

# Corporate and Enabling Services

## Hot Topic Briefs

1	2024-25 Budget (May 2024)	SB24-000337
2	2023-24 MYEFO/PAES (February 2024)	SB24-000338
3	Contractors	SB24-000341
4	Contracts and Consultancies	SB24-000340
5	Grant Management	SB24-000343
6	Questions on Notice from 2024-25 Budget Estimates (June 2024)	SB24-000345
7	Workforce Data	SB24-000344

**Issue:** 2024-25 Budget (May 2024)  
**Contact:** Marcus Markovic  
Ph: s 22  
Deputy Secretary

## Key Points

### **2024–25 Budget – as published in the Portfolio Budget Statements (PBS) 2024–25**

- Measures tables appear on pages 22 and 23.
- Strategic Directions Statement (narrative) commences on page 11.
- Approximately \$62 billion<sup>1</sup> will be spent on programs.
  - \$15 billion for early childhood education and care (child care) (Programs 1.1 to 1.2, page 27 of the PBS).
  - \$30.5 billion for early learning and schools (Programs 1.3 to 1.5, pages 27 and 28 of the PBS).
  - \$16.5 billion for higher education, research and international (Programs 2.1 to 2.8, page 47 and 48 of the PBS).
- Over the forward estimates to 2027–28 the Government has committed to an estimated \$256.8 billion in funding.
  - \$64 billion for early childhood education and care (child care).
  - \$128.8 billion for early learning and schools.
  - \$64 billion for higher education, research and international.
- Summary funding table showing change from 2023–24 to 2024–25 and over related Forward Estimates periods.

Group	2023-24 (\$ billion)*	2024-25 (\$ billion)	% change	2023-24 to 2026-27* (\$ billion)	2024-25 to 2027-28 (\$ billion)	% change
ECY	13.6	15.0	9.3	58.8	64.0	8.1
Schools	29.2	30.5	4.3	122.2	128.8	5.1
HERI	14.6	16.5	11.5	59.0	64.0	7.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>57.4</b>	<b>62.0</b>	<b>7.4</b>	<b>240.0</b>	<b>256.8</b>	<b>6.5</b>

\*as updated at Portfolio Additional Estimates 2023–24.

<sup>1</sup> The program expenditure totals include:

- Administered programs managed by the department
- Appropriations managed by Treasury relating to specific purpose payments and National Partnership payments in schools
- Does not include amounts not published (ie NFP items).

## Reprioritisation

- Relevant Budget documents: Budget Paper No. 2.
- The Accord is listed in Cross Portfolio measures – pages 62-64
  - The cost of this measure will be partially met from the following savings:
    - \$57.2 million over 4 years from Destination Australia Program (refer QB24-000080)
    - \$8.0 million over 4 years from Quality Indicators for Learning and Teaching Programs (refer QB24-000080)
- Education measures appear pages 86-89
  - Child Care Subsidy Reform – further measures for strong and sustainable foundations. (Integrity Measure)
    - \$410.7 million (net savings) will be redirected to support other Government policy priorities in the Education Portfolio.
    - This measure will contribute, in part or in full, to the following:
  - Closing the Gap – Education.
    - The Government has already provided partial funding for this measure. The cost of this measure will be partially met from savings identified in the Education Portfolio.
  - *Inclusion Support Program – additional funding.*
    - The cost of this measure will be met from a reprioritisation of funding from the 2024–25 Budget measure titled Child Care Subsidy Reform – further measures for strong and sustainable foundations.
  - *School Education Support.*
    - The Government will partially offset these costs by redirecting \$29.4 million over 4 years from 2024–25 from the 2018–19 MYEFO measure titled National School Reform Agreement – Commonwealth contribution to national policy incentives.
    - The remaining costs of this measure will be partially met from within the existing resourcing of the Department of Education and savings identified in the Education Portfolio.

## **Estimates Variations**

- Relevant Budget documents: Budget Paper No.1 pages 97 and 98
  - Child Care Subsidy Payment (bottom of page 97) - \$621.1 million increase largely reflecting additional support to families due to higher care costs.
  - Payments to Non-government schools (page 98) - \$136.7 million increase due to revised enrolment projections.
  - Payments to Government schools (page 98) - \$209.0 million increase largely due to increased number of students attracting a 'student with disability' loading.
- There are also variations across a range of other programs due to indexation and parameter adjustments which are reflected in the relevant program expense tables in the PBS.

## **Movement of Funds**

- Movement of Funds outcomes are published in the following:
  - 2024–25 Budget PBS
    - Outcome 1 – page 29
    - Outcome 2 – page 49
  - 2023–24 PAES
    - Outcome 1 – page 29
    - Outcome 2 – page 39

## Terminating Measures

- Relevant Publication: PBS
  - Program 1.4 – page 37
    - Non-Government Representative Bodies
    - SA Non-Government Schools – one off transition.
  - Program 1.5 – pages 42 & 43
    - Engaged Classrooms
    - National Consent Survey
    - Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM)
    - Student Wellbeing Boost
    - First Nation Education.
  - Program 2.1 – page 51
    - HESA Transition Fund Loading.
  - Program 2.3 – page 55
    - National Microcredentials Marketplace
    - Central Coast Health and Wellbeing Precinct
    - Jobs and Growth in Tasmania.
  - Program 2.6 – page 61
    - Centre for Augmented Reasoning
    - Enhance Research Capacity of Regional Universities (refer QB24-000079)
    - Strategic University Fund (refer QB24-000079).

## Media

NIL

<b>Date Last Cleared</b>	30 October 2024
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**Issue:** 2023-24 MYEFO/PAES (February 2024)  
**PAES Pg No.** 9, 10, 11, 12, 16, 27, 28 & 39  
**MYEFO Pg No.** 226, 227, 233, 234, 235, 236, 271, 272, 273, 274  
**Contact:** Marcus Markovic  
Ph: s 22  
Deputy Secretary

## Key Points

### ***2023–24 MYEFO measures – as published in the Mid-Year Economic and Fiscal Outlook (MYEFO) 2023–24***

- Approximately \$57.4 billion<sup>1</sup> will be spent on programs including:
  - \$13.6 billion for early childhood education and care (child care) (Programs 1.1 to 1.2, page 27 of the PAES)
  - \$29.2 billion for early learning and schools (Programs 1.3 to 1.5, pages 27 & 28 of the PAES)
  - \$14.6 billion for higher education, research and international (Programs 2.1 to 2.8, page 39 of the PAES).
- Over the forward estimates to 2026–27 the Government has committed to an estimated \$240.0 billion in funding including:
  - \$58.8 billion for early childhood education and care (child care)
  - \$122.2 billion for early learning and schools
  - \$59.0 billion for higher education, research and international.

### ***MYEFO measures***

- The measures table for the department commences on page 16 of the PAES and page 233 of the MYEFO. A narrative can be found on pages 9-12 of the PAES.
- Outcome 1 led:
  - Child Care – additional support. \$75.8 million over 2 years from 2023–24 to support the child care system (MYEFO page 234, PAES page 10 and ECY SB23-000564):
    - \$73.8 million in 2023–24 to help child care services increase their capacity to support inclusion of children with disabilities and additional needs by providing funding support for an additional educator at services where children with disabilities or additional needs are enrolled
    - \$2.0 million over 2 years from 2023–24 to support Services Australia to deliver Child Care Subsidy payments

<sup>1</sup> The program expenditure totals include:

- Administered programs managed by the department
- Appropriations managed by Treasury relating to specific purpose payments and National Partnership payments in schools
- Does not include amounts not published (ie NFP items).

- The cost of this measure will be partially met from a reprioritisation of funding from the 2023–24 MYEFO measure titled *Education – reprioritisation* (MYEFO page 234, PAES page 10).
- South Australian Non-Government Schools – one-off transition assistance (MYEFO page 235, PAES page 10 and Schools SB24-000027(DB)):
  - \$24.2 million in 2023–24 to provide one-off transition assistance to non-government schools in South Australia that offer 18 month foundation year programs.
- Strong Beginnings Fund \$7.1 million over 4 years from 2023–24 (\$1.0 million ongoing) (MYEFO pages 235 & 236, PAES page 10 and Schools SB24-000012) to improve the quality and performance of initial teacher education programs in the higher education sector, in line with the recommendations of the *Strong Beginnings: Report of the Teacher Education Expert Panel*:
  - \$4.6 million in 2023–24 to support the implementation of new tertiary course requirements for initial teacher education programs by the end of 2025
  - \$2.5 million over 2 years from 2025–26 (and \$1.0 million per year ongoing) to support higher education providers improve the delivery of initial teacher education programs across the sector
  - The cost of this measure will be met from a reprioritisation of funding from the 2022–23 October Budget measure titled *Teacher Shortages* and the 2021–22 Budget measure titled *Schools and Youth – supporting students, teachers and young Australians*.
- Outcome 2 led:
  - Australian Universities Accord Interim Report – response to the immediate actions identified in the Australian Universities Accord Interim Report. \$102.6 million over 4 years from 2023–24 (MYEFO page 233 and HERI SB23-000569/575):
    - \$34.4 million over 4 years from 2023–24 (and \$10.5 million per year ongoing) to establish up to 20 additional Regional University Study Centres (Regional University Study Hubs) to improve access to tertiary education for regional and remote students, taking the number of Regional University Study Hubs to a total of 54 by 2026 (PAES page 10)

- \$34.1 million over 4 years from 2023–24 (and \$323.5 million over 11 years to 2033–34) to extend demand driven Commonwealth supported places to all First Nations university students from 2024 (PAES page 11)
  - \$32.5 million over 4 years from 2023–24 (and \$9.3 million per year ongoing) to establish up to 14 Tertiary Education Hubs (Suburban University Study Hubs) to provide in-person support and an alternative to on-campus study for higher education and vocational education and training students in outer metropolitan and peri-urban areas (PAES page 11)
  - \$1.1 million over 4 years from 2023–24 to remove the 50% pass rule retrospectively from 1 January 2023 and to increase reporting on student outcomes (PAES page 11)
  - \$0.5 million in 2023–24 for the Department of Education to work with state and territory governments to strengthen the institutional governance of universities (PAES page 11).
- All: Education – reprioritisation. Savings of \$111.9 million over 4 years from 2023–24 across the Education portfolio (MYEFO pages 234-235, PAES pages 17 and 21, and HERI SB23-000575):
    - \$56.3 million over 4 years from 2023–24 (and \$20.7 million per year ongoing) by ceasing the Regional Research Collaboration Program (OC2)
    - \$46.2 million over 4 years from 2023–24 by redirecting funding from Australia’s Economic Accelerator program (OC2)
    - \$6.2 million in 2023–24 by redirecting funding from the Higher Education and Offshore Microcredentials program (OC2)
    - \$2.0 million over 4 years from 2023–24 by rescoping initiatives from the 2022–23 October Budget measure titled Child Care Subsidy Reforms Integrity Package (OC1)
    - \$1.2 million over 3 years from 2023–24 by redirecting funding from the Destination Australia program (OC2)
    - The savings from this measure will be redirected to fund other policy priorities in the Education portfolio.



- Cross Portfolio measures
  - Employment White Paper (OC2):
    - \$5.6 million in 2023–24 to develop a business case for a National Skills Passport, in consultation with employers, unions, the tertiary education sector and governments (MYEFO page 227, (PAES page 11)
    - \$1.7 million over 4 years from 2023–24 to turbocharge TAFE Centres of Excellence to drive uptake of higher apprenticeships and undertake consultation to develop degree-level higher apprenticeships in the priority areas of net zero transformation, the care sector and advanced digitalisation (MYEFO page 226, (PAES page 11).
- Other Portfolio measures
  - Supporting Australian Communities Affected by the Hamas-Israel Conflict (OC1):
    - \$6.0 million in 2023–24 for mental health and wellbeing support to students in Jewish and Islamic schools, and students of Jewish and Islamic faith, recognising the impact of the ongoing conflict on young people in these communities (MYEFO page 274, (PAES page 10).
  - Migration System Integrity (OC2):
    - \$3.8 million (1.0 million to TEQSA) in 2023–24 to strengthen the international education sector and combat exploitation of international students (MYEFO pages 271 & 272, (PAES page 12)
    - \$24.9 million over 4 years from 2023–24 to reshape international student pathways and improve integrity in the international education sector, including redesigning language and application requirements for international students to raise language proficiency and to enhance monitoring and enforcement of student visa conditions (MYEFO page 273).

## Media

- Nil

<b>Date Last Cleared</b>	30 September 2024
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**Issue:** Contracts and Consultancies  
**Contact:** Marcus Markovic  
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 Deputy Secretary – Corporate and Enabling

## Key Points

**Table 1: Non-Consultancy Contracts and Consultancy Contracts on AusTender**

	<i>Education Commenced 1 July 2024 to 30 September 2024*</i>		<i>Education - Commenced 2023–24 FY *</i>	
	#	Total Contract Value	#	Total Contract Value
<b>Non-Consultancy Contracts</b>				
<i>Administered</i>	12	\$1,757,088	105	\$120,197,240
<i>Departmental</i>	42	\$17,316,790	223	\$42,707,810
<b>Total contracts</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>\$19,073,878</b>	<b>328</b>	<b>\$162,905,051</b>
<b>Consultancy Contracts</b>				
<i>Administered</i>	-	-	11	\$3,710,917
<i>Departmental</i>	2	\$859,660	39	\$11,076,787
<b>Total consultancies</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>\$859,660</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>\$14,787,704</b>
<b>Totals: <sup>1</sup></b>	<b>56</b>	<b>\$19,933,538</b>	<b>378</b>	<b>\$177,692,755</b>

Note: Minor discrepancies in totals are due to rounding of individual lines.

\*Contracts and consultancies over \$10,000 GST inclusive as on AusTender. AusTender data extracted 1 October 2024 (commenced date data).

### Consultancy Contracts

- Consultants are defined (as per RMG 423) as the provision of professional, independent advice and other strategic services that:
  - involve the development of an intellectual output which represents the independent view of the Service Provider
  - assists with entity decision-making.
- The top 10 consultancy contracts (by value) that **commenced** in the financial year 2023–24 and 2024–25 as at 30 September 2024 are listed in Attachment A.

<sup>1</sup> Contract data is dynamic - changes occur throughout the term of the contract through reportable variation, including cancellation of reported contracts, which impacts the number and/or value of contracts reported on AusTender.

- The top 10 consultancy contracts (by value) **active** in financial year 2023–24 and financial year 2024–25 as at 30 September 2024 are listed in Attachment B.
- As at 30 September 2024, Education had a total of 341 **active contracts** with the value of **\$928,585,365**:
  - 28 consultancies valued at \$33,808,743, and
  - 313 non-consultancies contracts valued at \$894,776,622.

**Table 2: Education - Reasons for consultancy contracts as a proportion to the number of contracts – commenced between 1 July 2024 to 30 September 2024**

Reasons for consultancy	Contracts Commenced 1 July 2024 to 30 September 2024*	Contracts Commenced 2023–24 FY*
Need for independent research or assessment	-	52%
Need for specialised or professional skills	100%	44%
Skills currently unavailable within agency	-	4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

\*AusTender data (administered and departmental) extracted 30 September 2024 for consultancies over \$10,000 GST inclusive.

**Table 3: Education - Categories for consultancy contracts commenced between 1 July 2024 to 30 September 2024**

Category	Contracts commenced 1 July 2024 to 30 September 2024*		Contracts commenced 2023–24 FY*	
	%	Total Value (GST incl)	%	Total Value (GST incl)
Management advisory services	100%	\$859,660	92%	\$13,628,429
Research programs	-	-	6%	\$807,675
Business administration services	-	-	1%	\$135,100
Human resources services	-	-	1%	\$124,700
Corporate objectives or policy development	-	-	<1%	\$72,000
Audit services	-	-	<1%	\$19,800
<b>Total:</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>\$859,660</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>\$14,787,704</b>

\*AusTender data (administered and departmental) extracted 30 September 2024 for consultancies over \$10,000 GST inclusive.

**Table 4: Education - Categories for consultancy contracts active in 2023–24 and between 1 July 2024 to 30 September 2024**

Category	Contracts Active in 1 July to 30 September 2024*		Contracts Active in FY 2023–24*	
	%	Total Value (GST incl)	%	Total Value (GST incl)
Management advisory services	66%	\$22,272,704	60%	\$26,684,795
Education and training services	31%	\$10,400,500	23%	\$10,400,500
Research programs	2%	\$659,284	15%	\$6,677,980
Development finance	1%	\$356,255	1%	\$356,255
Audit services	<1%	\$120,000	<1%	\$139,800
Business administration services	-	-	<1%	\$135,100
Human resources services	-	-	<1%	\$124,700
Corporate objectives or policy development	-	-	<1%	\$72,000
<b>Total:</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>\$33,808,743</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>\$44,591,130</b>

\*AusTender data extracted (administered and departmental) 30 September 2024 for consultancies over \$10,000 GST inclusive.

**Table 5: Education - Expenditure on Top 10 consultancy vendors active between 1 July 2024 to 30 September 2024**

Vendor Names	Total value of active contracts (GST incl)	Expenditure Value (GST incl)
Parkville Institute Ltd	\$10,400,500	\$1,705,000
SNAICC	\$6,644,143	-
KPMG	\$2,692,540	\$90,592
Accenture Australia	\$2,309,614	\$1,883,914
BDO Services Pty Ltd	\$2,200,000	\$239,152
The Nous Group	\$2,189,660	\$239,350
Deloitte	\$1,818,373	\$148,285
Australian Academy Of Technology	\$990,000	-
Acil Allen Consulting Pty Ltd	\$989,244	-
Dandolo Partners	\$956,901	\$218,659
<b>Total:</b>	<b>\$31,109,975</b>	<b>\$4,524,953</b>

Note: Some top vendors have nil expenditure for 2024–25 Financial year as at 30 September 2024.

**Table 6: Education - Expenditure on Top 10 consultancy vendors active in 2023–24 FY**

<b>Vendor Names</b>	<b>Expenditure Value (GST incl)</b>
Parkville Institute Ltd	\$2,970,000
SNAICC	\$2,028,896
Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu	\$1,748,506
BDO Services Pty Ltd	\$974,546
Ernst And Young	\$808,405
Meld Studios	\$807,675
Acil Allen Consulting Pty Ltd	\$745,215
KPMG	\$513,562
Minter Ellison - Act	\$495,000
The Nous Group	\$439,269
<b>Total:</b>	<b>\$11,531,073</b>

*Note: Minor discrepancies in totals are due to rounding of individual lines.*

- Figures as in the 2023–24 Annual Report (not yet published) noting the Annual Report includes the top 5 by value or those organisations receiving more than 5% of total expenditure which cuts in at \$745,215. Hence the last 3 rows of this table are not captured in the Annual Report.

**Table 7: Education - Expenditure on Top 10 Non-consultancy vendors active between 1 July 2024 to 30 September 2024**

<b>Vendor Names</b>	<b>Total value of active contracts (GST incl)</b>	<b>Expenditure Value (GST incl)</b>
Ku Children's Services	\$247,544,235	\$8,915,513
Community Child Care Association	\$88,881,067	\$3,659,476
Teach For Australia	\$63,134,500	-
Education Services Australia Ltd	\$55,830,848	\$22,196
The Social Research Centre	\$46,039,183	\$7,943,620
Australian Council for Educational	\$41,526,303	\$5,488,781
Communicare Inc	\$39,931,882	\$1,592,306
Autism Spectrum Australia (Aspect) Autism Spectrum Australia (Aspect)	\$33,385,000	\$1,661,000
Gowrie SA Lady Gowrie Child Centre Inc	\$31,653,231	\$1,259,376
Latrobe University	\$20,897,333	-
<b>Total:</b>	<b>\$668,823,582</b>	<b>\$30,542,268</b>

**Table 8: Education - Expenditure on Top 10 Non-consultancy vendors active in 2023–24 FY**

<b>Vendor Names</b>	<b>Total value of active contracts (GST incl)</b>	<b>Expenditure Value (GST incl)</b>
Ku Children's Services	\$247,544,235	\$25,671,425
Community Child Care Association	\$88,881,067	\$9,173,714
The Social Research Centre	\$84,143,211	\$19,937,918
Teach for Australia	\$63,134,500	\$10,450,000
Education Services Australia Ltd	\$61,649,152	\$4,400,780
Australian Council for Educational	\$41,775,569	\$3,991,270
Communicare Inc	\$39,931,882	\$4,434,084
Autism Spectrum Australia (Aspect) Autism Spectrum Australia (Aspect)	\$33,385,000	\$6,289,800
Gowrie Sa Lady Gowrie Child Centre Inc	\$31,653,231	\$3,156,470
Early Childhood Australia	\$30,646,870	\$1,823,920
<b>Total:</b>	<b>\$722,744,717</b>	<b>\$89,329,381</b>

**Non-Consultancy Contracts**

- The top 10 non-consultancy contracts (by value), that commenced in the financial year 2024–25 as at 30 September 2024 and the 2023–24 financial year, are listed at [Attachment C](#).

**Table 9: Education - Categories for non-consultancy contracts commenced between 1 July 2024 to 30 September 2024 and 2023–24 FY**

Category	Contracts Commenced 1 July 2024 to 30 September 2024 *		Contracts Commenced 2023–24 FY*	
	%	Total Value (GST incl)	%	Total Value (GST incl)
Temporary personnel services	41%	\$7,303,011	9%	\$14,256,138
Insurance and retirement services	25%	\$4,477,685	-	-
Computer services	14%	\$2,461,030	10%	\$16,458,574
Software	8%	\$1,327,000	<1%	\$163,240
Personnel recruitment	5%	\$793,898	2%	\$2,545,307
Research programs	2%	\$417,537	14%	\$23,573,975
Education and training services	1%	\$220,609	1%	\$2,275,050
Legal services	1%	\$188,792	2%	\$3,110,000
Strategic planning consultation services	1%	\$165,000	-	-
Human resources services	1%	\$133,980	1%	\$1,266,346
Management advisory services	<1%	\$67,200	3%	\$5,683,649
Travel facilitation	<1%	\$45,000	2%	\$3,305,346
Psychologists services	<1%	\$30,000	-	-
Project management	-	-	17%	\$28,380,193
Corporate objectives or policy development	-	-	13%	\$21,515,579
Data services	-	-	12%	\$19,836,641
Advertising	-	-	5%	\$7,480,000
Project administration or planning	-	-	3%	\$4,861,674
Management support services	-	-	1%	\$2,398,513

Category	Contracts Commenced 1 July 2024 to 30 September 2024 *		Contracts Commenced 2023–24 FY*	
	%	Total Value (GST incl)	%	Total Value (GST incl)
Audit services	-	-	1%	\$1,898,229
Graphic design	-	-	1%	\$975,440
Market research	-	-	<1%	\$842,766
Printing	-	-	<1%	\$450,000
Information services	-	-	<1%	\$243,289
Statistics	-	-	<1%	\$201,300
Other	-	-	1%	\$1,183,803
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>\$17,630,743</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>\$162,905,051</b>



**The 'Big Seven' Contracts**

**Table 10A: Education - The 'Big Seven' contracts commenced in 2023–24 and between 1 July 2024 to 30 September 2024**

	Education - <i>Commenced</i> 1 July 2024 to 30 September 2024		Education - <i>Commenced</i> 2023–24 FY	
	#	Total Contract Value	#	Total Contract Value
<b>Non-consultancy Contracts</b>				
<i>Accenture</i>	-	-	-	-
<i>Boston Consulting Group</i>	-	-	-	-
<i>Deloitte</i>	2	\$1,899,050	6	\$2,580,726
<i>Ernst &amp; Young</i>	-	-	1	\$40,000
<i>KPMG</i>	-	-	5	\$222,110
<i>McKinsey</i>	-	-	-	-
<i>PWC</i>	-	-	-	-
<b>Total contracts</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>\$1,899,050</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>\$2,842,836</b>
<b>Consultancies</b>				
<i>Accenture</i>	-	-	1	\$2,309,614
<i>Boston Consulting Group</i>	-	-	-	-
<i>Deloitte</i>	-	-	3	\$668,706
<i>Ernst and Young</i>	-	-	6	\$1,613,729
<i>KPMG</i>	-	-	1	\$2,692,540
<i>McKinsey</i>	-	-	-	-
<i>PWC</i>	-	-	-	-
<b>Total consultancies</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>\$7,284,589</b>
<b>Totals</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>\$1,899,050</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>\$10,127,425</b>

- Education contracts with the Big Seven at a value of \$1,899,050 represents 10% of the total of all contracts **commenced** for financial year 2024–25 as at 30 September 2024.
- Education contracts with the Big Seven at a value of \$10,127,425 represents 6% of the total of all contracts **commenced** in financial year 2023–24.
- Top 10 contracts for the financial years are listed in Attachment D.

**Table 10B: Education - The ‘Big Seven’ contracts active in 2023–24 and between 1 July 2024 to 30 September 2024**

	Education - Active 1 July 2024 to 30 September 2024		Education – Active 2023–24 FY	
	#	Total Contract Value	#	Total Contract Value
<b>Non-consultancy Contracts</b>				
<i>Accenture</i>	-	-	-	-
<i>Boston Consulting Group</i>	-	-	-	-
<i>Deloitte</i>	5	\$3,741,331	7	\$2,909,488
<i>Ernst &amp; Young</i>	1	\$38,888	1	\$40,000
<i>KPMG</i>	8	\$564,610	12	\$802,010
<i>McKinsey</i>	-	-	-	-
<i>PWC</i>	1	\$400,000	2	\$468,750
<b>Total contracts</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>\$4,744,830</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>\$4,220,248</b>
<b>Consultancies</b>				
<i>Accenture</i>	1	\$2,309,614	1	\$2,309,614
<i>Boston Consulting Group</i>	-	-	-	-
<i>Deloitte</i>	2	\$1,818,373	7	\$3,424,491
<i>Ernst &amp; Young</i>	2	\$735,196	6	\$1,613,729
<i>KPMG</i>	1	\$2,692,540	2	\$3,775,020
<i>McKinsey</i>	-	-	-	-
<i>PWC</i>	-	-	1	\$210,000
<b>Total Contracts</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>\$7,555,723</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>\$11,332,855</b>
<b>Totals:</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>\$12,300,552</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>\$15,553,103</b>

**Indigenous Procurement Policy (IPP)**

- The 2024–25 financial year IPP target for the Education portfolio has been preliminarily set by the National Indigenous Australians Agency (NIAA) at \$3.338 million and 19 contracts.

**Table 11. IPP Performance for 2024–25 FY and 2023–24 FY**

IPP Performance Target	Financial Year 2024–25		Financial Year 2023–24	
	Annual Target	Actual YTD	Target	Actual
(a) Total number of contracts	19	4	21	33
(b) Total value of contracts	\$3.338m	\$500,875	\$2.119m	\$3.271m

- The Annual Report includes AusTender data only. Data includes multi-year contracts.

**Modern Slavery**

- The Australian Government established the *Modern Slavery Act 2018* (the Act) to combat modern slavery in the domestic and global supply chains of goods and services in Australia.
- The department has had no cause to respond to any case of modern slavery.
- No increased portfolio supply chain risks have been identified during the 2023–24 financial year in relation to ICT procurements, which are undertaken by the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations (DEWR) on behalf of the department.
  - DEWR advises its ICT Procurement team has had no cause to respond to any reports of modern slavery.
  - DEWR further advises that suppliers are made aware of their responsibilities with the inclusion of a modern slavery clause and there have been no issues reported with suppliers signing work orders and contracts that have included a clause.

**Table 12: Contracts not Published within 42 Days on AusTender**

Reporting Requirement Breached	Education - Published from 1 July 2024 to 30 September 2024*	Education - Published 2023–24 FY*
42-day AusTender Reporting instances	11	48

- Breaches of the Commonwealth Procurement Rules are recorded against section 105B of the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013*.

- The department undertakes assurance steps prior to contract publishing to reduce instances of non-compliance. This has included an email from the CFO reminding staff of their obligations under the PGPA Act, this email included a step by step guide on how to ensure their contract is published on time.
- The department reviews all AusTender contract notices for compliance with publishing requirements.
- Identified instances of non-compliance are recorded in the Financial Management Compliance System (FMCS) however these may not align to the number of contracts that appear non-compliant on AusTender due to system reporting issues.

### ***Actions taken***

- In each instance, the breaching official and their SES manager have been notified and training offered to the breaching official.
- The Executive Board receives quarterly reporting on non-compliance.

### ***Senate Standing Committee on Finance and Public Administration - Inquiry into Management and Assurance of Integrity by Consulting Services***

- Education was invited to provide a submission to Senate Standing Committee on Finance and Public Administration - Inquiry into Management and Assurance of Integrity by Consulting Services. The department provided a submission on 19 May 2023.
- The department responded to Inquiry Questions on Notice. IQ23-000007 refers.

### ***Australia National Audit Office (ANAO) Audits related to Procurement***

- Outcomes from the ANAO's recent publications (April 2023) have been evaluated against Education procurement policies and procedures, with no issues identified.
  - *Audit Insights - Procurement and contract management and the Auditor-General Report No. 19 (2022–23) Procurement Complaints Handling.*
- The department is proactive in critically analysing both internal and external audit reports, including the Independent Review of Services Australia and National Disability Insurance Agency procurement and contracting, and the ANAO report into the Digital Transformation Agency procurement of ICT related services, and taking actions to incorporate recommendations into our practices and guidance material.

### ***Conflict of interest (Col) in procurement***

- The department's **AAI 1.8 – Disclosure of Interests** places a duty on all “workers” to disclose interests relating to the affairs of the department to not undermine the confidence and trust in dealings with the department, and the Commonwealth more broadly.
- The department has a comprehensive policy for the management of Col which complies with the Australian Public Service (APS) Code of Conduct, Public Service Act and Regulations.
- The Col Policy applies to all “workers” which covers:
  - all ongoing and non-ongoing SES and non-SES APS employees
  - contractors and consultants engaged by the department
  - board, committee, and panel members, including grant assessors and external advisors working for the department.
- Terms and conditions contained within the Commonwealth Contracting Suite and Panel Deeds require suppliers to declare any real or perceived Col that might arise relevant to the performance of their obligations under the contract.
- The department engaged the Australian Government Solicitor to carry out a review of Col Policy and processes.
  - The advice confirmed the department has satisfactory policies and processes to manage conflicts of interest and provided some recommendations to further strengthen outcomes. As a result:
  - Col clauses in our contract templates have been further strengthened.
  - The department has revised its Col Policy in response.
- We have established a *Conflict-of-Interest Hub*, where declarations from departmental staff, consultants, labour hire workers and other specified personnel are stored centrally.

### ***Commonwealth Procurement Rules – Department of Finance issued changes commencing 1 July 2024***

- The Department of Finance released updates to the CPRs on 1 July 2024 further reinforcing the Government's commitment to sourcing from Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) and opening the door to more opportunities for businesses that contribute to Australia's economy.
- From July, a new, higher target will be introduced to source 25% of procurements below \$1 billion, and 40% of procurements below \$20 million, from SMEs. In addition, the Government is making it

easier for entities to procure from small and medium businesses by raising the SME exemption threshold to \$500,000.

- Five per cent of agencies' spending on services through the MAS and People Panels can also now be sourced directly to First Nations businesses who are not on those panels through a new Flexibility Allowance, further enhancing the opportunities for First Nations businesses.
- The Procurement and Grant Policy and Services team have updated the department's procurement intranet pages and guidance to reflect the updates to the Commonwealth Procurement Rules (CPRs) with input sought from the newly established Procurement Guidance Reference Group (PGRG)

## Media

### ***Finance's 'basic' spreadsheet error triggers reform calls, The Australian Financial Review, 8 April 2024.***

The federal Finance department failed to remove hidden tabs in a master spreadsheet, exposing confidential pricing data, a review has found, as vendors called for reform of the \$70 billion tender system.

Commonwealth ombudsman Michael Manthorpe found that human error led to the mistaken release in February of sensitive pricing data for all 410 consulting vendors.

## Attachments

Attachment A – Top 10 Consultancy Contracts commenced in Financial Year 2023–2024 and 2024–2025

Attachment B – Top 10 Consultancy Contracts Active in Financial Year 2023–24

Attachment C – Top 10 Non-consultancy contracts (by value) commenced in Financial Year 2024–25 and Financial Year 2023–2024

Attachment D – Big Seven contracts commenced in Financial Year 2024–25 and Financial Year 2023–24.

<b>Date Last Cleared</b>	05 November 2024
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**Education - Top 10 consultancy contracts (by value) commenced in financial year 2024–25 (data as at 30 September 2024)**

Rank	CN ID	Group	Start Date	End Date	Contract Value	Funding Source	Description	Category	Supplier Name
1	CN4093168	Higher Education, Research and International	22-Jul-24	31-Oct-24	\$759,660	Departmental	Program Management Support	Management advisory services	The Nous Group
2	CN4091262	Higher Education, Research and International	18-Jul-24	13-Jun-25	\$100,000	Departmental	Independent actuarial modelling and costings of potential policy changes to the Higher Education Loan Program (HELP)	Management advisory services	Australian Government Actuary

**Education - Top 10 consultancy contracts (by value) commenced in financial year 2023-24  
(data as at 30 September 2024)**

Rank	CN ID	Group	Start Date	End Date	Contract Value	Funding Source	Description	Category	Supplier Name
1	CN4015398	Corporate and Enabling Services	23-Oct-23	30-Jun-26	\$2,692,540	Departmental	Independent Project Assurance Services	Management advisory services	KPMG
2	CN4042628	Higher Education, Research and International	26-Feb-24	30-Sept-24	\$2,309,614	Departmental	Combined Pass Business Case (CPBC) to provide Government options for a production National Skills Passport	Management advisory services	Accenture Australia
3	CN4040019	Early Childhood and Youth	22-Feb-24	30-Jun-26	\$1,430,000	Administered	Independent evaluation of the development and trial of the Preschool Outcomes Measure	Management advisory services	The Nous Group
4	CN4039106	Higher Education, Research and International	26-Feb-24	30-Jun-24	\$807,675	Departmental	Stakeholder Engagement to inform the National Skills Passport review	Research programs	Meld Studios
5	CN4040017	Schools	5-Mar-24	31-Dec-24	\$539,258	Administered	Provision of External Assurance Services	Management advisory services	Ernst and Young
6	CN4012133	Higher Education, Research and International	7-Sept-23	30-Nov-23	\$495,000	Departmental	Identification of any gaps in legal and regulatory frameworks in relation to Commonwealth,	Management advisory services	Minter Ellison



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Rank	CN ID	Group	Start Date	End Date	Contract Value	Funding Source	Description	Category	Supplier Name
							State and Territory laws which have implications for universities' and student residential providers' in preventing sexual assault, harassment and discrimination against students and staff		
7	CN4064799	Higher Education, Research and International	13-May-24	30-Jun-26	\$447,996	Departmental	External Assurance Services	Management advisory services	Synergy Group
8	CN4041392	Schools	8-Mar-24	30-May-25	\$445,365	Administered	Evaluation of the Let's Count and Little Scientists programs	Management advisory services	Dandolo Partners
9	CN4004258	Higher Education, Research and International	8-Aug-23	30-Jun-24	\$333,634	Departmental	Counsellor Allowance Review	Management advisory services	Ernst and Young
10	CN4048927	Schools	9-Apr-24	30-Jun-25	\$329,960	Administered	Evaluation of STEM Professionals in Schools program	Management advisory services	Acil Allen Consulting Pty Ltd

**Education - Top 10 consultancy contracts (by value) active in financial year 2024–25 (data as at 30 September 2024)**

Rank	CN ID	Group	Start Date	End Date	Contract Value	Funding Source	Description	Category	Supplier Name
1	CN3864838	Early Childhood and Youth	31-Mar-22	31-Dec-26	\$10,400,500	Administered	Early Years Education Program Replication Trial	Education and Training Services	Parkville Institute Ltd
2	CN3886997	Early Childhood and Youth	01-Jul-22	30-Jun-25	\$6,644,143	Administered	Connected Beginnings and the Community Child Care Fund Restricted Program Partnership	Management advisory services	SNAICC
3	CN4015398	Corporate and Enabling Services	23-Oct-23	30-Jun-26	\$2,692,540	Departmental	Independent Project Assurance Services	Management advisory services	KPMG
4	CN4042628	Higher Education, Research and International	26-Feb-24	30-Sep-24	\$2,309,614	Departmental	Combined Pass Business Case (CPBC) to provide Government options for a production National Skills Passport	Management advisory services	Accenture Australia
5	CN3969724	Early Childhood and Youth	08-Mar-23	31-Dec-24	\$2,200,000	Administered	Provision of Business Support for Community Child Care Funding	Management advisory services	BDO Services Pty Ltd
6	CN4040019	Early Childhood and Youth	22-Feb-24	30-Jun-26	\$1,430,000	Administered	Independent evaluation of the development and trial of the Preschool Outcomes Measure	Management advisory services	The Nous Group
7	CN3962110	Early Childhood and Youth	21-Apr-23	26-Jul-24	\$1,149,990	Administered	Independent Review of the Community Child Care Fund	Management advisory services	Deloitte

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Rank	CN ID	Group	Start Date	End Date	Contract Value	Funding Source	Description	Category	Supplier Name
8	CN3888010	Higher Education, Research and International	24-Jun-22	30-Sep-24	\$990,000	Departmental	Research Consultancy Services	Management advisory services	Australian Academy of Technology
9	CN4093168	Higher Education, Research and International	22-Jul-24	31-Oct-24	\$759,660	Departmental	Program Management support	Management advisory services	The Nous Group
10	CN3971036	Higher Education, Research and International	19-Feb-23	16-Aug-24	\$668,383	Departmental	Data Collection and Analysis Services	Management advisory services	Deloitte

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**Education - Top 10 consultancy contracts (by value) active in financial year 2023–24 (data as at 30 September 2024)**

Rank	CN ID	Group	Start Date	End Date	Contract Value	Funding Source	Description	Category	Supplier Name
1	CN3864838	Early Childhood and Youth	31-Mar-22	31-Dec-26	\$10,400,500	Administered	Early Years Education Program Replication Trial	Education and Training Services	Parkville Institute Ltd
2	CN3886997	Early Childhood and Youth	1-Jul-22	30-Jun-25	\$6,644,143	Administered	Connected Beginnings and the Community Child Care Fund Restricted Program Partnership	Management advisory services	SNAICC
3	CN3615516	Early Childhood and Youth	24-Jul-19	30-Sep-23	\$3,000,000	Administered	Child Care Payment Accuracy Estimates and Data Analytics	Research programs	Orima Research
4	CN4015398	Corporate and Enabling Services	23-Oct-23	30-Jun-26	\$2,692,540	Departmental	Independent Project Assurance Services	Management advisory services	KPMG
5	CN4042628	Higher Education Research and International	26-Feb-24	30-Sep-24	\$2,309,614	Departmental	Combined Pass Business Case (CPBC) to provide Government options for a production National Skills Passport	Management advisory services	Accenture Australia
6	CN3969724	Early Childhood and Youth	8-Mar-23	31-Dec-24	\$2,200,000	Administered	Provision of Business Support for Community Child Care Funding	Management advisory services	BDO Services Pty Ltd
7	CN4040019	Early Childhood and Youth	22-Feb-24	30-Jun-26	\$1,430,000	Departmental	Independent evaluation of the development and trial of the Preschool Outcomes Measure	Management advisory services	The Nous Group

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Rank	CN ID	Group	Start Date	End Date	Contract Value	Funding Source	Description	Category	Supplier Name
8	CN3962110	Early Childhood and Youth	21-Apr-23	26-Jul-24	\$1,149,990	Administered	Independent Review of the Community Child Care Fund	Management advisory services	Deloitte
9	CN3854214	Corporate and Enabling Services	4-Mar-22	31-Dec-23	\$1,082,480	Departmental	Independent Assurer for NAPLAN 2022	Research programs	KPMG
10	CN3888010	Higher Education Research and International	24-Jun-22	31-Mar-25	\$990,000	Departmental	Research on Academy of Science programs	Management advisory services	Australian Academy of Technology

**Education - Top 10 Non-consultancy Contracts (by value) commenced in financial year 2024–25 as at 30 September 2024 (data extracted 1 October 2024)**

Rank	CN ID	Group	Start Date	End Date	Contract Value	Funding Source	Description	Category	Supplier Name
1	CN4082943	Corporate and Enabling Services	01-Jul-24	30-Jun-25	\$3,901,354	Departmental	Comcare Insurance 2024-25	Insurance and retirement services	Comcare
2	CN4057918	Early Childhood and Youth	01-Jul-24	30-Jun-25	\$1,906,671	Departmental	Labour Hire Services - CCS Helpdesk support	Temporary personnel services	Hays Personnel Services
3	CN4093167	Higher Edu, Research and International	19-Aug-24	28-Feb-25	\$1,799,050	Departmental	ATEC Business Case: IT system to support reforms to higher education funding and governance	Computer services	Deloitte
4	CN4074298	Early Childhood and Youth Group	01-Jul-24	30-Jun-25	\$1,453,229	Departmental	Labour Hire Services - Business Analysts	Temporary personnel services	Hays Personnel Services
5	CN4092155	Corporate and Enabling Services	02-Aug-24	30-Jun-27	\$1,327,000	Departmental	Provision of Grants Management Software as a Service	Software	Our Community Pty Ltd
6	CN4098466	Early Childhood and Youth Group	16-Sep-24	14-Mar-25	\$1,151,247	Departmental	Implementation of ECEC Worker Retention Payment Grant Program	Management support services	Parberry Consulting
7	CN4085864	Corporate and Enabling Services	01-Jul-24	30-Jun-25	\$576,331	Departmental	2024-25 Comcover annual premium and adjustments	Insurance and retirement services	Comcover

Rank	CN ID	Group	Start Date	End Date	Contract Value	Funding Source	Description	Category	Supplier Name
8	CN4087682	Schools Group	12-Aug-24	12-Aug-25	\$481,215	Administered	Labour Hire Services - Change Manager to support the Schools Unique Student Identifier Project	Temporary personnel services	Recruitment Sorted Pty Ltd
9	CN4092157	Early Childhood and Youth Group	02-Sep-24	30-Jun-25	\$448,347	Departmental	Labour Hire Services to support the CCS helpdesk	Temporary personnel services	Hudson
10	CN4082940	Early Childhood and Youth Group	15-Jul-24	30-Jun-25	\$421,733	Administered	Labour Hire Services - Senior Governance and Risk Officer role to support the Preschool Outcome Measure	Temporary personnel services	Peoplebank Australia

**Education - Top 10 Non-Consultancy Contracts (by value) commenced in FY 2023-24 as at 30 September 2024  
(data extracted 1 October 2024)**

Rank	CN ID	Group	Start Date	End Date	Contract Value	Funding Source	Description	Category	Supplier Name
1	CN3998245	Early Childhood and Youth	09-Aug-23	03-Aug-26	\$24,248,350	Administered	Supplier for the Australian Early Development Census 2024 collection (Cycle 6)	Project management	The Social Research Centre
2	CN4040022	Early Childhood and Youth	08-Feb-24	30-Jun-26	\$20,570,967	Administered	Preschool Outcomes Measure (POM) development and trial	Corporate objectives or policy development	Australian Council for Educational Research
3	CN4069255	Higher Education, Research and International	19-Jun-24	30-Nov-27	\$19,836,641	Administered	Administration of QILT Program 2024-2027	Data services	The Social Research Centre
4	CN4002326	Corporate and Enabling Services	16-Aug-23	30-Jun-24	\$7,480,000	Administered	Elevating the Teaching Profession Campaign	Advertising	Universal Mccann
5	CN4031801	Higher Education, Research and International	24-Jan-24	31-Dec-26	\$3,630,000	Administered	Services to support the Bilateral Education and Research Relationship between Australia and India	Research programs	The University of Melbourne
6	CN4065095	Early Childhood and Youth	18-Mar-24	30-Jun-25	\$3,333,000	Administered	Development of Fraud Risk Indicators	Computer services	Ember Advisors
7	CN4039217	Corporate and Enabling Services	05-Feb-24	30-Jun-27	\$3,305,346	Departmental	Travel management services	Travel facilitation	Corporate Travel Management Group Pty Ltd



Rank	CN ID	Group	Start Date	End Date	Contract Value	Funding Source	Description	Category	Supplier Name
8	CN4054198	Schools	29-Apr-24	30-Jun-28	\$3,092,708	Administered	Implementation of the 2026 Progress in International Reading Literacy	Project administration or planning	Australian Council for Educational
9	CN4013541	Corporate and Enabling Services	02-Nov-23	04-Oct-24	\$2,940,344	Departmental	Provision of Technology and Project Support Services	Computer services	Conceptsix
10	CN4068162	Early Childhood and Youth	11-Jun-24	31-Jul-25	\$2,646,910	Administered	ACECQA Quality and Safety Training Project - Stage 3	Project management	ACECQA

**Education – Top 10 Active Contracts (by value) with “Big Seven” consultancy firms in FY 2024–25 (data as at 30 September 2024)**

Rank	CN ID	Group	Start Date	End Date	Contract Value	Funding Source	Description	Category	Supplier Name
1	CN4015398	Ed Corporate and Enabling Services	23-Oct-23	30-Jun-26	\$2,692,540	Departmental	Independent Project Assurance Services	Management advisory services	KPMG
2	CN4042628	Higher Education Research and International	26-Feb-24	30-Sept-24	\$2,309,614	Departmental	Combined Pass Business Case (CPBC) to provide Government options for a production National Skills Passport	Management advisory services	Accenture Australia
3	CN4093167	Higher Education Research and International	19-Aug-24	28-Feb-25	\$1,799,050	Departmental	A TEC Business Case: IT system to support reforms to higher education funding and governance	Computer services	Deloitte
4	CN4062668	Early Childhood and Youth Group	30-May-24	30-Sep-27	\$1,365,500	Administered	Grant Administration Services	Management advisory services	Deloitte
5	CN3962110	Early Childhood	21-Apr-23	26-Jul-24	\$1,149,990	Administered	Independent Review of the Community	Management advisory services	Deloitte

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Rank	CN ID	Group	Start Date	End Date	Contract Value	Funding Source	Description	Category	Supplier Name
		and Youth Group					Child Care Fund		
6	CN3971036	Higher Education Research and International	19-Feb-23	16-Aug-24	\$668,383	Departmental	Data Collection and Analysis Services for Higher Education Expenditure 2021-2022	Management advisory services	Deloitte
7	CN4040017	Schools Group	5-Mar-24	31-Dec-24	\$539,258	Administered	Provision of External Assurance Services for Unique Student Identifier (USI)	Management advisory services	Ernst and Young
8	CN3956520	Corporate and Enabling Services	3-Jan-23	20-Dec-24	\$400,000	Departmental	Internal Audit Services	Internal audits	PriceWaterhouseCoopers
9	CN4085865	Higher Education Research and International	28-Jun-24	27-Oct-24	\$251,831	Departmental	Support Analysis of Economic and Regulatory Impacts	Research programs	Deloitte
10	CN4074292	Higher Education Research and International	24-Jun-24	23-Aug-24	\$224,950	Departmental	Activity mapping process for the Higher Education, Research and International (HERI) group	Research programs	Deloitte

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**Education – Top 10 Active Contracts (by value) with “Big Seven” consultancy firms in FY 2023–24 (data as at 30 September 2024)**

Rank	CN ID	Group	Start Date	End Date	Contract Value	Funding Source	Description	Category	Supplier Name
1	CN4015398	Corporate and Enabling Services	23-Oct-23	30-Jun-26	\$2,692,540	Departmental	Independent Project Assurance Services	Management advisory services	KPMG
2	CN4042628	Higher Education Research and International	26-Feb-24	30-Sep-24	\$2,309,614	Departmental	Combined Pass Business Case (CPBC) to provide Government options for a production National Skills Passport	Management advisory services	Accenture Australia
3	CN4062668	Early Childhood and Youth Group	30-May-24	30-Sep-27	\$1,365,500	Administered	Grant Administration Services	Management advisory services	Deloitte
4	CN3962110	Early Childhood and Youth Group	21-Apr-23	26-Jul-24	\$1,149,990	Administered	Independent Review of the Community Child Care Fund	Management advisory services	Deloitte
5	CN3854214	Corporate and Enabling Services	04-Mar-22	31-Dec-23	\$1,082,480	Departmental	Independent Assurer for NAPLAN 2022	Research programs	KPMG
6	CN3971036	Higher Education Research and International	19-Feb-23	16-Aug-24	\$668,383	Departmental	Data Collection and Analysis Services for Higher Education Expenditure 2021-2022	Management advisory services	Deloitte
7	CN4040017	Schools Group	5-Mar-24	31-Dec-24	\$539,258	Administered	Provision of External Assurance Services for Unique Student Identifier (USI)	Management advisory services	Ernst and Young
8	CN3991188	Corporate and Enabling Services	10-Jul-23	17-Nov-23	\$522,500	Departmental	Provision of Research Services to support the Financial and Resourcing Review	Research programs	Deloitte

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Rank	CN ID	Group	Start Date	End Date	Contract Value	Funding Source	Description	Category	Supplier Name
9	CN3862100	Higher Education Research and International	31-Mar-22	24-May-24	\$490,187	Administered	Opportunities and Barriers to Diversification Project in the International Education Sector	Research programs	Deloitte
10	CN4074292	Early Childhood and Youth Group	7-Mar-23	30-Sep-23	\$447,226	Administered	Review of the Inclusion Support Program	Research programs	Deloitte

**Issue:** Contractors  
**Contact:** Marcus Markovic  
Ph: s 22  
Deputy Secretary

## Key Points

### ***Contractors engaged as at:***

- 30 September 2024: 65, approximately 3.7% of the total workforce.
- 1 July 2024: 55, approximately 3.2% of the total workforce.

