbullying, online safety and some existing resources on student attendance and school refusal. The Student Wellbeing Hub, hosted by Education Services Australia (ESA), is available at [www.studentwellbeinghub.edu.au](http://www.studentwellbeinghub.edu.au).

### Recommendation 3

***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.***

#### *Noted*

The Government acknowledges this recommendation falls within the responsibility of state and territory education authorities and the non-government school sector and has referred this recommendation to state and territory education authorities and the non-government school sector for consideration.

The Government is committed to inclusive education and improving educational and mental health outcomes for all students. This is a key policy priority of *Australia's Disability Strategy 2021–2031* (ADS) and the National Action Plan for the Health of Children and Young People 2020–2030 for health outcomes.

Although child development screening is the responsibility of state and territory governments, the Government funds initiatives to support the assessment and diagnosis of mental health and developmental disorders in children, including but not limited to:

- Actions under the Early Childhood Targeted Action Plan of the ADS, which focuses on children from infancy to school age with disability or developmental concerns, their families, and carers.
- Funding pre-emptive early intervention pilots for infants with early signs of autism to provide strengths-based and family-based supports to young children aged 9–14 months of age and their families. The pilots will be delivered in partnership with selected states and/or territories.
- The National Early Childhood Program for children with disability or developmental concerns, which aims to support young children (aged 0 to 8 years) with newly identified disability or emerging developmental concerns and their parents and carers.
- The National Guidelines funded by DoHAC support states and territories to consider wellbeing in early childhood health checks being led by the National Mental Health Commission.
- Head to Health Kids Hubs funded by DoHAC provide free multidisciplinary assessment and support for children 0–12 years and their families.
- The Department of Education's Positive Partnerships program and Starting School resources hosted on the Student Wellbeing Hub website support school-aged autistic students, and families and teachers of autistic children.
- Be You funded by DoHAC assists educators to promote mental health and wellbeing in the classroom and builds the mental health literacy of educators to identify when children need support and know where to go for assessment and supports.
- DoHAC's National Workforce Centre for Child Mental Health upskills professionals to identify, assess and support children at risk of mental health conditions.

**Recommendation 4**

***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.***

***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.***

***Noted***

The Government acknowledges this recommendation falls within the responsibility of state and territory education authorities and the non-government school sector and has referred this recommendation to state and territory education authorities and the non-government school sector for consideration.

**Recommendation 5**

***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.***

*Noted*

The Government acknowledges this recommendation falls within the responsibility of state and territory education authorities and the non-government school sector and has referred this recommendation to state and territory education authorities and the non-government school sector for consideration.

### **Recommendation 6**

*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.*

*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.*

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

### *Noted*

The Government notes this recommendation. Pending the findings of research conducted by AERO, the Government will refer this matter to EMM for discussion.

The Government shared this report with the Expert Panel to Inform a Better and Fairer Education System.

The Government recognises the lead role of state and territory education authorities and the non-government school sector play in the delivery of education and operation of schools. The Government will explore the feasibility of the development of a national plan through the EMM architecture, within the timeframe expressed by the Committee. A



national action plan that outlines the above requirements would provide clear policy direction for school systems and the wider education system and be complementary to the arrangements between the Government and state and territory education authorities and the non-government school sector.

In December 2022, Education Ministers agreed on a model to roll-out the Unique Student Identifier (USI) nationally to all school students. Ministers also agreed that the baseline use of the Schools USI will be to support the transfer of student information when individuals move between schools and systems through the inclusion of the USI in the agreed data set under the Student Data Transfer Protocol once operating, and that no further uses will be considered by Ministers until the initiative is fully implemented and every school student has a national USI.

In line with Closing the Gap Priority Reform 1, work on the national action plan should proceed in partnership with First Nations people and their representative organisations such as consultation with Aboriginal Education Consultative Groups (AECG), the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Council (NATSIEC) and SNAICC – National Voice for our Children (SNAICC) to develop an understanding of the depth of the issue and include First Nations perspectives into strategies. AERO research should ensure consideration of First Nations students' experience of school refusal to help provide evidence to ensure that the National Action Plan is relevant for First Nations students.

### Recommendation 7

*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.*

*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.*

*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.*

#### *Supported in-principle*

The Government acknowledges responsibility of this recommendation sits with both the Australian Government and state and territory education authorities and the non-government school sector and has referred this recommendation to state and territory education authorities and the non-government school sector for consideration.

The Government supports this recommendation in-principle, noting the course content of initial teacher education (ITE) programs are set under the nationally agreed *Accreditation of Initial Teacher Education Programs in Australia: Standards and Procedures* (Accreditation Standards). ITE programs should prepare ITE students to meet the *Australian Professional Standards for Teachers*, which include standards relating to creating and maintaining supportive and safe learning environments. This approach to ITE accreditation sets national quality standards while allowing higher education providers and schools the flexibility to design and deliver teacher training to meet local needs and circumstances.

The Government will refer proposed amendments of the Accreditation Standards to EMM for discussion, as responsibility for setting priorities for teacher professional learning sits with state and territory teacher regulatory authorities and government and non-government education departments.