### ***Contractors overview***

- A contractor may be engaged to perform functions for the department, under the supervision of the department, for output produced on behalf of the department.
- Contractors are individuals not hired under Section 22 of the *Public Service Act 1999* to:
  - provide surge capacity
  - obtain specialist skills
  - undertake short-term roles.
- Contractors are used to meet short-term demand across several categories, including:
  - project and program management
  - compliance and regulation
  - service delivery
  - research
  - administration.
- The majority of the department's Contractors are engaged through labour hire firms and sourced through government panel arrangements.
- There are no contractors that have been identified as undertaking core roles and capabilities in accordance with the Strategic Commissioning Framework targets for 2024-25.

### ***Expenditure on contractors***

Financial Year	Expenditure (GST exclusive)
2024-25 (YTD 30 September 2024)	\$2,724,054

**Contractors as at 30 September 2024 by Group**

Group	Non-ICT	ICT	Total
Corporate and Enabling Services	5	4	9
Early Childhood and Youth	36	1	37
Higher Education, Research and International	5	4	9
Schools	6	4	10
<b>Total</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>65</b>

**Contractors as at 30 September 2024 by Job Family**

Job Family	Total
Accounting and Finance	1
Administration	1
Communications and Marketing	3
ICT	6
Project and Programme	21
Research	7
Service Delivery	22
Policy	4
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>65</b>

**Contractors as at 30 September 2024 by AusTender Category**

AusTender Category	Total
Computer services	8
Personnel recruitment	2
Temporary personnel services	55
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>65</b>

**Contractor Engagements**

New engagements	1 July 2024 to 30 September 2024
Non-ICT	37
ICT	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>41</b>

- New engagements include contractors commencing with the department or being re-engaged under a new contract.

- Between 1 July 2024 and 30 September 2024, the department had 41 new Contractor engagements.
  - 40 remain engaged as at 30 September 2024.
  - 13 contractors who were engaged under a contract ending on 30 June 2024, were re-engaged under a new contract on 1 July 2024.

**Active contracts by supplier by value as at 30 September 2024**

Supplier	Contractor	Contracts	Value GST inclusive	% Total
Hays Personnel Services	24	8	\$4,546,044	26%
Hudson Global Resources	9	5	\$1,381,725	8%
MTP Services	3	3	\$1,240,536	7%
Halcyon Knights	2	2	\$1,176,000	7%
Peoplebank Australia	3	3	\$1,068,421	6%
Recruitment Sorted	3	3	\$1,020,507	6%
Corroboree Talent	2	2	\$798,800	5%
Compas	1	1	\$772,992	4%
Larrison	1	1	\$770,280	4%
1448 Pty Ltd	2	2	\$687,470	4%
Randstad	3	3	\$528,441	3%
IT Alliance	1	1	\$494,000	3%
SOL People	1	1	\$471,900	3%
Onpoint 365	1	1	\$438,000	3%
The Recruitment Hive	1	1	\$367,096	2%
Nisus Australia	1	1	\$359,040	2%
Octango	1	1	\$302,940	2%
SOS Recruitment	2	1	\$254,787	1%
Chandler MacLeod	1	1	\$252,643	1%
Indigeco	1	1	\$203,369	1%
Bridge IT Engineering	1	1	\$181,210	1%
Capital Recruit	1	1	\$131,495	1%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>\$17,447,695</b>	<b>100%</b>

Note: Some contracts are across multiple years.

**Contract Extensions**

- Between 1 July 2024 and 30 September 2024, the department extended 3 contracts in relation to contractors.

**Converting positions to APS**

- Between 1 July 2024 and 30 September 2024, the department converted 1 contractor position to 1 non-ongoing APS position.

**Contractor pay rates**



- Contractors are engaged in accordance with the Commonwealth Procurement Rules (CPRs). Assessing value for money is a core component of the CPRs.
- Contractor pay rates differ due to:
  - markets in different locations
  - skill sets
  - levels of responsibility.
- The department supports fair pay conditions for contractors.
  - To date no contractor engaged under a People Panel Phase2 (PPP2) contract is paid less than their equivalent APS level.
- The department has not previously collected information on the profit margin charged by labour hire firms, or the hourly rate paid to the contractor by the supplier, as it was not a requirement for labour hire firms to disclose this information.
  - With the implementation of the PPP2 from 7 August 2023, this information is required to be provided by suppliers in the Work Order.

### ***Hourly rate of contractors active***

- As at 30 September 2024, hourly rates paid to the supplier for:
  - Non-ICT contractors ranged from \$67.10 to \$272.41 (GST inclusive).
  - ICT contractors ranged from \$148.50 to \$220.00 (GST inclusive).

### ***Management of contractors***

- All SES in the department are public servants.
- All contractors are managed by APS staff.

### ***Indigenous Procurement Policy***

- The department is committed to increasing engagement with Indigenous owned businesses. Procurement activities must consider Indigenous owned recruitment agencies on panels and listed on Supply Nation.
- As at 30 September 2024, 4 contractors (6% of total contractors) were engaged from Indigenous owned businesses.

### ***Practising a diverse and fair approach to the market***

- Contractor engagement is undertaken through a fair and competitive approach resulting in arrangements with a diverse cohort of suppliers.
- This practice is also demonstrated within single procurement activities where more than one firm may be chosen to supply contractors for a particular outcome.

### ***Integrity of our Contractor Security***

- The department's security policies require all Contractors to:
  - undergo pre-engagement checks
  - have at least Baseline Security Clearances.

### ***Training***

- All contractors are required to complete a suite of mandatory training.

### ***Fraud and conflict of interest***

- The department's AAI 1.8 – Disclosure of Interests places a duty on all “workers” to disclose interests relating to the affairs of the department so as to not undermine the confidence and trust in dealings with the department, and the Commonwealth more broadly.
- The Conflict of Interest Policy applies to all “external workers” including contractors.
- All contractors are required to:
  - be aware of their fraud and conflict of interest obligations prior to commencing
  - complete the applicable Conflict of Interest Form and sign a Fraud and Conflict of Interest Responsibilities Form agreeing to comply with the department's Fraud Control and Conflict of Interest policies
  - undertake Fraud Awareness training.
- Terms and conditions contained within the Commonwealth Contracting Suite and Panel Deeds require suppliers to declare any real or perceived conflicts of interest that might arise relevant to the performance of their obligations under the contract.

### ***Exit process for contractors***

- Supervisors are required to complete an Exit Advice Notice for all contractors separating from the department, at least one week before the contract end date.
- This ensures that all department resources allocated to the exiting contractors are returned and system and building accesses terminated.

### **Media**

NIL

<b>Date Last Cleared</b>	09 October 2024
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**Issue:** Grant Management  
**Contact:** Marcus Markovic  
Ph: s 22  
Deputy Secretary

## Key Points

- The Department of Education undertakes its grant activities in line with legislative and policy frameworks, including the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013* (PGPA Act) and the Commonwealth Grants Rules and Principles 2024 (CGRPs).
- In making recommendations to the Minister or their delegate, the department ensures the decision maker is aware of the relevant requirements of the PGPA Act and the CGRPs, the specifics of the Grant Opportunity Guidelines (GOGs), and other relevant information.
- The department utilises multiple selection processes to award grant funding and ensures the selection process is proportional to the scale and risk profile of the grant opportunity.
- The department ensures it is compliant with requirements under the CGRPs when awarding funding through selection processes. This includes:
  - creating and publishing GOGs
  - ensuring the appropriateness of the organisation receiving funding (i.e. assessment against eligibility criteria)
  - reporting of the awarded grant funding on GrantConnect
  - ministerial reporting against Senate Orders 13 (Murray) and 16 (Minchin).
- The department uses Grants Administration Hubs consistent with whole of government arrangements outlined in the *Streamlining Government Grants Administration (SGGA)* program.

## Grants Published

- A list of new grant agreements by PBS program name and the process used to award them in the 2024–25 financial year to 30 September and the 2023–24 financial year are at [Attachment A](#) and [Attachment B](#).

**Table 1 - Grants management  
(as published on GrantConnect as at 30 September 2024)**

	2024–25 YTD 1 July 2024 - 30 September 2024		2023–24 FY	
	Grants Published	Grant Programs	Grants Published	Grant Programs
Internally Managed	551	12	1314	16
Grants Hub Managed	5	2	122	6
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>556</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>1436</b>	<b>22</b>

Note 1: Grant programs not managed internally are managed by the Community Grants Hub (CGH).

Note 2: No current Education grants are managed by the Business Grants Hub.

**Table 2 - Grants Awarded**

	2024–25 YTD (1 July 2024 to 30 September 2024)		2023–24 FY	
	Grants	Value	Grants	Value
New Agreements	556	\$173,644,460	1436	\$1,443,273,743
Variations to Existing Agreements	292	\$159,852,596	397	\$3,145,445,415
<b>Total</b>	<b>848</b>	<b>\$333,497,056</b>	<b>1833</b>	<b>\$4,588,719,158</b>

Note 1: Some variations are reductions in value.

Note 2: Total grants published is different to grants awarded due to some grants being published as aggregate grant awards (for privacy reasons and volume).

**Table 3 - Grants Awarded by Process – New Agreements Only**

	2024–25 YTD (1 July 2024 to 30 September 2024)		2023–24 FY	
	Grants	Value	Grants	Value
Open Competitive	479	\$162,347,756	54	\$17,553,317
Demand Driven	51	\$596,084	1,227	\$52,282,759
Targeted or Restricted Competitive	19	\$7,456,576	82	\$56,832,148
Closed Non-Competitive	1	\$1,131,971	35	\$1,310,025,916
Ad hoc, One-Off	6	\$2,112,072	38	\$6,579,603
<b>Total</b>	<b>556</b>	<b>\$173,644,460</b>	<b>1436</b>	<b>\$1,443,273,743</b>

Note 1: The majority of the Closed Non-Competitive grants in 2023–24 relate to the National Collaborative Research Infrastructure Strategy (NCRIS) program with a value of \$1,241,446.30.

Note 2: Minor discrepancies in total are due to rounding of individual lines.

### **Role of the Minister**

- It is normal practice that the department is the approving delegate and briefs the Minister before grants are announced.
- For 2023–24 and 2024–25 reporting period to 30 September 2024 there have been no instances of a Minister approving a proposed grant in their own electorate or any instances of a Minister approving a grant where a departmental official had recommended it be rejected.
- Ministers may approve the awarding of grant funding but must:
  - not approve the grant without first receiving written advice from departmental officials on the merits of the proposed grant or group of grants (CGRGs Section 4.10 (a))
    - the written advice usually outlines the selection processes used to select grant recipients, and the recommendations based on the process outcome.
  - record, in writing, the basis for the approval relative to the GOGs and the key principle of achieving value with relevant money (CGRPs Section 4.10 (b))
  - must write to the Finance Minister advising of the details when approving a proposed grant in their own electorate (CGRGs Section 4.11 (a))
  - report annually to the Finance Minister on all instances where they have decided to approve a grant, but where the relevant official had recommended that grant be rejected (CGRGs Section 4.12 (a)).

### **Grants not published within 21 days on GrantConnect**

- Under the CGRPs, information on grants and grant variations must be published on GrantConnect no later than 21 calendar days after the grant agreement or grant variation takes effect.
- Late grant reporting resulting in a breach are recorded against section 5.4 of the CGRPs.

**Table 4 - Instances of Grant Publishing Breaches**

<b>CGRP (section 5.4) Requirement Breached</b>	<b>2024-2025 YTD (1 July 2024 – 30 September 2024)</b>	<b>2023-2024 FY</b>
21-day GrantConnect Reporting instances	4	415

- For financial year 2024-25 to 30 September 2024, Education recorded 4 breaches and in 2023–2024, 415 breaches were recorded.

- 403 of the breaches for 2023–2024 were recorded against one program with:
  - 357 of these breaches due to an administrative error
  - 46 of these breaches resulting from an IT system error.
- The department undertakes regular internal communication with program managers and SES in relation to mandatory grant reporting requirements.

### ***National Redress Scheme***

- The National Redress Scheme (the Scheme) was established to provide acknowledgement and support to people who experienced institutional child abuse.
- The Redress Grant Connected Policy (Redress GCP) restricts access to Australian Government grant funding for non-government institutions that are not participating in the Scheme.
- The department supports this policy.
- The department has no current funding arrangements in place with institutions identified as either not joining or showing intent to join the Scheme.

### ***The Procedural Order of Continuing Effect - Senate Order 16 – Minchin Order***

- Senate Order 16 or the ‘Minchin Order’ requires the Minister to table a list of grants, a week prior to each estimates hearing.
- Tabling for this reporting period includes all new grants published in the period 1 April 2024 – 30 September 2024. The report will be signed off by Minister Clare and presented to the President of the Senate by 28 October 2024.

## Media

In 2024–25 there has been a range of media across multiple channels in relation to the early childhood education worker retention payment.

- ***Children in remote Goldfields and Midwest schools to benefit from \$10m reading and writing program, The West Australian, 24 January 2024***

Federal and State Governments are joining forces to deliver the Scaling Up Success in Remote Schools Program which aims to close the gap for Aboriginal students' reading and writing skills. The WA Goldfields and Midwest regions will get a boost from this program to be rolled out in Term 1.

## Attachments

Attachment A – Department of Education Granting Activity  
1 July 2024 to 30 September 2024.

Attachment B – Department of Education Granting Activity  
1 July 2023 to 30 June 2024.

<b>Date Last Cleared</b>	21 October 2024
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Department of Education Granting Activity  
1 July 2024 to 30 September 2024

Note:

\*This list as published on GrantConnect by the responsible program areas has been subsequently cleansed to improve consistency of the published program names and Portfolio Budget Statement (PBS) outcome.  
\*Value of grants awarded is the value published on Grant Connect and does not represent expenditure.  
\*Grant Programs not being managed by a Grants Hub were either established prior to the establishment of the Hubs, obtained an exemption, or are anticipated to transition to a Hub in future.  
\*Hub Services Column K: CCCF program streams utilise Grants Hub services in full, part or not at all. Services provided by Grants Hubs can vary.

Rank	Group	PBS Program Name	Grant Program/Title	Selection Process	Delegate for Grant Funding	Value of Grants Awarded	Minister funding was Awarded Under	Funding Awarded in Minister's Electorate	Did the Minister Approve a Non Recommended Application for Funding	Are Hub services utilised?	Total Grant Awards
1	Schools	DE 24/25 1.5 Early Learning and Schools Support	High Achieving Teachers Program	Open Competitive	Departmental	\$74,633,547	Clare	No	No	No	10
2	ECCC	DE 24/25 (24/26) 1.1 Support for the Child Care System	Community Child Care Fund Open Competitive	Open Competitive	Departmental	\$72,729,902	Aly	No	No	Part	385
3	ECCC	DE 24/25 1.1 Support for the Child Care System	Community Child Care Fund	Open Competitive	Departmental	\$14,984,308	Aly	No	No	No	84
4	ECCC	DE 24/25 1.1 Support for the Child Care System	Connected Beginnings	Targeted or Restricted Competitive	Departmental	\$4,261,395	Aly	No	No	No	2
5	ECCC	DE 23/24 1.1 Support for the Child Care System	Connected Beginnings	Targeted or Restricted Competitive	Departmental	\$1,982,081	Aly	No	No	No	1
6	ECCC	DE 24/25 1.1 Support for the Child Care System	Community Child Care Fund - Restricted Infrastructure	One-Off / Adhoc	Departmental	\$1,300,000	Aly	No	No	Yes	1
7	ECCC	DE 23/24 1.5 Early Learning and Schools Support	Australian Youth Affairs Coalition Grant	Closed Non Competitive	Departmental	\$1,131,971	Aly	No	No	Part	1
8	HERI	DE 24/25 2.7 International Education Support	Destination Australia Cheung Kong Exchange Program 2025 (Round 4)	Targeted or Restricted Competitive	Departmental	\$583,100	Clare	No	No	No	14
9	ECCC	DE 23/24 1.1 Support for the Child Care System	Special Circumstances - Special Appropriation	One-Off / Adhoc	Departmental	\$548,072	Aly	No	No	No	1
10	ECCC	DE 23/24 1.5 Early Learning and Schools Support	First Nations Youth Engagement Grant	Targeted or Restricted Competitive	Departmental	\$330,000	Aly	No	No	Part	1
11	Schools	DE 23/24 1.5 Early Learning and Schools Support	Commonwealth Teaching Scholarships	Demand Driven	Departmental	\$315,000	Clare	No	No	No	8
12	ECCC	DE 23/24 1.5 Early Learning and Schools Support	Rural, Regional and Remote Youth Engagement Grant	Targeted or Restricted Competitive	Departmental	\$300,000	Aly	No	No	Part	1
13	ECCC	DE 24/25 1.1 Support for the Child Care System	CCCF Open Competitive Sustainability Support	One-Off / Adhoc	Departmental	\$264,000	Aly	No	No	No	4
14	ECCC	DE 24/25 1.1 Support for the Child Care System	Innovative Solutions Support	Demand Driven	Departmental	\$185,568	Aly	No	No	No	28
15	ECCC	DE 24/25 DE Output 1.1 Support for the Child Care System	Innovative Solutions Support	Demand Driven	Departmental	\$95,517	Aly	No	No	No	15
						<u>\$173,644,460</u>					<u>556</u>

**Department of Education Granting Activity**  
**1 July 2023 to 30 June 2024**

**Note:**

**\*This list as published on GrantConnect by the responsible program areas has been subsequently cleansed to improve consistency of the published program names to the Portfolio Budget Statement (PBS) outcomes.**  
**\*Value of grants awarded is the value published on Grant Connect and does not represent expenditure.**  
**\*Grant Programs not being managed by a Grants Hub, were either established prior to the establishment of the Hubs, or obtained an exemption, or are anticipated to transition to a Hub in future.**  
**\*Hub Services Column J: Services provided by Grants Hubs can vary. For example - CCCF program streams utilise Grants Hub services in full, part or not at all.**

Group	PBS Program Name	Grant Program/Title	Selection Process	Delegate for Grant Funding	Value of Grants Awarded	Minister funding was Awarded Under	Funding Awarded in Minister's Electorate	Did the Minister Approve a Non Recommended Application for Funding	Are Hub services utilised?	Total Grant Awards
ECCC	DE 23/24 DE Output 1.1 Support for the Child Care System	CCCF Open Competitive Capital Support	Open Competitive	Departmental	\$2,310,000	Clare	No	No	Yes	7
ECCC	DE 23/24 DE Output 1.1 Support for the Child Care System	CCCF Open Competitive Capital Support	One-off/Adhoc	Departmental	\$260,700	Clare	No	No	Yes	2
ECCC	DE 23/24 DE Output 1.1 Support for the Child Care System	CCCF Open Competitive Community Support	One-off/Adhoc	Departmental	\$16,500	Clare	No	No	Yes	1
ECCC	DE 23/24 DE Output 1.1 Support for the Child Care System	CCCF Open Competitive Sustainability Support	One-off/Adhoc	Departmental	\$990,006	Aly	No	No	Yes	17
ECCC	DE 23/24 DE Output 1.1 Support for the Child Care System	CCCF Open Competitive Sustainability Support	Open Competitive	Departmental	\$15,243,317	Aly	No	No	Yes	47
ECCC	DE 23/24 DE Output 1.1 Support for the Child Care System	Quality Support - Australian Childrens Education and Care Quality Authority	Closed Non-Competitive	Departmental	\$52,708,000	Clare	No	No	Yes	1
ECCC	DE 22/23 1.1 Support for the Child Care System	Innovative Solutions Support	Demand Driven	Departmental	\$63,700	Clare	No	No	No	11
ECCC	DE 23/24 1.1 Support for the Child Care System	Innovative Solutions Support	Demand Driven	Departmental	\$1,688,209	Clare	No	No	No	209
ECCC	DE 23/24 1.1 Support for the Childcare System	Innovative Solutions Support	Demand Driven	Departmental	\$36,268	Clare	No	No	No	2
ECCC	DE 21/22 1.1 Support for the Child Care System (20/21)	Collaborative and Strategic Innovative Solutions Project - Resource and Analysis	Demand Driven	Departmental	\$901,877	Clare	No	No	No	1
ECCC	DE 23/24 DE 18/19 1.1 Support for the Child Care System (18/19)	Community Child Care Fund (CCCF)	Targeted or Restricted Competitive	Departmental	\$2,110,517	Clare	No	No	No	1
ECCC	DE 23/24 1.1 Support for the Child Care System	Connected Beginnings	Targeted or Restricted Competitive	Departmental	\$15,917,032	Clare	No	No	No	6
ECCC	DE 23/24 DE Output 1.1 Support for the Child Care System	Special Circumstances - Special Appropriation	One-off/Adhoc	Departmental	\$2,912,397	Clare	No	No	No	16
ECCC	DE 23/24 DE Output 1.1 Support for the Child Care System	Special Circumstances - Special Appropriation	Demand Driven	Departmental	\$455,493	Clare	No	No	No	2
ECCC	DE 23/24 1.1 Support for the Child Care System	Community Child Care Fund Restricted Expansion (Closing the Gap)	Closed Non-Competitive	Departmental	\$7,202,670	Clare	No	No	No	7
ECCC	DE 23/24 DE Output 1.1 Support for the Child Care System	Community Child Care Fund - Restricted Infrastructure	One-off/Adhoc	Departmental	\$2,400,000	Aly	No	No	No	2
ECCC	DE 23/24 DE Other Outcome 1 Education	Support for the Administration of the ABC Takeover Program and the Heywire Summit	Targeted or Restricted Competitive	Departmental	\$350,000	Clare	No	No	No	1
ECCC	DE 23/24 1.1 Support for the Child Care System	Early Childhood Education and Care Workforce Taskforce	Demand Driven	Departmental	\$18,402,512	Aly	No	No	No	895
Schools	DE 23/24 1.5 Early Learning and Schools Support	Scaling Up Success in Remote Schools	Targeted or Restricted Competitive	Departmental	\$11,000,000	Clare	No	No	Part	1
Schools	DE 23/24 DE Output 1.5 Admin 2019-20 Early Learning and Schools Support	Commonwealth Regional Scholarships Program	Targeted or Restricted Competitive	Departmental	\$2,645,500	Clare	No	No	Yes	2
Schools	DE 23/24 1.5 Early Learning and Schools Support	Commonwealth Regional Scholarships Program	Closed Non-Competitive	Departmental	\$5,439,500	Clare	No	No	Part	1
Schools	DE 23/24 1.5 Early Learning and Schools Support	Commonwealth Teaching Scholarships	Demand Driven	Departmental	\$30,735,000	Clare	No	No	No	107
Schools	DE 23/24 1.5 Early Learning and Schools Support	The Seeds in Schools Program	Closed Non-Competitive	Departmental	\$35,000	Clare	No	No	No	1
Schools	DE 23/24 1.5 Early Learning and Schools Support (21/22)	The Duke of Edinburgh International Award (Australia) - Disadvantaged Youth Program	Closed Non-Competitive	Departmental	\$3,300,000	Clare	No	No	No	1
Schools	DE 23/24 1.5 Early Learning and Schools Support	International Geography Olympiad and Geography's Big Week Out 2023-24 to 2025-26	Closed Non-Competitive	Departmental	\$99,000	Clare	No	No	Part	1
HERI	DE 23/24 2.7 International Education Support	Destination Australia Cheung Kong Exchange Program 2024 (Round 3)	Targeted or Restricted Competitive	Departmental	\$1,799,850	Clare	No	No	No	39
HERI	DE 23/24 2.7 International Education Support	Destination Australia Program	Targeted or Restricted Competitive	Departmental	\$23,009,250	Clare	No	No	Yes	32
HERI	DE 21/22 2.6 Research Capacity	National Collaborative Research Infrastructure Strategy (NCRIS)	Closed Non-Competitive	Departmental	\$23,880,023	Clare	No	No	No	1
HERI	DE 23/24 2.6 Research Capacity	National Collaborative Research Infrastructure Strategy (NCRIS)	Closed Non-Competitive	Departmental	\$1,217,361,423	Clare	No	No	No	22
					<u>\$ 1,443,273,743</u>					<u>1436</u>

**Issue:** Questions on Notice from 2024–25 Budget Estimates (June 2024)  
**Contact:** Marcus Markovic  
Ph: s 22  
Deputy Secretary

## Key Points

- The Department of Education and related portfolio entities appeared at the 2024–25 Budget Estimates hearing on 5 and 6 June 2024.
- A total of 588 Questions on Notice (QoNs) for the education portfolio resulted from the hearing—99 were requested during the hearing and 489 were received in writing after the hearing. See [Attachment A](#) for the breakdown of QoNs.
- QoNs were due for tabling on 1 August 2024.
- Clearance was provided to the department to table QoNs on 2 October 2024. All QoNs were tabled on this date.
- The department authors and finalises responses to QoNs, which are cleared by the relevant portfolio Minister’s office.
  - This process is consistent with Section 4.16.1 of the Government Guidelines for Official Witnesses published by PM&C.
- Of the 588 QoNs:
  - 525 answers to QoNs were provided to Ministers’ offices on or before 18 July 2024
  - 47 were provided between 19 and 26 July 2024
  - One was provided on 12 September 2024 (SQ24-000707 initially assigned to Minister Clare’s office to respond. On 4 September, the MO requested the department respond).
  - the remaining 15 were answered by the Hon Jason Clare MP, Minister for Education.

### ***Procedural order of continuing effect No. 21: Estimates hearings – Unanswered Questions on Notice (Senate Order 21)***

- Letters to the President of the Senate to comply with Senate Order 21 for QoNs taken at the 2024–25 Budget Estimates hearing on 5 and 6 June 2024 were due to be tabled on 25 October 2024.
- Portfolio responses were tabled by:
  - the Hon Jason Clare MP, Minister for Education, on 25 October 2024
  - the Hon Dr Anne Aly MP, Minister for Early Childhood Education and Minister for Youth, on 15 October 2024.
- There were no unanswered QoNs to report.

**Attachments**

Attachment A – Breakdown of questions on notice

<b>Date Last Cleared</b>	25 October 2024
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**Breakdown of Questions on Notice**  
**2024–25 Budget Estimates hearing – 5 and 6 June 2024**

Entity	QoNs	
	Spoken	Written
Department of Education	<b>92</b>	<b>184</b>
o Cross Portfolio	6	74
o Higher Education, Research and International	21	31
o Early Childhood and Youth	21	36
o Schools	29	43
o Ministers	15	0
Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA)	<b>3</b>	<b>80</b>
Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) *Released from hearing	<b>0*</b>	<b>78</b>
Australian Research Council (ARC)	<b>3</b>	<b>69</b>
Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA)	<b>1</b>	<b>78</b>
<b>Sub total</b>	<b>99</b>	<b>489</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>588</b>	

**Previous hearing: 2023–24 Additional Budget Estimates hearing  
(15 February 2024)**

- The Department of Education and related portfolio entities appeared at the 2023–24 Additional Budget Estimates hearing on 15 February 2024.
- A total of 432 QoNs resulted from the hearing—75 were requested during the hearing and 357 were received in writing after the hearing.
- All QoNs were due for tabling by 5 April 2024.
- The department tabled all QoNs on 24 May 2024.
- The distribution of QoNs from the hearing:

Entity	QoNs
Department of Education	180
ACARA	62
AITSL	65
ARC	67
TEQSA	58
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>432</b>

**Issue:** Workforce Data  
**Contact:** Marcus Markovic  
 Ph: s 22  
 Corporate and Enabling Services  
 Deputy Secretary

## Table List

<b>Table 1</b>	General Staffing Information	Pg 2
<b>Table 2</b>	Percentage of First Nations Staff	Pg 3
<b>Table 3</b>	Percentage of Staff with a Disability	Pg 3
<b>Table 4</b>	Department Headcount by Group	Pg 3
<b>Table 5</b>	Department FTE by Group	Pg 4
<b>Table 6</b>	Employee Classification by Headcount and Gender	Pg 4
<b>Table 7</b>	Employee Headcount by Location	Pg 5
<b>Table 8</b>	Current International Staff	Pg 5
<b>Table 9</b>	SES Staffing (FTE)	Pg 6
<b>Table 10</b>	SES Recruitment	Pg 6
<b>Table 11</b>	Vacancies Advertised	Pg 6
<b>Table 12</b>	Commencements by Type	Pg 7
<b>Table 13</b>	Commencements from Outside the APS by headcount	Pg 7
<b>Table 14</b>	Separation Rates (per cent)	Pg 7
<b>Table 15</b>	Separations by Reason	Pg 8
<b>Table 16</b>	Entry Level Employment Programs	Pg 8
<b>Table 17</b>	Employee Diversity Representation (Headcount)	Pg 10
<b>Table 18a</b>	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employees by Location	Pg 10
<b>Table 18b</b>	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employees by actual classification	Pg 11
<b>Table 19</b>	Unscheduled Absence Rates	Pg 11

## Key Points

### Organisation Chart

- The Department of Education organisation chart, as published on the department's website in November 2024, is provided at [Attachment A](#).

### Workforce data

- All data presented in tables 1 – 19 utilises data from the HR system, unless otherwise specified.

**Table 1: General Staffing Information**

Type	30 Jun 2023	30 Jun 2024	30 Sept 2024	Change Jun 24 - Sept 24	Per cent Change Jun 24 - Sept 24
<b>FTE</b>	<b>1,391.3</b>	<b>1,573.0</b>	<b>1,585.6</b>	<b>12.6</b>	<b>0.8%</b>
Ongoing	1,313.9	1,495.5	1,511.4	15.9	1.1%
Non-Ongoing	77.4	77.5	74.2	-3.3	-4.3%
Full Time	1,218.0	1,374.0	1,381.0	7.0	0.5%
Part Time	173.3	199.0	204.6	5.6	2.8%
<b>Headcount</b>	<b>1,497</b>	<b>1,677</b>	<b>1,699</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>1.3%</b>
Ongoing	1,401	1,586	1,609	23	1.5%
Non-Ongoing	96	91	90	-1.0	-1.1%
Full Time	1,245	1,399	1,410	11	0.8%
Part Time	252	278	289	11	4.0%
<b>TPL/TT</b>	<b>242</b>	<b>264</b>	<b>355</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>34.5%</b>
Temporary Performance	209	227	327	100	44.1%
Temporary Transfer	33	37	28	-9	-24.3%
<b>ASL</b>	<b>1,248</b>	<b>1,507</b>	<b>1,548</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>2.7%</b>

Note: Headcount excludes inactive employees, casuals, contractors, Public Office Holders, and the Secretary. FTE excludes LWOP >90 days. Data based on actual positions. Includes individuals in acting arrangements in system at the time of reporting. Totals may not equal the sum of components due to rounding.

**Table 2: Percentage of First Nations Staff**

Substantive Classification	Commonwealth Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Workforce Strategy 2020–24 targets (per cent)	Percentage of First Nations staff at 30 June 2024	Percentage of First Nations staff at 30 September 2024
APS4-6	5.0%	3.8%	4.3%
EL1-2	5.0%	1.5%	1.6%
SES	3.0%	6.2%	5.5%

**Table 3: Percentage of Staff with a Disability**

Employment target for people with disability in the APS by 2025 (per cent)	Percentage of staff with Disability at 30 Jun 2023	Percentage of staff with Disability at 30 Jun 2024	Percentage of staff with Disability at 30 Sept 2024
7.0%	6.1%	6.0%	5.9%

**Table 4: Department Headcount by Group**

Group	30 Jun 2023	30 Jun 2024	30 Sept 2024	Change Jun 24 - Sept 24
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,497</b>	<b>1,677</b>	<b>1,699</b>	<b>22</b>
Executive Group*	21	19	20	1
Corporate and Enabling Services	330	350	347	-3
Early Childhood and Youth	389	408	444	36
Higher Education, Research and International	433	521	508	-13
Schools	324	379	380	1

Note: Headcount excludes inactive employees, casuals, contractors, Public Office Holders, and the Secretary. Data based on actual positions. Includes individuals in acting arrangements in system at the time of reporting.

\*Executive Group includes Deputy Secretaries, their executive support staff and the Secretary's executive support staff.



**Table 5: Department FTE by Group**

Group	30 Jun 2023	30 Jun 2024	30 Sept 2024	Change Jun 24 - Sept 24
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,391.3</b>	<b>1,573.0</b>	<b>1,585.6</b>	<b>12.5</b>
Executive Group*	21.0	19.0	20.0	1.0
Corporate and Enabling Services	306.2	333.5	327.0	-6.5
Early Childhood and Youth	368.7	384.8	417.7	32.9
Higher Education, Research and International	400.2	481.5	466.6	-14.9
Schools	295.1	354.3	354.3	0.0

Note: Data based on actual FTE. FTE excludes LWOP >90 days, inactive employees, casuals, contractors, Public Office Holders, contractors, and the Secretary. Data includes individuals in acting arrangements in the system at the time of reporting. Totals may not equal the sum of components due to rounding.

\*Executive Group includes Deputy Secretaries, their executive support staff and the Secretary's executive support staff.

**Table 6: Employee Classification by Headcount and Gender at 30 September 2024**

Classification	Female		Male		Uses a different term**		Total Workforce	
	Headcount	Percentage	Headcount	Percentage	Headcount	Percentage	Headcount	Percentage
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,160</b>	<b>68.3%</b>	<b>531</b>	<b>31.2%</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>0.5%</b>	<b>1,699</b>	<b>100%</b>
APS1 Trainee	1	50.0%	1	50.0%			2	0.1%
APS2	6	42.9%	8	57.1%			14	0.8%
APS3*	13	44.8%	16	55.2%			29	1.7%
APS4	96	70.1%	41	29.9%			137	8.1%
APS5	122	68.5%	56	31.5%			178	10.5%
APS6	279	68.6%	128	31.4%			407	23.9%
GOVLWR1 (APS 5/6)	5	71.4%	2	28.6%			7	0.4%
EXEC1	386	70.8%	159	29.1%			545	32.1%
GOVLWRS1 (EXEC1)	16	88.9%	2	11.1%			18	1.1%
EXEC2	164	65.9%	85	34.1%			249	14.6%
GOVLWRP2 (EXEC2)	8	72.7%	3	27.3%			11	0.6%
SESB1	50	69.4%	22	30.6%			72	4.2%
SESB2	11	64.7%	6	35.3%			17	1.0%
SESB3	3	60.0%	2	40.0%			5	0.3%

Note: Data based on actual classification. Data includes individuals in acting arrangements in the system at the time of reporting. Totals may not equal the sum of components due to rounding.

\*The APS 3 cohort includes APS3 Trainees and Graduates.

\*\*To protect employees who identify with gender other than male or female have been reported in category "uses a different term" as per Department of Finance guidelines, and these headcount numbers are included in the total figure only.

**Table 7: Employee Headcount by Location at 30 September 2024**

Location	Total Workforce	
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,699</b>	<b>100%</b>
ACT	1,308	77.0%
Victoria (Melbourne)	96	5.7%
Queensland (Brisbane, Townsville, Mackay)	88	5.2%
New South Wales (Sydney, Newcastle, Dubbo, Orange)	79	4.6%
South Australia (Adelaide)	60	3.5%
Western Australia (Perth)	29	1.7%
Tasmania (Hobart)	18	1.1%
Northern Territory (Alice Springs, Darwin)	11	0.6%
Overseas (Beijing, Brazil, Delhi, Hanoi, Jakarta, Kuala Lumpur, Mexico, Tokyo)	10	0.6%

Note: Location describes the actual position number personal area. Data excludes inactive employees, casuals, contractors, Public Office Holders, and the Secretary.

**Table 8: Current International Staff**

Location	Classification	Commence	Cease
Beijing	EXEC1	1/08/2021	May-2025
	SESB1	31/7/2024	Jul-2027
Brazil	EXEC2	8/09/2021	Sept-2025
Delhi	EXEC1	9/01/2023	Jan-2026
	SESB1	19/11/2021	Jan-2025
Hanoi	EXEC2	05/12/2020	Nov-2024
Jakarta	EXEC2	17/11/2021	Sept-2025
Kuala Lumpur	EXEC2	31/10/2020	Dec-2024
Mexico City	EXEC2	04/08/2021	Jan-2025
Tokyo	EXEC2	15/09/2021	Jun-2025

**Table 9: SES Staffing (FTE)**

	30 Jun 2023	30 Jun 2024	30 Sept 2024	Change Jun 24 - Sept 24
<b>SES FTE</b>	<b>61.9</b>	<b>70.8</b>	<b>73.8</b>	<b>3</b>
Band 1	45.0	51.9	53.9	2
Band 2	12.9	14.9	15.9	1
Band 3	4.0	4.0	4.0	0
Female SES FTE	38.0	51.9	52.9	1
Female SES as % of SES FTE	61.4%	73.3%	71.7%	-1.6
SES as % of all Staff FTE	4.4%	4.5%	4.7%	0.2

Note: FTE figures are calculated in line with APSC SES Cohort reporting requirements. Includes substantive SES staff and staff acting in an SES role for greater than 3 months and excludes SES on leave for 3 months or greater. Excludes inactive employees, casuals, contractors, Public Office Holders, and the Secretary.

**Table 10: SES Recruitment**

1 July 2024 to 30 September 2024	Female	Male	Total
Internal Promotion	0	0	0
External Promotion	0	0	0
External Engagement	1	3	4
External Transfer	1	1	2
<b>Total SES commencements</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>6*</b>

\*Note: Includes 5 Ongoing positions and 1 Non-Ongoing position

**Table 11: Vacancies advertised**

1 July 2024 to 30 September 2024	Internal	External	Total
<b>Vacancies advertised</b>	<b>20*</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>69</b>

Note: \*This includes internal opportunities that were also advertised as an APS Mobility Expression of Interest (Advertised on APSJobs – targeting ongoing APS employees for temporary transfer opportunities only). This excludes SES roles advertised.

- The recruitment of staff is managed by groups within their allocated budgets and staffing levels.
- At 30 September 2024, the department had 1 external recruitment process advertised on APS Jobs (this denotes the number of recruitment processes live on APS jobs on the reporting date).
- 76 new staff are due to commence from 1 October 2024.

**Table 12: Commencements by Type**

1 July 2024 to 30 September 2024	Non-SES	SES	Total
Engagement – Ongoing	16	3	19
Engagement – Non-Ongoing	33	1	34
Transfer/Promotion	52	3	55
Transfer – Temporary	9	0	9
<b>Total Commencements</b>	<b>110</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>117</b>

**Table 13: Commencements from Outside the APS by Headcount**

	Ongoing	Non-Ongoing	Total	Percent of total commencements
<b>FYTD 30 September 2024</b>	19	34	53	<b>45.3%</b>

**Table 14: Separation Rates (per cent)**

	1 Jul 2022 – 30 Jun 2023	1 Jul 2023 – 30 Jun 2024	1 Jul 2024 – 30 Sept 2024
<b>All separations</b>	<b>24.3%</b>	<b>19.9%</b>	<b>5.5%</b>
Organisation Initiated	2.9%	2.9%	0.9%
Employee Initiated	21.4%	17.0%	4.6%

Note: The separation rate is based on the last available headcount for the respective reporting periods and total separations financial year to date. Therefore, the rate at 30 Sept 2024 is a three-month rate.

**Table 15: Separations by Reason – FYTD 30 September 2024**

Separations		Total
Employee Initiated	Transfer/Promotion to another department	48
	Resignation	19
	Retirement	11
	Other (Includes invalidity and deceased)	0
	<b>Total Employee Initiated</b>	<b>78</b>
Organisation Initiated	*Voluntary Redundancy (HR records not HR system data)	0
	Transfer Machinery of Government	0
	Non-ongoing contract cessation	12
	Other (dismissal, failing to meet a condition of engagement, end of temporary transfer)	3
	<b>Total Organisation Initiated</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Total number of employee separations</b>		<b>93</b>

Note: \*Organisation initiated separations includes Voluntary Redundancies in accordance with the departments Enterprise Agreement, and SES Incentives in accordance with SES s24(1) Determinations.

**Tables 16: Entry Level Employment Programs at 30 September 2024**

Program	Number	Notes
Graduate Program	36	36 graduates engaged in the 2024 Graduate Program commenced on 8 February 2024.  Graduates commence as an APS3 and complete a Graduate Certificate in Public Administration facilitated through the University of Canberra. Graduates advance to an APS5 upon successful completion of the 10-month program.
Indigenous Apprenticeship Program (IAP)	2	Two apprentices engaged in the 2024-25 program commenced on 19 August 2024.  This whole-of-government 12-month program is coordinated by Services Australia. Education apprentices were engaged as APS3 employees and will complete a Diploma of Government, advancing to the APS4 upon successful completion.  The previous four 2023–24 program participants completed the program on 31 July 2024.
Australian Government Apprenticeship	3	Three apprentices engaged in the 2023–24 program commenced on 30 October 2023 and are due to complete the program on 30 October 2024.

Program (AGAP)		<p>This whole-of-government 12-month program is coordinated by the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations. Candidates commence as an APS3 and complete a Diploma of Government. Candidates advance to an APS4 upon successful completion. The department is not participating in the 2024–25 program.</p>
Science Policy Fellowship	0	<p>Two Fellows engaged in the 2023–24 program completed the program on 2 July 2024.</p> <p>An initiative of the Chief Scientist, candidates are employed for up to 12 months as an APS6 non-ongoing Policy Officer.</p> <p>The department intends to participate in the 2024–25 program.</p>
Australian Government School Leaver Program (AGSLP)	2	<p>Three participants were engaged in the 2024 program which commenced on 15 February 2024.</p> <p>As at 30 September 2024, one participant has since ceased employment with the Department.</p> <p>This whole-of-government 12-month program is coordinated by the Department of Finance and the Australian Taxation Office. The program is open to candidates who have graduated high school in the 2 years prior to the program commencing. Participants commence as an APS1 and complete a Certificate IV in Government. Candidates advance to an APS2 upon successful completion of the program.</p> <p>This program was previously two separate initiatives known as the Career Starter Program and Human Resources School Leaver Program.</p>
Digital Traineeship Program	1	<p>One APS3 Trainee commenced on 18 April 2024.</p> <p>This whole-of-government program is coordinated by the Australian Public Service Commission (APSC). The 12-month program provides a career opportunity through a supported pathway for under-represented groups looking to launch a digital career or those seeking a career change. Candidates are employed in an ongoing capacity at classifications from APS1 – APS6, based on the business area requirements.</p>
Stepping Into Internship Program	0	<p>This program is offered through the Australian Disability Network. It offers university students or recent graduates with disability the opportunity to gain practical experience and gain confidence in the workplace through a temporary paid internship at the APS2 classification, giving them an advantage to step into a career. Participants complete 152 hours of work which can take up to 3 months.</p> <p>12 interns completed the 2023 Winter intake which commenced between late July – mid August.</p>

		The department intends to opt into the 2024 Summer intake.
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**Table 17: Employee Diversity Representation (Headcount) at 30 September 2024**

Diversity Group	Ongoing	Non-Ongoing	Total	Percent of Department workforce	Overall APS proportion of employees*
First Nations	51	2	53	3.1%	3.5%
People with disability	89	12	101	5.9%	5.2%
Non-English-Speaking Background**	128	8	136	8.0%	6.0%
Female	1,109	51	1,160	68.3%	60.4%
Mature Age 55+	214	17	231	13.6%	19.0%
Part Time	257	32	289	17.0%	12.2%

Note: Excludes inactive employees, casuals, contractors, Public Office Holders, and the Secretary.

\*APS data sourced from the APSED Employment Data 31 December 2023 release.

\*\*APS employment data has historically been collected to inform metrics labelled 'Non-English speaking background (NESB)'.

These metrics are split into 2 components: NESB 1 refers to people born overseas who arrived in Australia after the age of 5 and whose first language was not English. NESB 2 refers to children of migrants eg. born overseas arriving in Australia aged 5 or younger, English not first language. Currently the shared services HR system does not enable reporting on NESB 2 employees.

**Table 18a: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employees by Location at 30 September 2024**

Location	Headcount
<b>Total</b>	<b>53</b>
ACT	31
New South Wales (Sydney, Newcastle)	3
Victoria (Melbourne)	1
Queensland (Brisbane, Townsville, Mackay)	12
South Australia (Adelaide)	1
Tasmania (Hobart)	1
Northern Territory (Darwin)	2
Western Australia (Perth)	2
Overseas	-

Note: Excludes inactive employees, casuals, contractors, Public Office Holders, and the Secretary.

**Table 18b: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employees by Actual Classification at 30 September 2024**

Classification	Headcount	Percent of Department workforce
<b>Total</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>100.0%</b>
APS3*	2	3.8%
APS4	8	15.1%
APS5	8	15.1%
APS6	12	22.6%
EXEC1	15	28.3%
EXEC2	4	7.5%
SESB1	4	7.5%

Note: Data based on actual classification. Data includes individuals in acting arrangements in the system at time of reporting. Totals may not equal the sum of components due to rounding. Excludes inactive employees, casuals, contractors, Public Office Holders, and the Secretary.

\*The APS 3 cohort includes APS3 Trainees and Graduates.

**Table 19: Unscheduled Absence Rates**

	FYTD 30 September 2024
<b>Unscheduled absence days per FTE</b>	<b>10.6</b>

Note: Rolling 12-month period of unscheduled absence days per FTE includes personal, carers and miscellaneous leave (bereavement, compassionate and emergency leave). It includes instances of these leave types with or without a supporting medical certificate, paid or unpaid.

Note: The average number of unscheduled absence days across large APS agencies (headcount greater than 1,000) is 13.4 days per FTE ([APSC State of the Service Report 2022-23](#)).

### ***Gender equity and pay gap***

- The APS Remuneration Survey Report 2023 (released August 2024) for the department covering the period 1 January 2023 to 31 December 2023 indicated a gender pay gap of 0.6%. This was less than the APS gender pay gap of 4.5% for the same period.
- As at 30 September 2024, department data showed a gender pay gap of 0.8%. A negative percentage would indicate the pay gap is in favour of women.
- The *Australian Public Service Gender Equality Strategy 2021–26* builds on previous strategies to show gender equality strategic advantage, leading to better outcomes for employees, agencies and the communities.
- The department has continued to report to the Workplace Gender Equity Agency (WEGA) and the Executive Board and is developing its approach to implementing the six Gender Equality Indicators:
  - gender composition of the workforce
  - gender composition of governing bodies
  - equal remuneration between women and men



- availability and utility of employment terms, conditions and practices relating to flexible working arrangements and working arrangements supporting employees with family or caring responsibilities
- consultation with employees on issues concerning gender equality in the workplace
- sexual harassment, harassment on the ground of sex or discrimination.

### ***Diversity and Inclusion***

- The department's commitment to diversity and inclusion is reflected in the People Strategy 2023–2025 (People Strategy), the Reconciliation Action Plan 2023–25 (RAP) and the Inclusion and Diversity Strategy 2024–25.
- The department's Innovate RAP is endorsed by Reconciliation Australia and reflects the National Agreement on Closing the Gap and aligns to the *Commonwealth Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Workforce Strategy 2020–24*.
- The department responded to Reconciliation Australia's RAP Impact Survey in September 2024 and invited staff to participate in the RAP Barometer Survey between 6 and 20 September in 2024.
- The department's *Indigenous Business is Everyone's Business Committee* (IBEB) has oversight of the RAP implementation and progress reporting on the actions through its quarterly meetings.
- A two-day First Nations Staff Conference (RAP Action 9.8) was held in August 2024 with 29 attendees. This year's theme was Resilience is Our Strength.

### ***APS Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Employment Strategy and Action Plan***

- The *APS Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Employment Strategy and Action Plan* was released in April 2024 and aims to develop an APS workforce that reflects the diversity of the Australian population.
- The department is considering the existing actions in its Inclusion and Diversity Strategy 2024-25 and its approach to implementation of further actions to achieve the SES targets.

### ***Australian Public Service Disability Employment Strategy 2020–25***

- The *Australian Public Service Disability Employment Strategy 2020–25* aims to increase employment of people with disability across the APS to 7% by 2025.

### **Department's Employee Networks**

- The department has 6 Employee Networks supporting our diversity and inclusion agenda with each network supported by 2 SES champions.
  - Ability and Carers
  - Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (Deadly Crew)
  - Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD)
  - Gender Equity
  - Pride
  - NeuroNetwork

### **Media**

Nil

### **Attachments**

Attachment A – Organisation Chart

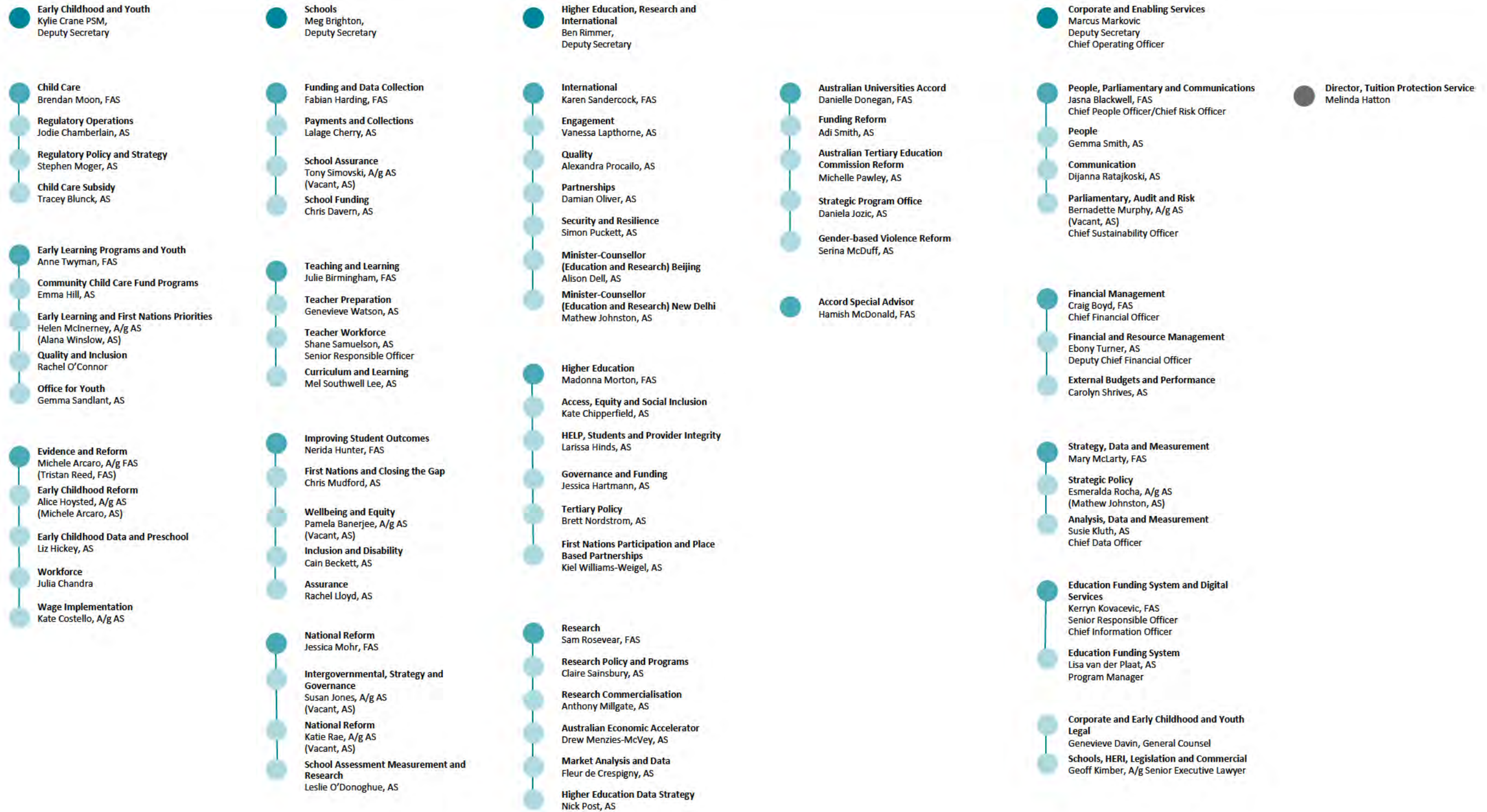
<b>Date Last Cleared</b>	01 November 2024
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**Secretary**  
Mr Tony Cook PSM

**Executive Assistant to the Secretary**  
Vanessa Jordan

**Executive Officer to the Secretary**  
Lucy Vangelatos



# Early Childhood and Youth

## Hot Topic Briefs

- |   |  |             |
|---|--|-------------|
| 1 | Access                                       | SB24-000352 |
| 2 | Child Care Affordability                     | SB24-000353 |
| 3 | Child Safety                                 | SB24-000354 |
| 4 | Early Childhood Education and Care Workforce | SB24-000355 |
| 5 | ECEC worker retention payment                | SB24-000356 |
| 6 | Productivity Commission Report               | SB24-000357 |
| 7 | Regional Access                              | SB24-000358 |

**Issue:** **Access**  
**Contact:** **Kylie Crane**  
Ph: s 22  
Deputy Secretary

## Key Points

### Report on Government Services (RoGS) 2024

- The Early Childhood, Education and Care chapter of the Productivity Commission’s RoGS was released on 5 February 2024. The child care data used to produce the report was primarily drawn from the March quarter of 2023.
- The key findings were as follows:
  - In the March quarter 2023, 1,417,946 children aged 0-12 years attended Child Care Subsidy (CCS) approved child care services.
  - A total of 14,382 CCS-approved services were operating during the same period.
  - Since 2022, there has been a 6.3% increase in the number of children aged 0-12 years attending CCS-approved child care services. This growth was most significant in the 6-12 years age group, where attendance increased by 12.4%. Additionally, there was a 14.9% increase in the number of children attending Out of School Hours Care (OSHC).
  - Attendance of children aged 0–5 increased by 3.1%. Centre Based Day Care services also saw a 2.6% overall increase in attendance for children aged 0-12.

#### Proportion of children attending care from vulnerable groups

Cohort	0-5 years		6-12 years	
	% of all children in community	% of all children attending child care	% of all children in community	% of all children attending child care
NESB	24.1	21.7	21.1	14.3
Disability	4.5	5.4	9.6	4.7
Indigenous	6.5	4.8	5.7	3.3
Regional	24.3	22.4	25.8	19.0
Remote	2.3	1.0	2.2	0.5

Source: RoGS 2024.3. Caveats and methodology are for all percentages are given in table 3A.15 of the RoGS publication.

### ***Changes to the Child Care Subsidy***

- The Australian Government delivers a range of supports for families to help them access the early childhood education and care (ECEC) services they need.
- The primary support provided is through the CCS which helps families with the cost of ECEC.
- In July 2023, the Government lifted the maximum CCS percentage to 90% for families earning up to \$80,000 and has increased subsidy rates for families earning less than \$530,000.
- These changes have benefited around 1.2 million families.
  - Of the total number of families who will benefit, around 2% earn over \$360,000 with 75% earning under \$180,000.

### ***The Community Child Care Fund***

- Additional support is provided by the Community Child Care Fund (CCCF) which supports ECEC services to address barriers to participation in disadvantaged, regional and remote communities.
- The CCCF provides support to approved early childhood services through:
  - Community Child Care Fund Competitive grants
  - Community Child Care Fund Restricted grants
  - The Connected Beginnings Program
  - Community Child Care Fund Special Circumstances grants.
- The total 4 year budget for the Community Child Care Fund (CCCF) program is \$614.7 million (\$499.7 million excluding the Connected Beginnings program).
- The CCCF supports around 700 services across Australia to reduce barriers to access, particularly for children and families in rural and remote communities experiencing disadvantage, First Nations communities, and where services are in limited supply.

### ***Starting Blocks Website***

- Families can access the information they need to make choices about their children's needs through the Starting Blocks website.
- Starting Blocks allows families to search for information on service fees, inclusions and quality ratings on the one website.

- The Australia Children Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA) also collects information about ECEC vacancies and publishes this information on Starting Blocks, so families are able to locate available care options which are accessible to them.
  - The search engine allows families to find services with vacancies up to 100km radius of the selected suburb. Vacancy information includes age ranges and days.
  - Families can also narrow the search to include service type and service quality rating. Vacancy data is provided to ACECQA through daily data files from Services Australia, with the Starting Blocks website updated 5 times a week (Sunday to Thursday).
- Waiting lists are kept by individual services but are considered unreliable because parents can choose to be on more than one waiting list. Waiting lists are not shown on Starting Blocks.
- Recent enhancements to the Starting Blocks website enable families to see average year-on-year fee increases, as well as revenue and profit information for large for-profit providers.
- This is a big step in the Government's commitment to improving transparency in the child care sector.

## Research

### ***International Child Care Report – Mapping the Deserts***

- The Mitchell Institute's (MI) report, *Mapping the Deserts*, examines the prevalence of 'child care deserts' across nine countries: England, Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland, Netherlands, France, Norway, Sweden and Australia. These countries were selected for their diverse approaches to child care provision. The MI report is focussed on children under school aged.
- The MI has defined a child care 'desert' as an area where there are 3 or more children for every available child care place. The report reveals that 24% of Australian children live in a child care desert, a figure that places Australia in the mid-range compared to other OECD countries, such as, France (86% of children under 3 years), England (45%) and Scotland (10%).
- In Australia, there are 0.47 child care places per child. Among the countries studied, only Scotland had a higher ratio, with 0.51 places per child.
- The report presents an incomplete picture of child care in Australia due to flaws in the datasets and methodology used.

- The report identifies several factors that contribute to variations in child care access:
  - **Government involvement:** Unlike other parts of the education system, governments often have limited control over child care planning and delivery, including the location of services. This restricts their ability to increase supply in underserved areas.
  - **Demand variability:** Child care is not compulsory and demand fluctuates based on family needs, preferences and the length of parental leave available.
  - **Funding models:** Whether a country relies on publicly or privately funded child care - through supply-side or demand-side funding - affects the cost of services for families and influences decisions on enrolling children.
  - **Workforce challenges:** The report highlights ongoing issues faced by the child care workforce, which further impacts access and availability.

## Media

Nil

<b>Date Last Cleared</b>	24 October 2024
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**Issue:** Child Care Affordability  
**Contact:** Kylie Crane  
Ph: s 22  
Deputy Secretary, Early Childhood and Youth Group

## Key Points

### ***Investment in the Child Care Subsidy (CCS)***

- As part of the October 2022–23 Budget, the Australian Government invested **\$4.6 billion** to increase CCS rates for families earning less than \$530,000 – reducing out-of-pocket fees for around 96% of Australian families – over 1.2 million families.
- The total estimated expenditure on CCS (including Additional Child Care Subsidy) for the June quarter 2024 was **\$3.7 billion**.
- **\$13.6 billion** was spent on CCS in the 2023–24 financial year.

### ***Impact of CCS Changes on the Consumer Price Index (CPI)***

- The child care CPI **increased by 3.2%** in the September quarter 2024. Over the year to September quarter 2024 childcare CPI **increased by 12.1%**.
  - All groups CPI **increased by 0.2%** in the September quarter 2024. Over the year to the September quarter 2024, all groups CPI increased by 2.8%.
- Out-of-pocket child care costs as measured by child care CPI are now **2.7% lower than in June quarter 2023**, prior to the introduction of Cheaper Child Care reform.
  - Child care CPI is based on out of pocket costs of child care borne by households. A reduction in the child care CPI indicates that out of pocket costs have been reduced.

### ***Out-of-Pocket Costs***

- Since the introduction of the Child Care Subsidy (CCS) in 2018, average out-of-pocket costs reached their lowest amount (\$3.59) in December quarter 2023 after introduction of the Cheaper Child Care measures.
- The average out-of-pocket cost in June quarter 2024 was \$3.66 per hour for all care types (excluding In Home Care).
  - An improvement from \$4.22 in the June quarter 2023 – the last quarter prior to the Cheaper Child Care measures.

**Table 1 – Average Out-of-Pocket costs per hour per child**

	<b>Sept quarter 2018</b> (after introduction of CCS)	<b>June quarter 2023</b> (before Cheaper Child Care measures)	<b>June quarter 2024</b>
CBDC	\$3.79	\$4.36	\$3.82
OSHC	\$3.64	\$3.65	\$3.06
<b>ALL*</b>	<b>\$4.01</b>	<b>\$4.22</b>	<b>\$3.66</b>

\*Excludes In Home Care

- In the June quarter 2024 there were 811,090 children in Centre Based Day Care (CBDC).
  - For 237,450 (29.3%) children, parents' out-of-pocket costs were less than \$2 an hour per child (compared to 29.5% in the March quarter 2024).
  - For 604,070 (74.5%) children, parents' out-of-pocket costs were less than \$5 an hour per child (the same percentage (74.5%) for the March quarter 2024).

### **Fees**

- In the June quarter 2024, the **average hourly child care fee per child, for all service types** (excluding In Home Care) was **\$12.55** – an annual increase of 8.6% and a quarterly increase of 1.0%. The 10-year average fee growth is **5.3%** per annum.
  - The **average hourly fee in CBDC** was **\$13.15** in June quarter 2024 – an annual increase of 8.5% and a quarterly increase of 0.5%. The 10-year average fee growth for CBDC is 5.5% per annum.
  - The **average hourly fee in Outside School Hours Care (OSHC)** was **\$9.10** in June quarter 2024 – an annual increase of 7.4% and a quarterly increase of 2.8%.

### **Worker retention payment and affordability**

- On 8 August 2024, The Government announced that it will provide \$3.6 billion in funding to support a 15% wage increase for the Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) workforce.
- Phased in over 2 years, workers will receive a 10% increase from December 2024, and a further 5% increase from December 2025 through a new ECEC worker retention payment.

- The wage increase will be conditional on providers passing on all funding as wages and limiting fee increases.
  - From 8 August 2024 to 7 August 2025 services won't be able to increase their fees by more than 4.4%. This is an important condition that will keep downward pressure on fees for families.
  - From 8 August 2025 onwards, a new fee constraint will apply, which is being developed by the Australian Bureau of Statistics.
  - Combined with the Government's Cheaper Child Care initiative, this investment will help support the availability of early education and care for families and is a crucial step in charting the course to a truly universal early education system.

### ***Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) Inquiry***

- The ACCC has investigated the drivers of ECEC costs and the impact of these costs on child care provider viability, quality and profits.
- The ACCC's final report was provided to Government on 31 December 2023 and published on 29 January 2024, presenting 8 recommendations and 31 findings. The report includes analysis of the impact of the CCS increases in July 2023 on out-of-pocket fees.
- The ACCC's recommendations and findings will be considered in the context of the Productivity Commission's comprehensive inquiry into Australia's ECEC system which was released on 18 September 2024.

### **Media**

- ***ABS reports 1.3% out of pocket expense increase, The Sector, Jason Roberts, 29 September 2024***

The article reports on the ABS Early Childhood Education and Care CPI June quarter 2024 data, the increase in net out-of-pocket costs and the erosion of the affordability gains associated with the introduction of the cheaper child care policy. The article also refers to the worker retention payments and the associated cap on fee increases and that the rate of change in net out-of-pocket expenses will more than likely start to fall as approved providers across Australia sign up to the new payment.

- ***Labor salutes child care costs fall, The Australian, Sarah Ison, 28 September 2024***

The article reports that child care out of pocket costs fell by 13% over the year until June quarter 2024 following the introduction of the government's cheaper child care policy whereby the lowest income earners can now access a subsidy rate of 90% up from 85%. The

article also references the Productivity Commission report on their inquiry into child care and the recommendation that child care be made free for families on less than \$80,000 and abolish their activity test.

- ***Childcare operators lock in fee increases, The Australian, Natasha Bita, 9 August 2024***

The article reports that the government's worker retention payment, to support child care worker wage increases, will cap fee increases to 4.4% in its first year between 8 August 2024 and 7 August 2025 for those services signed up to the payment by their provider. Services such as Goodstart (not for profit, with 654 services) and G8 Education (the biggest for-profit chain of 430 services) had already increased their fees by 5.8% on 1 July 2024 and 4.5% in January 2024 respectively, before the 8 August 2024 worker retention payment announcement. The article notes that Goodstart, G8 (whose CEO "refused to disclose the extent of any July fee increase") and other providers that increased their fees before 8 August 2024 and sign up to the worker retention payment, have locked in those increases as the limit on fee increases will not be back dated.

<b>Date Last Cleared</b>	05 November 2024
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**Issue:** Child Safety  
**Contact:** Kylie Crane  
Ph: s 22  
Deputy Secretary, Early Childhood and Youth

## Key Points

- The Australian Government takes the safety, health and wellbeing of every child seriously, and is committed to ensuring that all providers of early childhood education and care (ECEC) embed a child safe culture.
- The National Quality Framework (NQF) provides a comprehensive national regulatory system to ensure the safety, health and wellbeing of all children attending an approved ECEC service.
- The NQF is designed to support ECEC services in meeting their obligations to provide a child safe environment and minimise the risk of harm and hazard to children.
- As at 1 July 2024, there were 17,705 approved services regulated under the NQF across Australia, including centre-based day care, family day care, outside school hours care and preschool<sup>1</sup>.
  - Refer [Attachment A](#) for information on serious incidents and waivers.
- States and territories are responsible for ECEC delivery as well as establishing regulatory authorities that ensure NQF compliance.
- All ECEC providers are required under the Education and Care Services National Law and National Regulations to have a range of critical safety measures in place, including that children are adequately supervised at all times. Adequate supervision is a requirement under Element 2.2.1 of the National Quality Standards.
- Australia has both national child protection safeguards and safeguards within jurisdictions. There are protections under the NQF such as the reporting of risks and serious incidents to regulatory bodies, as well as jurisdictional based mechanisms such as working with children checks, reportable conduct schemes (ACT, NSW, Vic., WA and Tas.) child protection training, teacher registration processes and mandatory reporting.
  - Refer [Attachment B](#) for an overview of jurisdictional child safety schemes.

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<sup>1</sup> [NQF Snapshot Q2 2024 \(acecqa.gov.au\)](https://www.acecqa.gov.au)

- The Government is working with all states and territories to implement and promote the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations (refer [Attachment C](#)) a requirement of the Commonwealth Child Safe Framework.
- The Government recognises the protection of children is not something it can achieve alone (refer [Attachment D](#) for child protection portfolio responsibilities and safeguards).
- There is ongoing collaboration between governments and respective agencies on specific operations and incidents.
  - Questions related to Operation Tenterfield should be directed to the Australian Federal Police.
  - Questions related to national policies and strategies to prevent and respond to child sexual abuse, the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations, and the Commonwealth Child Safe Framework should be directed to the National Office for Child Safety.

### ***Review of Child Safety Arrangements Under the NQF***

- The Australian Children’s Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA) is an independent national authority that assists governments in administering the NQF. It is established under the Education and Care Services National Law.
- The Hon Jason Clare MP, Minister for Education, and the Hon Dr Anne Aly MP, Minister for Early Childhood Education, with support from all Ministers through the Education Ministers Meetings, commissioned the ACECQA to undertake a *Review of Child Safety Arrangements under the NQF* (the Review).
- The Final Report of the Review was [published on ACECQA's website](#) on 21 December 2023 and includes 16 recommendations about:
  - physical and online safety
  - child supervision
  - staffing requirements.
- The Review found:
  - The NQF is an internationally recognised framework that provides a robust regulatory scheme for ensuring the safety, health and wellbeing of children.
  - Australia has a very good system of ECEC and more can be done to ensure the NQF remains contemporary and fit-for-purpose in the context of child safety.

- On 23 February 2024, Education Ministers accepted, in-principle, key recommendations from the Review, and agreed that they would work with other Ministers where recommendations went beyond Education.
- Implementation actions will improve existing safeguards and enhance safety arrangements for children in ECEC services across Australia.
- Recommendations from the Review for priority action include reducing notification reporting timeframes for allegations of physical or sexual abuse, making services free from e-cigarettes/vaping and options to restrict the use of personal devices that take images or videos of children.

### ***Implementation Progress***

- On 26 April 2024, Education Ministers agreed to develop/adapt support materials under the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers (APST) to better recognise and support registration arrangements for early childhood teachers operating in non-school settings. This work is underway, led by the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) and ACECQA.
- On 1 July 2024, ACECQA in partnership with all governments, released the National Model Code and Guidelines – a set of recommended child safe practices for the use of electronic devices, when taking images or videos of children in ECEC.
  - The National Model Code and Guidelines set out that:
    - only service-issued devices should be used to take photos and/or videos of children
    - personal electronic devices that can take and/or record images are not to be carried when providing ECEC, unless for authorised essential purposes such as emergencies, health and family needs
    - strict controls should be in place for storing and retaining children’s images and recordings.
  - The National Model Code has been designed for centre-based services approved under the NQF (long day care and pre-school/kindergarten services).
  - Providers of other types of ECEC services may choose to consider adopting similar practices within their own contexts.
  - The National Model Code is voluntary while regulatory reform around these issues is explored by governments.

## **Other Actions to Improve Child Safety**

### *2019 NQF Review – Implementation*

- The 2019 review of the NQF made recommendations in 21 areas to improve children's health, safety and wellbeing, service quality and regulatory burden.
- Education Ministers agreed changes to legislation, regulations and guidance to implement the recommendations and ensure the NQF remained contemporary and robust.
- Final regulatory changes came into effect from 1 October 2023.

### *Safety in Out of Scope Services Funded by Australian Government*

- The Government has engaged ACECQA to build capability in the provision of quality and safe ECEC in Community Child Care Fund Restricted services and In Home Care services.

### *Recommendations from the Productivity Commission Inquiry into the ECEC Sector in Australia*

- On 18 September 2024, the Productivity Commission (PC) released their final report on the future of Australia's ECEC system.

## **Media**

- ***Three daycare staff arrested in three days, eight children abused, Sydney Morning Herald, 18 October 2024***

Concerns raised on 25 September 2024 regarding inappropriate conduct of an educator at Aussie Kindies Glen Innes. The individual was immediately prohibited by the NSW Regulatory Authority (RA) with investigations underway. It is alleged 8 children were assaulted.

- ***Warwick Farm man charged with child abuse at Seaforth childcare centre, Sydney Morning Herald, 17 October 2024***

The NSW RA are investigating allegations regarding inappropriate interactions with a child on 11 September 2024 at Seaforth Childcare Centre. The educator, casually employed, has been stood down and immediately prohibited upon police charges. The educator is facing court on 25 October 2024.

Also ***Daycare worker refused bail over alleged assault, 10 News, 17 October 2024***



- **Daycare worker ‘filmed abuse of children’ in Sydney classroom, Sydney Morning Herald, 17 October 2024**

The Australian Federal Police (AFP) notified the NSW RA of concerns regarding an individual alleged to have inappropriate footage of children on a mobile device. The incidents may have occurred in the ECEC and school setting. The AFP and NSW RA are investigating. There is a court order precluding publishing of the individual’s name and service locations.

- **Childcare workers bared from taking photos of children on own phones under new guidelines, 9 News, 1 July 2024**

Several similar articles were published around this time including from 7 News and Mirage News following the introduction of the National Model Code on 1 July 2024.

The article highlights under the new guidelines workers at certain child care centres are no longer allowed to take photos and videos of children on their own phones. Only devices issued by ECEC services can be used to take footage of children.

The article also states the code and guidelines are voluntary.

- **Man charged with rape and sexual assaults at childcare centres, AFP media release, 1 August 2023**

Other media on child safety primarily relates to Operation Tenterfield and the 1 August 2023 announcement by AFP of the investigation and arrest of a Gold Coast man regarding child abuse in multiple child care centres spanning 15 years.

## Attachments

Attachment A – Serious incidents and waivers

Attachment B – Overview of jurisdictional child safety schemes

Attachment C – National Principles for Child Safe Organisations

Attachment D – Child protection portfolio responsibilities

<b>Date Last Cleared</b>	21 October 2024
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### **Serious Incidents**

- Under the National Quality Framework (NQF), a serious incident is defined as an event occurring at an ECEC service which causes:
  - the death of a child; or
  - serious injury or trauma to a child for which the child requires urgent medical attention; or
  - a child being missed or unaccounted for.
- In 2022–23, there were 139 reported serious incidents per 100 NQF approved services, up from 124 in 2021–22 (highest rate since 2016-17)<sup>1</sup>.
- Long day care services continue to report a higher rate of serious incidents than other service types (191 per 100 approved services), likely to coincide with longer periods of care and younger children in care<sup>2</sup>.
- ACECQA has undertaken further analysis to improve sector understanding of the drivers of these increases and possible solutions with ongoing discussions occurring with stakeholders on the results.
- ACECQA has also released occasional papers about trends in serious incidents data and newsletter articles and information sheets to help providers and services prevent, manage and respond to serious incidents.

### **Staffing Waivers**

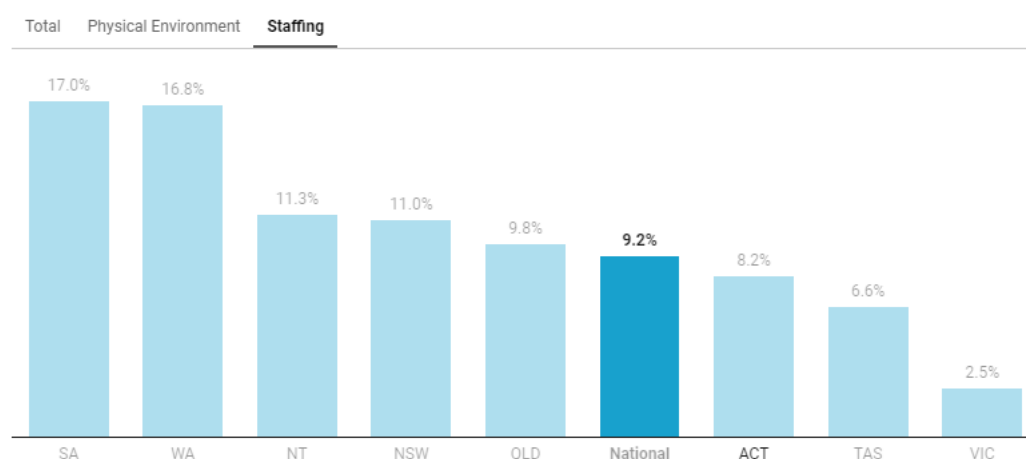
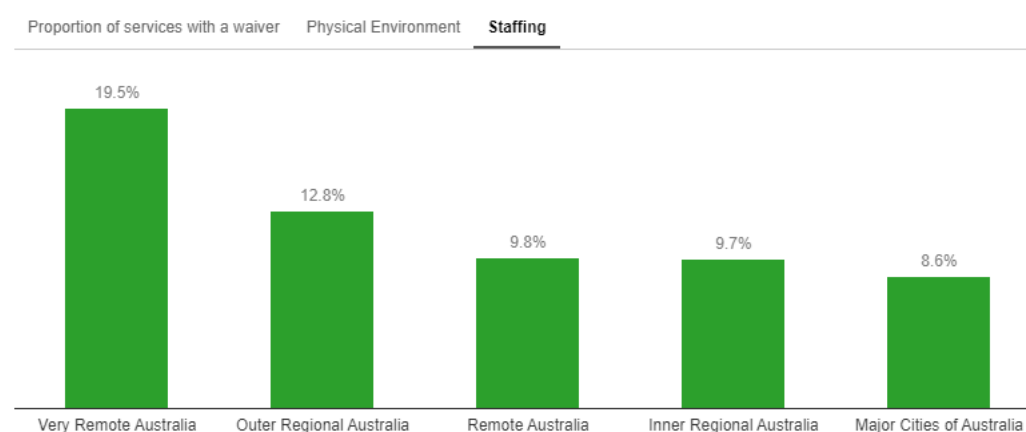
- As at 1 July 2024, 9.2 per cent of all services had a staffing waiver (down from 10 per cent on 1 October 2023, which was the highest since the introduction of the NQF)<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> [NQF Annual Performance Report 2023](#). Note the 2023-24 Performance Report will be published in December 2024.

<sup>2</sup> [NQF Annual Performance Report 2023](#). Note the 2023-24 Performance Report will be published in December 2024.

<sup>3</sup> [NQF Snapshot Q2 2024 \(acecqa.gov.au\)](#)

**W1: Proportion of services with a waiver by jurisdiction and waiver category****W4: Proportion of services with a waiver by remoteness classification and waiver category\***

- Waivers are issued only when the regulator is certain genuine steps were taken to avoid the need for a waiver and there is no risk to children's safety, health and wellbeing and they are adequately supervised at all times.
- Most staffing waivers relate to temporary difficulties experienced by long day care service providers in meeting the early childhood teacher requirements stipulated under the Education and Care Services National Regulations, with very few relating to the educator-to-child ratio requirements stipulated under the Regulations.

<b>Requirements that may be covered by a service waiver</b>	
Regulation	Requirement
72A	Location of principal office of family day care service
<b>Physical environment</b>	
104	Fencing

## Attachment A

107	Indoor space (Centre-based only)
108	Outdoor space (Centre-based only)
110	Ventilation and natural light
117	Glass (Family Day Care only).

...Cont. over page

<b>Staffing</b>	
120	Educators who are under 18 to be supervised (Centre-based only)
123	Educator to child ratios—centre-based services (Centre-based only)
124	Number of children who can be educated and cared for (Family Day Care only)
126	General educator qualifications – centre-based services
127	Family day care educator qualifications (Family Day Care only)
128	Family day care co-ordinator qualifications (Family Day Care only)
130	Requirement for early childhood teacher—centre-based services—fewer than 25 approved places (Centre-based only)
131	Requirement for early childhood teacher—centre-based services—25 or more approved places but fewer than 25 children
132	Requirement for early childhood teacher—centre-based services—25 to 59 children
133	Requirement for early childhood teacher—centre-based services—60 to 80 children
134	Requirement for early childhood teacher—centre-based services—more than 80 children (Centre-based only)
Division 2 of Part 4.3	(Centre-based only) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 111 Administrative space</li> <li>• 112 Nappy change facilities</li> <li>• 113 Outdoor space—natural environment</li> <li>• 114 Outdoor space—shade</li> <li>• 115 Premises designed to facilitate supervision</li> </ul>
Ch.7	Any jurisdiction-specific, transitional or saving provisions that apply in place of the regulations outlined above.

## Summary – Current Jurisdictional Child Safety Schemes

	Teacher Registration	Child Protection Training <sup>1</sup>	Reportable Conduct Scheme <sup>2</sup>
<b>ACT</b>	Voluntary registration from 1 April 2024. Open to all early childhood teachers (ECTs) qualified to teach in ECEC services, including outside school hours care.	Staff are encouraged to complete free online training.	Yes – <i>Ombudsman Act 1989</i> (ACT).
<b>NSW</b>	Mandatory ECT registration since 18 July 2016.	Requires child protection training under s162A of the National Law.	Yes – <i>Children’s Guardian Act 2019</i> (NSW).
<b>NT</b>	Not required for all ECTs. However, preschools attached to schools require registration as a condition of employment.	Nil.	Nil.
<b>Qld</b>	Not required for ECTs in NQF settings. Some employers require teacher registration as condition of employment. Only mandatory for ECTs operating in schools.	Progressing a protocol.	To commence from 1 July 2026 with a staged approach. All reporting organisations are required to comply by 1 July 2027. <sup>3</sup>
<b>SA</b>	Mandatory ECT registration since 1 January 2014.	ECTs complete training and maintain currency update certificate.	May not be required as existing mechanisms in place. <i>Children and Young People (Safety) Act 2017</i> (SA) – a prescribed person who suspects on reasonable grounds that a child or young person is or may be at risk must report that suspicion.
<b>Tas.</b>	Not required for ECTs in NQF settings that are not kindergartens or schools. Tasmanian kindergartens are part of Tasmanian schools, and as such kindergarten teachers are required to hold registration.	Nil.	Yes – commenced 1 January 2024. <i>The Child and Youth Safe Organisations Act 2023</i> (TAS).
<b>Vic.</b>	Mandatory ECT registration since 30 September 2015.	Early childhood professionals are encouraged to complete free online training.	Yes – <i>Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005</i> (VIC).
<b>WA</b>	Mandatory ECT registration since 6 December 2012.	Nil.	Yes – commenced 1 January 2023. <i>Parliamentary Commissioner Amendment (Reportable Conduct) Act 2022</i> (WA).

<sup>1</sup> Information from Attachment 7 of the [Review of Child Safety Arrangements under the National Quality Framework Final Report \(acecqa.gov.au\)](https://www.cecqa.gov.au/review-of-child-safety-arrangements-under-the-national-quality-framework-final-report)

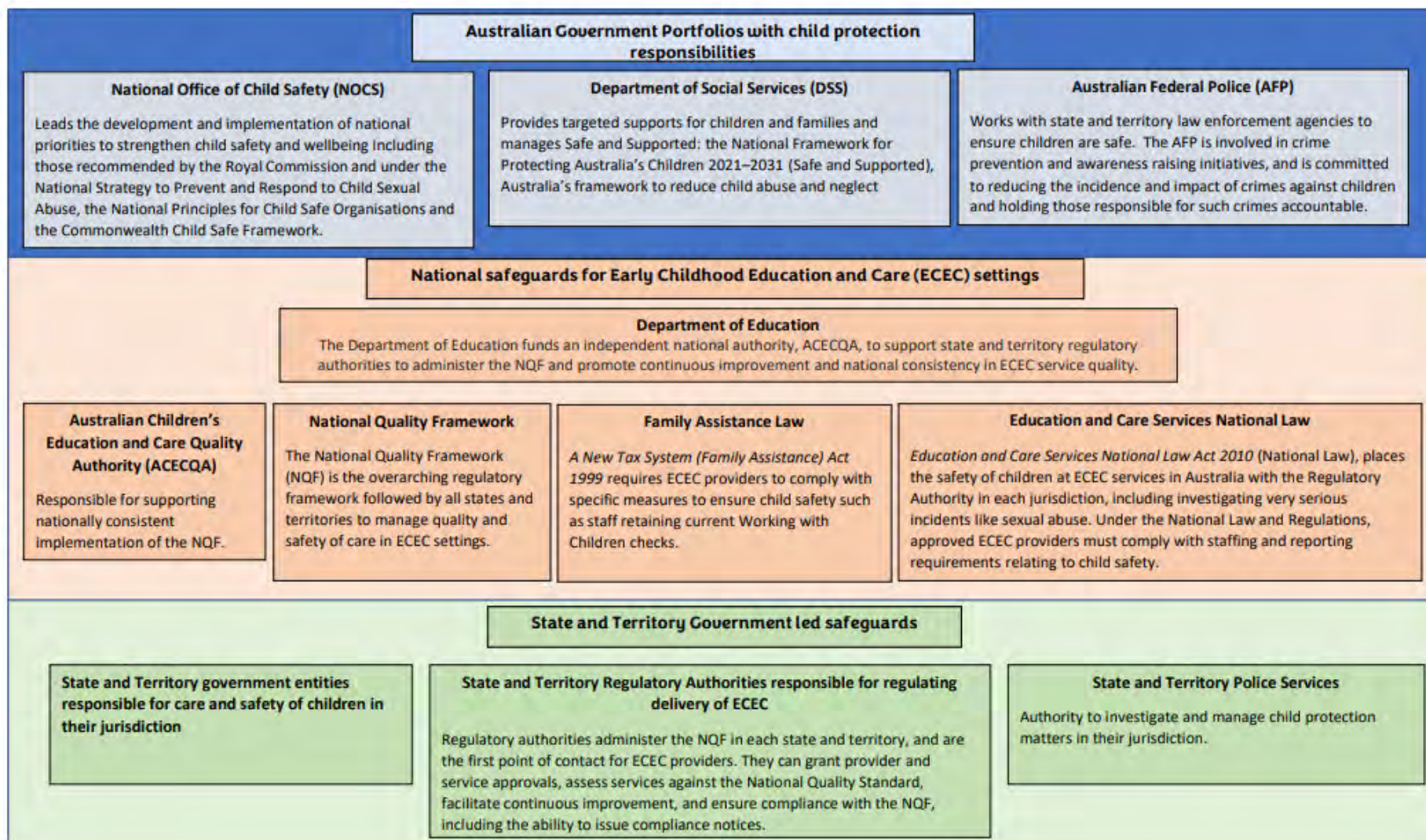
<sup>2</sup> Information from Attachment 7 of the [Review of Child Safety Arrangements under the National Quality Framework Final Report \(acecqa.gov.au\)](https://www.cecqa.gov.au/review-of-child-safety-arrangements-under-the-national-quality-framework-final-report)

<sup>3</sup> [Reportable Conduct Scheme | Queensland Family and Child Commission \(qfcc.qld.gov.au\)](https://www.qfcc.qld.gov.au/reportable-conduct-scheme)

# National Principles for Child Safe Organisations

- 1.** Child safety and wellbeing is embedded in organisational leadership, governance and culture.
- 2.** Children and young people are informed about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously.
- 3.** Families and communities are informed and involved in promoting child safety and wellbeing.
- 4.** Equity is upheld and diverse needs respected in policy and practice.
- 5.** People working with children and young people are suitable and supported to reflect child safety and wellbeing values in practice.
- 6.** Processes to respond to complaints and concerns are child focused.
- 7.** Staff and volunteers are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children and young people safe through ongoing education and training.
- 8.** Physical and online environments promote safety and wellbeing while minimising the opportunity for children and young people to be harmed.
- 9.** Implementation of the national child safe principles is regularly reviewed and improved.
- 10.** Policies and procedures document how the organisation is safe for children and young people.

## Attachment D: Child Protection Portfolio Responsibilities





## Further information on key agencies

### National Office for Child Safety

The [National Office for Child Safety](#) (NOCS) leads the development and implementation of national priorities to strengthen child safety and wellbeing including those recommended by the Royal Commission and under the *National Strategy to Prevent and Respond to Child Sexual Abuse*, the *National Principles for Child Safe Organisations* and the *Commonwealth Child Safe Framework*. NOCS is working with jurisdictions to develop options for national reform to enhance child safety and reduce regulatory barriers around working with children checks. Reform options will be developed as a joint responsibility between all governments.

### Department of Social Services

The Department of Social Services is responsible for contributing to stronger and more resilient children and families by providing targeted supports. They have carriage of Australia's framework for ensuring children and young people grow up in safe and supported homes free from harm and neglect '*Safe and Supported: the National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children 2021–2031*'.

### Department of Education

The Department of Education funds an independent national authority, Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA) to support state and territory regulatory authorities to administer the NQF and promote continuous improvement and national consistency in early childhood education and care (ECEC) service quality.

### Family Assistance Law

*A New Tax System (Family Assistance) Act 1999* requires ECEC providers to comply with specific measures to ensure child safety such as staff retaining current Working with Children checks.

### Education and Care Services National Law

*Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010* (National Law), places the safety of children at ECEC services in Australia with the Regulatory Authority in each jurisdiction, including investigating very serious incidents like sexual abuse. Under the National Law and Regulations, approved ECEC providers must comply with staffing and reporting requirements relating to child safety including:

- Requirement for each nominated supervisor and person in charge of the service to have completed the child protection training required in their jurisdiction, have the correct working with children checks and teacher registrations in place, as well as having policies and procedures in place to ensure the provision of a child safe environment.
- requirement for providers to notify the relevant Regulatory Authority of any circumstances which pose a risk to the health, safety and wellbeing of children. This includes incidents or allegations of physical or sexual abuse of a child while a child is in care.

### National Quality Framework

The National Quality Framework (NQF) is the overarching regulatory framework followed by all states and territories to manage quality and safety of care in ECEC settings. The NQF includes a range of child protection safeguards including requiring all ECEC services comply with relevant child protection legislation in their jurisdictions.

### Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority

ACECQA has developed a register of prohibited persons and suspended educators that ECEC services review prior to hiring staff.

### State and Territory Governments

Legal responsibilities of each state and territory government for child protection and law enforcement. The Australian Federal Police works in partnership with state and territory police authorities to manage child protection matters.

**Issue:** Early Childhood Education and Care Workforce  
**PBS Pg No.** Pages 14-15 of the 2023-24 PBS.  
**Contact:** Ms Kylie Crane  
 Ph: s 22  
 Deputy Secretary, Early Childhood and Youth

### Administered Budget – ECEC Workforce Subsidies (Professional Development, Paid Practicum, Practicum Exchange) as at 2023–24 PBS

Financial year	2023–24 (\$m)	2024–25 (\$m)	2025–26 (\$m)	2026–27 (\$m)	2027–28 (\$m)	Total
Budget Allocation	16.262	33.256 <sup>1</sup>	8.582	6.318	0.000	64.418
Committed <sup>2</sup>	15.974	0.754	0.287	0.287	0.000	17.302

### Key Points

- The early childhood education and care (ECEC) sector faces challenges in attracting and retaining the qualified workforce it requires.
- The Productivity Commission (PC) and the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) inquiry final reports both note that addressing workforce issues will be fundamental to enabling future reforms.
- The PC recommends governments prioritise the workforce attraction, retention and professional recognition challenges facing the sector.
- The Jobs and Skills Australia (JSA) Capacity Study (the Study) final report was published on 3 September 2024.
- Workforce modelling completed for the Study shows that:
  - There is a shortfall of around 21,000 qualified ECEC workers needed to meet existing demand.
  - Current workforce levels need to grow by 8% to meet sustainable staffing levels.
  - A further 8% growth is required to address unmet demand for service.