The Government, through the DoHAC, is responsible for the National Workforce Centre for Child Mental Health and works with vocational and tertiary education providers in health and social services to integrate resources around child mental health into their respective curriculums. The National Centre also helps to build capacity of health workforces to support children's mental health and wellbeing, through provision of free, online, evidence-based training, resources and information and has reach across the health sector that can be leveraged and built upon to disseminate training and resources regarding school refusal once developed.

Be You funded by the DoHAC works with tertiary institutions to incorporate mental health and wellbeing resources into their courses to increase mental health literacy amongst pre-service educators.

### **Recommendation 8**

***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.***

### *Noted*

The Government acknowledges this recommendation falls within the responsibility of state and territory education authorities and the non-government school sector and has referred this recommendation to state and territory education authorities and the non-government school sector for consideration.

The Government through the DoHAC funds the Parenting Education and Support Program, delivered by Triple P International, which includes a marketing and campaigning aspect focused on combating stigma around parents seeking to build parenting strategies to support their child's wellbeing. The Raising Healthy Minds app, delivered by the Raising Children Network, provides parents and carers with mental health literacy information to better equip them to support children's social and emotional wellbeing, as well as strategies for supporting their own self-care and family wellbeing.

### **Recommendation 9**

***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.***

#### *Noted*

The Government acknowledges this recommendation falls within the responsibility of state and territory education authorities and the non-government school sector and has referred this recommendation to state and territory education authorities and the non-government school sector for consideration.

The Government recognises the importance of trauma-informed practices in schools and acknowledges the use of best-practice methods to support all students, including neurodiverse and First Nations students. The Government will explore opportunities to support state and territory education authorities and the non-government school sector to implement best-practice methods.

Using a trauma-informed approach is addressed in one of the two professional-learning modules being developed by Education Services Australia (ESA) to support the Get Ready to Learn online resource in the Autism section of the Student Wellbeing Hub. The second module, called Supporting Emotional Regulation, includes two sub-modules:

- Trauma and emotional dysregulation – What can cause students to express big emotions or experience behavioural challenges? And how do environmental or sensory triggers in the classroom play a role?
- Trauma-informed approach – You can support students who experience severe dysregulation by creating a safe environment, fostering relationships, and improving their emotional self-regulation skills.

### Recommendation 10

***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.***

#### *Noted*

The Government acknowledges this recommendation falls within the responsibility of state and territory education authorities and the non-government school sector and has referred this recommendation to state and territory education authorities and the non-government school sector for consideration.

Recommendation 9 of the Department of Education's *Next steps: Report of the Quality Initial Teacher Education Review (2021)* states 'families and carers are the key partners with teachers in their children's learning and the Expert Panel recommends more resources be created for families and carers to understand what teaching best practice looks like'.<sup>1</sup>

Recent parent engagement resources funded by the Government include:

- The Family-School Partnerships Framework was developed to promote and guide partnership building between parent and schools. The Framework includes supporting material, research insights, practical advice and a range of resources including fact sheets and case studies.
- Learning Potential, created in 2015, is a module based online resource developed specifically for parents to help them support their child's learning.
- Part of the Student Wellbeing Hub online modules includes topics for parents such as safety, bullying, interoception and decision making for parents to work with their child and the school to build a happy and safe learning community.
- Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth (ARACY) published in 2020 *Parent and Family Engagement – an implementation guide for school communities*. This resource provides school communities with practical guidance on better engagement and how to implement successful parent and family engagement practices, focusing on the 'how' rather than just the 'why'.

---

<sup>1</sup> Quality Initial Teacher Education Review (2021) *Next Steps: Report of the Quality Initial Teacher Education Review*, Canberra: iv.

### Recommendation 11

***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.***

#### *Noted*

The Government acknowledges the responsibility of this recommendation is shared between the Government, state and territory education authorities and the non-government school sector. The Government has referred this to state and territory education authorities and the non-government school sector for consideration.

The Government acknowledges that all schools in Australia are required under the *Disability Standards for Education 2005* (the Standards) to provide reasonable adjustments for students with disability to enable access and participation in education, equal to their peers. The definition of disability in section 1.4 of the Standards is broad and covers a past, current, future or imputed disability. Students do not need to have a diagnosed disability to be protected under the Standards.

The Government, through the Department of Education, undertook a review of the Standards in 2020. The review found that students with disability had better experiences when their educators and education providers had a good understanding of the Standards. The Government is working with state and territory and non-government education authorities to implement the review recommendations, including strengthening the knowledge and capability of educators and providers in relation to the requirement of the Standards.

The Government has released resources including case studies and an animated explainer video to help schools better understand their legal and professional obligations to students with disability. They are available at [www.nccd.edu.au/dse](http://www.nccd.edu.au/dse). New resources are available to provide teachers and school leaders with practical examples of supporting the inclusion of students with disability. The resources, developed by the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) in consultation with disability and education organisations, are available at [www.aitsl.edu.au/teach/supporting-students-with-disability](http://www.aitsl.edu.au/teach/supporting-students-with-disability).

The Government is investing \$29.1 billion for school recurrent funding in 2024. Of this, an estimated \$3.6 billion will be provided for the student with disability loading. The student with disability loading is based on the Nationally Consistent Collection of Data on School Students with Disability (NCCD). The NCCD provides information about the number of students with disability in schools and the adjustments they receive. The NCCD groups school students with disability by the level of support they need to access and participate in learning. More information about the NCCD is available at [www.nccd.edu.au](http://www.nccd.edu.au).