<sup>1</sup> Movement of Funds of \$8.092m from 2023–24 to 2024–25 for Paid Practicum. There was lower uptake in 2023-24 than anticipated due to eligibility parameters; the grant will be available to wider ECEC sector in 2024–25.

<sup>2</sup> As at end of September 2024, the first grant round for 2024-25 is yet to be committed.

- As of **August 2024**<sup>1</sup>, there were **255,800** educators, early childhood teachers (ECTs) and centre managers employed in the workforce, an **increase of 16,200 (6.8%)** from **August 2023**.
- In **August 2024**<sup>2</sup>, there were **6,283 ECEC job vacancies** (three-month moving average). The yearly comparison indicates a **19.02% decrease** from **August 2023**.
  - This includes 4,191 job advertisements for early childhood educators, 1,785 job advertisements for early childhood teachers (ECTs), and 308 job advertisements for centre managers.
- As at 1 July 2024, 9.2% of services had a staffing waiver, generally for not having access to a qualified ECT<sup>3</sup>. This is an increase from 9.1% of services with a staffing waiver as at 1 April 2024.

### ***National Workforce Strategy***

- To attract and retain a quality workforce, the Government is working in partnership with stakeholders to implement Shaping Our Future, the co-designed National Children's Education and Care Workforce Strategy (the Strategy) to support recruitment and retention of the ECEC workforce.
  - The Strategy, published on 13 October 2021, documents and builds on the significant investment by all governments and the sector to date.
  - Implementation is a collective responsibility between governments, the ECEC sector and key stakeholders. No single government or stakeholder group can be responsible for its success.
  - Shaping Our Future includes 21 actions that will be progressed over 3 horizons:
    - 13 short-term actions, to be progressed within 3 years (end of 2024).
    - Seven medium-term actions, to be progressed within 6 years (end of 2027).
    - One long-term action, to be progressed within 10 years (end of 2031).
  - A summary of complementary initiatives released with the Strategy identifies over 70 recent workforce commitments and initiatives from all governments and the sector.

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<sup>1</sup> August 2024, Labour Force Survey (EQ08), Australia, Detailed, Quarterly, trended by Jobs and Skills Australia.

<sup>2</sup> Jobs and Skills Australia, Labour Market Insights, Internet Vacancy Index, August 2024.

<sup>3</sup> Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority NQF Snapshot Report Q2, 2024.

- An implementation tracker for Strategy actions and complementary initiatives was published on the Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority website in July 2023, the dashboard was refreshed in July 2024.
  - As of October 2024, 20 of the 21 Strategy actions are on track or ahead of schedule: seven short-term actions and one medium-term action are complete.
  - Five short-term actions are on track for completion by the end of 2024.
  - Five medium-term actions have commenced and are ahead of schedule.
  - The implementation of early childhood teacher registration in all states and territories (FA1-2) is the only short-term action that is not currently on track for completion by 2024. Qld, Tas. and the NT have commenced this work and have committed to implementation by 2026 under the Child Safety Review. Voluntary early childhood teacher registration commenced in the ACT on 1 April 2024.
- From these actions, 16 distinct outputs have been produced including research reports, reviews, wellbeing support programs and resources.

### ***Workforce Development Measures***

- In the 2023–24 Budget, the Government announced \$72.4 million (from 2023–24 to 2026–27) for 3 grants programs to support the skills and training of the ECEC workforce: the professional development subsidy; the paid practicum subsidy; and the practicum exchange program.
  - The professional development and paid practicum subsidies commenced on 3 July 2023.
  - The practicum exchange website was launched in October 2024. Interested students and services can register on the website [prac.exchange.gov.au](http://prac.exchange.gov.au) which helps students and services search for and arrange practicum opportunities.

- The 2024–25 Guidelines for the Professional Development and Paid Practicum subsidies were published in July 2024. The first round of applications closed on 20 September 2024 and are currently being assessed. Successful providers are expected to be paid in November 2024.
- In 2023–24, over 23,500 professional development subsidies and over 750 paid practicum subsidies have been paid at a cost of \$15.774 million.
  - In 2023–24, these programs prioritise support for First Nations educators and ECTs, and educators and ECTs in regional and remote areas.
  - For the Professional Development subsidy this exceeded the initial amount of 22,000 educators that were expected to be supported in 2023–24.
  - For Paid Practicum subsidy it was lower than the 2,500 educators that were expected to be supported when the subsidy was initially announced.
  - In 2024–25, the grants are open to all of Australia, but First Nations and regional and remote areas remain high priority. The Paid Practicum subsidy eligibility was also updated to support eight weeks of practicum placement per semester and to include Diploma-level qualifications.
- Australians in regional and remote areas also benefit from grants to ECEC services, such as the Community Child Care Fund (CCCF), including Connected Beginnings.
  - This will deliver \$614.7 million over 4 years (2024–25 to 2027–28) with around 85% of allocated funding over 2024–25 supporting services in regional and remote locations. This funding will support and retain ECEC workers in areas of critical shortage, including regional and remote communities.

### ***Recent Wage Increases and Award Reviews***

- Each financial year the Fair Work Commission reviews and sets minimum wages. Most ECEC workers are covered by 2 Modern Awards which establish the minimum wages and conditions for:
  - Child educators – covered by the Children’s Services Award (2010)<sup>4</sup>.
  - Early Childhood Teachers – covered by the Educational Services (Teachers) Award (2020)<sup>5</sup>.

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<sup>4</sup> <https://library.fairwork.gov.au/award/?krn=MA000120>

<sup>5</sup> <https://awardviewer.fwo.gov.au/award/show/MA000077>

- The Annual Wage Review for 2023–24 delivered a 3.75% increase to these awards from 1 July 2024.<sup>6</sup> This decision directly covered the majority of the ECEC workforce, with the remainder falling under different workplace instruments (e.g. Enterprise Agreements).
- On 8 August 2024, the Government announced \$3.6 billion in funding to support a wage increase for the ECEC workforce, delivering on its commitment made in the 2024–25 Budget.
  - Eligible providers can apply for a grant to support a 10% wage increase on top of relevant current national awards from 2 December 2024, and a further 5% increase from 1 December 2025 until 30 November 2026.

## **Pipeline**

### VET

- In 2023<sup>7</sup>, there were approximately 24,965 training completions for Certificate III and Diploma courses in early childhood, including:
  - 18,940 Certificate IIIs in Early Childhood and Care
  - 6,025 Diplomas of Early Childhood and Care.
- The Australian Apprenticeships Incentive Scheme commenced on 1 July 2022 and provides wage subsidies for employers and incentives for apprentices (trainees) to study priority occupations.
  - As at 31 March 2024, 22,665 trainees were in-training in an apprenticeship pathway to gain an ECEC qualification.<sup>8</sup>
    - 15,905 Certificate IIIs in Early Childhood and Care.
    - 6,760 Diplomas of Early Childhood and Care.
- Data from 1 January 2023 to 31 March 2024 shows Fee-Free TAFE has supported 473,840 student enrolments nationally. There were over 31,927 enrolments within the ECEC sector, comprising approximately 6.7% of total enrolments.

### Tertiary Education

- In 2023, there were 2,440 training completions for early childhood Initial Teacher Education courses.
- Providing 20,000 (1,469 for ECTs) university places to provide more opportunities for under-represented groups to enter higher education in 2023 and 2024.

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<sup>6</sup> FWC Annual Wage Review 2023-24.

<sup>7</sup> NCVET 2024, Total VET students and courses 2023, NCVET, Adelaide, Data de-duplicated by Department of Employment and Workplace Relations Note: Completions data for 2023 are preliminary. They may be revised upwards in August 2025 to account for completions submitted after the reporting deadline.

<sup>8</sup> NCVET 2024, Australian vocational education and training statistics: apprentices and trainees 2024 — March quarter, NCVET, Adelaide.

- Supporting talented students to enter the teaching profession with 5,000 scholarships for new teaching students studying from 2024.
- The **Commonwealth Prac Payment** (\$427.4 million over 4 years) will help eligible domestic students manage costs of mandatory placements for higher education courses in teaching, nursing, midwifery and social work and Diploma of Nursing courses for vocational education and training. From 1 July 2025, up to 73,000 tertiary students will be eligible for a payment of \$319.50 per week, benchmarked to the single Austudy rate.

### ***Retention and Support***

#### ***Child Care Discount***

- The child care discount for early childhood workforce measure, introduced from 24 January 2022, allows child care providers to discount the gap fee their employee pays when the employee's child is enrolled at a service where they work or that their employer owns.

#### ***Higher Education Loan Program (HELP)***

- The Very Remote Teachers Initiative is reducing HELP debts for teachers in the very remote areas, where teachers, including ECTs, who have completed 4 years working in very remote Australia may apply to receive a cut to HELP debts. The average debt reduction will be around \$35,000 per teacher. The initiative is expected to support 2,000 teachers in 2023 and 500 teachers each year thereafter.

#### ***Mental Health***

- Be You is a mental health and wellbeing program for educators in schools and ECEC sectors. It provides resources, guidance and advice related to supporting wellbeing of educators and children.
- The program is funded by the Health portfolio and has been extended until 2027.

## Media

- **Growing pains deepen hurt for childcare worker shortage, The West Australian, 3 September 2024**

Notes the release of the JSA ECEC Capacity Study final report and provides a summary of key findings and recommendations.

- **Jobs and Skills report shows a shortfall of more than 20,000 educators, The Sector, 4 September 2024**

Notes the high demand for ECEC professionals nationwide, that current workforce levels are not sustainable and that demand will continue to grow.

- **Productivity Commission releases highly anticipated ECEC Final report with affordability and workforce in spotlight *The Sector*, 18 September 2024**

Notes release of the PC final report indicating of the report's 56 recommendations that "affordability and workforce most prominent".

- **Advocates respond to the release of the Productivity Commission's report *The Sector*, 19 September 2024**

Notes PC report's key recommendations in which "Future focused long-term thinking" and the "Commitment to workforce" has been welcomed by respondents including by key peak bodies and advocacy organisations.

## Attachments

Attachment A – Detailed workforce data and information on the uptake of skills programs

<b>Date Last Cleared</b>	23 October 2024
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**Total Employment**

2017-2024 The figure is based on ABS Labour Force Survey data that is trended by Jobs and Skills Australia (JSA).

	February	May	August	November
2024	247,600	251,700	<b>255,800</b>	-
2023	231,700	235,600	239,600	243,600
2022	218,000	221,100	224,400	228,000
2021	208,900	210,700	212,800	215,200
2020	204,600	205,300	206,300	207,400
2019	203,100	203,400	203,700	204,100
2018	201,500	202,000	202,400	202,800
2017	197,600	198,900	199,900	200,800

Source: August 2024, Labour Force Survey (EQ08), Australia, Detailed, Quarterly, trended by Jobs and Skills Australia. Figures represent total persons employed under the ANZSCO unit level codes 4211 Child Carers, 2411 Early Childhood (Pre-Primary) Teachers and 1341 Child Care Centre Managers.

**Total Employment - selected 4-digit occupations**

ANZSCO Code	Occupation	Aug-2019	Aug-2020	Aug-2021	Aug-2022	Aug-2023	Aug-2024
4211	Child Carers	141,600	140,300	142,600	149,300	159,100	169,900
2411	Early Childhood Teachers	45,800	49,300	53,000	57,200	61,600	66,200
1341	Centre Managers	16,200	16,700	17,200	17,900	18,900	19,700
<b>Total</b>	<b>*Child Care Occupations</b>	203,700	206,300	212,800	224,400	239,600	255,800

Source: August 2024, Labour Force Survey (EQ08), Australia, Detailed, Quarterly, trended by Jobs and Skills Australia. \*Figures are rounded to the nearest 100. Calculations based on rounded figures may result in differences to the total number shown.

**Workforce by Service Type**

Service Type	Proportion of Workforce
Centre Based Day Care	61.4%
Family Day Care	5.5%
In Home Care	0.4%
Outside School Hours Care	13.0%
Vacation Care	10.3%
Dedicated Preschool	9.4%

Source: 2021 National ECEC Workforce Census.

**Workforce Shortages**

**Skills Priority List 2023**

ECEC Occupations in shortage, with future demand by State / Territory				
ANZSCO Occupation	Shortage Driver	National Shortage	Future Demand	State / Territory Shortages
4211 Child Carers	Retention gap	Yes	Above economy wide average	Shortages across all states/territories.
2411 Early Childhood Teachers	Long training gap	Yes	At economy wide average	Shortages across all states/territories.
1341 Centre Managers	N/A	No	At economy wide average	Shortage in WA only

Source: Jobs and Skills Australia, Skills Priority List, 2023.

**Employment Projections**

Victoria University Employment Projections					
Occupations	Employment level May 2023	Projected Employment level May 2028	Projected Employment level May 2033	Projected Employment Growth five years to May 2028 (%)	Projected Employment Growth ten years to May 2033 (%)
Child Carers	163,000	174,600	194,100	7.1%	19.0%
Early Childhood Teachers	60,300	63,700	67,400	5.6%	11.7%
Centre Managers	17,600	18,700	19,600	6.4%	11.8%
<b>Total</b>	240,900	257,000	281,100	6.7%	16.7%

Source: Projections produced by Victoria University for Jobs and Skills Australia.

Note: The employment projections are based on the macroeconomic and labour market outlook provided by the Commonwealth Treasury.

**Vacancies**

The Jobs and Skills Australia Internet Vacancy Index of major recruitment websites:

Occupation	August 2023	July 2024	August 2024	YoY Change	MoM Change
Child Carers	4,678	4,272	<b>4,191</b>	-10.42%	-1.91%
Early Childhood Teachers	2,707	1,850	<b>1,785</b>	-34.08%	-3.51%
Centre Managers	373	332	<b>308</b>	-17.50%	-7.23%
<b>Total</b>	7,759	6,454	<b>6,283</b>	-19.02%	-2.64%

Source: Jobs and Skills Australia, Labour Market Insights, Internet Vacancy Index, August 2024.

**Wages**

**Current Award Rates as at 1 July 2024**

Position	Level	Hourly Rate	Weekly Rate LDC (*)	Approx. Annual F/T Salary (LDC)
Child Carer (Certificate III)	3.1	\$27.17	\$1,032.30	\$53,865
Child Carer (Diploma)	3.4	\$30.59	\$1,162.40	\$60,654
Early Childhood Teacher	1	\$36.74	\$1,396.10 *	\$72,847
Early Childhood Teacher	5	\$50.83	\$1,931.70 *	\$100,796

An educational leader's allowance of \$4,412.84 per annum will be paid to an employee who is required to discharge the responsibilities of the educational leader under Regulation 118 of the Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011. Commenced 1 January 2022 for educational leaders employed under the Educational Services (Teachers) Award (2020) and commences 1 November 2022 for educational leaders employed under the Children's Services Award (2010).

\*Under the Educational Services (Teacher) Award (2020), long day care Early Childhood Teachers are paid a 4 per cent loading above the award rate for preschool and school teachers (reflected in the table).

Source: Fair Work Commission, Children's Services Award (2010) and Education Services (Teachers) Award (2020).

**Actual Earnings (including salary increases 2016-2023)**

Occupation	May 2016 avg salary	May 2018 avg salary	May 2021 avg salary	May 2023 avg salary	% and \$ change (2016 – 2023)	% and \$ change (2021 – 2023)
Child Carers	\$33,768	\$34,607	\$40,562	\$39,842	18.0% \$6,075	-1.8% -\$720
Early Childhood Teachers	\$45,990	\$61,967	\$64,809	\$58,004	26.1% \$12,014	-10.5% -\$6,805
Centre Managers	\$67,364	\$67,791	\$69,241	\$73,688	9.4% \$6,325	6.4% \$4,448

Source: Drawing from data sourced from the Australian Bureau of Statistics, Employee Earnings and Hours, Australia, May 2023. Data cube 11. All employees, Average weekly total cash earnings, average age - sex: by detailed occupation (ANZSCO 4 digit).

**Workforce Demographics**

National ECEC Workforce Census 2021 Key Findings:

- 92.1% female workforce (96% in Centre Based Day Care) (up from 91.1% in 2016).
- 2.9% of staff are Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander workers (up from 2.0% in 2016).
- The average years of experience for paid contact staff with an ECEC qualification was 8.1 years (up from 7.4 years in 2016).
- The average years of job tenure for paid contact staff with an ECEC qualification was 4.0 years ( up slightly from 3.6 years in 2016).

Source: 2021 National ECEC Workforce Census.

**Qualifications**

- In 2021, 84.8% of paid contact staff held a relevant qualification. This compares to 70% in 2010, 82% in 2013 and 85.2% in 2016.
- 30.1% had a certificate III or IV
- 41.8% had an advanced Diploma or Diploma
- 11.9% had a bachelor degree and above in an ECEC related field

Source: Department of Education National Workforce Census (2021).

**Workforce Supply - from training**

**Certificate III in Early Childhood Education and Care:**

	Enrolments	Commencements	Completions
2019	55,005	38,055	15,555
2020	55,030	32,675	12,125
2021	64,415	37,250	15,450
2022	70,695	46,180	17,820
2023	86,830	59,455	18,940

Source: NCVER 2024, *Total VET students and courses 2023*, NCVER, Adelaide, Data de-duplicated by Department of Employment and Workplace Relations Note: Completions data for 2023 are preliminary. They may be revised upwards in August 2025 to account for completions submitted after the reporting deadline.

**Diploma of Early Childhood Education and Care:**

	Enrolments	Commencements	Completions
2019	48,750	26,005	12,505
2020	44,945	21,590	9,845
2021	49,905	21,935	13,540
2022	38,240	13,505	18,400
2023	24,280	15,385	6,025

Source: NCVER 2024, *Total VET students and courses 2023*, NCVER, Adelaide, Data de-duplicated by Department of Employment and Workplace Relations Note: Completions data for 2023 are preliminary. They may be revised upwards in August 2025 to account for completions submitted after the reporting deadline.

**Early childhood Initial Teacher Education courses**

	Enrolments	Commencements	Completions
2019	12,604	3,541	2,144
2020	12,999	4,288	2,051
2021	13,899	4,683	1,992
2022	13,994	4,473	2,252
2023	14,196	4,909	2,440

Source: Department of Education Higher Education Statistics, Selected Higher Education Statistics – 2019-2023, Initial Teacher Education courses registered in early childhood education (excluding professional development and research qualifications)

**Skills and Training Initiatives**

**Australian Apprenticeships Incentive System (Incentives System)**

- ◇ The Incentives System, valued at \$2.3 billion over 4 years from 2022-23, is strengthening the apprenticeship system to target skill shortages, improve completions and ensure supports are accessible.
- ◇ Government support under the Incentives System came into effect from 1 July 2022 and is focused on priority occupations (including early childhood education and care), ensuring a combination of financial and non-financial support is targeted to the skills most in demand in the Australian economy.

Apprentices and Trainees in Training at 31 March 2024	Count
Certificate III in Early Childhood Education and Care	15,905
Diploma of Early Childhood Education and Care	6,760

Source: NCVER 2024, Australian vocational education and training statistics: apprentices and trainees 2024 – March quarter, NCVER, Adelaide

**Fee-Free TAFE**

- ◇ Data from 1 January 2023 to 31 March 2024, Fee-Free TAFE has supported 473,840 student enrolments nationally. There were over 31,927 enrolments within the Early Childhood Education and Care sector, comprising approximately 6.7% of total enrolments.
- ◇ Early Childhood Education and Care remains a priority area for the second tranche of Fee-Free TAFE, making available 300,000 fee free places over 2024 to 2026. Given the demand driven nature of the VET system, there is not a specific allocation of Fee-Free TAFE places across priority sectors.

Fee-Free TAFE Early Childhood and Education Courses	Enrolments
Certificate III in Early Childhood Education and Care	25,403
Diploma of Early Childhood Education and Care	5,910
Introduction to Early Childhood Education and Care Skill Set	498
Statement of Attainment in Early Childhood Education and Care (Develop Positive/Respectful Relationships with Children, Identify/Respond to Children/Young People at Risk and WHS)	36
Statement of Attainment in Early Childhood Education and Care (Food Safety and WHS)	29
<b>Total for top 5 course for priority sector</b>	<b>31,876</b>
<b>Total For Priority Sector</b>	<b>31,927</b>

Source: Fee-Free TAFE Quarterly Reporting as at 31 Mar 2024, DEWR.

**Additional University Places**

- ◇ 20,000 **additional university places** to provide more opportunities for under-represented groups to enter higher education across 2023 and 2024, with 1,469 in early childhood teaching.

NSW	VIC	QLD	SA	WA	TAS	NT	ACT	OTHER	Total
395	481	47	0	464	0	54	5	23	1,469

**NQF Snapshot — Staffing Waivers**

Staffing Waivers primarily relate to qualification level, for example, when a service needs to replace an early childhood teacher and needs time to recruit.

- As at 1 July 2024, there are 9.2 per cent of services nationally with a staffing waiver.

**Proportion of services with a staffing waiver by service type**

Service Type	National %
Long day care	15.6%
Preschool/Kindergarten	2.9%
Outside School Hours care	2.2%
Family Day care	1.7%
Centre-based care (LDC, Preschool/Kindergarten & OSHC)	9.4%

Source: ACECQA NQF Snapshot Report Q2 2024, W1 and W9 data tables.

**Proportion of services with a staffing waiver by remoteness classification**

ARIA Category	Waiver %
Major Cities of Australia	8.6%
Inner Regional Australia	9.7%
Outer Regional Australia	12.8%
Remote Australia	9.8%
Very Remote Australia	19.5%

Source: ACECQA NQF Snapshot Report Q2 2024, W4 data table.

Note: Most staffing waivers relate to temporary difficulties experienced by long day care service providers in meeting the early childhood teacher requirements stipulated under the Education and Care Services National Regulations, with very few relating to the educator-to-child ratio requirements stipulated under the Regulations.

**Gap fee discount for ECEC workers**

- Announced 17 December 2021
- Applicable from 24 January 2022
- Example
  - ◇ Educator average family income is \$110,000 and her family's CCS rate is 71.67%.
  - ◇ Child attends 3 days at the same service.
  - ◇ Daily fee of \$106.50 for a 10-hour session, weekly fee comes to \$319.50.
  - ◇ After CCS is applied, the service charges her a gap fee of \$90.51 per week.
  - ◇ If the service offers a discount of \$20 per session of care, the remaining gap fee would be \$30.51 per week.

**Issue:** ECEC worker retention payment  
**Contact:** Kylie Crane  
Ph: s 22  
Deputy Secretary

## Key Points

- In the 2024–25 Budget context, \$30.0 million in departmental funding was announced over 2 years from 2024–25 for IT and payment services to support a wage increase for the Early Childhood and Childcare (ECEC) sector - \$28.339 million of this was allocated to the Department of Education. This measure is published on page 86 of Budget Paper No. 2.
- On 8 August 2024, the Government announced \$3.6 billion in funding to support a 15% wage increase on the modern award rate for the ECEC workforce, delivering on its commitment made in the 2024–25 Budget. This includes departmental funding to support the program.
- This commitment will help retain existing early childhood educators and teachers, who are predominately women, and attract new employees to the sector.
- Providers who are approved to administer the Child Care Subsidy (CCS), who provide Centre-Based Day Care (CBDC) or Outside School Hours Care (OSHC) services and who meet the grant requirements and conditions will be eligible to apply for funding under a grant. The Government will consult with the Family Day Care and In Home Care sectors to understand if and how support can be extended to their workforces.
- Eligible providers can apply for a grant to support a 10% wage increase on top of relevant current national awards from 2 December 2024, and a further 5% increase from 1 December 2025 until 30 November 2026.
- In practical terms, this means a typical full-time ECEC educator who is paid at the award rate will receive a pay rise of at least \$103 per week, increasing to at least \$155 per week from December 2025. Early childhood teachers will receive at least an extra \$169 a week, increased to \$249 a week from next December.
- The funding includes provision for eligible on-costs associated with applying the wage increase, such as superannuation contributions, employee entitlements, leave loading, workers' compensation insurance and payroll tax.

### **Special Account Legislation**

- The Minister for Education introduced legislation to Parliament on 12 September 2024 to establish a special account (the *Wage Justice for Early Childhood Education and Care Workers (Special Account) Bill 2024*).
- Subject to passage, the special account will fund grants that support a remuneration increase for workers in the ECEC sector. Whilst this Bill progresses, the Department is continuing the necessary preparations to ensure the first payments of the ECEC Worker Retention Payment can be made in December 2024.

### **Eligible Workers**

- The wage increase applies to workers covered under the *Children's Services Award 2010*, *Educational Services (Teachers) Award 2020*, and workers who are undertaking duties covered by these awards and working in a CCS approved setting but are not covered by these awards (including workers covered by a state industrial instrument). This includes teachers, educators, cooks, coordinators, room leaders and support workers.
- Approximately 200,000 ECEC workers are expected to benefit from the wage increase, subject to their employers participating in the grant.

### **Grant Requirements and Conditions**

- For workers to receive the wage increase, employers must apply for the Worker Retention Payment Grant and meet the eligibility requirements.
- Grant payments will be made through the same channels as existing CCS payment arrangements. As such, providers must be approved to administer CCS.
- The wage increase is conditional on providers passing on all funding as wages and limiting fee increases.
  - From 8 August 2024 to 7 August 2025 services won't be able to increase their fees by more than 4.4%. This is an important condition that will keep downward pressure on fees for families.
  - From 8 August 2025 onwards, a new fee constraint will apply, which is being developed by the Australian Bureau of Statistics. This will reflect the actual costs of delivering ECEC services, informed by a range of ECEC relevant inputs, including wages and other labour costs, rent and hire expenses, consumables, and operational costs.

- ECEC providers must ensure their staff are engaged under a legally enforceable workplace instrument which stipulates the wage rates set out in the grant guidelines and be in effect for the full duration of the grant period.
- A workplace instrument gives workers, the community and the Government assurance that funding is being passed on to workers as higher wages.

### ***Grant Progress***

- Grant Opportunity Guidelines were published on 1 October 2024 and grant applications opened on 8 October 2024.
- The first payments to approved applicants will be made in December 2024.

### ***After the Grant Ceases***

- The two-year timeframe recognises that this is an interim retention payment while the Fair Work Commission (FWC) finalises its gender undervaluation review of priority awards, and the Government responds to findings from the ACCC and Productivity Commission (PC).

### ***Supported Bargaining***

- The supported bargaining stream was introduced on 6 June 2023 as part of reforms under the Fair Work Legislation Amendment (Secure Jobs, Better Pay) Act 2022. The ECEC sector was identified in the second reading speech as a key beneficiary of the changes.
- The Commonwealth, represented by Senior Counsel and the Australian Government Solicitor, have joined negotiations with unions and sector representatives since the ECEC supported bargaining application was authorised by the FWC on 27 September 2023.
- The Commonwealth continues to work with supported bargaining parties to support the successful formation of the multi-employer agreement.

## Media

- ***'One-off sugar hit': The divide over Labor's \$3.6 billion childcare pay offer, SBS News, 8 August 2024***

Includes comments from the Opposition Leader, the Hon Peter Dutton MP, describing the wage increase as a "one-off sugar hit" with no future provision for continuation beyond two years. He did not commit to extending Commonwealth funding towards a wage increase should the Opposition win the next election. The article also quotes The Greens' early childhood education and care spokesperson, Senator Steph Hodgins-May, who noted the government should have gone further.

<b>Date Last Cleared</b>	23 October 2024
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**Issue:** Productivity Commission Report  
**Contact:** Kylie Crane  
Ph: s 22  
Deputy Secretary, Early Childhood and Youth

## Key Points

- On 1 March 2023, the Productivity Commission (PC) commenced a comprehensive inquiry into Australia's early childhood education and care (ECEC) system.
- The PC final report was released on 18 September 2024. The report outlines 56 recommendations across 3 volumes (see **Attachment A**).
- In line with the terms of reference, the final report includes recommendations to support an affordable, accessible, equitable and high-quality, universal early learning system that supports children's learning and development and reduces barriers to workforce participation.
- Key recommendations include:
  - Giving all children aged 0–5 years an entitlement of up to 30 hours or 3 days of quality ECEC a week, including through removing the Activity Test policy.
  - Raising the Child Care Subsidy (CCS) rate to 100 per cent of the hourly rate cap for families on incomes up to \$80,000.
  - Providing additional funding to support the establishment of new services in persistently 'thin' markets.
  - Improving policy coordination and implementation through a new National Partnership Agreement between Australian and state and territory governments, and a new ECEC Commission.
- The Government will consider the findings and recommendations of the PC inquiry, alongside those of the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) inquiry.

## Workforce Participation

- The final report found that removing all the barriers to accessing ECEC has the potential to add 143,000 (full-time equivalent) more workers to the labour force.
  - Barriers included availability, flexibility and quality of care.
- The PC's final report also outlines that its preferred funding model will result in 'minimal changes to labour force participation'.

## Media

- ***Simon Birmingham: Child care matters but that doesn't mean it should be universally subsidised, The Nightly, 16 October 2024***

Senator Birmingham's opinion piece criticises "pitching a universal model of free ECEC" on the basis that it would substantially increase fiscal outlays. Senator Birmingham warns this will result in higher taxes and instead recommends "more means testing, applied more effectively". A copy of the article is at [Attachment B](#).

- ***Flat-fee child care key to PM's bid for a second term, Australian Financial Review (AFR), 15 October 2024***

The article states the Government is working on plans to phase in a flat daily fee model to deliver universal ECEC and "secure a second term in office". The article also states \$10 and \$20 flat fee options are being considered, as is the mechanism for implementing flat fee while maintaining capacity. A copy of the article is at [Attachment C](#).

- ***Key report slammed, The Canberra Times, 26 September 2024***

The article outlines The Parenthood's rebuke of the PC's final report on the basis that it fails to meet the terms of reference of its inquiry (i.e. to consider options to improve or support economic growth, including through enabling workforce participation, particularly for women, and contributing to productivity) through its finding that making ECEC affordable would have a "negligible impact" on women's workforce participation. A copy of the article is at [Attachment D](#).

- ***Economic case for child care spending should stack up, AFR, 20 September 2024***

This article criticises the prospect of increased ECEC expenditure given the PC found the limited workforce participation impacts. It also implies costs may increase above PC's estimates. A copy of the article is at [Attachment E](#).

- ***NDIS shows the risks in universal child care, AFR, 19 September 2024***

Criticises risk of implementing the PC's recommended changes to the CCS system. The article noted the extent to which National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) costs have exceeded the original estimates by the PC. A copy of the Article is at [Attachment F](#).



- ***Child care: PM’s plan dealt a blow, AFR, 19 September 2024.***

This article states Government ambition to provide universal child care is not supported by the PC final report as it “recommends free care to only the nation’s *poorest families for three days a week and increased subsidies for others.*” A copy of the article is at

**Attachment G.**

- ***Productivity Commission’s final report on early childhood education and care, The Hon Jason Clare MP, The Hon Dr Anne Aly MP, 18 September 2024***

This is a joint media release announcing the release of the PC’s final report and highlighting the Government’s progress on establishing a universal ECEC system. A copy of the release is at **Attachment H.**

- ***A path to universal early childhood education and care, Productivity Commission, 18 September 2024***

PC’s media release outlines key findings and recommendations. A copy of the release is at **Attachment I.**

## **Attachments**

**Attachment A** – PC final report recommendations summary.

**Attachment B** – Media article - Childcare matters but that doesn’t mean it should be universally subsidised

**Attachment C** – Media article – Flat-fee childcare key to PM’s bid for a second term.

**Attachment D** – Media article – Key report slammed.

**Attachment E** – Media article – Economic case for child care spending should stack up.

**Attachment F** – Media article – NDIS shows the risks in universal child care.

**Attachment G** – Media article – PM’s plan dealt a blow.

**Attachment H** – Joint media release – PC final report on ECEC.

**Attachment I** – PC media release – A path to universal ECEC.

**Attachment J** – PC Inquiry Terms of Reference.

Date Last Cleared	18 October 2024
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## Summary of PC Final Report Recommendations

- **Key themes from the final report include:**
  - Availability, affordability, and inclusion gaps need to be addressed to achieve a universal ECEC system.
  - Reforms to ECEC need to be implemented in a staged and coordinated approach, including prioritising resolving the persistent workforce shortage.
  - Universal does not mean uniform, compulsory, full-time or fully subsidised access.
- **Key final recommendations include:**
  - giving all children aged 0-5 years an entitlement of up to 30 hours or three days of quality ECEC a week
  - raising the Child Care Subsidy (CCS) rate to 100 per cent of the hourly rate cap for families on incomes up to \$80,000 and increasing the CCS rate to 100 per cent for the higher CCS rate for families up to \$140,000
  - abolishing the activity test
  - providing additional funding to support the establishment of new services in persistently 'thin' markets
  - reducing barriers to educator upskilling through 'accelerated pathways', more wrap-around supports and greater flexibility to complete qualifications while working
  - improving policy coordination and implementation through a new National Partnership Agreement between Australian and state and territory governments, and a new ECEC Commission.

• **Full list of final recommendations:**

Issue	PC Final Recommendations
<p><b>Affordability and availability gaps</b> need to be addressed to achieve universal access</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish an advisory function for small not-for-profit providers (R 5.1)</li> <li>• Support access in thin markets via an ECEC Development Fund (R 5.2)</li> <li>• Amend the NQF to expand family day care services (R 5.3)</li> <li>• Modify the Child Care Subsidy (R 6.1)               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Remove the activity test</li> <li>○ Raise the subsidy rate for families at or below \$80,000 to 100% of the fee</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Increase the ACCS subsidy rate to 100% of the fee up to and including the hourly rate cap (R 6.2)</li> <li>• Change indexing to the hourly rate cap (R 6.3)</li> <li>• Set the default CCS withholding rate at 0% (R 6.4)</li> <li>• Review CCS eligibility for restricted or temporary residents (R 6.5)</li> <li>• Trial expanding the Assistance or Isolated Children Distance Education Allowance to include preschool education programs (R 6.6)</li> <li>• Simplify the Child Care Subsidy application and income reconciliation processes (R 6.7)</li> <li>• Support families with changing or challenging circumstances through CCS and ACCS (R 6.8)</li> <li>• Establish a ECEC website (R 6.9)</li> <li>• Prompt families to update their details with Services Australia (R 6.10)</li> <li>• Maintain integrity of the Child Care Subsidy Program (R 6.11)</li> <li>• Monitor rises in fees and out-of-pocket expenses (R 6.12)</li> </ul>
<p>Availability can only improve if <b>workforce challenges</b> are resolved</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Set goals for the ECEC workforce, as identified in the draft National Vision for ECEC (R 3.1)</li> <li>• Evaluate recent changes to ECEC VET training packages (R 3.2)</li> <li>• Re-examine entry requirements for Diploma courses for people who already hold a Certificate III qualification (R 3.3)</li> <li>• Develop bespoke traineeship pathways for family day care settings (R 3.4)</li> </ul>

Issue	PC Final Recommendations
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduce barriers for qualified educators to upskill to early childhood teachers (R 3.5)</li> <li>• Support innovative delivery of teaching qualifications (R 3.6)</li> <li>• Improve registration arrangements for early childhood teachers (R 3.7)</li> <li>• Lift support and mentoring for new early childhood teachers (R 3.8)</li> <li>• Improve pathways and support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to obtain ECEC qualifications (R 3.9)</li> <li>• Facilitate more placements in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ECEC services (R 3.10)</li> <li>• Contribute to professional development for the ECEC workforce (R 3.11)</li> <li>• Enhance the National Children’s Education and Care Workforce Strategy (R 3.12)</li> </ul>
<p>A universal ECEC system has to be <b>inclusive of all children</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Amend the Disability Standards for Education (R 2.1)</li> <li>• Enhancing the Inclusion Support Program should be an immediate priority (R 2.2)</li> <li>• Adopt an enhanced and expanded needs-based inclusion funding instrument (R 2.3)</li> </ul>
<p>ECEC services do not consistently <b>respond to family needs</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Address practical barriers to ECEC access through an ECEC Inclusion Fund (R 7.1)</li> <li>• Trial a system navigator role (R 7.2)</li> <li>• Review barriers to providing ECEC during non-standard hours (R 7.3)</li> <li>• Support occasional care for those most in need (R 7.4)</li> <li>• Flexibility of ECEC services should be encouraged (R 7.5)</li> <li>• Address barriers to providing subsidised wrap-around care in dedicated preschools (R 7.6)</li> <li>• Funding arrangements for ACCOs should be considered as part of a process of shared decision-making (R 7.7.)</li> <li>• Consider if new ECEC services receiving supply-side funding should be established as integrated services (R 7.8)</li> <li>• Support connections between ECEC and child and family services (R 7.9)</li> </ul>

Issue	PC Final Recommendations
<p><b>Quality is paramount</b> to achieving the benefits of ECEC</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve regulatory authorities' performance reporting (R 8.1)</li> <li>• Review how services are assessed against National Quality Framework (NQF) (R 8.2)</li> <li>• Ensure regulatory authorities are adequately resourced (R 8.3)</li> <li>• More effective communication of quality ratings (R 8.4)</li> <li>• Clear courses of regulatory action when services are Working Towards the NQS (R 8.5)</li> <li>• Powers for regulators to issue compliance notices to underperforming services (R 8.6)</li> <li>• Support for services to improve quality (R 8.7)</li> <li>• Reward quality provision in new ECEC services (R 8.8)</li> <li>• Ensure appropriate quality regulation for services outside the scope of the NQF (R 8.9)</li> </ul>
<p>New <b>ECEC funding models</b> will alleviate affordability barriers</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ECEC funding mechanisms should be designed around clear principles (R 9.1)</li> <li>• The Government should focus on improving the current funding model (R 9.2)</li> <li>• The national agreement for ECEC should be a vehicle to address preschool funding issues (R 9.3)</li> <li>• Proposed ECEC reforms should be evaluated as part of a future sector review (R 9.4)</li> </ul>
<p>New <b>coordination mechanisms</b> will support universal access</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Form a National Partnership Agreement for ECEC (R 10.1)</li> <li>• Establish an independent ECEC Commission (R 10.2)</li> </ul>

# Axing income tests will push up taxes

By SIMON BIRMINGHAM

The Nightly

Wednesday 16th October 2024

859 words

Page 18 | Section: OPINION

1160cm on the page



## Axing income tests will push up taxes

Childcare matters but that doesn't mean it should be universally subsidised

Means testing can sound kind of, well, mean. In truth, it's at the centre of the great

Aussie fair go.

Right now the Albanese Government is frantically briefing that more money for childcare will be central to its re-election, pitching a universal model of free child care.

To achieve this, Labor would axe or substantially reduce the two tests currently applied to childcare subsidy. Those tests apply to how much parents earn, and how many hours of child care they need.

Before dissecting Labor's possible policy, it's worth remembering how widely means testing is used in Australia and why it's used.

Means testing exists from birth to death. Family tax benefit payments give targeted financial help to lower-income families, helping with the costs of raising children.

The aged pension is means tested against income and assets (excluding the family home) to ensure those without adequate retirement savings have a minimum income in their senior years.

In between childhood and retirement, key social safety nets such as youth allowance, the Newstart allowance and disability support payment are all means tested.



**SIMON BIRMINGHAM**

SHADOW FOREIGN AFFAIRS MINISTER

While Medicare and access to public hospitals or government schools are all universally available, government policies still target support to those who can least afford to pay or incentivise contributions from those who can.

For example, the bulk billing incentive encourages doctors to bulk bill social safety net recipients, children and retirees. While higher income earners are made to pay a higher rate of Medicare levy if they do not have private health insurance.

Government funding to non-government schools is reduced according to a school parent community's capacity to pay. If parents are poorer, the school gets funding closer to government school levels; where parents are wealthier the

private school can lose up to 80 per cent of the base funding.

What does all of this targeting of payments and incentives achieve? Lower taxes!

If every parent received the family tax benefit, every student the youth allowance and every retiree the age pension then taxes would need to be wildly higher.

If every visit to the doctor were bulk billed, every person reliant on public hospitals and every child at a government school, then every taxpayer would be digging a whole lot deeper.

Means testing allows governments to help those who need it most, while keeping taxes lower for other Australians.

Those lower taxes encourage work and innovation. Targeted rather than universal support creates a stronger culture of self-sufficiency among those who can and should support themselves.

Mixtures of public and private delivery of services also encourages innovation, cost competitiveness and higher standards.

If anything, governments should be looking at more means testing, applied more effectively, so as to get taxes lower.

Instead, the Albanese Government has headed in the opposite direction. Take Labor's

pre-election energy rebate cash splash, giving millionaires the same as low-income earners, or even more where they have multiple properties.

In 2017 I was the education minister who legislated the child care subsidy that Australia largely has today.

It replaced multiple different payments with one payment, where eligibility was assessed against a means test and an activity test.

Our aim was to give the maximum subsidy for childcare costs to the families who earned the least, and the maximum hours of subsidised care to those who were working, studying or training the most.

Childcare provides both early education for children, and the ability for parents (most often mums) to get back into the workforce.

But these important objectives do not mean that it should be universally subsidised for everyone, all of the time.

Governments already work to provide universal access to pre-school for four-year-olds. Where evidence warrants expanding early education then we should. But does that really mean that a six-month-old needs the same free access to centre based child care as a three or four-year-old?

What about workforce participation? Isn't there benefit in helping all who want

to go back to work to do so? When it comes to handing out taxpayer dollars, that benefit only stretches as far as the subsidies make a difference in the decision to work or not.

The higher the income, the less likely the cost of child care is to make the difference in deciding to go back to work, or to work the extra day.

Why should taxpayers be subsidising higher income families childcare fees when the subsidy makes little difference, if any, to their workforce participation?

And beyond well-defined educational or welfare needs of the child, why should parents who aren't working or studying receive subsidised child care?

Far from embracing billions more in big spending, universal childcare subsidies, Labor should take a leaf from the aged-care reforms recently negotiated with the Liberal Party.

Under these reforms access is guaranteed but everyone who can will pay a little more.

These reforms aim to improve aged care quality, but reduce the extent to which taxes need to be higher to pay for it.

Our Aussie fair go has been built off of support where it's warranted, alongside incentive to work that bit harder to get ahead. It's made our country the envy of many.

Let's stick with what works.

# Flat-fee childcare key to PM's bid for a second...

By Phillip Coorey

Australian Financial Review (AFR)

Tuesday 15th October 2024

667 words

Page 3 | Section: News

270cm on the page



## Flat-fee childcare key to PM's bid for a second term

Phillip Coorey  
Political editor

### Exclusive

The Albanese government is working on plans to phase in a flat daily fee for childcare, in order to avoid overwhelming the system with a flood of new enrolments, as it seeks a breakout issue to help it secure a second term in office.

In a repudiation of the Productivity Commission's recent recommendation to top up the \$12.7 billion a year in subsidies by another \$4.7 billion, the government is instead pursuing the more expensive flat-fee option as part of its pitch to deliver universal childcare.

But because such an option, which would include removing the activity test, would precipitate a stampede in demand, the government, through the Education Department and Treasury, is examining a phased-in approach to ensure there are adequate staff and facilities.

In its final report released in September, the Productivity Commission said an option of a flat daily fee of \$10, regardless of family income, would cost another \$8.3 billion a year but create 7300 more full-time jobs. Its preferred option of increasing subsidies would have a "negligible" impact on

job creation, it said.

Flailing in the polls and with the next election due by May at the latest, the government is looking for a circuit breaker. Anthony Albanese went to the previous election flagging universal childcare as a legacy goal and at last week's caucus meeting, the prime minister told MPs and senators it would be front and centre of what he described as "a big second-term agenda".

Mr Albanese reiterated this while campaigning in Queensland yesterday.

"We'll have more to say about childcare, about our second-term agenda, but that is something for the future," he said, as he was being pressed on Labor's poor polling and how it intended to avoid being reduced to minority government.

The government is prepared to spend big on childcare despite the budget forecast to be back in deficit for the next decade.

Another source familiar with the process said flat-fee options of \$10 and \$20 were being considered, as was the mechanism for moving from the current subsidy system to flat fees while maintaining capacity.

As part of its capacity-building efforts, the government will spend \$3.6 billion over two years, starting on December 1, to boost the wages of childcare workers by 15 per cent. The

Coalition agreed last week to support the requisite legislation after the government included a sunset clause to ensure the subsidy was not ongoing.

In its final report, the Productivity Commission recommended maintaining the subsidy system but changing eligibility criteria so that families earning less than \$80,000 a year, and up to \$140,000 for those with multiple children in care, would receive three days a week of free childcare, for 48 weeks of the year.

It recommended the subsidy then be tapered down by 1 percentage point for every \$5000 of adjusted taxable income over the minimum. Families with a combined income of \$580,000 or over would not be eligible for any subsidy.

It said the flat-fee model "would generate a somewhat stronger (but still small) labour market response from parents", create a higher increase in demands, come at a "much higher additional cost to taxpayers" and not be equitable.

"A disproportionate share of the increased government support would go to the families whose incomes are in the top 25 per cent of the income distribution," it said.

It also warned the spike in demand would result in a fall in quality, as had been witnessed in Canada.

These concerns were echoed by Early Learning and Care Council of Australia chief executive Elizabeth Death.

Her organisation backs the Productivity Commission recommendation of boosted and revamped subsidies.

"These recommendations ensure that the families of children who have the most to gain from quality early learning and care, are not faced with unnecessary barriers or burdens," she said.