## **Recommendation 12**

***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.***

### *Noted*

The Government acknowledges the responsibility of this recommendation is shared between the Government, state and territory education authorities and the non-government school sector. The Government has referred this to state and territory education authorities and the non-government school sector for consideration.

The Government will explore and discuss opportunities with state and territory governments to identify and promote effective models for collaboration between the education and health sectors related to school refusal. This may include through existing mechanisms of the EMM and the Health Ministers Meeting.

The importance of collaboration between health and education service providers to support children's mental health and wellbeing is highlighted in the Children's Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy. Action 2.2d of the Children's Strategy specifically recommends that mental health professionals be required to communicate with educators and other service providers about a child's treatment and support plan, with the family's permission and subject to this being deemed clinically appropriate.

Collaboration between schools and health professionals is important given the links identified in the Committee's Report between school refusal and mental health concerns, and the need to conceptualise school refusal through a mental health lens. There is work to be done to determine how this collaboration would operate in practice. However, at a high level, the potential benefits of collaboration between the education and health sectors run both ways: educators and learning communities can refer children who are beginning to experience attendance difficulties or who are exhibiting signs of poor mental health to health providers for support; and health providers can notify educators when they identify mental health challenges in children and young people that may require additional classroom support to prevent or reduce school refusal.

Be You and the National Workforce Centre for Child Mental Health collaborate in relation to their respective work upskilling education, health and social services workforces. Additionally, the National Workforce Centre, delivered by Emerging Minds is developing a workforce package aimed at supporting partnerships between parents, educators and health professionals to be able to connect and communicate around children's mental health.

**Recommendation 13**

*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.*

*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.*

*Noted*

The Government acknowledges the responsibility of this recommendation is shared between the Government, state and territory education authorities and the non-government school sector. The Government has referred this to state and territory education authorities and the non-government school sector for consideration.

The Government acknowledges the importance of the lived experience of students, families and school communities in relation to school refusal. The Government also acknowledges the impact on parents and carers of families who experience school refusal, including the mental and physical health and wellbeing, financial and employment impacts. The Government recognises the importance of support groups for parents, particularly in relation to a complex and often misunderstood issue such as school refusal.

The Government will explore opportunities with state and territory governments to provide funding for independent peer support for families and schools experiencing school refusal.



#### **Recommendation 14**

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

#### *Noted*

The Government acknowledges this the importance of this recommendation and notes that support is available for all people with a diagnosed mental disorder under the Better Access to Psychiatrists, Psychologists and General Practitioners through the Medicare Benefits Schedule (Better Access) initiative, funded by the DoHAC. Medicare rebates are available for up to 10 individual and 10 group mental health services per calendar year. More information on the Better Access initiative and eligibility requirements is available at [www.health.gov.au/our-work/better-access-initiative#who-can-access-better-access-rebates](http://www.health.gov.au/our-work/better-access-initiative#who-can-access-better-access-rebates).

People who have used all their Better Access services for the calendar year and need additional support may be eligible for other government funded services. The Government funds a range of free or low-cost services for people with or at risk of mental illness. These include regional services commissioned by Australia's 31 Primary Health Networks, a national network of Head to Health Adult Mental Health Centres. People can find contact details for their local PHN by visiting: [www.health.gov.au/initiatives-and-programs/phn/your-local-phn](http://www.health.gov.au/initiatives-and-programs/phn/your-local-phn).

Further, through the 2023–24 Budget, the Government is investing \$586.9 million in the mental health and suicide prevention system. This investment will lay the groundwork to make real, structural changes in response to the Better Access evaluation. It includes \$91.3 million to address critical shortages in the psychology workforce and \$17.8 million to upskill the broader health workforce in mental health. Improving the availability of the workforce will help ensure there is equity in service delivery, enabling longer-term reform.

### Australian Greens Senators' Additional Comments

**Recommendation 15**

Students, and parents as their advocates, are best placed to speak to and guide their own experiences. For this reason, a national school refusal strategy should be guided by and responsive to, the lived experiences of kids going through school refusal.

**Recommendation 16**

It is clear that for many students going through school refusal, the persistent inflexibility of the education system is highly problematic. To enable these students to achieve the best possible education outcomes, education systems and institutions need to be supported to fully embrace inclusive education principles and be open and willing to adapt for them. The federal government should take leadership in embedding this flexibility into the public school system.

**Recommendation 17**

In order for schools and teachers to accommodate and meet the needs of students refusing to go to school, funding needs to reflect the challenges of school refusal. School refusal should be made a priority equity cohort in the National School Reform Agreement. This could be done by accounting for absences within the Schooling Resource Standard loadings, with more support offered to teachers and students that require focused support.

**Recommendation 18**

Given the exclusion of education from the National Disability Insurance Scheme, state governments cannot vacate the field for neurodivergent students, who are disproportionately affected by school refusal. State governments should review the policy support they provide neurodivergent children to receive a quality and inclusive education and ensure it is funded adequately given the absence of National Disability Insurance Scheme support.

**Recommendation 19**

In light of the immediate need for support for the thousands of students, parents, and carers experiencing school refusal, the already existing but entirely voluntary advocacy group, School Can't Australia, should be provided funding as a priority until Recommendation 13 of the committee's report is implemented.

*Noted*

The Government's position on the Australian Greens' Senators Additional Comments has been addressed in the response in Recommendations 3, 5, 6, 11 and 13.

The Government notes Recommendation 18 falls within the responsibility of state and territory governments and the Government has referred the report to state and territory education authorities and the non-government school sector for consideration.

## Senate Standing Committee on Education and Employment

### *The issue of increasing disruption in Australian school classrooms: Final Report*

#### Final Report

- The Senate Standing Committee on Education and Employment (the Committee) released its final report from its Inquiry into the “The issue of increasing disruption in Australian school classrooms” on 7 February 2024.
- The final report focussed on work that had occurred since the interim report was released on 1 December 2023.
- This includes the release of the OECD’s latest Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) results, the first tranche of resources from the Australian Education Research Organisation’s (AERO’s) Engaged Classrooms Through Effective Classroom Management (Engaged Classrooms) project and the release of the Expert Panel’s Review to Inform a Better and Fairer Education System report.
- The committee states that it is encouraged by the recommendations of the Expert Panel and the release of AERO’s classroom management resources but is concerned by the latest PISA results and the stagnant and declining academic performance of Australian schools.
- The committee indicates that it believes that these issues deserve ongoing scrutiny and it recommends that the Senate tasks the committee to undertake an extensive inquiry into the performance of Australian schools overall, and makes the following, and only recommendation:

#### **Recommendation 1**

*The committee recommends that the Senate refer an inquiry into declining academic standards in Australian schools to the Education and Employment References Committee.*

*The terms of reference should include:*

- *students’ proficiency in literacy and numeracy;*
  - *the experience of principals, teachers and parents in meeting the challenge of raising academic standards;*
  - *the extent to which the experience of other countries with high or markedly high academic standards can inform Australian schools; and*
  - *what support could be provided to teachers and what improvements could be made to the Australian Curriculum to raise academic standards in Australian schools.*
- The Australian Government will provide a response to both the interim report and final report in due course.

### Greens Dissenting Report

- The Green submitted a dissenting report which forms part of the final report. It lists eight recommendations which are broad and cover fully funding schools, inclusion housing and poverty.
- Recommendations 1 to 3 can be addressed directly by the Department. The remaining five recommendations address socio-economic factors which occur outside of the classroom and may need to be addressed by other Australian Government departments.

#### **Recommendation 1 (raised in Interim Report)**

*The Australian Government deliver 100 per cent of the Schooling Resource Standard to all public schools at the beginning of the next National School Reform Agreement in 2025.*

#### **Recommendation 2**

*The Australian Government commit to ending segregated education within the decade, with an initial \$10 million to co-design a National Inclusive Education Transition Plan.*

#### **Recommendation 3**

*The Australian Government immediately implements in full the recommendations of the inquiry into the National Trend of School Refusal.*

#### **Recommendation 4**

*The Australian Government commit to substantial further investment in public, social and genuinely affordable housing in the 2024–25 Federal budget, including specific funding for youth and First Nations housing.*

#### **Recommendation 5**

*The Australian Government coordinates with the states and territories to freeze rental increases for two years, followed by a limit on rental increases of two per cent every two years.*

#### **Recommendation 6**

*The Australian Government immediately lift the base rate of all income support payments to \$88 a day, regardless of age.*

#### **Recommendation 7**

*The Australian Government make a national commitment to end child poverty.*

#### **Recommendation 8**

*The Australian Government undertake a review of the Parenting Payment (Single), with a view to increasing the allowance and improving eligibility to better support single-parent families and children, particularly those experiencing domestic and family violence; and expand coverage of the Parenting Payment (Single), so that eligible single parents remain eligible for the payment until their youngest child's 16th birthday.*

### Background

- On 28 November 2022 the Australian Senate referred the issue of increasing disruption in Australian school classrooms to the Senate Standing Committee on Education and Employment (the Committee) for inquiry. The Inquiry is a response to evidence that increasing disruption in Australian classrooms is contributing to a decline in literacy and numeracy results and impacting the health and wellbeing of school communities.
- The committee was to report by the first sitting day in July 2023. On 22 March 2023, the Senate granted the committee an extension of time to report until 16 November 2023. On 18 October 2023, the Senate agreed to further extend the reporting date to 6 December 2023 to allow the committee to gather further evidence and conclude its deliberations.
- On 1 December 2023, the committee released an interim report on 'The issue of increasing disruption in Australian school classrooms'. The report contained nine recommendations to address classroom disruption.