**We'll have more to say about childcare, but that is something for the future.**

Prime Minister Anthony Albanese

# Key report slammed

By Dana Daniel

The Canberra Times

Thursday 26th September 2024

560 words

Page 1,4 | Section: NEWS

388cm on the page



# Key report slammed

Dana Daniel

## EXCLUSIVE

AUSTRALIA'S leading advocacy group for parents has issued a scathing rebuke to the Productivity Commission over a key finding in its landmark childcare report.

The Parenthood chief executive Georgie Dent has written to Productivity Com-

mission chair Danielle Wood arguing it "categorically fails to meet the terms of reference for the inquiry".

In her letter, seen by *The Canberra Times*, Ms Dent questioned the modelling used by the commission

to weigh its recommended \$4.8 billion funding boost to the early childhood education sector.

At issue is the commis-

sion's finding that making childcare affordable would have a "negligible impact" on women's workforce participation, adding the equivalent of just 11,500 full-time employees.

This is damaging to the campaign for a significant funding boost to the sector, which Prime Minister Anthony Albanese has said he

wants to transform to deliver universal childcare.

For the \$4.8 billion price tag to be politically palatable, it is crucial to be able to point to increased productivity in the nation's economy from parents increasing their working hours.

Ms Dent said the commission had failed to deliver what it was asked to provide.

■ Continued Page 4





■ From Page 1

## CHILD CARE Scathing rebuke for Productivity Commission report

# Advocates slam finding in key report

"Specifically, the PC was asked to consider options to improve or support 'economic growth, including through enabling workforce participation, particularly for women, and contributing to productivity'," Ms Dent wrote.

"It is perplexing ... that of the three funding models the PC considered in the inquiry the maximum increase in labour force participation was just 11,500 [full-time equivalent employees] with [its recommended option]."

Ms Dent added that it was "curious" for the commission to reach this conclusion despite also finding that removing "all barriers" to early childhood education could

add 143,000 full-time equivalent employees.

She reminded the commission's chair of her opening address at the Jobs and Skills Summit in Canberra in September 2022, when she was chief executive of progressive think tank the Grattan Institute.

"Your description of the unmet economic potential of increasing women's workforce participation as akin to 'a giant iron ore deposit' that governments would be falling all over themselves to give subsidies to get it out of the ground was compelling," Ms Dent wrote.

A 2020 Grattan Institute report titled *Cheaper Child-*

*care*, co-written by Ms Wood, framed an investment in more affordable early education and care as an effective and "practical plan to boost female workforce participation".

That report found a \$5 billion investment to increase affordability would lead to a 13 per cent increase in hours worked by second-earners with young children, boosting GDP by about \$11 billion a year, while lifting a typical working mother's lifetime earnings by about \$150,000.

The Women's Economic Equality Taskforce, of which Ms Wood was a member, handed a report to the Commonwealth government in

October estimating that removing barriers to women's participation could deliver a \$128 billion boost to the nation's economy.

A spokesperson for the Productivity Commission said in a statement: "Our modelling used the latest available data and found that by itself lowering the cost of childcare would not significantly increase women's workforce participation."

"However, if all the barriers to accessing early education and care were removed, including availability, flexibility and quality of care, it could potentially see many more people enter the workforce," the spokesperson said.



**Australian Financial Review (AFR)**  
Friday 20th September 2024  
673 words  
Page 34 | Section: Editorial&Opinion  
315cm on the page

## Economic case for childcare spending should stack up

### THE AFR VIEW

**T**he Productivity Commission released its much-awaited review of early childhood education on Wednesday. The commission says that the changes it proposes to improve the affordability and accessibility of childcare services would cost an extra \$4.7 billion a year.

Strangely, these cost projections are based on the \$12.7 billion cost of childcare subsidies written into the May 2023 budget. Yet the latest revised budget forecasts put the cost of the childcare system, before any changes, at \$14.5 billion.

Using this outdated spending data, as revealed by *The Australian Financial Review*, to underestimate the real price tag of the commission's recommendations isn't a good start, given the fiscal pressures on the federal budget. Nevertheless, the government's independent economic think tank has also used the report to provide frank and fearless policy advice which punctures Labor's claim that higher "care economy" spending is a pro-productivity reform.

Anthony Albanese went to the 2022 election promising to explore the feasibility of all families being entitled to a subsidy covering more than 90 per cent of the cost of childcare. Part of the pitch is Labor's claim its universal childcare plan would boost female workforce participation.

With economic growth stalling and productivity falling, making it easier for women to balance work and family responsibilities is in the national interest. Access to affordable childcare is also

*Other factors influence parents' work and care choices.*

fundamentally about gender equity and equality of opportunity for women. Bang for buck isn't the only thing to consider here.

Yet the economic case for expanded taxpayer subsidies should also stack up. The commission's report finds no straightforward relationship between higher childcare spending and higher female workforce participation. Reducing cost barriers to childcare – which might encourage women with young children to return to work earlier or work additional days – will have "marginal impacts on labour supply" it says. That is because other factors, such as personal preferences and eligibility for family tax benefits, influence parents' work and care choices.

According to the commission, Labor's universal childcare scheme would cost \$6.8 billion extra a year but would lift female workforce participation – which sits at 63 per cent – by only 1.4 per cent. The report also finds that the bulk of the financial benefits would go to the wealthiest families for whom the cost of childcare is less of a barrier to women working.

The relatively more modest, more targeted but still expensive option the commission proposes is a 100 per cent subsidy for families with incomes less than \$80,000. The subsidy would taper down progressively for families earning up to \$580,000. Some might argue the recommended expansion of eligibility to such a high level of family income would bake more middle-class welfare into the budget. Under the commission's model, half of all families would be eligible for a 90 per cent subsidy and four in five families would be eligible for a 75 per cent subsidy. It admits these higher subsidies would have a "negligible" impact on getting more women back into the workforce. But there is also no guarantee that childcare becomes more affordable. As history shows, higher government subsidies have just led childcare operators to increase out-of-pocket fees charged to families.

The Albanese government has acknowledged this problem. Under Labor's \$3.6 billion plan to increase childcare workers' wages, a one-year price cap has been imposed on operators. Permanently capping prices – such as the proposal for a flat \$10 per child fee that would require eye-watering increases in taxpayer funding – would inevitably hurt both the supply and quality of childcare services.

Simply throwing more money at the formal system doesn't seem to be the answer for cheaper childcare either. The time may have arrived to consider alternative ways to increase supply and meet demand. For example, some economists suggest that allowing families to claim the cost of nannies and other informal carers as a tax deduction might be a more effective way to improve both access and affordability.

# NDIS shows the risks in universal childcare

By Phillip Coorey

Australian Financial Review (AFR)

Thursday 19th September 2024

585 words

Page 5 | Section: Family support News

234cm on the page



## NDIS shows the risks in universal childcare



Phillip Coorey

### Comment

Before either party rushes to embrace the Productivity Commission's recommendations for universal childcare, it is worth remembering how spectacularly wrong the commission was in 2017 when it gave the green light to the NDIS.

"Once fully implemented, it is expected that around 475,000 people with disability will receive individualised supports, at an estimated cost of \$22 billion each year, with improved prospects of employment and social participation,"

the PC proclaimed. Seven years later, the NDIS has 650,000 participants and growing, is costing double what the PC forecast, and the cost will be north of \$100 billion by early next decade unless reined in.

The best the government can do is try to reduce the growth rate from the current rate of about 20 per cent to 8 per cent, which is still twice the maximum 4 per cent the PC forecast.

Like the NDIS, universal childcare is

a noble idea, but it has to be paid for. Debt is around \$1 trillion and the budget is forecast to be in deficit for at least a decade, yet here we are, contemplating another policy that the PC says will cost \$5.4 billion a year and growing.

And, as is the norm these days, there

is no proposal about how to pay for it other than some hoped for and unproven productivity dividend.

Anthony Albanese went to the last election promising to examine the feasibility of universal childcare as a way of creating a legacy.

The prime minister told his troops upon winning power that they needed to govern for two to three terms because that would enshrine any legacy reform by making it harder for a future Coalition to revoke it. Medicare is the prime example.

Right now, the government is wallowing in the polls and Albanese is not just looking for a legacy – Future Made in Australia is a damp squib and the Voice is dead – but he also needs a circuit breaker. Universal childcare

ticks both boxes. But the government should tread warily. Childcare evolved as a tool to enable women, predominantly, to go back to work. Universal childcare that includes removing the activity test that requires

people to at least look for work or do some study in return for the subsidies, may not be so universally accepted, especially by those without kids or with older kids.

Why, people will ask, should somebody who was not working and had no intention of working or studying, receive a childcare subsidy for a six-month-old, more so if it takes a childcare spot for somebody who is working?

The PC did not go as far as the government wanted. Instead of the 90 per cent subsidy model, the

commission recommended a 100 per cent subsidy for families with incomes below \$80,000, and a tapering of that subsidy by 1 percentage point for every \$5000 of adjusted taxable income over the minimum.

Thus it does not totally abandon the means-testing principle that has thus far enabled a high care, low tax society to target public funding to those who need it most. It just waters it down a bit.

Either way, it might be an idea to get the NDIS under control before embarking on the next great adventure, otherwise the debt already awaiting kids in childcare will be even more insurmountable by the time they grow up.

Easier still, make childcare part of the schools system and be done with it.

# Childcare: PM's plan dealt a blow

By Julie Hare

Australian Financial Review (AFR)

Thursday 19th September 2024

965 words

Page 1,5 | Section: Family support News

580cm on the page



# Childcare: PM's plan dealt a blow

## ► Commission scales back Labor recommendations

Julie Hare

Anthony Albanese's political ambition of creating a universal childcare system has been dealt a blow after the Productivity Commission recommended a cheaper option of providing free care to only the nation's poorest families for three days a week and increased subsidies for others.

Education Minister Jason Clare left open the possibility of Labor adopting the commission's proposed \$17.4 billion a year scheme, which would give the government a new family-friendly pitch to take to the election.

"We have a shared vision that every child in Australia, no matter who they are or where they live, should have access to affordable and high-quality childcare," Mr Clare said.

However economists said the productivity and workforce participation gains Labor promised when it increased child care subsidies last year have so far failed to materialise.

In February last year, Treasurer Jim Chalmers had asked the Productivity Commission to review the early childhood education and care sector and recommend ways to support affordability and accessibility, including model-

ling a 90 per cent subsidy for all families.

In its report released yesterday, the commission said families earning less than \$80,000 a year, and up to \$140,000 for those with several children in care, should get three days a week of free childcare, for 48 weeks of the year.

It recommended the subsidy then be tapered down by 1 percentage point for every \$5000 of adjusted taxable income over the minimum. Families with a combined income of \$580,000 or more would not be eligible for any subsidy.

Almost all families using childcare  
**Continued p5**



## Childcare: PM's plan dealt a blow

### From page 1

would benefit from the changes. Half of the families would be eligible for childcare subsidy rates of 90 per cent or more; nearly 80 per cent would be eligible for subsidies of over 75 per cent.

The commission said this would add \$4.7 billion a year to the \$12.7 billion childcare subsidy cost as shown in the May 2023 budget. But by using this outdated spending figure – the latest budget estimate is for \$14.5 billion this year – the commission may have underestimated the cost.

Alongside its preferred option, the commission also modelled a 90 per cent subsidy for all families (which the government refers to as universal childcare) and a flat fee of \$10 a day for care, which countries like Canada use. The 90 per cent subsidy regime would cost \$6 billion more a year, while the \$10 a day scheme would cost \$8.3 billion more.

The commission also found much of the financial benefit from the two more expensive options fell to the wealthiest families.

It said making childcare free for the nation's poorest families, particularly from rural and disadvantaged backgrounds, would improve children's readiness for school and their university attendance in the future.

"Children experiencing vulnerability

and disadvantage benefit the most from quality early childhood education and care, but they are currently the least likely to attend," said Deborah

Brennan, associate commissioner with the Productivity Commission.

Mr Albanese has previously said moving to a universal childcare model is "about boosting productivity". "It's about boosting women's workforce participation and it will assist over the long term in boosting population as well," he said in June 2023.

Ben Phillips, principal research fellow at the Centre for Social Research and Methods at Australian National University, said the option favoured by the Productivity Commission was preferable to a universal model that would result in "very large benefits to very high-income families and would be unlikely to change their behaviour".

"The current system is already generous. I don't see any great need or any great evidence that more subsidies will change the amount of use of childcare

or increase female workforce participation beyond existing trends," Dr Phillips said.

He noted that since the last tranche of childcare subsidy reforms introduced in July last year, there had been no uplift in women's workforce participation and only a tiny increase in the amount of childcare being accessed, according to the education department's quarterly childcare reports.

"That was an additional \$1.3 billion per year, on top of other reasonably substantial increases by the Morrison

government only about a year or so earlier, yet we didn't see any particularly substantial changes in terms of female participation," Dr Phillips said.

"In terms of priorities, if I had \$4.7 billion to spend it would be better going on family payments or child poverty alleviation where you get better bang for your buck."

University of NSW economist Richard Holden agreed, saying the report itself wasn't able to substantiate significant improvements in women's workforce participation and that educational improvements were contested. "There is no doubt that some of the most disadvantaged children will benefit from high-quality childcare but when I read statements saying it's going to be fantastic for one-year-olds, that's overstated," Professor Holden said.

"And there's this argument about choice for families and increasing female labour supply. But the report says there's basically no benefit to that."

Linda Davison, who runs the Clarendon Children's Centre in South Melbourne, is aware of women who can't take on additional hours because they don't have childcare and can't get more childcare because of the activity test.

"I was having a conversation with a parent just this morning about her trying to a sole parent, but her work hours are inconsistent.

"She has some regular hours, but then can be offered additional hours and she's frustrated she can't take them because she can't get childcare. And she can't take up an extra day of childcare on the off chance she will get the extra hours of work. It's madness."



Linda Davison, who runs the Clarendon Children's Centre in South Melbourne, yesterday. PHOTO: EAMON GALLAGHER



## MINISTERS' MEDIA CENTRE

Ministers of the Education Portfolio

Joint Media Release

18 September 2024

# Productivity Commission final report on Early Childhood Education and Care

The Hon Jason Clare MP  
Minister for Education

The Hon Dr Anne Aly MP  
Minister for Early Childhood Education  
Minister for Youth

Today the Productivity Commission released their final report on the future of Australia's Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) system.

The final report considers how to build an affordable, accessible, inclusive, high-quality, universal early learning system.

The report includes 56 recommendations across three volumes to achieve this.

It says every child should be able to access at least 30 hours or 3 days a week of high-quality early education and care by 2036.

The report also highlights that quality early education can improve outcomes for children, especially those from disadvantaged backgrounds, but it's those from disadvantaged backgrounds who are also the most likely to be missing out.

The report says one of the first things we need to do to build a bigger and a better early education system, is build a bigger ECEC workforce. That's why last month, the Government announced a 15 per cent wage increase for ECEC workers.

This wage increase will be tied to a requirement for ECEC services to not increase their fees by more than 4.4 per cent for the next 12 months. The Government will then set a cap for the following 12 months, informed by the work of the ABS.

In addition, the Government's Cheaper Child Care changes have cut the cost for more than one million Australian families.

The report is the result of a comprehensive inquiry, co-led by Professor Emerita Deborah Brennan AM. It was informed by a consultation process over 16 months which included 329 written submissions and 11 days of public hearings.

The Government will consider the findings and recommendations of the Productivity Commission report, alongside those of the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) inquiry.

The Final Report and its recommendations are available [here](https://www.pc.gov.au/inquiries/completed/childhood/report) (<https://www.pc.gov.au/inquiries/completed/childhood/report>).

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

"The Albanese Government's Cheaper Child Care changes have made early childhood education and care more affordable for more than one million Australian families.

"We've also announced a 15 per cent pay rise for workers and capping fees at 4.4 per cent for families.

"The report makes clear that more needs to be done to make sure children from poor families, who would benefit the most from high quality early education, are not missing out.

"I thank the Productivity Commission, Dr Brennan and everyone who has contributed to this important report. The report is a significant input into our work to chart the course to a universal early childhood education and care system.

"The Government will consider these recommendations alongside the findings of the ACCC."

***Quotes attributable to Minister for Early Childhood Education Dr Anne Aly:***

"All children should be able to access the transformational benefits of quality early childhood education and care, no matter their background or postcode.

"Quality early childhood education and care can improve developmental outcomes for children, particularly for children experiencing disadvantage and vulnerability.

"Accessible and affordable early learning is critical for supporting more people, especially women, to have a choice when it comes to undertaking study, re-entering the workforce or increasing their hours of work.

"Significant work has gone into this important report, I thank Professor Brennan, the Productivity Commission, the sector and all those who have been involved over the last 16 months.

"This report, together with the ACCC inquiry, will help us build the early childhood education system our children deserve."

## Productivity Commission media release

Dated 18/09/2024

### A path to universal early childhood education and care

The report presents government with a roadmap to a high-quality universal early childhood education and care system that is accessible, within the means of all families, equitable and inclusive for all children. This system would ensure every child aged 0-5 has access to high-quality ECEC for at least 30 hours or three days a week, for 48 weeks of the year.

Modelling shows that the recommended reforms would increase demand for ECEC by 10%, primarily from children in low- and middle-income families who are currently not attending services.

Parents' labour force participation would be expected to rise, as services become more inclusive, available and responsive to families' needs.

The report's recommendations were informed by engagement with hundreds of people from the ECEC sector, academia, advocacy and the broader public across Australia.

To achieve the long-term goal of a universal ECEC system, the Australian Government should first act to ensure that cost is not a barrier to access for children from low-income families. The report recommends abolishing the activity test and increasing the rate of the Child Care Subsidy for families on incomes of up to \$80,000 to 100% of the hourly rate cap.

"Children experiencing vulnerability and disadvantage benefit the most from quality early childhood education and care, but they are currently the least likely to attend," said Associate Commissioner Deborah Brennan.

The report finds that the activity test, which links the amount that a family works, studies or volunteers with the amount of Child Care Subsidy they receive, is a barrier to access for low-income families and does little to incentivise labour force participation and should be removed.

"A child's entitlement to at least three days of ECEC a week should not depend on how much their parents work," said Associate Commissioner Brennan.

The report also recommends that governments introduce new measures to support the ECEC workforce – giving those who are starting in the sector access to tailored training options and creating better mentoring, professional development and career pathways for those who already work in the sector. These measures, coupled with the recently announced improvements to pay, should alleviate some of the recruitment and retention challenges the sector has been experiencing for a long time.

"We will not make any progress towards a universal system without addressing the sector's workforce challenges. Improving pay and conditions is critical but more can be done to improve career and qualification pathways for ECEC professions," said Commissioner Martin Stokie.

Achieving universal childcare will also require government to further invest in establishing ECEC services in communities experiencing disadvantage and regional and remote communities.



“Some areas of Australia have few or no early childhood education and care services. More funding will be needed to address these persistent service gaps,” said Commissioner Lisa Gropp.

The report also recommends expanding access to outside school hours care. State and territory governments should facilitate the provision of outside school hours care in all public schools where there is sustainable demand.

The report says that increasing access and availability cannot come at the expense of quality. It recommends investing in quality, through greater support for the regulatory system and better information to services and parents.

Government should also prioritise ensuring that ECEC services are inclusive for all children.

“Governments and ECEC services also need to do more to achieve the commitments in the Closing the Gap Agreement for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children. That means working towards a sustainable funding model for Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations and investing in the capability of the sector, to make all services culturally safe,” said Commissioner Stokie.

“The system can only be universal if every child is welcome. The Australian Government should increase funding to enable the inclusion of all children regardless of their ability or cultural background,” said Commissioner Stokie.

#### [Media requests](#)

Media team – 02 6240 3330 / [media@pc.gov.au](mailto:media@pc.gov.au)

# Early Childhood Education and Care

## Terms of reference

I, Jim Chalmers, Treasurer, pursuant to Parts 2 and 3 of the *Productivity Commission Act 1998*, hereby request that the Productivity Commission undertake an inquiry into the early childhood education and care (ECEC) sector in Australia.

### Background

The Australian Government recognises that ECEC is an essential part of Australia's education system and is integral to Australia's economic prosperity as a powerful lever for increasing workforce participation. The Government is committed to identifying solutions that will chart the course for universal, affordable ECEC – in the great tradition of universal Medicare and universal superannuation.

Participation in quality ECEC has important developmental, social, and educational benefits for Australian children. It can assist with positive early childhood development and provides a foundation for our children's future well-being and success.

Cost and availability continue to be barriers to accessing ECEC, and for parents and carers achieving their preferred level of workforce participation. The Government believes more accessible ECEC is one of the most powerful initiatives it can pursue for increasing workforce participation, particularly for women.

Governments make significant investments in ECEC which must be targeted, complementary and cohesive to maximise the educational and economic benefit in the most efficient way possible.

Findings from the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission Child Care Price Inquiry will inform and support this Inquiry.

In addition, the Government has committed to developing a Commonwealth whole-of-government Early Years Strategy, focused on the wellbeing, education and development of Australia's children. Further, National Cabinet has asked Education and Early Years Ministers to develop a long-term vision for ECEC.

### Scope of the inquiry

The Commission will undertake an inquiry into the ECEC sector in Australia. The Commission should make recommendations that will support affordable, accessible, equitable and high-quality ECEC that reduces barriers to workforce participation and supports children's learning and development, including considering a universal 90 per cent child care subsidy rate.

In doing so, the Commission should consider options that improve or support:

- affordability of, and access to, quality ECEC services that meet the needs of families and children
- developmental and educational outcomes for Australian children, including preparation for school
- economic growth, including through enabling workforce participation, particularly for women, and contributing to productivity

- outcomes for children and families experiencing vulnerability and/or disadvantage, First Nations children and families, and children and families experiencing disability
- the efficiency and effectiveness of government investment in the sector.

Without limiting the matters on which the Commission may report, in making recommendations the Commission should consider:

- impacts on demand, supply, and fee growth.
- interactions with existing and planned Commonwealth, state and territory ECEC policy settings and funding, including recent commitments by the New South Wales and Victorian governments to expand access to 30 hours of preschool for children in the year before full time school and support more 3-year-old children to participate in preschool, and any commitments in response to the South Australian Royal Commission into Early Childhood Education and Care.
- interactions with other incentives and disincentives to join or increase participation in the workforce.
- ECEC sector workforce requirements and the capacity to meet these requirements within current Commonwealth, state and territory initiatives.
- required regulatory settings, including to manage compliance and integrity risks for Commonwealth programs.
- impact on access to quality ECEC, including by remoteness and access to flexible (non-standard hours) services.
- whether different settings are required based on the location of services or family circumstances.
- the operation and adequacy of the market, including types of care and the roles of for-profit and not-for-profit providers, and the appropriate role for government.
- activity requirements and other ECEC policy settings, including to reduce system complexity and debt for families.
- impacts on the economy, including workforce participation, productivity and budgetary implications.
- a pathway for implementation.

The Commission should have regard to any findings from the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission's Price Inquiry into child care prices, as well as any other relevant government reviews of ECEC programs.

## Process

The Commission should undertake a broad public consultation process, including by holding hearings, inviting public submissions and releasing a draft report to the public.

The Commission should consult with state and territory governments and the ECEC sector where required. The Commission should also consult with the Closing the Gap Early Childhood Care and Development Policy Partnership on matters relating to First Nations children, families, and services.

The Commission will commence this Inquiry on 1 March 2023 and provide a final report to the Government by 30 June 2024.

**The Hon Jim Chalmers MP**  
**Treasurer**

**Issue:** Regional Access  
**Contact:** Kylie Crane  
Ph: s 22  
Deputy Secretary, Early Childhood and Youth

## Key Points

- The Australian Government is aware of the difficulty families living in regional and remote areas face when looking for suitable early childhood education and care (ECEC) services and delivers a range of supports to help families access the services they need.
- A range of key programs support the delivery of ECEC in regional and remote areas including:
  - The Community Child Care Fund (CCCF), which supports services in areas of limited supply.
  - The In Home Care (IHC) and Connected Beginnings programs support access for geographically isolated households and First Nations children.
- In the June quarter 2024, approximately 25% (3,747) of approved ECEC services (not including In Home Care (IHC)) were located outside major cities.

## ***Productivity Commission Inquiry into ECEC***

- The Productivity Commission (PC) released its final report on the future of Australia's ECEC system on 18 September 2024.
- The PC considered a range of matters, including:
  - the impact on access to quality ECEC, including by remoteness; whether different settings are required based on the location of services or family circumstances
  - the operation and adequacy of the market.
- The PC:
  - Found that ECEC availability tends to be poorer in regional and remote areas and in communities experiencing higher levels of socio-economic disadvantage (finding 5.3).
  - Recommended additional supports in some areas to ensure service availability (recommendation 5.2).

## **Work with States and Territories**

- All governments have a shared responsibility for improving access to ECEC in regional areas of Australia. These roles are distinct but complementary.
  - States and territory governments have their own funding programs and initiatives to support access to ECEC and are responsible for approving and regulating ECEC services under the National Quality Framework (NQF).
  - State governments are responsible for regional planning and growth. Local governments also plan, fund and deliver ECEC.
- One of the constraints on supply is attracting and retaining the qualified workforce ECEC services require. All jurisdictions are working on the National Children's Education and Care Workforce Strategy to increase access to ECEC in regional areas.

## **Key Programs and Initiatives** (further information at [Attachment A](#))

### **Community Child Care Fund (CCCF)**

- The CCCF supports around 700 services nationally to reduce barriers to access, particularly for children and families in rural and remote communities experiencing disadvantage, First Nations communities, and where services are in limited supply.
- The CCCF will deliver approximately \$614.7 million over 4 years (2024–25 to 2027–28, including Connected Beginnings), with around 85% of allocated funding over 2024–25 supporting services in regional and remote locations.<sup>1</sup>
- Under the **CCCF Establishing Childcare in Limited Supply Areas** grant opportunity, \$16 million is being provided to fund 47 new services, including 13 new Centre Based Day Care services and 34 Family Day Care locations, across 38 communities in priority regional and remote parts of the country.
  - Funding is allocated over 2 years (2023–24 to 2024–25).
- Funding of just over \$80 million has been offered to 439 services under the **CCCF Round 4** grant opportunity. A total of 475 agreements were offered, comprising:
  - 385 services offered Sustainability Support funding agreements.
  - 90 services offered Capital Support funding agreements.

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<sup>1</sup> Note: around 85% has been calculated based on known system commitments over 2024-25. This is not 85% of the total appropriation/budget, as this includes other components that cannot be seen in the grant management system.

- Outcomes of the round were announced on 7 August 2024, and funding agreements will support services through to June 2026.
- Since 4 April 2023, the Government has announced 8 new CCCF Restricted Expansion grants to First Nations led organisations.
  - The \$29.9 million allocated to this Closing the Gap measure over 4 years from 2021–22 supports organisations to establish new services in remote and very remote areas where there is little or no ECEC service available.
  - Grant negotiations are underway with organisations in another 3 sites.

### In Home Care (IHC)

- The IHC program provides high quality flexible ECEC to families for whom other approved ECEC options are not available or appropriate due to their unique circumstances, including where families are geographically isolated from ECEC in rural or remote locations.
  - As at 30 June 2024, 920 families were using IHC. Approximately 30% of these families were geographically isolated.
- IHC Support Agencies are working with IHC services, Registered Training Organisations (RTOs), and employment services to promote IHC as a career to potential educators.

### Affordability

- The Government also supports families by reducing the cost of ECEC through the Child Care Subsidy (CCS), which targets support to families who need it most.
- In July 2023, the Government lifted the maximum CCS percentage to 90% for families earning up to \$80,000 and has increased subsidy rates for families earning less than \$530,000.
  - The changes have benefited around 1.2 million families, including 265,000 families in regional and remote Australia, with no families worse off.
- Since 10 July 2023, the Government has been providing a base level of 36 subsidised care hours per fortnight for First Nations children, regardless of their family's activity. This will further support First Nations families residing in remote or regional communities.

### ECEC Workforce

- The ECEC sector faces challenges in attracting and retaining the qualified workforce it requires.

- On 8 August 2024, the Government announced \$3.6 billion in funding to support a 15% wage increase for the ECEC workforce.
- Phased in over 2 years, workers will receive a 10% increase from December 2024, and a further 5% increase from December 2025.
- The Jobs and Skills Australia (JSA) ECEC Capacity Study Final Report (the JSA report) was published on 3 September 2024 and provides a detailed analysis of the ECEC workforce. The JSA report shows that:
  - There is a shortfall of around 21,000 qualified ECEC workers needed to meet existing demand.
  - Workforce shortages are apparent in most regions across regional and remote Australia as well as major cities and are projected to persist over the next 10 years.
- Based on staffing waiver data, workforce shortages are most acute outside of major metropolitan regions.
- The percentage of services holding a temporary waiver for one or more of the staffing requirements under the NQF in outer regional, remote and very remote areas, is **4.8%** higher than in inner regional and major cities.<sup>2</sup> This compares to **3.8%** from the previous quarter.

*Temporary staffing waivers by remoteness classification (\* refers to previous quarter)*

Classification	Very Remote Australia	Outer Regional Australia	Remote Australia	Inner Regional Australia	Major Cities of Australia	
% of temp. staffing waivers	19.5% (16.3%)*	12.8% (12.1%)*	9.8% (10.5%)*	9.7% (9.5%*)	8.6% (8.8%*)	<b>Difference</b>
<b>Average</b>	14.0% (13.0%*)			9.2 % (9.2%*)		<b>4.8%</b> <b>(3.8%*)</b>

- Most staffing waivers relate to temporary difficulties experienced by centre based service providers in meeting the early childhood teacher requirements stipulated under the Education and Care Services National Regulations, with very few relating to the educator-to-child ratio requirements stipulated under the Regulations.
- Staffing waivers are a measure of last resort and are only issued if providers have made genuine steps to avoid the need for a waiver and there are no risks to children’s safety, health and wellbeing.

<sup>2</sup> [NQF Snapshot Q2 2024 \(acecqa.gov.au\)](https://www.acecqa.gov.au) W4: Proportion of services with a staffing waiver by remoteness classification and waiver category.

- The National Children’s Education and Care Workforce Strategy (the Strategy) is an important Government initiative, which includes 21 actions to be delivered in the short, medium and long-term, to support the recruitment and retention of the ECEC workforce.
- To implement Focus Area 2-1 of the Strategy, the Australian Government has commissioned a review of targeted programs that support studies and placements of potential educators and teachers in regional, rural and remote areas.
- The findings from this review are being considered and will inform the development of future targeted programs. The decision about publication will be made by Education Ministers.

#### Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) Inquiry

- The final report of the ACCC Childcare Price Inquiry into the market for ECEC services was released on 29 January 2024. The final report outlines 8 recommendations and 31 findings.
- Key findings include:
  - Child care affordability has improved following the July 2023 CCS changes.
  - A ‘one size fits all’ approach to regulation is unlikely to meet government and community expectations for all markets.
  - The Government will consider the ACCC’s report alongside the PC inquiry into ECEC.

#### Regional University Study Hubs

- Regional University Study Hubs are community-based organisations in regional and remote locations that provide facilities and academic skills/wellbeing support for students studying with tertiary providers. This will benefit ECEC students and help ensure they are supported to succeed in obtaining tertiary educator qualifications.
- On 25 March 2024, Minister Clare announced 12 Regional University Study Hubs, funded in response to the Australian Universities Accord Interim Report, including funding to support 2 existing Country Universities Centres located in New South Wales. The 12 newly funded Hubs will take the total number of Hubs to 46, building on the 34 Hubs already previously funded.

#### Indigenous, Regional and Low SES Attainment Fund (IRLSAF)

- The IRLSAF funds 5 programs that have the potential to provide support for regional students studying ECEC tertiary courses provided through Table A Universities, including courses delivered in remote and regional areas. (completely replace the first line)



- The Portfolio Budget statements for 2024–25 include the amount for IRLSAF as \$283.398 million (PBS page 55).
- The Regional Partnerships Project Pool Program funds university and Regional University Study Hubs-led consortia to deliver collaborative outreach initiatives to enable the higher education aspirations of students in regional and remote areas, which may include First Nations students.(which would be consistent with SB-000463)
- The Higher Education Participation and Partnerships Program provides funding for universities to support underrepresented students, including regional and remote.
- The National Priorities Pool Program provides funding to Table A universities for research projects and trial initiatives to inform equity policy and practices.
- The Regional Loading Program provides additional funding to eligible higher education providers to assist in offsetting higher operating costs of regional campuses in comparison with major city campuses
- The Regional Loading Program provides additional funding to eligible higher education providers to assist in offsetting higher operating costs of regional campuses in comparison with major city campuses.

## Media

### ***Out of school care services in Indi face imminent closure without Government action, Helen Haines MP Media Release, 19 September 2024***

- The media release from the Independent Federal Member for Indi (Vic.) raises concerns that 7 Outside School Hours Care services in the Indi region were not successful in receiving funding under CCCF Round 4.
- Dr Haines highlights the significant need for funding across regional communities and calls for an increase to the CCCF to meet demand.
- The article also links to a question (and response) from Dr Haines to Minister Aly in Question Time on this matter.

## Attachments

Attachment A – Further information on key programs and initiatives.

<b>Date Last Cleared</b>	23 October 2024
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### ***Further Information on Key Programs and Initiatives***

#### ***Community Child Care Fund (CCCF)***

- The CCCF grants program helps services address barriers to ECEC participation, particularly in disadvantaged, regional and remote communities.
- Overall, the CCCF program, including Connected Beginnings, funds around 700 services across Australia, to ensure families have access to quality care where the market might not otherwise support service provision.
- Around 85 per cent of funding in 2024–25 is supporting services in regional or remote locations.<sup>1</sup>
- Under the CCCF Competitive program (at 30 September 2024), a total of 487 services are currently receiving funding across a number of grant opportunities. 408 of these based in regional and remote areas (around 84 per cent of services).
- Funding awarded through a CCCF open competitive round may be used by a service for approved activities that support the viability and sustainability of their service, address community level barriers to child care participation and capital works to modify, renovate, extend ECEC facilities.

#### ***Community Child Care Fund Restricted (CCCFR)***

- CCCFR grants support approximately 150 services, mainly in regional, remote or very remote areas.
- A review of the CCCFR grant was undertaken by Deloitte and [published](#) on the department's website on 18 October 2024.
  - The Review Report contains 19 recommendations and 42 findings addressing the overarching policy, funding instrument and broader administration and governance arrangements for the CCCFR grant.
  - CCCFR Grant Agreements will be extended to 30 June 2027 to allow government time to consider the recommendations of the review, alongside the response to the PC and broader ECEC reform.

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<sup>1</sup> Note: around 85 per cent has been calculated based on known system commitments over 2024-25. This is not 85 per cent of the total appropriation/budget, as this includes other components that cannot be seen in the grant management system.

### ***CCCFR Expansion***

- In August 2021, the Government announced an additional \$29.9 million over four years, to establish new CCCFR services, in mainly remote locations where there are little or no ECEC services available.
- The funding is part of the Government's commitment to achieving Closing the Gap targets.
- The Government has announced 8 grants to First Nations led organisations.
- Once all sites are established, they will provide access to high quality ECEC for more than 300 children per year.
  1. Puuya Foundation in Lockhart River, Qld
  2. Napranum Aboriginal Land Council in Napranum, Qld
  3. Wunan Foundation in Kununurra, WA
  4. Yipirinya School, Alice Springs, NT
  5. Central Australian Aboriginal Congress, Alice Springs, NT
  6. Central Desert Regional Council, Ti Tree, NT
  7. Bundiyarra Aboriginal Community Corporation, Geraldton, WA
  8. Kowanyama Aboriginal Shire Council, Kowanyama, Qld
- Grant negotiations are underway with organisations in another 3 sites.

### ***Connected Beginnings***

- Connected Beginnings draws upon the strength and knowledge of First Nations' communities to increase children and families' engagement with health and ECEC.
- Connected Beginnings works closely with First Nations communities to identify early childhood priorities for change, and to lift participation in quality and culturally appropriate ECEC services and programs to improve school readiness and developmental outcomes for children.
- The program currently funds projects in 48 communities across Australia including metropolitan, regional, remote and very remote locations, and is expanding to 50 sites by 2024–25.
- The program currently supports around 23,700 First Nations children aged 0–5. Once expanded, around 20 per cent of First Nations children will be living in a community with Connected Beginnings.

### ***In Home Care (IHC) program***

- IHC provides high quality, flexible ECEC to families for whom other approved ECEC options are not available or appropriate due to their unique circumstances.
- Families using IHC work non-standard or variable hours, have complex needs, or are geographically isolated, such as those in regional and remote communities.
- \$5 million each year funds five IHC Support Agencies. They assess families' eligibility for IHC, support the delivery of IHC and recommend the allocation of IHC places to approved services.
- CCS for IHC is paid per family, is means tested, and is subject to the CCS activity test, with a family hourly rate cap of \$38.87. In addition, eligible families using IHC may receive the Additional Child Care Subsidy.
- In 2023, an independent external review of IHC was commissioned, with a final report published in November 2023.
- The report found the IHC partially met its objective. However, the report stated the program was hampered by workforce shortages, affordability, and access issues. It recommended the program is tailored to serve the three cohorts it seeks to serve.

### ***StartingBlocks Website***

- Families can access the information they need to make choices about their children's needs, through *StartingBlocks.gov.au*, which is hosted by the Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA).
- The StartingBlocks website allows families to search for information on services in their area, including fees, inclusions vacancies and quality ratings.
- Using StartingBlocks 'Find Child Care' function, families are able to locate care options which are accessible to them and see information about vacancies at services which are of interest.
  - The search engine allows families to find services with vacancies in a 50 km radius of the selected suburb. Vacancy information includes age ranges and available days. The search can be narrowed to include service type and quality rating.
  - Vacancy data is provided to ACECQA through daily data files from Services Australia, with the Starting Blocks website updated five times a week (Sunday to Thursday).

- The StartingBlocks 'Child Care Subsidy Calculator' allows families to calculate their current CCS rates and fees. The Calculator has been updated to reflect CCS rates from 10 July 2023.
- A new version of the StartingBlocks website was launched on 20 March 2024, with additional features and improved functionality.
  - Alongside enhancements to the design and accessibility features of the website, additional information has been added to enable families to see average year-on-year fee increases, as well as publication of some revenue and profit information for large for-profit providers.
  - This reflects the Government's commitment to improving transparency in the ECEC sector.
- Waitlists are kept by individual services but are not considered reliable data sources, because parents can be on more than one list at the same time. Waitlists are not shown on StartingBlocks.

# Higher Education, Research and International

## Hot Topic Briefs

1	Accord Implementation Advisory Committee and consultation process	SB24-000371
2	Australian Tertiary Education Commission	SB24-000372
3	Commonwealth Practicum Placements	SB24-000373
4	Disability Support in Higher Education	SB24-000374
5	ESOS Bill and Integrity changes	SB24-000375
6	FEE-FREE Uni Ready Courses (FFUR)	SB24-000376
7	Making HELP Simpler and Fairer	SB24-000378
8	Managed system for sustainable international education	SB24-000379
9	National Code to Prevent and Respond to Gender-based Violence	SB24-000380
10	National Student Ombudsman	SB24-000381
11	Racism Study and response to racism in universities	SB24-000382
12	Universities Accord (Student Support and Other Measures) Bill 2024	SB24-000383
13	University Study Hubs	SB24-000384

**Issue:** Accord Implementation Advisory Committee and consultation process  
**Contact:** Ben Rimmer  
Ph: s 22  
Deputy Secretary

## Key Points

### ***Accord Implementation Advisory Committee (IAC)***

- The Australian Universities Accord (the Accord) Final Report recommended the Minister for Education establish an Implementation Advisory Committee as a priority to advise on the implementation of the Accord recommendations (Recommendation 44).
- The Minister for Education announced the Accord Implementation Advisory Committee (the IAC) on 15 May 2024 to provide expert advice and engage with the tertiary education sector on the implementation of the 2024–25 Budget response to the Accord (see Terms of Reference at [Attachment A](#)).
- The IAC comprises:
  - Mr Tony Cook PSM (Chair)
  - Professor David Lloyd
  - Professor the Hon Verity Firth AM
  - Professor Stephen Duckett AM
  - Professor Julia Horne
  - Professor Tom Calma AO
  - Professor Barney Glover AO
  - Ms Jenny Dodd
  - Ms Natalie James (ex-officio)
  - Mr Ben Rimmer (ex-officio)

### ***Appointment and operation of the IAC***

- Members were appointed on 22 May 2024 as non-statutory appointments, and for an initial term ending 31 December 2024.
- Three members are remunerated at a rate of \$464 per day:
  - Professor Stephen Duckett AM, Professor Tom Calma AO and Professor Julia Horne are remunerated.
  - Rates are commensurate with the Remuneration Tribunal (Remuneration and Allowances for Holders of Part-time Public Office Determination) 2024.

- The non-remunerated members are ex-officio members or appointed due to the nature of their paid positions in the tertiary or public sector:
  - Mr Tony Cook PSM (Chair)
  - Professor David Lloyd
  - Professor the Hon Verity Firth AM
  - Professor Barney Glover AO
  - Ms Jenny Dodd
  - Ms Natalie James (ex-officio)
  - Mr Ben Rimmer (ex-officio)
- Members' travel expenses are based on Tier 2 rates in the Remuneration Tribunal (Official Travel) Determination 2024.
- The Committee met 7 times in the period May to September 2024. In addition, they have also held meetings with peak bodies from the university, VET, business and industry sectors (see [Attachment B](#) for further details).

### ***Departmental consultation process***

- The department ran a consultation process between April and September 2024 to inform the detailed design and implementation of the Accord reforms. The IAC were involved in some of these processes.
- [Attachment B](#) provides details of individual meetings and consultations.

### ***Roundtables with Vice-Chancellors (IAC involvement)***

- In the week commencing 29 July 2024, the department held 7 roundtables with all 38 public university Vice-Chancellors on the Accord's structural reforms and the Draft International Education and Skills Strategic Framework.
- [Attachment C](#) provides a summary of feedback received from Vice-Chancellors on the Higher Education reforms.
- The IAC was represented at each roundtable by at least one member.

### ***Post-Budget Implementation Discussion Papers***

- Between June 2024 and July 2024, the department released discussion papers on the Australian Tertiary Education Commission (ATEC), Managed Growth Funding and Needs-based Funding.
- The submission period closed on 9 August.
- The department received feedback from 88 organisations and individuals on the three papers. [Attachment D](#) provides further details. This feedback was a useful input into IAC discussions.



### *Equity Stakeholder Roundtables*

- Between April and September 2024, the department held 15 meetings with First Nations, disability and regional higher education stakeholders that are the focus of the equity reforms in the Accord.

### *Cross-Government Consultation*

- The Tertiary Reform Group (TRG) has been established to discuss and advise on national tertiary matters related to the Accord.
- The TRG comprises skills and training and higher education senior officials from the Commonwealth, state and territory governments.
- The TRG has met 4 times between May and September 2024.

### **Media**

- ***‘Policy or politics? – Australia’s future and the role of universities’, National Press Club, 11 September 2024***  
Professor David Lloyd (Universities Australia Chair) argued that “elected officials are using international students as scapegoats to blame the housing crisis on” and that caps would weaken the Australian economy.
- ***‘Skills success in Australia: Aligning need with know-how’, National Press Club, 14 August 2024***  
Professor Barney Glover AO referred to the urgent need for a more connected tertiary education system.
- ***Responding to the Australian Universities Accord, Media Release, 15 May 2024***  
The Minister announced that the Government has established an Implementation Advisory Committee to engage with the sector on Accord reforms.

### **Attachments**

Attachment A – IAC Terms of Reference

Attachment B – Further detail on IAC meetings and consultations

Attachment C – Summary of Vice-Chancellor Feedback on Higher Education Reforms

Attachment D – Further detail on Post-Budget Implementation Discussion Papers

<b>Date Last Cleared</b>	14 October 2024
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## Australian Universities Accord Implementation Advisory Committee

### Terms of Reference

#### Purpose

The Australian Universities Accord Implementation Advisory Committee (the Committee) will consist of a small group of experts and officials. Their role will be to provide expert advice and represent the views of the sector and wider community on the implementation of the Government response to the Australian Universities Accord.

The Committee will primarily provide advice to Ministers on implementation issues and changes to legislation related to the Government response to the Accord.

The Committee will provide advice on the implementation of the Government's commitments in the following priority areas by August 2024:

- Setting ambitious targets to grow the tertiary sector to meet Australia's skills needs
- Establishing an Australian Tertiary Education Commission
- Higher education pricing reform
- Managed growth funding for universities
- Needs-based funding for better equity outcomes
- Commonwealth Prac Payment

The Committee will also provide ongoing legislation and implementation advice on the Government response to the Accord Final Report.

The Committee will not be a formal decision-making body. It will provide expert advice to the Government, referred at the discretion of the Minister for Education.

The Committee will report to both the Minister for Education and the Minister for Skills and Training on tertiary reforms and targets and the Minister for Education on higher education funding and governance.

#### Timeframe and commitment

The Committee will commence in May 2024 and operate initially until the end of 2024, with the option to extend as required. The Committee will formally meet at least monthly, with additional meetings as necessary in consultation with the Department of Education.

#### Membership

The Committee will be chaired by the Secretary of the Department of Education, with members selected from individuals with experience in the tertiary education sector and public sector leadership.

**Other members of the Committee are:**

- Professor David Lloyd
- Professor the Hon. Verity Firth AM
- Professor Stephen Duckett AM
- Professor Julia Horne
- Professor Tom Calma AO
- Professor Barney Glover AO
- Ms Jenny Dodd
- Ms Natalie James (Ex-Officio Member)
- Mr Ben Rimmer (Ex-Officio Member)

**Secretariat Support and Consultation Processes**

The Department of Education will provide secretariat services to support the role and general functions of the Committee. This may include providing materials to inform the Committee's advice to Government and arranging meetings, including covering travel and related expenses.

The Department of Education will also ensure information from the wider consultation processes on the Government response to the Universities Accord will be provided to the Committee as required.