**Issue:** Teacher Workforce  
**PBS Pg No.** 23  
**MYEFO Pg No.** 235 (Strong Beginnings Fund)  
**Contact:** Meg Brighton  
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 the profession.
- Key data shows that the shortages are a culmination of a number of factors: a decline in application rates to study ITE; a decline in ITE completion rates; an increase in the intention to leave the workforce, and a consistent steady increase in student enrolments. Specifically:
  - The **number of school students** in Australia has increased by 12% since 2013 – in 2023 there were more than 4 million students, around 500,000 more than a decade ago. Over this period we saw a **20% increase in the number of secondary students**, compared to 6% for primary students, largely due to changes in the school level transition point (i.e. Year 7 moving into secondary schooling).
  - The **number of teachers** also has grown over that time. In 2023 there were around 311,000 teaching staff (FTE) compared to around 261,000 in 2013 – around a 20% increase. The growth in student numbers has been **matched by a 22% growth in secondary teacher numbers**, whereas primary teachers numbers have grown by 16%.
  - The **staff to teaching student ratio** has improved in the past 10 years. In 2013 there were as 13.9 students for every teacher; in 2023 there were 13.1. This improvement is driven by the primary sector.
- Notwithstanding this, we are concerned about supply – we know the number of school students will continue to grow, that the teacher workforce is aging, and fewer people are taking up teaching as a career.
  - By the end of this decade **there will be around one hundred and forty thousand more students in our schools**. Without taking account of any other factors (eg people retiring or leaving the profession), **this means we will need another 11,000 teachers than we have now**.
  - **More people are studying ITE than a decade ago** (in 2013 there were around 77,000 domestic students enrolled in ITE; in 2022 there were around 85,000) **BUT not everyone who enrolls goes on to complete their degree**. In 2023 there were around 17,900 ITE completions, and in 2022 there were similar numbers: around 17,500 ITE completions. Completions have flat-lined.

- The teacher workforce is ageing: according to the latest Census data, **30% of classroom teachers are aged over 50 years**. Interestingly, in 2021, **there were around 4,100 teachers older than 69 years** (compared to 1,500 in 2011).
- In recent years we have seen a **downshift in the proportion of teachers saying they will stay in the profession until they retire – this is consistent with broader labour market patterns, however, it adds to the supply challenge**. Historically around 60% of teachers planned to stick around to retirement; AITSL's latest survey shows this has dropped to around 30%.
- There are some green shoots:
- **We do not have national data on teacher vacancies** across the sector, but (for example) NSW has reported that it began Term 1 2024 with 460 fewer teacher vacancies than the same time last year (there were 1,782 teacher vacancies in the first week of this school year compared to 2,242 at the same time in 2023)
  - **Jobs and Skills Australia continues to identify teaching as a skills shortage priority** (for migration purposes).
- Following the agreement to the NTWAP, work has been underway in the 18 months since to take forward the 27 actions to address teacher workforce shortages. Many of these actions set the foundation for not only today's workforce shortage, but also set the building blocks for the future of the workforce.
- The data being collected for Actions 25 and 26 of the NTWAP will provide a long range forecast of the teacher workforce.
- 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, their wellbeing and future and the future of our economy.
- Early indicators are showing green shoots growth. Early commencement trends from some of the largest ITE providers from across Australia are showing There has been a 1% increase in commencements across all ITE courses in 2024 compared to the same time in 2023, led by strong preference for Masters-level qualifications showing a 15% increase in commencements.
- Key initiatives to address teacher workforce issues 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.
- Education Ministers are monitoring the implementation of the NTWAP Actions at every EMM.

- Complementing the NTWAP, states, territories and non-government education authorities are working at an operational level to address teacher workforce challenges. Some initiatives have been in place before NTWAP was agreed in 2022, and some have been implemented because of NTWAP. They are outlined in the Appendix of the NTWAP.
- The department is currently working with states, territories and non-government education authorities to prepare a progress update on the NTWAP, which will be published later this year.

### ***Additional information***

- Information about teacher salaries is available at [Attachment B](#).
- At the February 2023 Additional Estimates, in response to a question from Senator Davey, the Secretary committed to ask his state and territory counterparts for data relating to teacher shortages in regional, rural and remote areas. Information we have gathered so far includes:
  - **New South Wales** - as at 2 April 2024, 826 (715.80 FTE) permanent teacher vacancies were subject to recruitment across 969 public schools in regional and remote areas.
  - **Victoria** - in 2022, the Victorian Teacher Supply and Demand Report showed vacancy advertisements per 10 staff employed in public primary schools in inner regional locations was 5.1 and in outer regional and remote locations, 6.8. In public secondary schools in inner regional areas this number was 6.4 and outer regional and remote location, 7.5.
  - **Queensland** - in December 2023, vacancies in regional and remote areas account for 56.5% of the total current vacancies in the state.
  - **Western Australia** - noted that it is difficult to report and track exact numbers as principals can utilise several options to fill vacancies at the school level. Reporting is only available if principals make an application to the department to advertise/fill a vacancy.
- 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 (TEEP).
  - From the end of 2025, all ITE courses will be required to meet core content requirements. A new ITE Quality Assurance Board (currently being established) will oversee implementation of this change.
  - See [Attachment C](#) 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 on teacher wellbeing and student learning.
  - The Government is preparing a response to the inquiry.

### **Background**

- On 15 December 2022, Education Ministers agreed to NTWAP, which sets out 27 short, medium and long-term actions to address shortages.
- The NTWAP is focussed on improving supply, strengthening ITE, addressing workload, promoting the profession and improving our understanding of workforce needs.
- The Australian Government has allocated \$337 million over 4 years from 2022–23 to 2025–26 to support NTWAP initiatives.
  - See NTWAP Actions and funding summary at [Attachment A](#).

---

## Media

- ***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.

## Attachments

[Attachment A](#) – NTWAP actions and funding and expenditure status

[Attachment B](#) – Teacher salaries

[Attachment C](#) – Teacher Education Expert Panel recommendations

<b>Date Last Cleared</b>	30 May 2024
--------------------------	-------------

**National Teacher Workforce Action Plan – Funding and Expenditure to financial year 2025–26**

Action	Lead	Funding allocation to end of financial year 2025–26	Status of expenditure	Traffic light	
1a	More teaching places at universities in the right subjects and specialisations.	AG	\$159 million in Commonwealth funding.	Fully allocated.	Completed
1b	Improved data collection to inform prioritisation of places	NSW	N/A	N/A	On track
1b	Improved data collection to inform prioritisation of places	VIC	N/A	N/A	On track
2	5,000 scholarships worth up to \$40,000 each to help attract high quality candidates to the teaching profession.	AG	\$56.2 million in Commonwealth funding.	Nil 2023-24 budget allocation will be expended by 30 June 2024.	On track
3	1,500 more places in the High Achieving Teachers (HAT) Program	AG	\$68.3 million in Commonwealth funding  (note, \$70.9 allocated to phase two grant which covers from 2023-24 to 2026-27)	\$7.9 million committed.	On track
4a	Prioritise visa processing for qualified teachers and prioritise teachers from state and territory nominated visa allocations	AG	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	Completed
4b	Streamline overseas skills recognition	States and territories	In kind: all states and territories are contributing resources in efforts to streamline regulatory processes.	N/A	Completed
5	Prioritise conditional or provisional registration to increase the supply of teachers.	AG/AITSL	\$212,000 in Commonwealth funding	Fully allocated	Delayed (AITSL advice slightly delayed – expected mid 2024)
6	Teacher employers will look for opportunities to boost the number of permanent teachers, recognising the importance of permanency to secure jobs in creating a stable workforce.	Joint action	In-kind: States, territories and non-government peaks are working on strategies and actions to boost the number of permanent teachers and reduce casualisation.	N/A	Completed
7	States and territories to investigate the potential to promote teaching, mentoring and other opportunities to people who are registered but not currently working as teachers.	Joint action	In-kind: States and territories are working on strategies to attract former teachers back into the profession.	N/A	Completed

Please note, actions marked as completed have met all NTWAP reporting milestones. Work may still be ongoing at a national or operational level.

National Teacher Workforce Action Plan – Funding and Expenditure to financial year 2025–26

Action	Lead	Funding allocation to end of financial year 2025–26	Status of expenditure	Traffic light
8 The Teacher Education Expert Panel is reviewing initial teacher education (ITE) and will recommend ways to boost graduation rates, and broadly ensure graduating teachers are better prepared for the classroom	AG	\$6.4 million over 5 years as announced in the 2022-23 Budget (Outcome 1 PBS).	\$907,988 expended	Completed
9 Recognise previous study, work experience and skills that may be transferable to teaching.	AG/ACDE	The department is working with the Australian Council of Deans of Education via a variation to an existing contract to develop the framework. No new funding allocated to the project.	N/A	On track
10 Co-design actions to attract and retain more First Nations teachers.	AG	\$354,335 in Commonwealth funding allocated.  First Nations Language Education: \$14.1 Million (First Nations Languages in Schools bucket).	\$354,335 has been expended to support an initial phase of design work.  First Nations Language Education: \$540,000 (First Nations Languages in Schools bucket).	On track
11 In recognition that LANTITE should not be a barrier, all teaching students will undergo initial assessment of their personal literacy and numeracy skills in their first year to ensure they can receive targeted support if they need it.	AG	ACER was provided \$640,000 (GST excl) in additional Commonwealth funding to undertake the trial. No funding was allocated for this action under the NTWAP.	Australian Government funding for ACER and AITSL is fully allocated.	On track
12 Pilot new approaches to reduce teacher workload through a Workload Reduction Fund to maximise the value of a teacher's time.	AG	A total of \$30 million in Commonwealth funding was allocated through the Budget (the amount increased to \$30 million with jurisdictions having contributed funding for Action 23 – see below)  In Phase 2 of the WRF, \$26 million in Australian Government funding is available from 2023-24 to 2025-26.	\$4 million expended	On track

Please note, actions marked as completed have met all NTWAP reporting milestones. Work may still be ongoing at a national or operational level.

**National Teacher Workforce Action Plan – Funding and Expenditure to financial year 2025–26**

Action	Lead	Funding allocation to end of financial year 2025–26	Status of expenditure	Traffic light	
13	Build on work already underway to reduce unnecessary teacher workload, plan and collaborate and independently evaluate the effectiveness of these measures on teachers' time.	Joint action: states, territories and peak bodies	In-kind: States, 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	Completed
14	Develop national guidelines to support early career teachers and new school leaders including mentoring and induction.	AITSL	\$1.05 million in Commonwealth funding to develop draft guidelines.	Fully allocated	On track
15a	Develop and support career pathways which value teachers	Joint action	In-kind: States, 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	On track
15b	Reflect transitions in the Australian professional standards for teachers.	AITSL	\$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	Completed
16	Improve access to high-quality First Nations' cultural responsiveness resources to ensure teachers are better prepared to teach First Nations peoples in culturally safe ways.	Joint action: S/T, national peak bodies and ITE providers	In-kind: States, 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	Completed

Please note, actions marked as completed have met all NTWAP reporting milestones. Work may still be ongoing at a national or operational level.