## Further detail on IAC Meetings and Consultations

## IAC Member Attendance Summary (22 May to 30 Sept 2024)

Total Number of Meetings Held: 7

Total Cost of Official Hospitality for IAC Meetings: \$1,674.42 (ex. GST)

Member	Number attended
Mr Tony Cook PSM	7
Professor David Lloyd	5
Professor the Hon Verity Firth AM	7
Professor Stephen Duckett AM	7
Professor Julia Horne	6
Professor Tom Calma AO	7
Professor Barney Glover AO	7
Ms Jenny Dodd	6
Mr Ben Rimmer, ex-officio	7
Ms Natalie James, ex-officio	6
s 47F(1) (Invited to 6 meetings as guest/proxy)	5

## IAC Meetings from 22 May to 30 September 2024

No.	Meeting Date	Time	Location	Official Hospitality	IAC Attendees	Apologies	Guests/ Proxy	Agenda items for Discussion
1	22 MAY 2024	10:00AM – 1:00PM	Education, Canberra	Morning Tea (\$52.00 ex. GST)	Mr Tony Cook PSM Professor David Lloyd Professor the Hon Verity Firth AM Professor Stephen Duckett AM Professor Julia Horne Professor Tom Calma AO Professor Barney Glover AO Ms Jenny Dodd Mr Ben Rimmer	Ms Natalie James	s 47F(1) proxy for Natalie James	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accord 2024-25 Budget Summary</li> <li>• Role of IAC</li> <li>• Major Accord Reforms</li> </ul>

No.	Meeting Date	Time	Location	Official Hospitality	IAC Attendees	Apologies	Guests/ Proxy	Agenda items for Discussion
2	14 JUN 2024	9:00AM – 4:00PM	Education, Canberra	Morning Tea, Lunch and Afternoon Tea (\$414.55 ex. GST)	Mr Tony Cook PSM Professor the Hon Verity Firth AM Professor Stephen Duckett AM Professor Julia Horne Professor Tom Calma AO Professor Barney Glover AO Ms Jenny Dodd Mr Ben Rimmer Ms Natalie James	Professor David Lloyd	s 47F(1) proxy for Professor David Lloyd	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Target setting for higher education and VET</li> <li>• Managed Growth Funding System</li> <li>• Commonwealth Prac Payment</li> </ul>
3	2 JUL 2024	9:00AM – 3:15PM	Education, Canberra	Morning Tea, Lunch and Afternoon Tea (\$387.64 ex. GST)	Mr Tony Cook PSM Professor the Hon Verity Firth AM Professor Stephen Duckett AM Professor Tom Calma AO Professor Barney Glover AO Ms Jenny Dodd Mr Ben Rimmer Ms Natalie James	Professor David Lloyd Professor Julia Horne	s 47F(1) proxy for Professor David Lloyd	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Needs-based Funding</li> <li>• Participation targets and views from key equity groups</li> <li>• Draft International Education and Skills Strategic Framework and International Student Profile</li> </ul>

No.	Meeting Date	Time	Location	Official Hospitality	IAC Attendees	Apologies	Guests/ Proxy	Agenda items for Discussion
4	23 JUL 2024	9:00AM – 4:00PM	Education, Canberra	Morning Tea, Lunch and Afternoon Tea (\$405.91 ex. GST)	Mr Tony Cook PSM Professor David Lloyd Professor the Hon Verity Firth AM Professor Stephen Duckett AM Professor Julia Horne Professor Tom Calma AO Professor Barney Glover AO Mr Ben Rimmer Ms Natalie James	Ms Jenny Dodd	s 47F(1) guest The Hon Jason Clare MP, Minister for Education, guest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discussion with s 47F(1) on ATEC Accord Findings and Recommendations</li> <li>• ATEC implementation</li> <li>• Conversation with Minister Clare</li> </ul>
5	13 AUG 2024	9:00AM – 4:00PM	Education, Canberra	Morning Tea, Lunch and Afternoon Tea (\$414.32 ex. GST)	Mr Tony Cook PSM Professor David Lloyd Professor the Hon Verity Firth AM Professor Stephen Duckett AM Professor Julia Horne Professor Tom Calma AO Professor Barney Glover AO Ms Jenny Dodd Mr Ben Rimmer Ms Natalie James	N/A	s 47F(1) guest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stakeholder feedback on reforms incl. Roadshows with Vice-Chancellors</li> <li>• Pricing in the ATEC</li> <li>• IAC advice to Minister Clare</li> </ul>

No.	Meeting Date	Time	Location	Official Hospitality	IAC Attendees	Apologies	Guests/ Proxy	Agenda items for Discussion
6	23 AUG 2024	4:00PM – 5:00PM	Virtual	N/A	Mr Tony Cook PSM Professor David Lloyd Professor the Hon Verity Firth AM Professor Stephen Duckett AM Professor Julia Horne Professor Tom Calma AO Professor Barney Glover AO Ms Jenny Dodd Mr Ben Rimmer Ms Natalie James	N/A	s 47F(1) guest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Finalising the letter of advice to Minister Clare</li> </ul>
7	5 SEPT 2024	11:00AM – 12:00PM	Virtual	N/A	Mr Tony Cook PSM Professor David Lloyd Professor the Hon Verity Firth AM Professor Stephen Duckett AM Professor Julia Horne Professor Tom Calma AO Professor Barney Glover AO Ms Jenny Dodd Mr Ben Rimmer Ms Natalie James	N/A	s 47F(1) guest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Update on key Accord priority areas (ATEC and Needs-based Funding)</li> </ul>

## IAC Consultation Meetings with the Tertiary Sector on Accord Reforms

No.	Meeting Date	Time	Location	Official Hospitality	IAC Attendees	Peak Body Attendees
<b>University peak bodies</b>						
1	19 JUL 2024	9:30AM – 12:30PM	Education, Canberra	N/A	Mr Tony Cook PSM Professor the Hon. Verity Firth AM Professor Stephen Duckett AM Professor Barney Glover AO Professor Julia Horne Mr Ben Rimmer Ms Natalie James	<b>Australian Technology Network of Universities (ATN)</b> s 47F(1)  <b>Group of Eight (Go8)</b> s 47F(1)  <b>Innovative Research Universities (IRU)</b> s 47F(1)  <b>Regional Universities Network (RUN)</b> s 47F(1)  <b>Universities Australia</b> s 47F(1)
<b>Universities Australia Deputy Vice Chancellor/Pro Vice Chancellor Indigenous Committee and National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Higher Education Consortium (NATSIHEC)</b>						
2	14 AUG 2024	3:00PM – 5:00PM	Virtual	N/A	Professor Tom Calma AO Professor the Hon. Verity Firth AM Professor Julia Horne Mr Ben Rimmer	s 47F(1) s 47F(1) s 47F(1) s 47F(1) s 47F(1) Tasmania  Western Sydney University University of New South Wales LaTrobe University Flinders University University of



No.	Meeting Date	Time	Location	Official Hospitality	IAC Attendees	Peak Body Attendees
<b>Non-university Peak Bodies and Industry Groups</b>						
3	5 SEPT 2024	2:00PM - 4:00PM	Virtual	N/A	Mr Ben Rimmer Ms Natalie James Ms Jenny Dodd Professor the Hon. Verity Firth AM Professor Stephen Duckett AM Professor Barney Glover AO Professor Julia Horne Professor Tom Calma AO	<b>TAFE Directors Australia (TDA)</b> s 47F(1) <b>Independent Tertiary Education Council Australia (ITECA)</b> s 47F(1) <b>Independent Higher Education Australia (IHEA)</b> s 47F(1) <b>International Education Association of Australia (IEAA)</b> s 47F(1) <b>Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ACCI)</b> s 47F(1)  <b>Business Council of Australia (BCA)</b> s 47F(1) <b>Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU)</b> s 47F(1) <b>Australian Education Union (AEU)</b> s 47F(1) <b>National Tertiary Education Union (NTEU)</b> s 47F(1)  <b>Adult Learning Australia</b> s 47F(1)

### Vice Chancellor Roundtables on Accord Reforms and Draft International Education and Skills Strategic Framework

- The Roundtables with **Vice-Chancellors from the 38 public universities** were Chaired by Mr Ben Rimmer, Deputy Secretary, Higher Education, Research and International Group.
- At least one member from the IAC was present at each of the Roundtables.
- Morning and afternoon tea was provided by Department of Education. **Total Cost of Official Hospitality was \$866.32 (ex. GST).**

No.	Roundtable	Time	Location	Official Hospitality	Vice-Chancellors and IAC Members	Other Attendees
1	30 JUL 2024	9:00AM – 12:30PM	ANU	\$94.09 (ex. GST)	<b>Vice-Chancellors</b> Professor Sharon Pickering, Monash University Professor Deborah Terry AC, The University of Queensland Professor Genevieve Bell AO FAHA FTSE, The Australian National University Professor Peter Høj AC, The University of Adelaide Professor David Lloyd, University of South Australia <b>(and IAC Member)</b>	N/A
2	30 JUL 2024	1:30 – 5:00 PM	ANU	\$137.73 (ex. GST)	<b>Vice-Chancellors</b> Professor Adam Shoemaker, Victoria University Professor George Williams, Western Sydney University Professor Lucy Johnston, University of Canberra Professor Zlatko Skrbis, Australian Catholic University Professor Andrew J. Deeks, Murdoch University  <b>IAC Member</b> Professor David Lloyd	s 47F(1) dith Cowan University s 47F(1) The University of Notre Dame Australia s 47F(1) The University of Notre Dame Australia s 47F(1) The University of Notre Dame Australia s 47F(1) The University of Notre Dame Australia s 47F(1) Victoria University s 47F(1) University of Canberra

No.	Roundtable	Time	Location	Official Hospitality	Vice-Chancellors and IAC Members	Other Attendees
3	31 JUL 2024	9:00AM – 12:30PM	UNSW, Sydney	\$349.00 (ex. GST)	<p><b>Vice-Chancellors</b>  Professor Colin Stirling, Flinders University  Professor Carolyn Evans, Griffith University  Professor Theo Farrell, La Trobe University  Professor Iain Martin, Deakin University  Professor Alex Zelinsky AO, The University of Newcastle</p> <p><b>IAC Members</b>  Professor the Hon. Verity Firth AM  Professor Julia Horne</p>	<p>s 47F(1) University of Wollongong</p> <p>s 47F(1) La Trobe University</p> <p>s 47F(1) , Deakin University</p> <p>s 47F(1) The University of Newcastle</p> <p>s 47F(1) James Cook University</p> <p>s 47F(1) James Cook University</p>
4	31 JUL 2024	1:30 PM– 5:00 PM	UNSW, Sydney	\$89.00 (ex. GST)	<p><b>Vice-Chancellors</b>  Professor Attila Brungs, University of New South Wales  Professor Mark Scott AO, The University of Sydney  Professor Duncan Maskell, The University of Melbourne  Professor Amit Ch</p> <p><b>IAC Member</b>  Professor Julia Horne</p>	<p>s 47F(1) University of New South Wales</p> <p>s 47F(1) University of New South Wales</p>

No.	Roundtable	Time	Location	Official Hospitality	Vice-Chancellors and IAC Members	Other Attendees
5	1 AUG 2024	9:00AM – 12:30PM	CQU, Brisbane	\$72.00 (ex. GST)	<b>Vice-Chancellors</b> Professor Nick Klomp, CQUniversity Australia Professor Renee Leon PSM, Charles Sturt University Professor Tyrone Carlin, Southern Cross University Professor Helen Bartlett, University of the Sunshine Coast Professor Duncan Bentley, Federation University Australia  <b>IAC Member</b> Professor Stephen Duckett AM	s 47F(1) Federation University Australia s 47F(1) Sunshine Coast University s 47F(1) CQUniversity Australia
6	1 AUG 2024	1:30PM – 5:00PM	CQU, Brisbane	\$54.00 (ex. GST)	<b>Vice-Chancellors</b> Professor Geraldine Mackenzie, University of Southern Queensland Professor Scott Bowman AO, Charles Darwin University Professor Chris Moran, University of New England  <b>IAC Member</b> Professor Stephen Duckett AM	s 47F(1) s 47F(1) , University of Tasmania University of Southern Queensland s 47F(1) University of New England s 47F(1) University of Tasmania

No.	Roundtable	Time	Location	Official Hospitality	Vice-Chancellors and IAC Members	Other Attendees
7	2 AUG 2024	1:30PM– 5:00PM	RMIT, Melbourne	\$70.50 (ex. GST)	<p><b>Vice-Chancellors</b>  Professor Margaret Sheil AO, Queensland  University of Technology  Professor S. Bruce Dowton, Macquarie  University  Professor Andrew Parfitt, University of  Technology Sydney  Professor Harlene Hayne CNZM, Curtin  University</p> <p><b>IAC Member</b>  Professor Stephen Duckett AM (and Council  Member, RMIT University)</p>	<p>s 47F(1)  Swinburne University of Technology  s 47F(1)  Swinburne University of Technology  s 47F(1)  s 47F(1) RMIT University</p>

**Department of Education meetings with disability, First Nations and regional higher education stakeholders on Accord reforms**

- No IAC members have been involved in these meetings.

No.	Meeting Dates	Location	Invitees	Agenda items for Discussion
<b>Disability</b>				
1-7	8 APR 2024 20 MAY 2024 28 JUN 2024 25 JUL 2024 5 AUG 2024 29 AUG 2024 17 SEPT 2024	Virtual	<p>s 47F(1) CQ University</p> <p>s 47F(1) Griffith</p> <p>University and s 47F(1) Australian Tertiary Education Network on Disability (ATEND)</p> <p>s 47F(1) Australian Human Rights Commission (AHRC)</p> <p>s 47F(1) University of Tasmania</p> <p>s 47F(1) University of Queensland</p> <p>s 47F(1) National Union of Students (NUS)</p> <p>s 47F(1) University of New England</p> <p>s 47F(1) Universities Australia</p> <p>s 47F(1) Deakin University, s 47F(1) Children and Young People with Disability Australia (CYDA), Autistic Self</p> <p>s 47F(1) Advocacy Network ASAN</p> <p>s 47F(1) Children and Young People with Disability Australia (CYDA)</p> <p>s 47F(1) Australian Human Rights Commission (AHRC)</p> <p>s 47F(1) Australian Autism Alliance</p> <p>s 47F(1) National Union of Students (NUS)</p> <p>s 47F(1) National Union of Students (NUS)</p> <p>s 47F(1) Australian Centre for Student Equity and Access</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accord Final Report</li> <li>• Post-Budget update on Accord reforms</li> <li>• Managed Growth Targets</li> <li>• Needs-based Funding</li> <li>• Government’s equity reform agenda</li> <li>• Higher education stewardship through an ATEC</li> <li>• Mission-based compacts and institutional accountability</li> <li>• Priorities for new approach to funding for disability</li> <li>• Key lessons from the Disability Support Program</li> <li>• Commonwealth Prac Payment</li> </ul>

No.	Meeting Dates	Location	Invitees	Agenda items for Discussion
<b>First Nations</b>				
1-4	20 MAY 2024 28 JUN 2024 24 JUL 2024 17 SEPT 2024	Virtual	<p>s 47F(1) National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Higher Education Consortium</p> <p>s 47F(1) National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Principals Association</p> <p>s 47F(1) Coalition of Peaks</p> <p>s 47F(1) National Union of Students</p> <p>s 47F(1) National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Corporation</p> <p>s 47F(1) National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Corporation (supporting s 47F(1) )</p> <p>s 47F(1) First Peoples Disability Network</p> <p>s 47F(1) First Peoples Disability Network</p> <p>s 47F(1) Western Sydney University</p> <p>s 47F(1) University of New South Wales</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Post-Budget update on Accord reforms</li> <li>• Managed Growth Targets</li> <li>• Needs-based Funding</li> <li>• Government’s equity reform agenda</li> <li>• Higher education stewardship through an ATEC</li> <li>• Mission-based compacts and institutional accountability</li> <li>• Commonwealth Prac Payment</li> </ul>
<b>Regional</b>				
1-4	20 MAY 2024 28 JUN 2024 24 JUL 2024 25 SEPT 2024	Virtual	<p>s 47F(1) Regional Universities Network</p> <p>s 47F(1) Southern Cross University</p> <p>s 47F(1) James Cook University</p> <p>s 47F(1) Charles Darwin University</p> <p>s 47F(1) University of Tasmania</p> <p>s 47F(1) Edith Cowan University</p> <p>s 47F(1) La Trobe University</p> <p>s 47F(1) Deakin University</p> <p>s 47F(1) Australian Government Department of Education</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Post-Budget update on Accord reforms</li> <li>• Managed Growth Targets</li> <li>• Needs-based Funding</li> <li>• Higher education stewardship through an ATEC</li> <li>• Mission-based compacts and institutional accountability</li> <li>• Commonwealth Prac Payment</li> </ul>



## Summary of Vice-Chancellor feedback on Higher Education Reforms

Between 30 July and 2 August 2024, representatives from the Department of Education held roundtables with Vice-Chancellors and senior leaders from all 38 public universities across Australia. The focus of the roundtables was to discuss a series of major reforms proposed to the higher education sector:

- Establishment of an Australian Tertiary Education Commission
- Introduction of a new Managed Growth Funding System and Needs-based Funding
- Draft International Education and Skills Strategic Framework

### Australian Tertiary Education Commission (ATEC)

There was strong agreement from stakeholders that the ATEC should be independent, both in how it operates and how it is perceived by the sector. There was also a shared view that the continued autonomy of universities in a system stewardship environment was important.

Stakeholders sought clarity on ATEC's relationships and reporting lines with Ministers, the Department of Education, states and territories and other agencies, including the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA) and Jobs and Skills Australia (JSA). They also sought clarity on the functions and scope of the ATEC, including which functions would remain in the Department of Education and which would be new to the ATEC. Some stakeholders expressed concerns at the perceived broad scope for the ATEC.

Participants felt that ATEC should have an important role in supporting the longer-term stability of the sector. They acknowledged that trust and culture change from both ATEC and the sector is essential to achieving this stability and to deliver effective mission-based compacts.

Stakeholders agreed that ATEC Commissioners and staff will need deep understanding of, and experience in, the tertiary education sector. Most stakeholders believed people should not be excluded from Commissioner roles if they have held recent leadership positions in the tertiary sector. Some participants suggested that the number and diversity of ATEC Commissioners should be increased from the number outlined in the consultation paper.

Stakeholders shared concerns that the ATEC is being asked to do too much too soon and advocated for a slower or more staged approach to reform. All stakeholders agreed that success of the ATEC is dependent on adequate funding, resources and capability.

### Managed Growth Funding and Needs-based Funding

Stakeholders advised that projecting student load is challenging and could lead to issues such as under-enrolment under a hard cap managed growth system. Stakeholders noted the complexity in implementing the managed growth system, particularly managed demand-driven equity. They sought clarity on the practical operation of proposed geographical catchments, including how they would be determined, the role of student choice, and how catchments would operate with online students. Stakeholders also advised that the managed demand-driven system should not impose barriers to access for underrepresented students, as this could lead to those students not engaging or participating in higher education.



Stakeholders emphasised the critical importance of aspiration-building and outreach to drive demand for places, and how to prepare potential students for university.

Stakeholders believed that Government should focus on the outcomes universities deliver for equity students rather than on compliance and data reporting. Stakeholders were of the strong view that Needs-based Funding (NBF) should be based on head count and not on equivalent full-time student load (EFTSL), as outlined in the consultation paper. Stakeholders also raised the issue of quality data for equity cohorts, including the challenges arising from self-identification.

### **Draft International Education and Skills Strategic Framework**

There was a strong desire among stakeholders for the Government to provide immediate certainty on the Framework and individual university international student profiles, and to be transparent with how profiles will be determined. Stakeholders raised concerns with potential financial and staffing impacts of the proposed changes and with current visa fees, processing speeds and refusal rates.

Stakeholders discussed differences between universities, students and housing markets, research priorities, and discussed the opportunity to leverage a variety of different models to address requirements for student accommodation.

Stakeholders raised the challenges of timing of the proposed changes and called out potential tensions between the policy goals of diversification and integrity. Stakeholders brought views on how critical skills needs might be met in a higher education context.

### **Other Issues**

Stakeholders highlighted that while the reforms have a solid basis, their scale and timing could present a significant challenge for implementation, with many advocating for a more staged approach to delivery of reforms. They also raised the importance of addressing both the Job-ready Graduates Scheme and funding for research.

Stakeholders welcomed the roadshows and the opportunity to discuss the reforms in greater detail. They expressed a desire to continue the conversations on the reforms, and to work closely with the Department of Education on their finalisation and implementation.

### Further detail on Post-Budget Implementation Discussion Papers

Total number of organisations that submitted feedback: 88

Organisations that submitted feedback by stakeholder group	
Category*	Number
University	35
Higher Education Peak Body	14
Professional Association	5
Advocacy and Charity	5
Business / Industry Peak Body	4
Disability	4
Individual(s)	4
Regional (including Study Hubs)	4
State / Territory Government Department	3
Other Federal Government Department	2
Unions	2
Student / Student Group	1
TAFE Queensland	1
Other	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>88</b>

**\*Note:** The numbers calculated for each category are approximate due to stakeholders belonging to multiple categories or ambiguous category membership.

Number of organisations that submitted feedback on each paper

Organisations that submitted feedback by Paper	
Post-Budget Implementation Paper	Number
Needs-based Funding	74
Australian Tertiary Education Commission	66
Managed Growth Funding System	65

**Issue:** Australian Tertiary Education Commission  
**PBS Pg No.** Page 14  
**Contact:** Ben Rimmer  
Ph: s 22  
Deputy Secretary

## Key Points

- The Government has committed to establishing the Australian Tertiary Education Commission (ATEC) by 1 July 2025 in an interim capacity.
- The Australian Universities Accord (Accord) Final Report recommended an ATEC be established to exercise long-term vision, undertake coordinated strategic planning and deliver on the reforms proposed through the Accord (refer [Attachment A](#)).
- The Department of Education is developing the design and implementation of the ATEC in consultation with stakeholders, including an Implementation Advisory Committee (IAC).
- The ATEC will act as a steward of Australia's tertiary education system, driving growth, equity and diversity in the higher education sector, and working towards harmonisation between vocational education and training (VET) and higher education.

## Consultation

- The IAC was established to provide expert advice on the implementation of the Government's response to the Australian Universities Accord (refer [SB24-000456](#)). The IAC is comprised of experts in tertiary education and public sector leadership.
- The department published an Implementation Consultation Paper on the ATEC in June 2024 (refer [Attachment B](#)), with feedback due by 26 July 2024.
  - The department received over 60 responses from stakeholders in response to the paper.
- Further consultation has included roadshows with Vice-Chancellors, university leadership, and sector peak bodies, along with other targeted engagement.
- Key themes identified through consultation included:
  - A better approach to the ATEC's leadership arrangements, with responsibilities outlined in legislation.
  - Independence (refer [Attachment C](#)).
  - Policy stability baked into system design, via long-term objectives and powers within government settings.

- A new and distinct culture with highly capable staff.
- Staged and sequenced build over the first 24 months.
- The department is considering this feedback in developing its proposal to Government for the ATEC.

## Attachments

Attachment A – Recommendation 30 from the Accord Final Report

Attachment B – ATEC Implementation Consultation Paper

Attachment C – The IAC’s markers of independence for the ATEC

<b>Date Last Cleared</b>	14 October 2024
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**Recommendation 30 from the Accord Final Report**

***Establish an Australian Tertiary Education Commission***

That to deliver on the National Tertiary Education Objective and establish a public sector steward for the tertiary education system, the Australian Government establish an Australian Tertiary Education Commission as a statutory, national body reporting to the Minister for Education and the Minister for Skills and Training.

- a) The Australian Tertiary Education Commission would:
  - i. convene ongoing collaborative engagement about the future of the tertiary education system
  - ii. foster a high quality and cohesive tertiary education system, that encourages diversity and student choice
  - iii. advise on meeting skills and equity targets
  - iv. ensure that regulatory burden is monitored and minimised in the sector
  - v. provide expert advice to the Government and tertiary education system.
- b) The Australian Tertiary Education Commission would have the following functions:
  - i. policy coordination and development for higher education and university research, and joint development of policy initiatives on tertiary education with the Skills and Workforce Ministerial Council
  - ii. system planning
  - iii. negotiating mission-based compacts for universities
  - iv. pricing authority for the higher education sector
  - v. funding allocation for the higher education sector
  - vi. facilitating wide engagement with the tertiary education system
  - vii. strengthening First Nations representation and self-determination
  - viii. advising the Minister on regulatory frameworks within the higher education sector
  - ix. overseeing and monitoring of the Australian Qualifications Framework
  - x. accountability, quality and performance
  - xi. improving data and metrics
- c) The majority of the Australian Tertiary Education Commission's functions will start in higher education with additional priorities aimed at achieving higher levels of tertiary education system alignment, focused on student pathways, credit recognition and the Australian Qualifications Framework. The Australian Government should also negotiate with states and territories to

- expand the Australian Tertiary Education Commission's role to focus on the whole tertiary education system, with governance arrangements reflecting the ongoing role of all jurisdictions in its future, and with expansion to take effect in the context of the next National Skills Agreement
- d) The Australian Tertiary Education Commission should be reviewed every 5 years of operation
  - e) To ensure the Australian Tertiary Education Commission has a comprehensive view of the whole tertiary education system, the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA) and the Australian Research Council should form part of the Commission, as independent statutory bodies under its umbrella, with each Chair becoming a dedicated Commissioner and retaining their legislated roles
  - f) Governments should also consider the desirability and timing of bringing the Australian Skills Quality Authority into the Australian Tertiary Education Commission in order to reduce regulatory duplication
  - g) The Australian Tertiary Education Commission should be governed by a Board comprising the Chief Commissioner as Chair, 2 Deputy Commissioners, the TEQSA Chief Commissioner, the ARC Board Chair, a First Nations Commissioner, an Equity Commissioner and the Regional Education Commissioner. Most commissioners would be fractional or part-time. The day-to-day administration of the Australian Tertiary Education Commission would be handled by a full-time CEO
  - h) The Australian Tertiary Education Commission should seek the views of a wide range of stakeholders in the tertiary education system, through:
    - i. an ongoing Advisory Board, with representatives from tertiary education providers, all Australian governments, students, staff, employers (including business and industry representatives), unions, alumni and civil society organisations
    - ii. a First Nations Council
    - iii. a Learning and Teaching Council
    - iv. regular engagement with representatives from key stakeholders covering learning and teaching, research, equity, regional issues, and private tertiary education providers
  - i) Through the pricing authority function, the Australian Tertiary Education Commission should develop a deep understanding of the true costs of delivery of the range of activities across the tertiary education system, with a priority on pricing issues in higher education related to learning and teaching, additional support for under-represented students, regional delivery, and the full economic cost of research.



# Australian Tertiary Education Commission

## Implementation consultation paper

### A new approach to system stewardship

As part of the 2024-25 Budget the Government has committed to establish an Australian Tertiary Education Commission (ATEC) as a steward of the tertiary education system, with the detail of the proposal to be developed in consultation with the sector.

The Final Report of the Australian Universities Accord made the finding that Australia's tertiary education system lacks the coordinated, future-focused and evidence-based decision-making capacity necessary for Australia's future success. It recommended the Australian Government establish an Australian Tertiary Education Commission (Recommendation 30) to take a new leadership and stewardship role.<sup>1</sup>

This paper outlines a proposal for the ATEC for further consideration via consultation, to inform the Government's final decisions on design and implementation of the ATEC.

The Accord Final Report found that the absence of a sector steward has, over time, created a system characterised by:

- persistent under-representation of some student cohorts and failure to meet equity targets
- lack of deep thinking and clarity of direction for the sector to be agile to future needs
- fragmented changes to policy and funding, driven by immediate priorities rather than long-term strategy
- inadequate coordination and planning of effort and resources for growth areas, for example the outer metropolitan areas of major cities.

The ATEC will bring direction, cohesion and stability to policy making and it will have the capacity to drive reforms over the long term.

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<sup>1</sup> [Australian Universities Accord Final Report Document - Department of Education, Australian Government](#) p32-33.

## A statutory office with collaborative leadership

The ATEC is proposed to be established as a new statutory office, established in legislation. An Act of Parliament is a formal and enduring way to embed the ATEC's role in the tertiary education system, formally establish its powers and functions, and set out practical details such as composition, reporting, and administration. The ATEC's enabling legislation would sit alongside the act that describes a new managed funding system. Legislation ensures that the ATEC is established with parliamentary scrutiny and oversight and cannot be dissolved without it.

The ATEC's enabling legislation would adopt a legislated objective that draws from the proposed National Tertiary Education Objective. This objective was recommended by the Australian Universities Accord Panel and it is proposed it will replace the current objectives in the *Higher Education Support Act*, as part of a new *Higher Education Funding Act*. It is proposed the ATEC's purpose be articulated in legislation:

The objective of the ATEC is to underpin and drive:

- (a) equitable opportunity through supporting all Australians to access and participate in high-quality, engaging and transformative tertiary education programs
- (b) a productive economy and society through the delivery of highly skilled and educated graduates, and through facilitating the production and application of new knowledge
- (c) a strong civic democracy through institutions that foster robust debate and critical inquiry and contribute to Australia's cultural and intellectual life.

The ATEC will achieve this purpose through:

- (a) facilitating a strong, dynamic and efficient tertiary education system that has the capacity and capability it needs
- (b) fostering collaborative and purposeful work between all governments, tertiary education providers, industry, employers, communities and unions
- (c) working with other relevant agencies, including Jobs and Skills Australia on the identification of skills needs and the Australian Research Council on research funding
- (d) enhancing collaboration between Commonwealth and States and Territories on tertiary related matters.

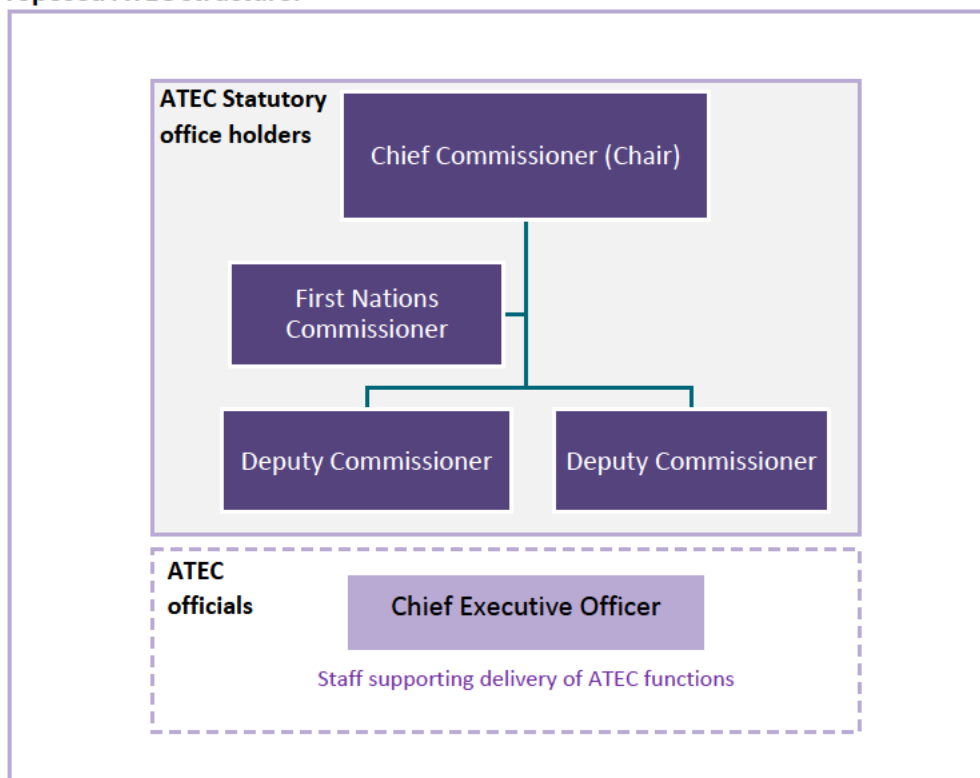
It is intended the ATEC be established in an interim capacity from 1 July 2025, and formally established from 1 January 2026, subject to the passage of legislation. To ensure the ATEC is meeting its objectives, it is proposed it be subject to an external review after several years of operation.

## Commissioners with skills and experience to steward the sector

The ATEC will need strong and independent leadership, supported by skilled and capable staff. As illustrated in **Figure 1** on the following page, it is proposed the ATEC would be led by a full-time Chief Commissioner, assisted by two part-time Deputy Commissioners, and a part time First Nations Commissioner. This position must be occupied by a First Nations representative (this does not preclude a First Nations person occupying any of the other Commissioner positions).



**Figure 1: Proposed ATEC structure.**



**Consulted officials<sup>2</sup>:**

- ARC Board Chair
- TEQSA Chief Commissioner
- JSA Commissioner
- Regional Education Commissioner
- Department of Education Secretary
- ASQA CEO
- Department of Employment and Workplace Relations (DEWR) Secretary

Appointment criteria will stipulate that Commissioners will need to be recognised leaders. Collectively the Commissioners will bring expertise and understanding of policy, regulatory, funding, equity and governance arrangements in the tertiary, industry or government sectors, a history of delivering public administration outcomes, as well as a strong commitment to consultation and engagement.

To ensure Commissioners are able to make decisions and provide advice in the national interest, legislation will establish criteria for their appointment, including requirements that:

- the Commissioner positions must be held by people that can demonstrate their independence from the tertiary sector, for example by not having worked in a leadership position in the tertiary sector within a set number of years
- the First Nations Commissioner position must be held by a First Nations Australian

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<sup>2</sup> This list is not exhaustive

- appointees will need to demonstrate an ability to work in the national interest and retain sufficient distance from narrow, sectoral views.

To provide advice to Government on behalf of the ATEC, the four Commissioners would operate collectively as the Commission.

To assist the Commission make decisions, ATEC Commissioners will be able to consult with and draw on the expertise of other officials, including but not limited to the Regional Education Commissioner, the Australian Research Council (ARC) board chair, the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA) Chief Commissioner, the Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA) CEO and the Jobs and Skills Australia (JSA) Commissioner on matters the ATEC Commissioners determine to be related, such as regional, rural and remote education, research policy, regulatory settings and national skills needs and shortages.

In addition, the Universities Accord Panel recommended that the ATEC should seek the views of a wide range of stakeholders in the tertiary education system, including through establishment of a First Nations Council.

The ATEC would have a full-time Chief Executive Officer, who would undertake the day-to-day management of the ATEC.

For the purposes of the finance law and to utilise organisational efficiencies, the ATEC would be housed within the Department of Education, enabling it to leverage the physical, digital, and corporate footprint of the Department and minimise establishment and operating costs. The Secretary of the Department of Education would be the accountable authority for the purposes of the finance law, including annual and financial reporting.<sup>3</sup> Formal outcome and financial reporting to Parliament will form part of the Department's Annual Report.

The Commission will be required to take part in Parliamentary processes such as inquiries or Senate estimates. To strengthen accountability for funding arrangements and delineate the ATEC's role and resourcing from that of the Department, establishing a new outcome in the Portfolio Budget Statements (PBS) will be considered.<sup>4</sup> This will provide transparency through the PBS for the funding appropriated to support ATEC activities. The Commission would – through staff of the Department working on ATEC functions – be able to commission additional advice or expertise as required to carry out functions and responsibilities.

The ATEC will be publicly accountable for delivering higher education and specified tertiary education outcomes, including delivering on Government objectives. The Minister could have statutory powers to direct the ATEC on particular matters and would determine an annual statement of expectations. The ATEC would report on higher education outcomes through an annual *State of the Sector* report.

## The ATEC will engage across Government

In pursuit of a new national tertiary education objective, the ATEC will be empowered to engage broadly with different portfolios as required and levels of government. Initially, the ATEC will focus

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<sup>3</sup> To fulfil requirements of the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013*.

<sup>4</sup> Portfolio Budget Statements set out agency outcomes and programs together with agency resourcing. The ATEC would become a unique program area within the Department of Education.

on delivering key reforms to the higher education system and early work on tertiary harmonisation. It is proposed that ATEC's higher education role would include potential roles in implementing Managed Growth funding for universities, implementing needs-based funding for underrepresented cohorts, and preparing the higher education sector for improved tertiary harmonisation. In addition, targeted work on specific tertiary harmonisation projects would involve the Vocational Education and Training (VET) sector.

Over time, it is proposed the ATEC's initial, more moderate tertiary focus would extend to achieving broader reforms in the tertiary realm, bringing greater involvement from the VET sector, VET providers, relevant agencies, and state and territory governments.

While higher education is primarily the policy and funding responsibility of the Commonwealth, VET is a shared responsibility with Federal, state and territory governments, under a National Skills Agreement. The ATEC will foster connections and alignment between the two sectors and will work with all levels of Government. It is proposed the ATEC would report to the Minister for Education and, on skills related matters, to the Minister for Skills and Training, with the reporting structure to be described in legislation. In particular:

- advice on **tertiary education** matters shall be provided to the Minister for Education, Minister for Skills and Training, and, where relevant, all state and territory education and skills ministers. Examples could include matters such as meeting tertiary attainment targets or the Australian Qualifications Framework
- decisions relating solely to the **higher education sector** will be accountable to the Minister for Education. Examples could include higher education provider compacts
- decisions relating to the **tertiary system in a single jurisdiction** will be accountable to and must be made with agreement from the Minister for Education, Minister for Skills and Training, and that jurisdiction's education and skills ministers. Examples could include a new dual sector provider to be established in a particular state or territory.

## The ATEC will lead and drive reform

It is proposed the ATEC will lead and manage Australia's higher education system, including promoting a more harmonised tertiary education system by breaking down barriers between the higher education and VET sectors. It will be responsible for providing stronger governance, rigour and oversight of public funding for higher education in Australia.

The ATEC will undertake coordinated strategic planning to deliver on the measures announced in the 2024-25 Budget, including driving growth through equity, making sure Australia's national higher education targets are met, and improving tertiary alignment.

### Functions and ways of working

The ATEC will achieve this role through delivering stewardship, policy and performance functions, which will be informed by regular communication and engagement with the sector as detailed in **Figure 2** below. The ATEC will work with relevant entities to deliver its functions, for example, with

JSA, DEWR and relevant regulators on tertiary matters. It is proposed the ATEC will influence and inform:

- government policy
- national skills planning in the higher education sector informed by JSA analysis
- tertiary education settings, including the monitoring of higher education targets and their attainment
- student choice
- provider performance and quality.

The ATEC will also:

- manage international student profiles for public universities
- play a role advising on and monitoring overall tertiary education targets.

## Proposed ATEC functions<sup>5</sup>

### Stewardship

- Monitors tertiary targets.
- Implements and negotiates enforceable mission-based compacts with higher education providers.
- Engages and communicates with the sector.
- Delivers on Government objectives.

### Funding and pricing

- Administers funding for higher education teaching and research programs.<sup>6</sup>
- Delivers enhanced compliance for higher education funding conditions.
- Supports the implementation of higher education Managed Growth and needs-based funding.
- Decides institutions' Managed Growth Targets.
- Manages higher education and research programs.
- Provides higher education pricing advice to Government.

### Policy

- Advises on and implements higher education, research and tertiary policy.
- Drives tertiary harmonisation efforts.
- Undertakes research and analysis of emerging and entrenched issues.
- Advises on policy settings for higher education Managed Growth and needs-based funding.
- Drives improvements in regulatory systems.

### Performance

- Monitors and analyses higher education provider and sector performance.
- Delivers new higher education quality metrics.
- Delivers enhanced higher education data functionality and analytics.

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<sup>5</sup> Items listed are not exhaustive

<sup>6</sup> This does not include research grants administered by the research councils

## The ATEC will drive system improvements

The ATEC will provide advice to Government and make decisions to drive system improvements. The ATEC's functions will enable it to effectively govern the higher education sector and deliver policy settings for better alignment between the higher education and VET sectors. The ATEC will use its advisory or decision-making powers to deliver on the following outcomes:

- **Provide for a diverse sector that better meets student demand** through allocating Managed Growth Targets for places to individual institutions, within the system-wide pool of Commonwealth supported places (CSPs) determined by Government.<sup>7</sup>
- **Deliver growth through equity** through advising the Government as it considers higher education equity targets, monitoring sector progress toward achieving targets, working with individual providers to ensure any agreed targets are met and providing advice on and delivering needs-based funding.<sup>8</sup>
- **Foster greater tertiary alignment** between the higher education and VET systems through driving collaboration with tertiary stakeholders to develop solutions to structural problems, such as credit recognition.
- **Establish a pricing framework** for estimating the cost of delivering higher education and advising Government on the efficient prices paid for course-based and needs-based components. The Government will remain the final decision maker on pricing.
- **Ensure the sector is delivering positive outcomes** by meeting national objectives set by Government, developing enforceable mission-based compacts with links to funding and performance outcomes that take account of institutional and community priorities, and collaborating with the sector through extensive engagement.
- **Steward the sector through disruptions or crises** through providing policy advice to Government and the sector and supporting any changes in policy settings in response to emerging and entrenched issues, such as the COVID-19 pandemic or the emergence of generative artificial intelligence.
- **Improve the quality and reputation of Australian higher education** through developing and delivering new quality metrics for teaching, learning and research excellence.
- **Drive a high-performing sector** through robust analysis of sector performance, supported by improving the quality and currency of data across the sector, including filling critical data gaps.
- **Promote transparency and accountability of public funding** provided to universities through more robust assurance and compliance functions, with powers to manage non-compliance.

## The ATEC's operating model will be outcomes focused

The ATEC's operating model will require it to work closely with the sector and seek regular information and advice from the sector, stakeholders and other Government agencies, including:

- universities' strategic goals and missions, such as their teaching and research goals, growth and expansion plans

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<sup>7</sup> Pending finalising the detail of implementation through separate consultation processes on managed growth and needs-based funding.

<sup>8</sup> Pending finalising the detail of implementation through separate consultation processes on managed growth and needs-based funding.

- the needs and aspirations of First Nations staff and students to ensure their needs are at the heart of the higher education system
- student perspectives and preferences, including for specific courses or institutions
- student data and success markers, including completion and attrition rates from institutions
- estimates of student load across funding clusters for both domestic and international students
- institutions' demand and equity forecasts
- data and projections about changing demographic and population patterns
- skills and demand forecasts including occupations that are in shortage and future demand for occupations in Australia.

This will enable the ATEC to make good decisions, provide advice to Government, and deliver better outcomes for the sector, students and the wider community.

### **Implementation issues for consideration**

- How can the ATEC be set up so that it has sufficient expertise in the higher education sector while maintaining its focus on decision making that is in the national interest, rather than sectoral interest?
- Is the ATEC's proposed legislated objective (page 2) comprehensive?
- Does the proposed structure of the Commission, including consultation with other relevant stakeholders (pages 3-4), allow for an effective decision-making process?
- What does effective stewardship look like for the ATEC? What levers should the ATEC have to steward the sector?
- How can the ATEC seek the regular information and advice it needs to operate, while ensuring minimal additional regulatory burden on the sector?
- What does a successful tertiary future state look like and how can the governance of the ATEC help to achieve this?
- How can the ATEC be designed to maximise harmonisation between the two tertiary education systems?
  - What are the steps needed for harmonisation and how should they be timed/staged?
  - How should States and Territories be engaged in this process?

## Attachment C

### The IAC's markers of independence for the ATEC.

The IAC advised that the ATEC legislation should be drafted in such a way as to capture the following:

1. its objectives, functions and reporting arrangements, and its role in supporting the delivery of a high growth, high equity tertiary system of the future
2. report directly to Minister/s, including the Minister for Education and the Minister for Skills and Training (the Office of Parliamentary Counsel to draft in a way that limits the need for amendments upon changes to ministerial titles).
3. produce its own annual report
4. be guided by a regular published Ministerial Statement of Expectations, and a regular published Statement of Intent from the Commission in response
5. establish its own key performance indicators in consultation with the Minister, including how to measure the effectiveness of its agreed activities
6. publish its work plan
7. have a transparent appointment process for Commissioners
8. provide transparent, public advice
9. have an explicit allocation of funding in the annual Federal Government Budget for the running of the Commission and funding for the sector
10. have the ability, and a budget, to commission its own research
11. have dedicated media arrangements
12. have dedicated ATEC staff, who are selected and directed by ATEC and whose performance arrangements are undertaken by the ATEC
13. have a Service Level Agreement for services such as HR and IT that are provided through the Department of Education
14. the principles for the establishment and operations of the Commission should be transparency, wide consultation, dialogue, and the work undertaken without conflicts of interest.

**Issue:** Commonwealth Practicum Placements  
**PBS Pg No.** 55  
**Contact:** Ben Rimmer  
 Ph: s 22  
 Deputy Secretary

### Budget – Commonwealth Prac Payment

Financial year	2024–25	2025–26	2026–27	2027–28	Total
Budget Allocation	\$3.63	\$104.12	\$121.34	\$140.11	\$369.19
Committed					
Uncommitted	\$3.63	\$104.12	\$121.34	\$140.11	\$369.19

### Key Points

- The Government is introducing an ongoing Commonwealth Prac Payment (CPP) which will be available from 1 July 2025 for teaching, nursing and midwifery, and social work students to address placement poverty.
- A payment equivalent to \$319.50 per week (benchmarked to Austudy) will be available for eligible students during their practicum.
- This is the first time the Australian Government has provided financial support to students undertaking mandatory placements.
- \$427.4 million is being invested to support around 68,000 domestic higher education students (and 5,000 VET students) each year.
- This funding will support students to complete their study by addressing placement poverty and encourage new students to pursue careers in priority sectors.
- This measure responds to Recommendation 14 of the Australian Universities Accord Final Report, and Policy Area 3 - Planning for our Future Workforce from the 2023 Employment White Paper, which highlighted the financial impact unpaid practicums have on students and called for government funding to support care and teaching students.
- Both the Accord and the Employment White Paper indicated that nursing, care and teaching professions should be targeted — with ‘care’ understood by both to include social work — as these professions are critical enablers for the broader economy.



- CPP delivery is being developed in consultation with stakeholders, through an Operational Working Group, so it is administered as simply as possible while remaining targeted to those students most in need.
- Legislation to support implementation of the CPP was introduced into the Parliament on 15 August 2024. The Senate's Education and Employment Legislation Committee reported on 3 October 2024 and recommended the Bill be passed. The Bill passed in the House of Representatives on 10 October 2024.

### ***How will CPP be delivered?***

- For higher education students the CPP will be delivered through higher education providers.
- For the smaller cohort of VET students, the Government will administer the payment through the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations.

### ***Delivering CPP through higher education providers.***

- CPP is not an income support payment and nor is it a wage so it is not practical or desirable to be delivered through Services Australia or employers hosting the practicums.
- Delivery through higher education providers is the simplest, most efficient way of delivering much needed support to higher education students during placement periods.
- Higher education providers are best placed to deliver the payments given the existing teaching and learning relationship with students and the organisation hosting the practicum.
- Student feedback has indicated strong support for the delivery of the program through higher education providers.
- Many students also don't have an existing relationship with Services Australia, which would significantly increase the amount of administration for students.
- Providers will receive demand-driven grants each year to enable CPP payments to eligible students and will receive an ongoing additional 5 per cent loading to support delivery of the payments.
- The CPP was considered by a range of stakeholders including the Australian Universities Accord Implementation Advisory Committee (IAC).
- The department will continue to engage with students and the sector more broadly on the impact of the payment. As this is the first time

that government has supported students in this way, there are expected to be learnings as the program rolls-out.

***CPP payments are targeted to those who require support.***

- Commonwealth supported students undertaking Bachelor or Masters qualifications in teaching, nursing, midwifery, and social work.
- Students receiving Commonwealth income support (e.g. Youth Allowance, Austudy, ABSTUDY), or students who would otherwise support themselves with significant work during their normal studies (i.e. >15 hours per week).
- Students earning over \$1,500 per week (\$78,000 per year) will not be eligible for CPP.

***Will the payment be enough to support students and prevent placement poverty?***

- CPP is not expected to cover all living costs and is not a wage nor income support.
- The payments are intended to support learning outcomes and the rate of CPP will provide a level of support that will allow students to complete their studies, where the financial impacts of placement may otherwise have influenced them to defer or withdraw.

***Will CPP payments be taxable and why won't these be exempt?***

- CPP payments will be treated as ordinary income for tax purposes.
- This decision was a matter for Government and reflects the nature of the payment.

***Does this measure overlap with existing state and territory initiatives?***

- The CPP offers a consistent, national approach to supporting students in critical teaching, nursing and social work workforces.
- It will operate alongside any support the states and territories provide to students undertaking these courses in different ways according to the nature of the support.
- There are around 30-odd initiatives the department is aware of being offered by the states and territories to support these professions.
- The CPP is not a replacement for these initiatives.
- Further guidance regarding eligibility will be published in due course, as part of preparations for the 1 July 2025 commencement of payments.

## **What consultation did the Government undertake to develop the measure?**

- Placement poverty was a key issue raised through consultations undertaken as part of the Employment White Paper and the Australian Universities Accord. The Accord alone held 3 public consultation rounds and received over 820 submissions, and held hundreds of meetings, forums and roundtables.
- As part of its scoping work on CPP, the Government consulted with students, unions, education providers, peak bodies, regulatory and accreditation bodies, and state and territory governments.
- Consultations are ongoing to support implementation of the CPP, including through an Operational Working Group which includes representatives from the sector such as from Universities Australia, peak bodies and student organisations.

### **Media**

- ***Student placement payments won't burden universities, AAP, 24 September 2024***  
Article covers evidence given by Department of Education officials to the Senate Inquiry.
- ***Placement Poverty Wipes Student's Savings, Australian Journal of Pharmacy, 24 September 2024.***  
Article covers evidence given by the Health Services Union to the Senate Inquiry.
- ***Placement payments an 'administrative nightmare' for universities, Times Higher Education, 24 September 2024***  
Article covers evidence given by the HE sector to the Senate Inquiry.
- ***Access to Commonwealth Prac Payments a necessity: NAPSA, Australian Journal of Pharmacy, 13 September 2024.***  
Article covers the call by the National Australian Pharmacy Students' Association for pharmacy students be eligible for the CPP.
- ***All health students should have paid prac, sector says, Aged Care Insite, 5 September 2024***  
Article covers the call by the clinical allied health sciences students to be eligible for the CPP.
- ***The underexplained and insecure Commonwealth Prac Payment, Andrew Norton, 21 August 2024***  
Article argues that eligibility settings for the CPP should be revised to make proving eligibility easier for students.

Date Last Cleared

22 October 2024

**Issue:** Disability Support in Higher Education  
**PBS:** Page 55  
**Contact:** Ben Rimmer  
Ph: s 22  
Deputy Secretary

## Key Points

- The Australian Government is committed to supporting people with disability to participate and succeed in higher education.
- The Australian Universities Accord (Accord) Panel was clear that many more Australians need tertiary qualifications to meet the nation's future skills and employment needs. The Government has set an ambitious 2050 tertiary education attainment target of 80% of the working age population.
- Meeting this target requires greater participation among groups historically under-represented in higher education, including people with disability, who need support to participate and succeed.
- On 21 May 2024, the Minister for Education noted that he has heard concerns from disability advocates that the Accord didn't get everything right on disability and is committed to working with them to ensure implementation is meeting disability community needs.

### ***Department consultation to improve disability outcomes***

- The department is undertaking targeted consultation with higher education and disability stakeholders to ensure the design and implementation of reforms announced in the 2024–25 Budget is right.
- Since May 2024, the department has convened 7 monthly roundtables with higher education disability stakeholders to discuss implementation of the reforms, including targets, Needs-based Funding, current Commonwealth funding for students with disability in higher education, and the new Commonwealth Prac Payment measure ([Attachment A](#)).
- The department will continue to consult on Needs-based Funding with the higher education sector and disability advocates to determine appropriate eligibility settings and program design for students with disability.
- The department regularly meets with other disability advocates to seek views on current work and emerging opportunities.
- The department will also consult the Equity in Higher Education Panel (EHEP), an independent advisory panel consisting of senior higher education leaders and equity experts, on support for people with disability ([Attachment B](#)).

### ***Issues raised by disability stakeholders through departmental consultations***

- Key concerns raised by roundtable participants (Attachment A) and others include the need for:
  - A strategic national approach to higher education disability support
  - Continued genuine consultation and opportunities for collaboration in policy design for people with disability
  - Adequate funding directed to disability support
  - More and better data and targeted reporting on disability and disability funding
  - Ensuring providers meet their obligations under the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* (DDA), the *Disability Standards for Education 2005* (DSE) and the *Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021*
  - A national Disability Inclusion Action Plan, to be co-designed with Government and the disability support sector.

### ***Government investment in higher education disability support***

- As part of the 2023–24 Budget, the Government invested an additional \$17.7 million in the Higher Education Disability Support Program (DSP) over 2023–24 to 2026–27 (Attachment C).
- Provided by calendar year, the DSP has increased from \$8.0 million in 2022 to \$10.2 million in 2023 and **\$13.4 million in 2024**.
- The DSP is currently delivered across two specified programs: the **Disability Support Fund (DSF)** and the **Australian Disability Clearinghouse on Education and Training (ADCET)**.
  - The **DSF provides supplementary funding to universities** to support domestic students with disability to participate in higher education. Funding for the 2024 calendar year is **\$12.7 million**.
  - **ADCET is an online clearinghouse, hosted by the University of Tasmania, that promotes inclusive teaching and learning practices for students with disability**. Total ADCET funding for the 2024 calendar year is **\$175,224**.

## **Current and upcoming reviews — issues and sensitivities**

- The Government’s response to the final report of the Disability Royal Commission (DRC) was released on 30 July 2024.
- While some commentators have perceived a lack of ambition in the overall response, stakeholders have responded well to the upcoming review and modernisation of the *Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 1992*, to be conducted by the Attorney General’s Department.
  - While no recommendations directly address the higher education sector, universities will be affected as organisations that employ and teach people with disability.
- Disability advocates have identified compliance with the Disability Standards for Education (DSE), made under the DDA, as an area in which universities could improve their support for students, and have called for a review of compliance across the sector.
  - The DSE are reviewed every 5 years. The next review will be in 2025. The department will consult with higher education and disability stakeholders as part of the review.
- The consultations will provide an opportunity to address stakeholder aspirations for and concerns about these reviews, test how higher education providers comply with their obligations under the DSE and DDA, and whether actions can be taken using these levers to improve outcomes for people with disability in higher education.

## **Attachments**

Attachment A – Disability support roundtable meetings

Attachment B – EHEP Membership

Attachment C – Higher Education Disability Support Program

<b>Date Last Cleared</b>	3 October 2024
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**Disability support roundtable meetings****Meeting topics and dates**

<b>Topic</b>	<b>Meeting Dates</b>
Discussion of concerns with Accord Final Report	8 April
Post Budget information session	20 May
Managed Growth Targets	28 June
Needs-based Funding and Australian Tertiary Education Commission	25 July
Priorities for new approach to funding for disability	5 August
Higher-Education Disability Support Program	29 August
Commonwealth Prac Payment	17 September
Improving higher education governance through a sector-wide approach to Disability Action Plans	24 October

**Issues raised at meetings by attendees**

- A national strategic approach
  - Stakeholders have indicated the desire for Government to drive a joined-up, strategic national approach to disability support in the higher education sector.
- Data and reporting
  - Stakeholders suggest more and better data is needed to support implementation of the Government's reform agenda and support students with disability in higher education.
  - They have called for improved and better targeted reporting on disability and disability funding to drive greater accountability and transparency.
- Consultations
  - Stakeholders have reinforced the need for genuine consultation and opportunities for collaboration in policy design for people with disability
  - This includes on issues such as Needs-based Funding where stakeholders want to work with Government to get implementation right.
- Funding
  - Adequate funding to be directed to disability support – current levels are seen as insufficient to support need, which is anticipated to increase.
  - Stakeholders have called for transitional arrangements that increase current Commonwealth funding for disability up to four times, while settings for Needs-based Funding are determined.
- Provider obligations
  - Stakeholders want to ensure providers meet their obligations under the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* (DDA), the *Disability Standards for Education 2005* (DSE) and the *Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021*.

- Strong support for:
  - Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA) reviewing sector performance against these regulations, as stakeholders report systemic failure of providers to comply.
  - Mandatory training to ensure all higher education staff understand their regulatory obligations to people with disability.
- National Disability Inclusion Action Plan
  - Stakeholders have called for a national Disability Inclusion Action Plan to be co-designed with Government and the disability support sector, potentially to inform implementation of Needs-based Funding.

## **Invitees**

Note – not all invitees have attended all or any meetings. This list does not include attendees who may have attended meetings as representatives of other invitees.

<b>Name</b>	<b>Position / Organization</b>
s 47F(1)	s 47F(1) CQ University
s 47F(1)	s 47F(1) Griffith University
s 47F(1)	s 47F(1) Australian Tertiary Education Network on Disability (ATEND)
s 47F(1)	s 47F(1) Australian Human Rights Commission (AHRC)
s 47F(1)	s 47F(1) University of Tasmania
s 47F(1)	s 47F(1) University of Queensland
s 47F(1)	s 47F(1) National Union of Students - NUS
s 47F(1)	s 47F(1) University of New England
s 47F(1)	s 47F(1) Universities Australia
s 47F(1)	s 47F(1) Deakin University
s 47F(1)	s 47F(1) Children and Young People with Disability Australia (CYDA)
s 47F(1)	s 47F(1) Autistic Self Advocacy Network
s 47F(1)	s 47F(1) ASAN
s 47F(1)	s 47F(1) Children and Young People with Disability Australia (CYDA)
s 47F(1)	s 47F(1) Australian Human Rights Commission (AHRC)
s 47F(1)	s 47F(1) Australian Autism Alliance
s 47F(1)	s 47F(1) National Union of Students - NUS
s 47F(1)	s 47F(1) National Union of Students - NUS
s 47F(1)	s 47F(1) Australian Centre for Student Equity and Access



## EHEP Membership

- **Mr Ben Rimmer**, Chair (ex officio), Deputy Secretary, Higher Education, Research and International Group, Department of Education
- **Professor Leanne Holt**, Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Indigenous), University of New South Wales
- **Professor Denise Kirkpatrick**, President, Nan Tien Institute
- **Professor Nick Klomp**, Vice-Chancellor and President, Central Queensland University
- **Professor Adam Shoemaker**, Vice-Chancellor and President, Victoria University
- **Dr Guinever Threlkeld**, Director, TAFE Partnerships and Head of Campus, Albury Wodonga, La Trobe University
- **Professor Denise Wood AM**, Pro Vice-Chancellor (Learning and Teaching Futures), University of the Sunshine Coast
- **Professor Alex Zelinsky AO**, Vice-Chancellor and President, University of Newcastle
- **Professor Harlene Hayne CNZM**, Vice-Chancellor, Curtin University
- **Professor Attila Brungs**, Vice-Chancellor and President, University of New South Wales
- **Professor Shamit Saggat CBE FAcSS (ex officio)**, Executive Director, Australian Centre for Student Equity and Success, Curtin University
- **Dr Andy Johnston (ex officio)**, Branch Manager, Education and Youth Policy Branch, National Indigenous Australians Agency

## Higher Education Disability Support Program (DSP)

### Budget Measure Outcomes (2024-2025)

Financial year	2023–24 \$000's	2024–25 \$000's	2025–26 \$000's	2026–27 \$000's	2027–28 \$000's	Total
Higher Education Disability Support Program (DSP) (Administered)	10,616	15,855	13,888	14,322	14,669	69,350

Source: 2024-25 Education PBS, p.55 (Budget). Funding is provided to universities by calendar year. Calendar year funding will differ to financial years.

### Key Points

- Total DSP funding for the 2024 calendar year is **\$13,343,418.00**.
  - Funding for eligible universities to support students with disability has increased by over 50 per cent.
  - The DSP has increased from \$8.0 million in 2022 to \$10.2 million in 2023 and \$13.4 million in 2024.
- The DSP is currently delivered across two specified programs: (1) the Disability Support Fund (DSF) and (2) the Australian Disability Clearinghouse on Education and Training (ADCET).
  - The DSF provides supplementary funding to universities to assist them to attract domestic students with disability to participate in higher education, and to assist universities deliver appropriate support.
    - The total DSF funding for the 2024 calendar is **\$12,752,594**.
  - ADCET is hosted by the University of Tasmania and is an online clearinghouse that promotes inclusive teaching and learning practices for students with disability.
    - 2024 DSP funding for ADCET is **\$175,224**. This funding is indexed and provided per calendar year.

### Allocation of DSF and funding formula

- The DSF provides supplementary funding (paid in arrears) to universities via 2 sub-components:
  - *Enrolments-based funding (55 per cent):*
    - Allocated based on the proportion of domestic students with disability (UG and PG) enrolled at a university compared to the total proportion of domestic students with disability enrolled at all universities.

- Funding supports a range of activities to support students including through investing in staff training, course modifications, equipment support.
- *Partial reimbursement for high-cost claims (45 per cent):*
  - Partial reimbursement of universities' costs for equipment and educational supports for students with high-cost needs.
  - Funding is allocated as a proportion of total funding claimed by a university compared to the total funding claimed by all universities.
  - In 2023, the threshold for reimbursement of claims for students with high-cost needs was \$10,651 and above.

### **Activities delivered by ACDET**

- ACDET is hosted by the University of Tasmania (UTAS) and maintains an online clearinghouse and provide information, advice, and online resources (including in a form able to be downloaded and used) through a website aimed at disability practitioners, teachers and students.

### **2023-24 Budget – increasing DSF and closure of the National Disability Coordination Officer (NDCO) Program**

- 2023–24 Budget Paper 2 refers to an additional \$17.7 million over 4 years and \$4.7 million per year (indexed and ongoing) for the DSP.
  - This is due to the closure of the NDCA program, which redirected funding to the DSP to support this increase.
  - NDCO ceased on 1 July 2023 and funding agreements with higher education providers finished on 31 October 2023.
- Multiple reviews of the NDCO Program since 2008 recommended structural changes to increase the level of impact on barriers for students with disability at the institution or sector level.
- The most recent review in 2021-22 found the NDCO Program's design had not kept pace with policy approaches which recognised the responsibility of education providers to ensure accessibility and support for students with disability.
- The \$4.7 million is an estimate of the additional annual funding from 2027–28 onwards (based on \$4.3 million indexed over the forwards).

- Increasing DSP funding provided stronger incentives for universities to support students with disability to meet their obligations under the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992*.
- The 2008 *Review of Australian Higher Education* (Bradley Review) recommended increasing the DSP to \$20 million per year [Rec 31].
  - Since 2008, the DSP had only increased by indexation, with \$8.0 million available in 2022.
  - In 2008, the DSP provided \$216 per student. This compares to \$76 per student in 2022.
  - This measure increases DSP funding per student to about \$121 per student by 2024.

**Issue:** ESOS Bill and Integrity changes  
**Contact:** Ben Rimmer  
Ph: s 22  
Deputy Secretary

## Key Points

- The rapid growth in international education since the end of the pandemic has given rise to quality and integrity issues which risk undermining the sector's reputation and social licence.
- Urgent integrity issues were brought to attention with the release of the:
  - Rapid Review into the Exploitation of Australia's Visa System (Nixon Review)
  - Review of the Migration System (Migration Review) and
  - Joint Standing Committee Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Interim Report on the international education sector.
- The Australian Government has responded:
  - legislative changes to the Education Services for Overseas Students Amendment (Quality and Integrity) Bill 2024 (ESOS Bill)
  - reform through the Migration Strategy
  - identifying and closing loopholes
  - reform and regulatory action in skills and training to drive quality and integrity.
- Sector consultations have reported strong and widespread support for increased integrity.
- The ESOS Bill enables the right settings to provide the highest quality experience for all students and maintain Australia's world-class reputation for delivering education.
  - Settings will strengthen the integrity of the sector and ensure it maintains its social licence.
- The ESOS Bill will support a managed international education system that is designed to grow sustainably over time underpinned by strong integrity.
  - And providing greater protections for international education providers and international students.
- The ESOS Bill complements quality and integrity reforms to Australia's migration system led by the Department of Home Affairs.

- The ESOS Bill will:
  - Strengthen the fit and proper provider requirements for education providers (Part 1).
  - Support transparency by increasing access for providers to education agent information (Parts 1 and 2).
  - Make it possible to pause the making or processing of registration applications for new international education providers and for new courses from existing providers for up to 12 months (Part 3).
  - Require new providers to demonstrate a track record of teaching domestic students for periods totalling at least 2 years before they are allowed to deliver to international students (Part 4).
  - Automatically cancel the registration of providers who have not delivered training to international students for a consecutive 12-month period (Part 5).
  - Prevent providers under serious regulatory investigation from recruiting new international students (Part 6).
  - Allow the Minister for Education to determine limits on enrolments at a provider level, including within specific courses or locations (Part 7).
  - Enable the automatic suspension and cancellation of courses identified by the Minister for Education as having persistent integrity and quality issues or having limited value to Australia's critical skills needs (Part 8).
- Subject to passage of the ESOS Bill, the National Code 2018 will be amended to prohibit the payment of agent commissions on onshore student transfers between providers, removing incentives for unscrupulous agents and providers to 'poach' students.
- Measures in Parts 3 and 5 of the ESOS Bill complement changes to NVETR Act that strengthen integrity in the VET sector.

### ***Status of the ESOS Bill***

- The ESOS Bill was introduced to Parliament on 16 May 2024.
- On 13 August 2024, the ESOS Bill passed the House of Representatives.
- On 16 May 2024, the ESOS Bill was referred to the Senate Standing Committee for Education and Employment Legislation (the Committee) for inquiry.
  - The Committee received 193 submissions and held 4 public hearings.

- The Department of Education made a submission and provided evidence at hearings on 26 August, 6 September and 2 October 2024.
- The Committee delivered its report on 9 October 2024 and recommended passage of the Bill.
- The Committee proposed 6 amendments to the Bill (Recommendations 2-7) that are being considered by Government.
- Details of sector consultation was provided to the Committee as a Question on Notice (IQ24-000033) and published on 1 October 2024.

### ***Stakeholder Consultation***

- The department established an Integrity Stakeholders Forum as one of the consultation mechanisms on the integrity measures.
- The department also undertook significant consultation discussions, including on integrity measures, as part of the draft International Education and Skills Strategic Framework consultation process.

### ***Related visa processing measures***

- Government has advised the following actions will be taken to align with the passage of the ESOS legislation:
  - Ministerial Direction 107 will be revoked or replaced, and
  - Updated country and education provider Evidence Levels will be implemented.
- Increased scrutiny of student visa applications will continue.

## **Media**

- ***Improving the sustainability of international education, Joint Media Release, 27 August 2024***

Minister Clare, Minister Burke and Minister Watt, joint media release, announcing a National Planning Level of 270,000 new international student commencements for calendar year 2025, subject to passage of legislation before Parliament.

- ***Next steps in ensuring the integrity and sustainability of the international education sector, Joint Media Release, 11 May 2024***

Minister Clare, Minister O'Connor and Minister O'Neil, joint media release, announcing that the Government will introduce legislation to support the integrity and sustainability of the international education sector and the release of the draft International Education and Skills Strategic Framework.

- ***Last call dodgy providers in international education,  
Minister O’Neil Media Release, 8 May 2024***

Minister O’Neil announces the issuing of warning letters to education providers for non-genuine or exploitative recruitment practices, along with an increase in the financial capacity requirement for student visa applications.

<b>Date Last Cleared</b>	15 October 2024
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**Issue:** FEE-FREE Uni Ready Courses (FFUR)  
**PBS Pg No.** Page 13  
**Contact:** Ben Rimmer  
 Ph: s 22  
 Deputy Secretary, HERI

## Budget – FEE-FREE Uni Ready Courses

Financial year	2023–24 (millions)	2024–25 (millions)	2025–26 (millions)	2026–27 (millions)	2027–28 (millions)	Total (millions)
Budget Allocation	0.00	42.2	90.6	103.6	113.9	<b>350.3</b>

## Key Points

- The Australian Government is providing \$350.3 million in additional Commonwealth Grant Scheme (CGS) funding over 4 years, commencing on 1 January 2025, to fully fund FEE-FREE Uni Ready (FFUR) courses.
- This **is more than double** what would be allocated through the Enabling Loading Program (ELP) over the same period and **increases overall funding provided for enabling CSPs by more than 50% in 2025**.
- This investment will:
  - properly fund each FFUR place at a rate that is more closely aligned to the cost of delivery – a flat fee of \$18,278 per place;
  - remove the risk that providers see in the current program of ‘over expending’ and incurring costs for unfunded enabling courses, which may act as a reason why some providers do not offer enabling places; and
  - encourage and incentivise providers to provide additional FFUR places by ensuring all universities have equity of access to deliver FFUR courses providing more opportunities for people from under-represented backgrounds to take up tertiary study.
- Students will not be required to pay any student contribution amounts.
  - Post amendment, Subsection 93-5 of the *Higher Education Support Act 2003* (HESA) will specify that ‘a person’s student contribution amount for a unit of study is nil if the person undertakes the unit as part of an \*FEE-FREE Uni Ready Course’.
- Recommendation 12 of the Australian Universities Accord Final Report provided that, to help more students who aspire to university to qualify for entry, the Government should significantly increase the

availability of fee-free places and meet the need for high quality preparatory courses.

- The FFUR measure will likely result in 30,000 students studying in FFUR courses each year by 2030, an increase of 40% in student numbers (based on 2022 actual delivery) and doubling the number of students by 2040.
- The proposed amendments to the HESA included in the Universities Accord (Student Support and Other Measures) Bill 2024 establish a new FFUR funding cluster with a Commonwealth contribution rate of \$18,278.
  - The new FFUR cluster rate replaces the existing flat payment received by providers under the ELP which would have been \$4,045 per place, at a total cost \$39.7 million, in 2025.
  - The new FFUR cluster rate will provide consistency in funding arrangements and bring funding closer to the cost of delivery.
- The increased funding per place will act as an incentive for more universities to offer FFUR courses. Maximum funding per enabling place within funding cluster 1, which comprised 49% of enabling course EFTSL in 2022, will increase by \$12,947 per place compared to the ELP in 2025.
- In 2025, 8,665 places will be funded at a cost of \$158.4 million.
  - The department has allocated 8,176 FFUR places for 2025 to 29 Table A universities based on 2022 CSP enabling course delivery. This is a change to the previous Enabling Loading Program where funding was based on historical allocations.
  - Table A universities who are not under-enrolled against their Maximum Basic Grant Amount and have demonstrated their capacity to increase FFUR enrolments will be offered a share of 489 additional FFUR places for 2025 via a competitive allocation process.
  - In addition, under-enrolled providers can provide uncapped FFUR places up to the level of their MBGA.
  - Funding allocations for 2026 and later years will be determined in quarter 4 of the preceding year.
- The department has established a FFUR working group of tertiary sector experts to provide perspectives and advice about the implementation of the program, including regulatory, policy, operational and subject matter considerations.

### **What happens to regional loading under this model?**

- FFUR funding will be included in providers' base MBGA in 2025 and as such will be included in regional loading calculations.

- From 2026, regional loading is proposed to be replaced by Needs-based funding.

## Media

### ***How attractive will the FEE-FREE Uni Ready places be to universities?, Andrew Norton's blog, 19 August 2024***

- Professor Norton praised FFUR for ending the current enabling loading system, which is based on historical and political factors, and replaces it with a system that is neutral between providers.
- Professor Norton stated that the FFUR program will provide more than triple the funding rate under the current system for enabling subjects in funding cluster one. On the other hand, while universities get the same total revenue for a FFUR place as a place in an award course in arts, business or law, for other courses a FFUR place is less financially attractive.
- Professor Norton states that a university's capacity to enrol more FFUR students in 2025 will depend on their enabling place discipline profile and whether or not they expect to be under enrolled against their MBGA.
- Concerns were raised around the Government's intention to increase the consistency of FFUR courses which may risk making FFUR courses less tailored to the specific needs of students or the target courses the students want to enter.

<b>Date Last Cleared</b>	15 October 2024
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**Issue:** Making HELP Simpler and Fairer  
**PBS Pg No.** Pages 13, 22-23, 57  
**Contact:** Ben Rimmer  
 Ph: s 22  
 Deputy Secretary

### Budget – Lowering the indexation of HELP debts

Financial year	2023–24	2024–25	2025–26	2026–27	2027–28	Total
Total Budget Allocation	-22.080	-105.271	-26.659	-39.780	-45.875	-239.665
Education	-18.922	-90.801	-16.986	-29.365	-35.363	-191.437
DEWR	-2.899	-13.763	-9.639	-10.415	-10.511	-47.227
Services Aus	-0.259	-0.247	0.000	0.000	0.000	- 0.506
ATO	0.000	-0.460	-0.034	0.000	0.000	-0.494

### Key Points

- The Government announced changes to the indexation of HELP and other income contingent loans on 5 May 2024.
- These changes and other measures are proposed to be enacted through the Universities Accord (Student Support and Other Measures) Bill 2024 (the Bill) (**SB24-000383** refers).
- The Bill was introduced into Parliament on 15 August 2024.
- The Senate Standing Committee on Education and Employment released its report into the Bill on 3 October 2024. It recommended that the Bill be passed.
- Subject to the passage of legislation, the changes will cap indexation at the lower of the Consumer Price Index (CPI) or the Wage Price Index (WPI), with retroactive application from 1 June 2023.
- For 2023, an indexation credit will be applied to an individual's account calculated by the difference between CPI of 7.1% and the WPI figure of 3.2%.
- The indexation credit applicable to 2024 will be the difference between the CPI rate of 4.7% and the WPI calculated figure of 4.0%.
- All individuals with a HELP debt will be positively affected by this measure. As at 30 June 2024, there are approximately 3 million individuals with \$81 billion in outstanding HELP amounts.
- Individuals who have repaid their HELP debts since 1 June 2023 will still receive an indexation credit. This will become a tax credit if they have no other income contingent loans. This may be repaid as a cash refund if the person has no other outstanding tax or other Commonwealth debts.

- According to the ATO, as at July 2024, approximately 200,000 people have fully repaid their HELP debt since indexation was applied on 1 June 2023.
- The estimated \$3 billion financial impact of the change in indexation will be disclosed in the Department's financial statements in accordance with accounting standards set by the Australian Accounting Standards Board.

### ***Implementation timeframes***

- This measure will be implemented by the ATO following Royal Assent.
- Individuals will not need to do anything, the ATO will progress work to automatically apply an indexation credit to individual's HELP debt accounts.
- The ATO has been preparing for implementation of this measure since it was announced at Budget.
- The ATO has advised that it will need to process approximately 6 million transactions, and this will take some time to ensure correctness.

### ***Refunds of indexation credits***

- The ATO has advised the Department that, as at July 2024, approximately 200,000 people have fully repaid their HELP debt since indexation was applied on 1 June 2023.
- Some of these people may receive a refund depending on their individual circumstances including whether they have any outstanding tax or other Commonwealth debts.
- The ATO has advised the Department that it is unable to provide a precise estimate of the number of people who will receive refunds, or the size of these refunds as it requires the ATO to first assess people's entitlement according to their individual circumstances.
- The ATO also advised that it does not hold data on the amount of other Commonwealth debts for taxpayers i.e. Centrelink or Child Support. The ATO has no visibility on how much of any tax refund Services Australia may intercept.

### ***Lowering the indexation of HELP debts***

- HELP loans are indexed annually to ensure that the value of outstanding balances is maintained in real terms.
- The 1 June 2023 CPI-based HELP indexation rate of 7.1% on outstanding HELP loans drew into question the fairness of the current indexation methodology.
  - Indexation applied to outstanding HELP loans on 1 June 2022 was 3.9%.

- Indexation applied on 1 June 2024 was 4.7%, based on the previous CPI methodology.
- This measure does not change that underlying principle that HELP debts should be indexed to maintain their real value over time, which has been in place since the establishment of the Higher Education Contribution Scheme (HECS) arrangements in 1989.

***Change in the indexation reference period***

- The methodology will change for 1 June 2025 from the March quarter CPI to the December quarter WPI.
- This is because the March quarter WPI is not released until mid May each year (about 7 weeks after the end of each quarter) which is too late for the indexation event on 1 June each year, as such the preceding December quarter figure is used.
- Setting the reference period to December will provide sufficient notice to HELP debtors of the 1 June indexation date so they can make decisions around their debts, such as whether to make voluntary repayments.

Table 1: Total estimated indexation credit benefit

<b>HELP DEBT at 30 June 2023</b>	<b>TOTAL ESTIMATED CREDIT FOR 2023 AND 2024*</b>
\$15,000	\$670
\$25,000	\$1,120
\$30,000	\$1,345
\$35,000	\$1,570
\$40,000	\$1,795
\$45,000	\$2,020
\$50,000	\$2,245
\$60,000	\$2,690
\$100,000	\$4,485
\$130,000	\$5,835

Note: Benefit represents credit received in 2024 after legislation passes for retrospective reduction in indexation applied in 2023 and 2024.

**Media**

NIL

<b>Date Last Cleared</b>	14 October 2024
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**Issue:** Managed system for sustainable international education  
**Contact:** Ben Rimmer  
 Ph: s 22  
 Deputy Secretary

### Budget - A Managed System for International Education

Financial year	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	Total
To develop risk analysis and reform to inform a whole-of-government approach to sector integrity and funding for TEQSA to assess IT uplift to meet integrity reform.	3.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	3.8
To implement changes to PRISMS to increase transparency and data collection including expansion of the education agent dashboard	1.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.2
To implement changes to PRISMS to support a managed system and manage provider limits.	0.0	2.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.6

### Key Points

- On 11 May, the Government announced the draft *International Education and Skills Strategic Framework* (draft Framework) and reform of the *Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000* (the ESOS Act), to manage the sector for sustainable growth over time.
- On 27 August 2024, the Minister for Education announced the National Planning Level (NPL) of 270,000 new overseas student commencements (NOSC) for 2025. This includes:
  - Around 145,000 NOSC in 2025 for publicly funded universities, which is close to the number from last year.

- Around 30,000 NOSC in 2025 for other higher education providers, roughly the same student numbers as before the pandemic.
- Around 95,000 NOSC in 2025 for VET.
- On 27 August 2024, the Secretary and Deputy Secretary of the Department of Education wrote to providers to provide their indicative 2025 international student levels.
- Of the 38 publicly funded universities for 2025:
  - 34 have received an indicative allocation that is at or above their 2019 level.
  - 23 have received an indicative allocation that is at or above their 2023 level.
  - All Group of Eight universities have indicative allocations above their 2019 levels, and half of them will be at or above their 2023 levels.
- Indicative allocations for 2025 for regional universities are:
  - 11% above their 2023 international student levels.
  - 78% above their indicative estimates for 2024.
- For private universities and non-university higher education providers, indicative allocations for 2025:
  - Providers with 2023 activity received an allocation of approximately one-third below their 2023 level, broadly equivalent to 2019 levels of activity.
    - Overall, this is broadly equivalent to 2019 levels of activity for this group of providers.
  - Providers that commenced international student enrolments in 2024, received an indicative allocation based on their 2024 estimated activity as at July 2024.
  - New providers with no active enrolments will receive an allocation of at least 10 NOSC. The department is engaging in further discussions with these providers.
- For TAFEs with higher education activity, 2025 indicative allocations are based on their 2023 activity level.
- The Government intends to reallocate unutilised limits in April each year, to ensure the NPL is utilised.
- Subject to the passage of the ESOS Act Amendment Bill, changes will take effect from 1 January 2025.
  - Providers will be advised of final limits through issuance of a final determination by the Minister of Education.



- From 2026, providers will be able to sustainably grow their international student numbers.
  - For public universities, additional growth will be possible where they supply student accommodation.

### ***Provider Registration and International Student Management System (PRISMS) Updates***

- The department is making changes to PRISMS to support providers to monitor and manage their limits and avoid non-compliance.
  - \$2.6 million in the 2024–25 Budget to 30 June 2025.
- The initial release of PRISMS, giving providers visibility of their indicative limits and the number of Certificates of Enrolments that may count towards their limit, is scheduled for a late October release.
  - A further release will be made before the end of the year, prior to the commencement of limits on 1 January 2025.

### ***Sector consultation***

- Between 13 May and 28 June 2024, the department received over 115 submissions and conducted consultations with over 150 stakeholders following the release of the draft Strategic Framework.
- Between 29 August and 27 September 2024, the department met with all 38 public universities and representatives of 35 private universities and NUHEP providers on their new indicative allocations.
- From 11 to 17 September 2024, the department held nine webinars, with over 2,200 attendees to inform Higher Education and VET providers on:
  - How to calculate provider allocations and identify New Overseas Student Commencement (NOSC) data using Confirmation of Enrolments in PRISMS.

### ***Correspondence with providers***

- Since 27 August 2024, the Minister for Education and senior executives within the department have received over 150 pieces of correspondence.
- On 16 September 2024, the Minister for Education wrote to all Vice-Chancellors confirming that Ministerial Direction will be lifted upon Royal Assent of the ESOS Act amendment currently before the Parliament.
- The Department of Employment and Workplace Relations wrote to providers on 27 August, 6 September and 7 September 2024.

## Media

- The proposed reforms to the international education sector, including the NPL, have received significant and extensive media coverage since its announcement.
- Since 27 August 2024, media on all platforms has focused on the NPL and indicative international student levels for providers and their impacts on the sector and wider economy.

<b>Date Last Cleared</b>	14 October 2024
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**Issue:** National Code to Prevent and Respond to Gender-based Violence  
**Contact:** Ben Rimmer  
Ph: s 22  
Deputy Secretary

## Key Points

- On 23 February 2024, Education Ministers agreed to and released the *Action Plan Addressing Gender-based Violence in Higher Education* (Action Plan).
- The Action Plan recognises the unique leadership role that registered higher education providers can and must play in driving broader social change, as well as the distinct responsibilities they hold in relation to creating safe study, work, social and living environments.
- The Action Plan includes 7 actions. Action 3 calls for the introduction of a National Higher Education Code to Prevent and Respond to Gender-based Violence (the National Code) as a new form of regulation.
- The National Code will establish a new set of best practice standards all higher education providers must meet in preventing and responding to gender-based violence in their communities, including in accommodation that is owned and/or operated by the higher education provider.
- The National Code will apply to all higher education providers registered with the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency.
- The department has developed the National Code's draft standards with advice from 3 mechanisms: a public consultation process, targeted consultations and an Expert Reference Group (refer to [Attachment A](#) for member details).
- The ERG has met 4 times:
  - 30 May 2024
  - 13 June 2024
  - 27 June 2024
  - 11 July 2024.
- A summary of key findings from consultations is provided at [Attachment B](#).
- The department is also considering regulatory options to apply the National Code to standalone student accommodation providers in the future.

- The National Code will be implemented by a new expert unit currently being established in the department. This new unit will conduct targeted compliance; support providers by sharing best practice across the sector; and gather new and better data on gender-based violence in higher education.
- The unit will work closely with the National Student Ombudsman to ensure a coordinated regulatory approach. (See SB24-000381 for more information on the National Student Ombudsman).
- On 11 September 2024, the Government introduced the *Universities Accord (National Student Ombudsman) Bill 2024* and tabled a summary of the National Code ([Attachment C](#)).
- The cost of this procurement is \$79,850 (incl. GST).

### ***Additional information***

#### ***Purpose of the proposed National Code***

- The National Code is not intended to duplicate existing obligations; rather, its purpose is to strengthen existing requirements to ensure policies and procedures for dealing with gender-based violence in the higher education sector are streamlined and aligned, lifting the performance of the sector as a whole.
- This comprehensive approach will ensure progress across the whole sector, regardless of providers' size or location.

#### ***National Plan to end gender-based violence***

- All Australian governments share a vision to end gender-based violence in one generation and the National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022-2032 recognises that all parts of society must work to address this violence.
- However, over the last several years evidence has shown that gender-based violence, specifically sexual violence, continues to occur in higher education communities at significant rates that are unacceptable.
- With over 1.5 million students and 130,000 staff with internationally recognised research expertise, the higher education sector has a unique opportunity to drive social change at scale.

#### ***Evidence the National Code will reduce gender-based violence***

- In addition to the implementation of standards that all higher education providers must meet, a new unit is being established within the department to support the introduction of the Code.
- This new unit will have both a compliance and policy focus, working across governments and analysing emerging research both nationally and internationally to provide guidance and support for providers on best practice.

#### ***Assistance to all providers to implement the National Code***

- A new unit is being established within the department to encourage collaboration and assist providers with implementing the Code. Assistance will include providing templates and best practice examples to assist all providers with implementation.

## Media

- ***Albanese government to appoint Ombudsman with stronger powers to address sexual assault at unis, The Australian, 11 September 2024.***  
Provides a summary of the proposed National Code requirements including investigation timelines and data collecting requirements.
- ***Tough powers for students' watchdog to fight sexual assaults, The Australian, 11 September 2024***  
Summarises the proposed 7 standards covered in the National Code and reports on the establishment of the new specialist unit in the department to enforce and regulate the National Code.
- ***Justice, safety for uni students as watchdog introduced, The Canberra Times, 11 September 2024***  
Details some of the National Code's requirements including the need to update policies to include consequences for perpetrators and the requirement for ongoing prevention measures.
- ***"Sick of begging to feel safe:" New watchdog to ensure student safety on campus, SBS News, 11 September 2024***  
Article mainly covers the introduction of the *Universities Accord (National Student Ombudsman) Bill 2024* but references the proposed introduction of the National Code through separate legislation to ensure an improved response to gender-based violence, holding universities to account.

## Attachments

Attachment A – National Code Expert Reference Group members






Attachment B – National Code consultation summary






Attachment C – Summary of the draft National Code






<b>Date Last Cleared</b>	14 October 2024
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## National Code - Expert Reference Group





- The Expert Reference Group (ERG) is comprised of 19 leaders from higher education, violence against women and student accommodation sectors, including victim-survivor advocates.