**National Teacher Workforce Action Plan – Funding and Expenditure to financial year 2025–26**

Action	Lead	Funding allocation to end of financial year 2025–26	Status of expenditure	Traffic light	
17	Streamline (HALT) processes to make it less burdensome for teachers, set a target to increase the numbers of HALTs, and incorporate recognition of equivalent qualification and certification processes.	AITSL	On 25 November 2022 (prior to NTWAP), AESOC agreed to funding of \$425,149 for the NSW Government (working with AITSL) in 2022-23 from the National Project Fund.  A proposal for 50:50 cost sharing arrangements for quality assurance and moderation work to support the new HALT framework (totalling \$740,067) was agreed by EMM on 5 October 2023.	\$740,000 committed, noting the Commonwealth share is \$370,000.	On track
18a	Develop microcredentials to enhance teachers' access to quality professional development.	AG	\$10 million (total) in Commonwealth funding for 18a and 18b  Includes \$5 million from 2022–23 to 2025–26 (Commonwealth) for the development of the microcredentials	\$4.430 million expended	On track
18b	Expand the Quality Teaching Rounds to enhance teachers' access to quality professional development	AG	Same as 18a	Same as 18a	On track
19a	Examine how to support implementation of the Australian Curriculum.	ACARA	\$3 million in Commonwealth funding	\$3 million committed to ACARA	Delayed/paused.
19b	Advice on the frequency of the Australian Curriculum Review cycle.	ACARA	N/A	N/A	On track
20	Each initiative in the next National School Reform Agreement will be subject to a Teacher Workload Impact Assessment.	AG	In-kind: The Department is developing a draft tool for consultation ahead of implementation	N/A	Completed
21	Identify the most effective use of initial teacher education (ITE) students, teaching assistants and other non-teaching staff.	QLD	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	On track

Please note, actions marked as completed have met all NTWAP reporting milestones. Work may still be ongoing at a national or operational level.

**National Teacher Workforce Action Plan – Funding and Expenditure to financial year 2025–26**

Action	Lead	Funding allocation to end of financial year 2025–26	Status of expenditure	Traffic light	
22	Identify and assess the effectiveness of initiatives to support teacher retention.	AG	\$99,813 in Commonwealth funding for a consultant report to support Action 22.	\$99,813 expended	On track
23	A targeted national campaign to raise the status and value the role of teachers.	AG	\$10 million (\$5 million from the Commonwealth, remainder from jurisdictions)	As at 31 March 2024, \$9,126,975.35 (GST exclusive) (as per SB24-000167)	On track
24	Encourage members of the public to nominate teachers for Medals of the Order of Australia.	AG	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	Complete
25	Develop and publish nationally consistent teacher workforce projections based on consistent standards, disaggregated at a regional level and by subject specialisation, to enable a national understanding of teacher demand.	AITSL	\$4.442 million for Actions 25, 26, 27 in total  (\$2.221m from the Commonwealth, remainder from jurisdictions)	Australian Government funding for AITSL is fully allocated.	On track
26	Develop and publish nationally consistent initial teacher education (ITE) graduate supply data, including disaggregated by subject specialisation and participation in ITE at the regional level, to enable a national understanding of teacher supply.	AITSL	See action 25	See action 25	On track
27	Develop and publish data about teacher wellbeing and career intentions.	AITSL	See action 25	See action 25	On track

Please note, actions marked as completed have met all NTWAP reporting milestones. Work may still be ongoing at a national or operational level.

Teacher Salaries in Australia (current as at May 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)
NSW <sup>1</sup>	\$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%
Vic <sup>2</sup>	\$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%
Qld <sup>3</sup>	\$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%
WA <sup>4</sup>	\$78,397 (Increment 2.1)	\$125,850 (Level 3.2 Teacher)	06/12/2022	07/12/2022	05/12/2023	\$1,000	3.00%	3.00%	n/a	n/a
SA <sup>5</sup>	\$80,093 (Teacher Step 1)	\$133,250 (Lead Teacher)	01/05/2024	25/03/2024	25/03/2027	2.35%	2.35%	2.35%	4.00% (backpaid)	3.00%
Tas <sup>6</sup>	\$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%
ACT <sup>7</sup>	\$84,978 (Level 1)	\$121,038 (Experienced Level 8)	27/01/2024	07/07/2022	26/03/2026	3.00%	3.00%	1.50%	1.00% (plus \$3,000)	2.50% (plus \$1,500)
NT <sup>8</sup>	\$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: [Pay rates and forms for new employees and enterprise agreements \(education.sa.gov.au\)](#), [Enterprise Agreement 2024 | AEU \(SA Branch\) \(aeusa.asn.au\)](#)

<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 \(act.gov.au\)](#). These salaries do not include the additional payment made to Highly Accomplished and Lead Teachers, which is currently \$7,002 per annum.

<sup>8</sup> Source: [NTPS Non-contract Principals, Teachers and Assistant Teachers 2021 – 2024 Enterprise Agreement](#). These salaries do not include the additional payments made to Highly Accomplished Teachers (currently \$12,812 per annum) and to Lead Teachers, (currently \$26,828 per annum).



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

Rec	Proposed actions/milestones	EMM to consider	Authority and funding committed	Additional comments
1: Establish core content and mandate in national accreditation	<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>At the 11 December 2023 EMM Ministers approved the Addendum to the Accreditation of initial teacher education programs in Australia: Standards and Procedures by end 2025, noting in some jurisdictions further steps will be required to embed the additional standards.</li> <li>The addendum was published on AITSL's website at the end of 2023.</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>1. The brain and learning</li> <li>2. Effective pedagogical practices</li> <li>3. Classroom management</li> <li>4. Responsive teaching</li> </ol>
2: Embed core content in initial teacher education programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The core content must be embedded in all Initial Teacher Education programs before the end of 2025.</li> <li>AITSL is in regular communication with Teacher Regulatory Authorities on the changes to ITE programs.</li> </ul>			
3: Strengthen national quality and consistency of initial teacher education programs	<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>At the 11 December 2023 EMM Education Ministers agreed to establish an Initial Teacher Education Quality Assurance Oversight Board (Board) to strengthen the national quality and consistency of ITE programs.</li> </ul>	<p>The department has initiated processes to formalise all members' appointment to the new Board and prepare for their onboarding in a timely manner.</p>

Rec	Proposed actions/milestones	EMM to consider	Authority and funding committed	Additional comments
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Board to provide a report to EMM annually.</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>At the 26 April 2024 EMM Ministers approved the Board's ToR and agreed the composition of the Board's membership. Ministers also agreed to consider Tasmania's nomination to the Board out of session.</li> </ul>	
4: 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>		At the 11 December 2023 EMM Education Ministers agreed the Board will consult with the sector and develop an approach to reporting on nationally consistent, transparent indicators.	
5: 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>		At the 11 December 2023 EMM 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.
6: 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 the Transition Fund in 2024.</li> <li>Details regarding the delivery arrangements for the Excellence Fund, which will commence in 2025, will be made available at a later date.</li> </ul>		At the 11 December 2023 EMM 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.	An amendment to the <i>Higher Education Support Act 2003 Other Grants Guidelines</i> to enable delivery of the \$4.6 million Transition Fund has been signed by the Minister and was registered on the Federal Register of Legislation on 19 April 2024. All accredited higher education providers
7: Establish an Excellence Fund				

Rec	Proposed actions/milestones	EMM to consider	Authority and funding committed	Additional comments
to improve the 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.	have been invited to submit an application for Transition funding by 20 May 2024.  Under the Transition Fund, the Australian Government will provide \$4.6 million of grants to ITE providers in 2023-24 to 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	At the 11 December 2023 EMM 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>AITSL has been commissioned to develop draft guidelines, with consultation on the guidelines having taken place during the first quarter of 2024.</li> </ul>	June 2024	At the 6 July 2023 EMM Education Ministers agreed in-principle to all 14 recommendations from the Panel's Final Report, with four recommendations agreed for immediate action. This included	National guidelines should be developed to provide clear expectations and advice for consistent high-quality practical experience. The

Rec	Proposed actions/milestones	EMM to consider	Authority and funding committed	Additional comments
practical experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• AITSL intend to bring the guidelines for Ministers' approval by June 2024.</li> </ul>		<p>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 guidelines to improve the quality of practical experience in teaching.</p>	<p>guidelines would build on existing practical experience resources already being used in some jurisdictions.</p>
10: 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	<p>At the 11 December 2023 EMM Education Ministers agreed that state and territory Education Ministers will progress this in their own jurisdictions and report back to Ministers by June 2024.</p>	
11: 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	<p>At the 11 December 2023 EMM 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.</p>	<p>States and territories have responsibility for progressing professional recognition in their teacher registration requirements.</p>

Rec	Proposed actions/milestones	EMM to consider	Authority and funding committed	Additional comments
12: 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 professionals into the teaching profession.</li> </ul>		<p>At the 11 December 2023 EMM Education Ministers agreed that recommendation 12 will in part be implemented through the HAT Program Expansion Pilots.</p> <p>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.</p>	The Grant Opportunity Guidelines for the Phase 2 HAT Expansion Pilots closed on 22 May and applications are currently being assessed.
13: 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>		<p>At the 11 December 2023 EMM 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.</p>	<p>The campaign was launched on 31 October 2023. As at 31 March 2024 there have been:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Over 896,000 landing page views</li> <li>64 teacher stories published on the Be That Teacher online teacher gallery</li> <li>Over 19.7 million completed views of the video advertisement on social media channels</li> <li>Over 51.6 million completed views of the video advertisement on digital channels.</li> </ul>
14: 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> </ul>		<p>At the 11 December 2023 EMM 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</p>	The Grant Opportunity Guidelines for the Phase 2 HAT Expansion Pilots closed on 22 May and applications are currently being assessed.

Schools - Hot Topics (June 2024) - Hot Topic Briefs

Attachment C

Rec	Proposed actions/milestones	EMM to consider	Authority and funding committed	Additional comments
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <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>		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).	The next report from the ATWD on teacher workforce characteristics, including data from the Australia Teacher Workforce Survey, is due for publication in June 2024.