Name and photo	Biography
<p><b>Ms Ngaire Bogemann</b> President, National Union of Students</p> 	<p>Ms Ngaire Bogemann is the current president of the National Union of Students (NUS), which advocates for tertiary students' rights and interests across all higher education providers in Australia. Some of NUS's top priorities include a reformed welfare system, ending unpaid placements and free undergraduate tertiary education.</p> <p>Ms Bogemann was previously Women's Officer of the University of Melbourne Student Union (UMSU) and is passionate about advocating for student voices including women and minority groups.</p>
<p><b>Ms Yegenah Soltanpour</b> President, Council of International Students Australia</p> 	<p>Ms Yegenah Soltanpour is the current president of the Council of International Students Australia (CISA). CISA is a peak representative body for international students in Australia, providing them with a voice and advocating for university policies to enhance the quality and accommodation for international students in Australia.</p> <p>Ms Soltanpour has held a wide range of roles within disability support services and as a research intern at the Refugee Health Service in Adelaide. In addition, Ms Soltanpour is currently studying an MBA at the University of Adelaide. She also runs the non-for-profit organisation 'Just Genius' that supports international students with free career building services.</p>
<p><b>Dr Alison Barnes</b> National President, National Tertiary Education Union</p> 	<p>Dr Alison Barnes is the National Present of the National Tertiary Education Union (NTEU). She was elected to the position in 2018. The union has approximately 30,000 members and an office on most university campuses. Its role to protect rights at work and increase accessibility to support from experts and workplace representatives.</p> <p>Before her current role, Dr Barnes served as an Assistant Secretary in the NTEU NSW Division and Branch President at Macquarie University.</p>
<p><b>Dr Allison Henry</b> Postdoctoral Research Fellow, UNSW Sydney</p> 	<p>Dr Allison Henry is a Postdoctoral Research Fellow at the Australian Human Rights Institute at UNSW Sydney. She has two decades of experience in law, politics, public policy and advocacy and served for five years as a Ministerial Advisor in the federal Parliament and has led national organisations and campaigns across a range of issues. Dr Henry was the former director of the Hunting Ground Australia Project (2015-2018), a collaborative impact campaign that was instrumental in raising awareness of sexual violence on Australian university campuses.</p> <p>Dr Henry's thesis focused on regulatory responses to sexual assault and sexual harassment in Australian university settings.</p>
<p><b>Ms Renee Carr</b> Executive Director, Fair Agenda</p> 	<p>Ms Renee Carr is the Executive Director of Fair Agenda, non-profit organisation that campaigns to achieve a fair and equitable future for women. Ms Carr is a strategist and has led several campaigns through her role at Fair Agenda, including successfully campaigning for additional funding for domestic violence services, lobbying against cuts to parental leave, and the decriminalisation of abortions in two states.</p> <p>Ms Carr's advocacy is focused on gender equality in all areas of life, as well as changing the systems and structures that perpetuate gender injustice in Australia.</p>

Name and photo	Biography
<p><b>Ms Sharna Bremner</b>            Founder and Director, End Rape on Campus</p> 	<p>Ms Sharna Bremner founded the End Rape on Campus (EROC) campaign in 2016. EROC is a volunteer run organisation that provides direct support to students in over 40 universities, Australia wide. EROC has been a driving force behind awareness, prevention and better responses to sexual assault and harassment on university Campuses. In addition to supporting victim-survivors, EROC and Ms Bremner have campaigned for university reforms at state and national levels to ensure safer university campuses both structurally and culturally.</p> <p>EROC has undertaken extensive research into student safety in higher education settings, including the “Connecting the Dots” and “The Red Zone” reports, which have been fundamental in highlighting the extent of sexual assault in higher education settings. These reports’ recommendations have been highly regarded in creating new university structures and policies.</p>
<p><b>Ms Camille Schloeffel</b>            Founder and Director, the STOP campaign</p> 	<p>Ms Camille Schloeffel is the Founder and Director of the STOP Campaign is a passionate activist for the prevention of sexual violence and promotion of sexual wellbeing. The STOP campaign is a volunteer, grassroots intersectional feminist organisation that addresses sexual harm in higher education communities through empowerment, education, activism and awareness.</p> <p>Ms Schloeffel has led and delivered numerous projects through her role which have educated and pushed reforms in university settings. Since graduating with a Bachelor of Development Studies and a Bachelor of Arts (Human Rights) in 2019, Ms Schloeffel worked in the Australian Government across sexual violence, online harms and child abuse policy areas.</p> <p>In 2020, Ms Schloeffel was awarded the Peter Mitchell Churchill Fellowship to explore ways activists and universities can work together to prevent sexual violence on campus. Through this Ms Schloeffel took part in an 11-week international research task which saw her work to publish the “Combative to Collaborative” report.</p>
<p><b>Ms Nicole Lambert</b>            Chair, National Association of Services Against Sexual Violence            CEO, Allambee Counselling</p> 	<p>Ms Lambert is Chair of the National Association of Services Against Sexual Violence (NASASV). NASASV is the peak body for a diverse range of specialist organisations that provide prevention and response services to those who are at risk or experience sexual violence in Australia. NASASV is also a member of the Department’s National Respectful Relationships Education Expert Working Group.</p> <p>Ms Lambert has worked in community services for over a decade is a counsellor specialising in sexual and family violence, child protection and tertiary education. She is an advocate for sexual and family violence prevention and is the current CEO of Allambee Counselling.</p>
<p><b>Ms Cara Gleeson</b>            Acting CEO and Director, Prevention in Action, Our Watch</p> 	<p>Ms Cara Gleeson, Director of the Our Watch Institute and Prevention in Action for Our Watch, comes with 15+ years' experience in leading initiatives in preventing violence against women, gender equality and women’s rights both in Australia and internationally.</p> <p>Prior to this role, Ms Gleeson worked in a range of other relevant positions such as a senior project officer in health, working for YWCA Australia and as a policy officer in Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs.</p>
<p><b>Dr Lisa Warren</b>            Director, Code Back</p> 	<p>Dr Lisa Warren is the Clinical Director of Code Black Psychology. Dr Warren provides oversight and support for all clinical services, including complex case formulations and risk assessments. She also holds an academic position at Monash University’s Department of Psychiatry, where she is an Adjunct Senior Lecturer.</p> <p>Dr Warren is a registered psychologist with dual area of practice endorsements in clinical and forensic psychology. She is a renowned threat management expert, and her clinical expertise is in the fields of complex patients, perpetrators and victim/survivors of family violence and coercive control, and those who cause repeated harms, such as stalkers and persistent, unreasonable complainants.</p>

Name and photo	Biography
<p><b>Professor Kerri-Lee Krause</b> Vice Chancellor, Avondale University</p> 	<p>Chair of the Higher Education Standards panel, which provides independent advice to the Minister(s) responsible for tertiary education and research. She is an experienced university executive with over 30 years' experience in public universities.</p> <p>Her sector leadership includes four years as elected Chair of the Universities Australia Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academic) group and non-Executive Director on numerous Boards. She has led the national admissions transparency of higher education strategic priority on behalf of the Higher Education Standards Panel since 2017.</p> <p>Professor Krause is internationally recognised for her contributions to higher education leadership, policy research and practice, including research on the evolving nature of academic work and implications for higher education leadership, quality and standards.</p> <p>She retired from her position as Vice-Chancellor of Avondale University in July 2024.</p>
<p><b>Professor Carolyn Evans</b> Vice-Chancellor and President, Griffith University Board Member, Universities Australia</p> 	<p>Professor Carolyn Evans commenced her appointment as Vice-Chancellor and President of Griffith University in February 2019. She is President of the Australian Higher Education Industrial Association and was Chair of the Innovative Research Universities from 2021-2022, former board member of Open Universities Australia from 2019-2023, and current Board member of Universities Australia. She is an internationally recognised expert on religious freedom and the relationship between law and religion.</p> <p>Professor Evans is currently Universities Australia's lead Vice-Chancellor for Safety and Wellbeing.</p>
<p><b>Professor Jessica Vanderlelie</b> Deputy Vice-Chancellor Academic, La Trobe University</p> 	<p>Professor Jessica Vanderlelie is the Deputy Vice-Chancellor Academic at La Trobe University. Her role focuses on the student experience, equity outcomes, and teaching and learning. She leads La Trobe's work on sexual violence. She is co-chair of Universities Australia Women and is an advocate for improving institutional and sector-wide support for diversity and inclusion.</p> <p>Professor Vanderlelie is an Australian Learning and Teaching Fellow and has been recognised nationally through receipt of an Australian Award for University Teaching and AFR Award.</p>
<p><b>Professor Sharon Pickering</b> Vice-Chancellor and President, Monash University</p> 	<p>Professor Pickering is Vice-Chancellor and President at Monash University and is also Professor of Criminology and a leading expert on Australian criminal justice and criminology and refugee law. She is regarded as a global expert on border crossings, migration and trafficking and is the founder of the Border Crossing Observatory, working with NGOs, government agencies and law enforcement.</p> <p>Previously she worked across South-East Asia and Northern Ireland on counter-terrorism policing, human rights and women. She was the editor of Australian and New Zealand Journal of Criminology.</p>
<p><b>Ms Eve Ollerenshaw</b> Board Member, Independent Higher Education Association Pro Vice Chancellor and Executive General Manager, NextEd</p> 	<p>Ms Ollerenshaw is Pro Vice Chancellor and Executive General Manager Group Quality, Accreditation and Compliance at NextEd Group Limited, which includes higher education provider Academy of Interactive Technology (AIT). She has over 35 years of education industry leadership and management experience peppered with commercial, government and consulting roles. She has worked in leadership roles at a number of exclusive Sydney independent schools, Stratco QLD, Australian Technical College, Carrick Education, Think Colleges, Pharmacy Guild of Australia, the Australian government funded Workforce Futures program, and Scentia.</p> <p>Ms Ollerenshaw has owned and operated large retail outlets, a global consultancy business, and a sports management and coaching business. She is passionate about student safety and wellbeing in higher education.</p>



Name and photo	Biography
<p><b>Ms Stephanie Taylor</b></p> <p>President, Australian and New Zealand Student Services Association</p> <p>Director, Student Success and Wellbeing at Bond University</p> 	<p>Ms Stephanie Taylor is the President of ANZSSA, a network of student services professionals across the higher education sector. She has a diverse range of work experience, primarily in the field of student services, support and wellbeing.</p> <p>Ms Taylor has had significant roles at the University of Tasmania, where she served as Association and Executive Director Student Life and Enrichment as well as Director of Student Services, Director of the Student Centre, and Manager of Student Services.</p> <p>Ms Taylor has a degree in social work as well as a master's degree in business.</p>
<p><b>Ms Lisa Sutherland</b></p> <p>President, University Colleges Australia and Master, Wesley College</p> 	<p>As President of University Colleges Ms Lisa Sutherland works with heads of residential university colleges and halls for continuous improvement of collegiate life experiences. Currently, University Colleges Australia represents over 60 accommodation providers.</p> <p>Ms Sutherland has an extensive education background, starting within secondary schools as a teacher and eventually progressing into the tertiary education sector in a senior leadership position.</p> <p>Ms Sutherland is currently the Master of Wesley College at the University of Sydney where she oversees all elements of campus life from its residences to the school structures and curriculum.</p>
<p><b>Ms Marion Grey</b></p> <p>President, Asia-Pacific Student Accommodation Association</p> 	<p>Ms Marion Grey is CEO of Deakin Residential Services, President at the Bluebird Foundation and Immediate Past President of the Asia-Pacific Student Accommodation Association (APSAA).</p> <p>Marion oversees local residences at Deakin University which has over 2700 residences across its campuses. Marion's role as CEO makes her responsible for those residences and ensuring students wellbeing and safety.</p>
<p><b>Professor Braden Hill</b></p> <p>Deputy Vice-Chancellor Students, Equity and Indigenous, Edith Cowan University</p> 	<p>Professor Braden Hill is a Nyungar (Wardandi) man from the south-west of Western Australia previously held the role of Pro Vice-Chancellor (Equity and Indigenous) and Head of Kurongkurl Katitjin, Edith Cowan University's (ECU) Centre for Indigenous Australian Education and Research. He has significant experience in Aboriginal education, as well as leading a range of equity initiatives.</p> <p>Professor Hill is heavily involved in Edith Cowan's work to address gender-based violence.</p>

Summary of feedback on National Code Issues Paper							
	Students, lived experience, student organisations	NTEU	Women's safety sector	Higher education sector	First Nations, LGBTIQ+, culturally and linguistically diverse, people with disability	Australian Human Rights Commission & eSafety Commissioner	Student accommodation providers/groups
<b>Standard 1: Accountable governance and leadership</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There needs to be consequences for universities that do not take steps to prevent GBV or respond appropriately to students and staff making reports.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Providers must not 'delegate down' responsibility for meeting provisions of the code – it rests with the VC and the most senior leaders.</li> <li>There must be transparency to the public and staff on who is accountable.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Standard needs specific requirements around monitoring/consequences for non-compliance.</li> <li>The Code should have an outcomes framework and monitoring plan.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Both the most senior leader and governing body should be accountable.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Transparency on who is accountable is critical.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure commitment to prevent and respond to GBV is across all levels of leadership.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Clarity is needed on who is responsible at the accommodation senior level and the provider's senior levels.</li> </ul>
<b>Standard 2: Effective organisational policies and practice</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Policies need to be easy to understand, accessible to the public and easily translatable.</li> <li>Requirements should include managing incidents for students experiencing GBV in external placements.</li> <li>Providers should consider historical cases.</li> <li>Students need to know what unacceptable behaviour is, potential consequences and where they can appeal a decision.</li> <li>Providers should investigate any report of gender-based violence, regardless of where it occurs.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Policies should protect staff who disclose or make a formal report.</li> <li>This standard should ensure alignment between how providers respond to staff and students.</li> <li>Code should prevent perpetrators 'institution-hopping'.</li> <li>Policies must be developed in partnership with staff.</li> <li>Policies must protect staff abused by students.</li> <li>The Code should mandate that complainants are informed of the outcome.</li> <li>NDA's should be banned.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Policies must focus on high-risk contexts and intersectional needs.</li> <li>Policies must recognise the gendered nature of sexual violence.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Standards should complement existing regulation.</li> <li>The Code should recognise extent and limitations of universities' control and influence.</li> <li>Code should provide clarity of scope where some external partners have their own reporting and investigation pathways.</li> <li>How would the Code apply to dual sector institutions?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Policies need to recognise intersectionality and be developed in consultation with groups.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recommend providers have a standalone policy on sexual harassment and other relevant unlawful behaviours.</li> <li>Support ban on NDAs, and if they are to be used, Code should align with AHRC's recommendation on confidentiality clauses.</li> <li>Policies must be implemented across the whole organisation.</li> <li>Working with children requirements should be in place for all providers.</li> <li>Technology-facilitated abuse must be defined in policies and understood by all providers.</li> <li>Consider how the Code can combat hazing behaviours.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Policy alignment between accommodation and host institutions may not be possible in all circumstances; alignment at a principles and values level is preferred.</li> </ul>
<b>Standard 3: Trauma-informed, safety-first procedures</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consultation on procedures must occur with victim-survivors as part of trauma-informed responses/support.</li> <li>All staff involved in procedures need to have specific training in the effects of trauma so students are not re-traumatised.</li> <li>There must be requirements for giving progress updates to everyone involved.</li> <li>NDA's should be banned.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Code needs to address complexity where staff member is also a student and what this means for processes.</li> <li>Must not breach the employment rights of staff.</li> <li>Complainants should be notified of outcomes.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Staff involved in procedures need specialist expertise.</li> <li>This standard could be split – into an immediate 'safety first' response, then another section on procedures.</li> <li>Risk assessments should be undertaken whenever there is a disclosure or formal complaint.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Clarity on timeframes for investigations, disciplinary processes and appeals is needed in the Code and what government considers to be reasonable circumstances where timeframes are not met.</li> <li>Difficult for providers to balance safety with procedural fairness.</li> <li>It will be difficult for providers to meet the proposed 30-day timeframe.</li> <li>Code should require agreements between universities and student accommodation so unis can bring them into line (UA).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Code should require all staff involved in responding to disclosures/processes to be culturally and disability competent – not just 'aware'.</li> <li>Code should ensure universities are meeting their basic obligations under anti-discrimination legislation.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Those dealing with complaints must be trained in both trauma-informed practice &amp; basic complaint handling and statement-taking.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Code should support information-sharing arrangements between accomm providers and universities.</li> <li>Accomm staff don't often have the skills to conduct trauma-informed procedures – Code should provide clear guidance on training required.</li> </ul>
<b>Standard 4: Evidence-based education and training</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Code should require education and training to be accredited/overseen by experts in prevention and response.</li> <li>Any education and training should be developed and delivered in consultation with students and victim-survivors.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All staff should receive first responder training and HR staff may require additional training to respond effectively.</li> <li>Governing body members should receive prevention and first responder training.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Code should ensure providers deliver unconscious bias training and resources and materials reflect best practice and emerging evidence.</li> <li>Qualitative data collected should include student/ staff attitudes towards violence against women.</li> <li>Ideally the Code would support primary prevention workforce development.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Code should set standards on the outcomes, modes, frequency, quality and effectiveness of the training / education material.</li> <li>Delivering education and training to all staff and students will be challenging for some providers and resource intensive.</li> <li>Code should consider education/training to offshore students where it may conflict with local laws – e.g.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Education and training need to be affirming and include how other forms of discrimination influence GBV.</li> <li>Programs should be developed in partnership with specific cohorts and delivered by people who recognise the role of intersectionality on violence.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Education and training should complement existing AHRC resources on positive duty.</li> <li>Should not be one-off.</li> <li>Training must include examples of TFA.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Code should have a sliding scale of appropriate training/qualifications to develop and deliver education and training based on the size and complexity of the college.</li> </ul>

				<p>discrimination against women – and what this means for compliance.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Universities should be able to apply for funding from gov't to support programs.</li> <li>Code should allow for providers to pilot innovative programs</li> </ul>			
<b>Standard 5: Expert and timely support services</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Counsellors need to have specific expertise in working with victims of trauma.</li> <li>Providers should adequately resource support services to deal with long wait times.</li> <li>Support should recognise and value diversity and be accessible.</li> <li>Providers need to work with local sexual assault centres to improve their practice and referral pathways.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Code should specify qualifications for EAP support services staff and should be the same as what is provided to students.</li> <li>Code should specify service delivery standards across the sector for EAP.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Providers need to work with specialists in the sexual assault sector to improve their practice and referral pathways.</li> <li>If there are not specialist counsellors available in the provider, providers should partner with experts to facilitate the right support.</li> <li>Support needs to recognise intersectionality.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Code should not position providers as substitutes for long-term therapeutic support.</li> <li>Code should clarify what specific support is needed for alleged perpetrators and how providers can refer to such support.</li> <li>Additional gov't resourcing for providers to meet proposed obligations is needed.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Providers need to form partnerships with local organisations to ensure support meets people's needs.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Code should ensure support is available to staff who experience or witness relevant unlawful conduct and that workers are informed about available support, and can access the support, regardless of whether they report the conduct.</li> <li>Support must be tailored to the individual.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Student accomm don't provide support services – Code should encourage collaboration between accomm and providers.</li> <li>Code should stipulate residential students can access support without having to disclose/consent to their information being shared by the college with the provider.</li> <li>Code should require emergency alternative accommodation is available to students where allegation has been made.</li> <li>All student accomm should assess and manage risk for all disclosures/reports.</li> </ul>
<b>Standard 6: Transparent data and reporting</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students need to understand where their information is going before they consent to provide it.</li> <li>Demographics and course details need to be collected.</li> <li>Data &amp; questions should come from the GBV unit.</li> <li>Needs to be timely and transparent publication of data.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Code should collect same information on staff experiences as students.</li> <li>Must be transparency on unacceptable behaviour by staff, including senior leaders, and publication of outcomes.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Access to detailed reporting dictates areas of attention</li> <li>Internal data can be supplemented by relevant external research and reports</li> <li>Develop a monitoring and evaluation plan</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Code must reduce duplication of reporting to other agencies on GBV data.</li> <li>Code/unit must provide definitions so providers understand what they're collecting against.</li> <li>Concerns about the government publishing data at an institutional level.</li> <li>Code should recognise that collecting demographic data won't always be possible.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Demographic information on victim-survivors and perpetrators is critical to collect.</li> <li>People should always be given the option to provide information – should not be mandatory.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Regular collection and publication of robust and consistent data is critical to understanding the nature and extent of GBV, efficacy of prevention efforts and to identify improvement areas.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Code needs to develop thresholds for data collection so individuals are not identified.</li> <li>Privacy and consent to give data from student accomm to unis must be observed.</li> </ul>
<b>Standard 7: Safe student accommodation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Code should drive stronger partnerships between unis and colleges. Both should be held accountable.</li> <li>All staff and residents should receive relevant training in GBV prevention and response.</li> <li>Safety measures for residents should be implemented immediately.</li> </ul>	N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Critical that standalone student accomm is subject to regulation, oversight and behavioural standards.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Code should require all student accomm to have agreements in place with HEPs.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Student accomm staff need to be culturally competent and understand and support intersectional responses to residents.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Student accomm should work collaboratively with higher education providers.</li> <li>International students in student accomm are at high risk and the Code should include requirements they receive particular support.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Proposed timeframes for procedures may not be able to met by some student accomm.</li> <li>Code should require student accomm to work in partnership with providers.</li> <li>Code needs to recognise the complexity of student accomm sector.</li> </ul>



# National Higher Education Code to Prevent and Respond to Gender-based Violence & National Student Ombudsman

On 23 February 2024, Education and Higher Education Ministers agreed to and released the Action Plan Addressing Gender-based Violence in Higher Education (Action Plan). As part of the Action Plan, the Australian Government is:

- establishing a new National Student Ombudsman to enable higher education students to escalate complaints about the actions of their higher education provider if they're unsatisfied with their provider's response. The National Student Ombudsman will be independent, impartial and provide higher education students with an effective, trauma-informed complaints mechanism.
- introducing a new National Higher Education Code to Prevent and Respond to Gender-based Violence. The National Code will strengthen the accountability of registered higher education providers and ensure they embed a whole-of-organisation approach to preventing and responding to gender-based violence.
- enhancing the oversight, standards and accountability of student accommodation providers.

The National Student Ombudsman and National Code will be established through separate legislation. The Universities Accord (National Student Ombudsman) Bill will establish the National Student Ombudsman. The National Code will be established through forthcoming legislation.

The National Code will be implemented by a new expert unit currently being established in the Department of Education. This new unit will conduct targeted compliance; support providers by sharing best practice across the sector; and gather new and better data on gender-based violence in higher education. The unit will work closely with the National Student Ombudsman to ensure a coordinated regulatory approach.

The Code will set standards across seven areas. Requirements proposed under each standard, subject to finalisation and the passage of legislation, are set out here.

## 1. Leadership and governance

- The Vice-Chancellor, Chief Executive Officer or equivalent will be the individual person responsible for their organisation's compliance with the National Code.
- All higher education providers will be required to complete an annual report outlining their performance against the National Code and their plan to improve.
  - This means there will be clear accountability of leaders and providers.
  - There will be a report for every provider on their performance and their proposed actions for improvement.

## 2. Policies

- All relevant policies of a provider will be required to be updated to include a definition of gender-based violence that is in line with the legislated definition, specify that this is unacceptable behaviour and identify potential consequences for perpetrating gender-based violence.
- The use of non-disclosure agreements will be prohibited, unless requested by the complainant.
- Higher education providers will be required to implement recommendations made by the National Student Ombudsman.
  - These requirements mean there is a consistent national approach to gender-based violence, that victim-survivors are not silenced, and providers are held to account for their actions.
  - These requirements will see all staff and students who may have a role in disclosure trained to handle and report that disclosure.

## 3. Procedures

- All higher education providers will have to comply with detailed requirements to meet the National Code. The overarching aim of these requirements is to ensure that all formal reports of gender-based violence are investigated and a conclusion is reached within 45 business days. This timeframe includes associated disciplinary proceedings (excluding appeals).
- Higher education providers will be required to demonstrate that staff involved in responding to incidents of gender-based violence have and maintain specific expertise, including an understanding of the effects of trauma, intersectionality and procedural fairness.
- Higher education providers will also be obliged to provide regular updates to all parties as processes progress and notify complainants of outcomes and any sanctions.
- Where a higher education provider determines that gender-based violence has occurred and imposes a sanction, the unit will consider whether the sanction imposed is proportionate to the behaviour.
  - These requirements mean complaints are resolved swiftly by people with the right expertise, there is transparency about outcomes, and perpetrators are held to account.
  - These requirements will mean that a victim-survivor knows what support they can expect and the timeframes in which things should be worked through. It means that whatever happens, the victim-survivor will be kept up to date on the progress of the investigation.



## 4. Education and training

- Higher education providers will be required to deliver ongoing (not one-off) prevention education to all staff and students that addresses the drivers of and risk factors for gender-based violence.
- Higher education providers will also be required to ensure all staff, as well as governing body members and student representatives and leaders, receive regular training that equips them to respond effectively to disclosures of gender-based violence.
  - These requirements will mean everyone plays their role in ending gender-based violence and there is 'no wrong door' for a victim-survivor.

## 5. Support services

- Higher education providers will be required to demonstrate that people delivering counselling to people affected by gender-based violence have specific training in this area and that providers prioritise victim-survivors' and alleged perpetrators' access to this counselling and other support services.
- Higher education providers will be required to have a policy that sets service-level standards for access to and delivery of all support services.
  - These requirements will ensure everyone involved gets the support they need when they need it.

## 6. Data and reporting

- Higher education providers will be required to collect and maintain fit-for-purpose data about gender-based violence experienced by their students and staff.
- This will create a national dataset that can be used to monitor providers' performance and add to the national evidence base on gender-based violence.
- Higher education providers will be required to submit de-identified, aggregated data on an annual basis to the Department on types of gender-based violence experienced by staff and students, along with victim-survivor demographic and enrolment/employment characteristics where possible.
- Higher education providers and the Department will observe individuals' consent and protect their privacy and confidentiality in any proposed collection and reporting of data.
  - These requirements will create a national picture of student and staff experiences and enable providers to target their efforts.
  - The end product of these requirements is a better evidence base to inform policy and responses from individual providers and at the national level.

## 7. Student accommodation

- Student accommodation owned and operated by higher education providers will need to meet strict requirements that are targeted to the unique context of residential settings. This will include immediately responding to a disclosure or formal report and urgently implementing safety measures.
- Higher education providers will also be required to demonstrate they have agreements in place with affiliated accommodation providers that enable information-sharing to protect the safety of residents and reduce the need for multiple disclosures about the same incident.
  - These requirements will mean the safety of victim-survivors is instantly prioritised and all parties work together to support them.



**Issue:** National Student Ombudsman  
**PBS Pg. No.** Page 15  
**Contact:** Ben Rimmer  
 Ph: s 22  
 Deputy Secretary

### Budget - National Student Ombudsman

Financial year	2023–24	2024–25	2025–26	2026–27	2027–28	Total
Budget Allocation		8.8	10.6			19.4

Funding is provided to the Office of Commonwealth Ombudsman (OCO).

### Key Points

- The *Universities Accord (National Student Ombudsman) Bill 2024* (the bill) was introduced in the House of Representatives on 11 September 2024 and passed in the House on Wednesday 9 October 2024.
- The Bill was referred to Education and Employment Legislation Committee (the Committee) for inquiry on 19 September 2024.
- The Committee tabled its report on 10 October 2024, which was overwhelmingly positive and recommend the Bill be passed. No amendments to the Bill were recommended.
- The Bill amends the *Ombudsman Act 1976* to establish a National Student Ombudsman, implementing recommendation 18b of the Australian Universities Accord.
- The National Student Ombudsman will be established as a new ongoing statutory function of the Commonwealth Ombudsman, providing a national escalated complaints handling mechanism for higher education students.
- The National Student Ombudsman will enable higher education students to escalate complaints about the actions of their higher education provider, including complaints relating to gender-based violence and other student complaints, if they are unsatisfied with their provider’s response.
- The National Student Ombudsman will have the powers to:
  - investigate complaints about a broad range of issues
  - bring parties together to resolve those issues, including offering restorative engagement processes and alternative dispute resolution where appropriate
  - make findings and recommendations on what actions providers should take to resolve a complaint
  - monitor the implementation of those recommendations.

- The National Student Ombudsman will be able to share information with, and receive information from, relevant regulators to identify and respond to systemic risk and provide the basis for further compliance action by regulators where necessary.
- If the National Student Ombudsman considers a provider has not taken appropriate action in response to recommendations, it will be able to provide the Minister for Higher Education with a copy of an investigation report for tabling in Parliament.
- Higher education providers will be required to comply with the National Student Ombudsman's recommendations through a new regulatory requirement in the proposed *National Higher Education Code to Prevent and Respond to Gender based Violence* (National Code).
- Establishing a National Student Ombudsman is the first action of the *Action Plan Addressing Gender-Based Violence in Higher Education* (the Action Plan), agreed to by all Education Ministers on 23 February 2024.
- The proposed National Code, another key measure of the Action Plan, will set best practice requirements for higher education communities in preventing and responding to gender-based violence, see SB24-000380.
- Together, these measures will ensure greater oversight and accountability of providers and help drive the social change we need to see in universities to address gender-based violence.
- The National Student Ombudsman will be able to accept historical complaints, if it is of the view the complaint can still be handled.
- In the 2024–25 budget, the Australian Government provided \$19.4 million over 2 years to establish the National Student Ombudsman as an ongoing function of the Commonwealth Ombudsman.
- The Government will explore arrangements for cost recovery from 2026–27 to share the costs of this new escalated student complaints function with the higher education sector.
- It is estimated that the National Student Ombudsman may receive somewhere between 5,500 and 6,000 complaints and enquiries annually, including historical complaints.



### **Role and functions of the National Student Ombudsman**

- The National Student Ombudsman will be independent, impartial, and provide higher education students with an effective, national, trauma-informed complaints mechanism.
- It will have the power to make recommendations to providers about the actions that should be taken to resolve a complaint, work cooperatively with regulators to identify and respond to systemic issues, and promote best practice complaints handling across the higher education sector.
- The National Student Ombudsman will be able to:
  - Consider whether decisions and actions taken by providers are unreasonable, unjust, oppressive, discriminatory or otherwise wrong.
  - Recommend a provider takes specific steps to resolve the complaint.
  - Share information with relevant regulators for further compliance action if needed.
  - Offer a restorative engagement process between the student and the provider where appropriate.
  - Bring parties together to resolve complaints through an alternative resolution process.
- Annual reporting on the National Student Ombudsman's operations and performance of functions – in a manner that protects the privacy of students – will be publicly available and tabled in both Houses of Parliament. This will include reporting on complaints volumes by provider and complaint type, recommendations made, and actions taken in response to recommendations.
- The National Student Ombudsman will start taking complaints from 1 February 2025, pending passage of the legislation.
- Students can continue to access existing complaints pathways until the National Student Ombudsman commences:
  - Higher education students at public universities or TAFEs can contact the relevant state or territory ombudsman.
  - International students at private higher education providers can contact the Overseas Student Ombudsman.
  - Further information about these pathways can be found on the StudyAssist website or via a student's provider.

## **Consultation on the National Student Ombudsman**

- Public consultation was undertaken on the National Student Ombudsman between 22 November 2023 and 31 January 2024, as part of consultation on the Draft Action Plan Addressing Gender-based Violence in Higher Education. This included targeted consultation with students and victim-survivor advocates, gender-based violence experts, the higher education sector, and student accommodation providers.
- Further targeted consultation was undertaken on the implementation of the National Student Ombudsman in June and July 2024. Consultation sessions were held with:
  - Higher education sector
  - Student representatives
  - Victim-survivor advocates
  - Gender-based violence experts
  - Bodies representing:
    - Culturally and linguistically diverse people
    - First Nations people
    - People with disability
    - LBGTQIA+ people
- Broadly, key feedback from stakeholders during consultation included:
  - The importance of clear communication and outreach to students and the sector.
  - The need to ensure clarity in the role and scope of the National Student Ombudsman compared to regulators and other complaints bodies.
  - The importance of ensuring accessibility through the National Student Ombudsman complaints process.
  - The need for awareness of the distinct barriers different cohorts of students may face in raising a complaint.
- The Government is also engaging with states and territories on the detailed design and implementation of the National Student Ombudsman through a monthly Policy Forum. The Policy Forum is chaired by the Department, with representatives from the Office of the Commonwealth Ombudsman (OCO), AGD and state and territory departments with policy responsibility for higher education and ombudsmen. The Policy Forum has met 6 times since 3 April 2024.

<b>Date Last Cleared</b>	16 October 2024
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**Issue:** Racism Study and response to racism in universities  
**PBS /PAES /** PBS – Page 15  
**MYEFO Pg No.** N/A  
**Contact:** Madonna Morton – (Ph:) s 22  
 First Assistant Secretary

### Budget – Racism study

Financial year	2023–24	2024–25	2025–26	2026–27	Total
Budget Allocation	-	1.0	-	-	1.0

### Key Points

- In response to Recommendation 33 from the Australian Universities Accord, the Government has provided \$2.5 million for Mr Giridharan Sivaraman, Race Discrimination Commissioner (RDC), to lead the *Respect at Uni: Study into Antisemitism, Islamophobia, racism, and the experience of First Nations People* (the Study).
- The Study report will include recommendations for reform to Government, universities and others to address racism and discrimination within higher education, with a focus on systemic and institutional reforms, practices and standards that can be implemented by universities.
- The RDC will deliver interim findings by 13 December 2024 and a final report by 13 June 2025.
- Terms of Reference are at [Attachment A](#) and are published on the Australian Human Rights Commission (AHRC) website.
- The Government is also considering the recommendations of the Senate Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee and is preparing a response to the Committee.
- The Government supports the referral of the matter of antisemitism at Australian universities to the Joint Parliamentary Committee on Human Rights.

### Project costs

- The total project costs to deliver the study is \$2.5 million, to be paid to the AHRC by the Department over 2 years.
- The 2024–25 Budget provided \$1.0 million to support the study costs. A further \$1.5 million has been provided by the Department.
- An initial \$1.5 million was paid to the AHRC in September 2024.

### ***Appointment of the AHRC to lead the Study***

- The establishment of the study responds to Recommendation 33 of the Accord Final Report to “conduct a study into the prevalence and impact of racism across the tertiary education system, on campus and online, guided by an expert committee with representation from a wide range of stakeholder groups”.
- With responsibility for combatting all forms of racial discrimination, and promoting understanding, tolerance and harmony across all sectors of Australian society, the Government determined the RDC would bring an independent expertise and authority to the study.
  - RDC has responsibilities under the Australian Human Rights Commission Act 1986 to promote an understanding and awareness of human rights, and the public discussion, of human rights in Australia (s.11(1)(g)).

### ***Consultation to inform the study***

- The RDC is consulting with universities, students, staff and other stakeholder groups to inform the report findings. A national survey will be launched in early 2025. Consultations are culturally safe, and trauma informed.
- The RDC provides a pathway to report back so government and universities can hear about and can implement emerging study findings in a timely manner.
- The Commissioner has established an advisory committee of respected leaders from the Jewish, Muslim, First Nations Australians, and CALD communities, following consultation with Minister for Education, Attorney-General and Minister for Indigenous Australians.
- The advisory committee will provide guidance to the Commissioner on methodology, consultation mechanisms, best practice identification, results analysis and recommendations.
- The advisory committee will meet up to 6 times to June 2025. It met on **25 September** and will next meet on **27 November**.
- Advisory Committee members are currently being finalised.

**Handling note:** The RDC has not formally reached a position on whether Advisory Committee member names should be made public, citing safety concerns. Questions relating to this issue should be referred to the AHRC.

- The Department is working with the Department of Home Affairs, the National Indigenous Australians Agency, the Attorney-General’s Department and other relevant agencies on social cohesion initiatives to ensure a coordinated approach on this matter.

### **Universities' obligations to address racism**

- Higher education providers are governed by a range of legal frameworks which contribute towards addressing incidences of racism and ensure support, safety and care for students and staff.
- These include:
  - The Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021, specifically:
    - S2.3: Wellbeing and Safety
    - S2.4.3: Student Grievances and Complaints
    - S6.1.4: Academic freedom and freedom of speech
    - S6.2: Corporate Monitoring and Accountability
  - The Higher Education Standards Act 2003 (HESA) (S19-1):
    - S19-15: Quality requirements
    - S19-30 and S19-35: Fairness
    - S19-43: Fairness (Support for Student Policy)
    - S19-45: Fairness (Student grievance and review processes for complaints)
    - S19-115: Academic freedom and freedom of speech
- Universities are also subject to other Commonwealth and jurisdictional legislation to address racism and hate speech.
- The Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA) as the national regulator is responsible for the administration of and regulation of the sector against the Threshold Standards.
  - TEQSA continues to work closely with providers on the issue of student and staff safety to assess the appropriateness of provider responses.
  - TEQSA's work with universities on these issues is ongoing. Where non-compliance with the Threshold Standards is identified, it can take a range of enforcement options including placing conditions on a provider's registration or issuing an infringement notice.

- The establishment of the National Student Ombudsman, legislation introduced to the Australian Parliament on 11 September and passed by the House on 9 October 2024, is a key measure to address the needs of students on this matter.
  - It will provide a clear pathway for students to escalate complaints about the actions of their higher education provider, if they are unsatisfied with their provider's response.
  - It will have powers similar to a Royal Commission to examine a range of issues, including students' experiences of racism.
  - It is proposed to begin taking complaints from 1 February 2025.
- See also Attachment B - Initiatives which contribute to addressing racism and ensuring student and staff safety and support in higher education.

### ***Specific responses to address antisemitism***

#### *Adoption of the IHRA definition*

- As part of the Government's efforts to enhance the safety, support and wellbeing of students, the Government committed in 2021 to "embrace" the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) working definition of antisemitism.
  - As autonomous institutions, universities must determine their position on or acceptance of any definition.
  - Six universities have adopted the IHRA definition (4 with caveats). These are: La Trobe, Monash, Melbourne, Sunshine Coast, Macquarie and Wollongong.
  - The adoption of the IHRA definition of antisemitism is viewed by some universities as unnecessary and infringing on freedom of speech and academic freedom.
  - Group of Eight have developed a working group to consider the adoption of a definition of antisemitism, in consult with the Special Envoy to Combat Antisemitism, Ms Jillian Segal.

#### *Senate Inquiry into the establishment of a Commission of Inquiry into Antisemitism at Australian Universities*

- The Senate Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee released its inquiry report on 1 October 2024, noting university responses to incidents of antisemitism have been inadequate and more action is required by universities, specifically to address complaints processes.
- It recommended against establishing a Commission of Inquiry citing a commission of inquiry is not designed for addressing safety and racial and religious discrimination concerns at universities.

- Instead, the Senate Committee recommended:
  - Universities undertake an urgent review of their complaints processes, in collaboration with TEQSA and the Special Envoy to Combat Antisemitism.
  - The Attorney-General refer to the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Human Rights to lead an inquiry into antisemitism at Australian universities.
- The Government supports the referral of the matter of antisemitism at Australian universities to the Joint Parliamentary Committee on Human Rights.
- TEQSA is convening a series of roundtables with government, universities and student representatives to further progress regulatory work on the issue of racism at universities, including university complaints and grievance processes.

### *Special Envoys*

- The Australian Government has appointed 3 Special Envoys to support efforts to enhance community cohesion. These include:
  - Ms Jillian Segal AO, as Special Envoy to Combat Antisemitism
  - Mr Peter Khalil MP, as Special Envoy for Social Cohesion
  - Mr Aftab Malik, as Special Envoy to Combat Islamophobia.
- The Department met with Ms Segal on 21 October to discuss her engagement with universities in her role as Special Envoy on Antisemitism, and will meet with her again in November.
- Ms Segal has raised concerns about universities responses to instances of antisemitism since the events of 7 October and supports the establishment of a Commission of Inquiry into antisemitism at Australian universities.
  - Ms Segal is working closely with universities to explore opportunities to enhance support for Jewish students and staff, including improving complaints handling processes and establishing an Australian definition of antisemitism.
  - Many of Ms Segal's concerns are being addressed by existing and new Government initiatives, including legislation introduced to establish a National Student Ombudsman.
  - The Race Discrimination Commissioner and the Special Envoy agreed to explore whether they can assist each other with their respective responsibilities.

The Department has requested a meeting with Mr Aftab Malik, Special Envoy to Combat Islamophobia.

## **Sensitivities**

- There have been concerns raised, including from the Special Envoy to Combat Antisemitism Jillian Segal, Opposition Senators and the Jewish community, that Jewish-Australians do not have confidence in the AHRC or its ability to handle evidence over the course of the study appropriately.
- The Department of Education is working with Ms Segal and her Office, the Department of Home Affairs, the Attorney General's Department and the AHRC to encourage a collaborative approach to information sharing on related government priorities relevant to racism in universities.
- The AHRC is actively working to publicly address misinformation and mistrust.
  - It is continuing to engage with Jewish community representatives to build trust in the Commission.
  - In its interim report due mid-December, the ARHC will outline its approach for working in manner that ensuring confidentiality, impartiality and appropriate respect.
  - The AHRC has put in place safeguards for confidentiality, data protection, use of social media and personnel conduct.
  - It has also incorporated specific processes in its recruitment of staff for the Study to ensure impartiality and confidence.

## **Attachments**

Attachment A – Terms of Reference.

Attachment B – Government initiatives to address racism and ensure student support.

<b>Date Last Cleared</b>	28 October 2024
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***Respect at Uni: Study into Antisemitism, Islamophobia, Racism  
and the experience of First Nations people***

**Study into the prevalence and impact of racism in Australian Universities, with a particular focus on the incidence of antisemitism, Islamophobia and the experience of First Nations peoples.**

**Terms of Reference**

1. The Australian Human Rights Commission, **HAVING REGARD TO:**

- Its functions to:
  - promote an understanding and awareness of human rights, and the public discussion, of human rights in Australia (s.11(1)(g) AHRC Act);
  - undertake research and educational programs and other programs, on behalf of the Commonwealth, for the purpose of promoting human rights... (s.11(1)(h) AHRC Act);
  - report to the Minister as to the laws that should be made by the Parliament, or action that should be taken by the Commonwealth, on matters relating to human rights (s.11(1)(j) AHRC Act);
  - report to the Minister as to the action (if any) that, in the opinion of the Commission, needs to be taken by Australia in order to comply with human rights (s.11(1)(k) AHRC Act);
  - develop, conduct and foster research and educational programs and other programs for the purpose of: (i) combating racial discrimination and prejudices that lead to racial discrimination; (ii) promoting understanding, tolerance and friendship among racial and ethnic groups; and (iii) propagating the purposes and principles of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (s.20(c) RDA); and
  - promote an understanding and acceptance of, and compliance with, the Racial Discrimination Act 1975 (Cth) (s.20(b) RDA).
  
- Its duties to ensure that its functions are performed with regard to:
  - the indivisibility and universality of human rights; and
  - the principle that every person is free and equal in dignity and rights (s.10A(1) AHRC Act).
  
- Community concern about the rise in antisemitic and Islamophobic incidents in Australia, including in the months following 7 October 2023.

- Recommendation 33 of the Australian Universities Accord Final Report to undertake a comprehensive racism study, including a specific focus on the experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and staff.

**WILL exercise its functions to conduct a study into the Prevalence and Impact of Racism in Australian Universities, with a particular focus on the incidence of antisemitism, Islamophobia and the experience of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and staff (the Study).**

2. The Study will examine the prevalence and impact of racism in universities (including those with dual-sector operations), establish a baseline of the experiences of racism, and develop recommendations to foster a safe, respectful and inclusive environment for all university students and staff (see further Section: Scope below).
3. The Study will be evidence-based and underpinned by principles of cultural safety and trauma-informed practices, inclusion and consultation.
4. The Study will be led by the Race Discrimination Commissioner at the Australian Human Rights Commission, with support from the Department of Education and Attorney-General's Department. The National Indigenous Australians Agency will also provide advice to the Department of Education and AHRC on issues related to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.
5. The Study will provide an interim report to be delivered by **13 December 2024** and a final report by **13 June 2025**.

**Scope**

6. The Study will identify:
  - a. The prevalence, nature and experiences of racism including antisemitism and Islamophobia at universities (including those with dual-sector operations) for both staff and students, at the individual and systemic level.
  - b. Which cohorts of students and staff experience racism, including but not limited to the distinct incidences of antisemitism, Islamophobia, and the experience of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, people from negatively racialised backgrounds, and international students.
  - c. The unique context and circumstances of racism for different groups of students and staff, including a specific focus on the experiences of Jewish, Muslim and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and staff.
  - d. Any matter incidental to the above.
7. The Study will also identify:
  - a. Frameworks for prevention, including examples of best practice and other guidance available within national and international university contexts to strengthen sectoral and institutional anti-racism approaches and activities.

- b. The impact and effectiveness of the rules, policies and other arrangements of universities in relation to preventing, and addressing, racism on university campuses (physical and online).
  - c. Ways in which universities can increase transparency and accountability to their students, staff, communities and Government on activities to prevent and respond to racism and discrimination.
  - d. The identification and application of benchmarks for measuring sectoral performance and ongoing improvement.
  - e. The adequacy of legislative and regulatory mechanisms in supporting universities to respond to racism and discrimination.
8. In conducting the Study, the Commission will undertake a national online prevalence survey, as well as focus groups, consultations at universities and online, roundtables and meetings with key stakeholders, and research on domestic and international trends.
  9. The Study will include recommendations for reform to Government, universities and other relevant stakeholders to address racism and discrimination. Recommendations provided through the Study will be evidence-based, specific, measurable, implementable, realistic (e.g. in cost) and time-limited, with a focus on systemic and institutional reforms, practices and standards that can be implemented by universities.
  10. The Study will have regard to, and complement, the findings of previous and ongoing Australian Government reviews and processes, such as the AHRC's National Anti-Racism Strategy and the government's social cohesion efforts.

### **Consultation**

11. The Study will consult widely with stakeholders, including universities, students, staff, student and staff representative bodies and unions, community leaders and groups and governments. This will specifically include stakeholders reflecting the experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, Jewish, Muslim, negatively racialised, and international students, staff, and communities.
12. Such consultations will be conducted in a trauma informed and culturally safe manner.

### **Governance and advisory support**

#### Advisory Committee

13. The Commission will establish an Advisory Committee representing students, staff and community and cultural groups to provide advice and guidance on the Study's approach, methodology, consultation mechanisms, identification of best practice, analysis of findings and recommendations.
14. In establishing the Advisory Committee, the Race Discrimination Commissioner will consult the Minister for Education and the Attorney-General on composition of the Committee. The Minister

Australian Human Rights Commission  
for Education will consult with the Minister for Indigenous Australians regarding the membership of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples on the Committee.

15. It is anticipated that the Advisory Committee will meet at least 6 times during the Study.

#### Australian Government Senior Officials' Working Group

16. The Race Discrimination Commissioner will also convene a working group of senior Australian Government officials.
17. The Senior Officials' Working Group will discuss progress, emerging issues and key considerations. A focus will be to ensure the Study's objectives and deliverables are met by the agreed timelines. Other Government agencies may be invited as required.

#### **Timing**

18. The Commissioner will deliver interim findings of the Study to the Attorney-General and the Minister for Education by 13 December 2024, and a final report by 13 June 2025.
19. Interim findings will reflect stakeholder feedback, emerging themes and early issues for consideration. The final report will identify the prevalence and nature of racism in university settings based on the survey (to be conducted in early 2025), best practice and areas for reform, recommended actions and issues for further exploration.

**Dated: 30 July 2024**

## Initiatives which contribute to addressing racism and ensuring student and staff safety and support in higher education

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### Higher education legislative frameworks

- Higher education providers are governed by a range of legal frameworks to assure their governance, integrity and quality.
- The Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021:
  - S2.3: Wellbeing and Safety – encompasses a series of general and specific facets of a provider’s operations aimed at the promotion of safety and wellbeing.
  - S2.4.3: Student Grievances and Complaints – seeks to ensure students have access to mechanisms that resolve grievances effectively, at reasonable cost and with appropriate protection for complainants from breach of confidentiality or reprisal.
  - S6.1.4: Academic freedom and freedom of speech – ensures the governing body takes steps to develop and maintain an institutional environment in which freedom of speech and academic freedom are upheld and protected.
  - S6.2: Corporate Monitoring and Accountability – specifies a series of critical accountabilities the provider must be able to demonstrate, and that the governing body, as part of its governance role, must be able to satisfy itself are being met.
- The Higher Education Standards Act 2003 (HESA):
  - S19-15: Quality requirements – requires higher education providers to meet the quality requirements of the Threshold Standards.
  - S19-30 and S19-35: Fairness – requirements to treat students fairly and afford equality of opportunity.
  - S19-43: Fairness – requirements for a specific Support for Student Policy that deals with the support provided to the provider’s students to assist them to successfully complete the units of study in which they are enrolled.
  - S19-45: Fairness – requirements for providers to ensure appropriate grievance and review processes for student complaints and maintain appropriate mechanisms for students to complain about a providers’ decision.
  - S19-115: Academic freedom and freedom of speech – requirements for providers to uphold academic freedom and to meet the definition of academic freedom.

## National Student Ombudsman

- On 11 September 2024 legislation was introduced to establish a National Student Ombudsman as a national complaint handling body for higher education students.
- The establishment of the NSO implements Action 1 of the *Action Plan Addressing Gender-based Violence in Higher Education and rec 18b of the Australian Universities Accord Final Report*. In the 2024-25 Budget, the Government provided \$19.4 million over two years to establish the NSO as a function of the Commonwealth Ombudsman.
- The NSO will provide a clear pathway for students to escalate complaints about the actions of their higher education provider, if they are unsatisfied with their provider's response. It will bring together complaint handling arrangements for university students that are currently administered by State and Territory Ombudsmen into a single, consistent, expert mechanism, with the power to:
  - handle and investigate student complaints about the actions of their providers, including in relation to student safety, welfare, course and student loan administration, and reasonable adjustments for students
  - make recommendations to providers about actions that should be taken to resolve a complaint and monitor providers' implementation of recommendations
  - work cooperatively with regulators to identify and respond to systemic issues and promote best practice complaints handling in the sector
  - offer a restorative engagement process between a student and their provider where appropriate
  - bring parties together to resolve complaints through an alternative dispute resolution process where appropriate.
- The NSO will have strong investigative powers, similar to those of a Royal Commission, including:
  - making preliminary inquiries to determine whether a matter should be investigated
  - requiring a person or provider to provide information, documents or other records relevant to an investigation
  - entering the premises of a higher education provider
  - requiring a person to attend a specified place and answer questions.
- The NSO will begin taking student complaints from 1 February 2025, subject to passage of legislation. The Australian Government

continues to work with state and territory governments, ombudsmen in each jurisdiction, complaint handling bodies and stakeholders to implement the National Student Ombudsman.

- The Ombudsman will report on its operations and functional performance in a public annual report. The report will include observations about any trends and broader issues arising from complaints to the Ombudsman, as well as improvements that higher education providers can make.

### **Support for Students Policy**

- The Support for Student Policy requirements commenced on 1 January 2024, further strengthening the obligations of higher education providers to support students who experience antisemitism and other forms of racism.
- Since 1 April 2024, providers' Support for Students Policy must meet the detailed requirements set out in the Higher Education Provider Guidelines (s49A).
- Providers' Support for Student Policies must include information detailing academic and non-academic supports specific to the students' individual needs. For issues of student safety and wellbeing, this includes:
  - how the provider delivers, and how students are able to access, non-academic support, including but not limited to, mental health and wellbeing support and career planning and employability support
  - the provider's crisis and critical harm response arrangements for students and instructions to students on how to report incidents
  - the provider's specific academic and non-academic supports for students who have experienced family and domestic violence, harassment, sexual harm, or other traumatic events.
- Under the Higher Education Provider Guidelines, providers must evaluate their Support for Students Policy annually and provide an annual report to the Department of Education on the implementation of the policy requirements.
- Providers are required to submit an annual report to the Department on the implementation of their policy, with the first report due on 1 March 2025.

### ***Academic Freedom - The Model Code and French Review***

- The 'Model Code' was developed in 2019 by the Hon Robert French AC, former Chief Justice of the High Court of Australia, as a voluntary code to protect freedom of speech and academic freedom at Australian universities.
- While the Model Code protects the lawful speech of students and staff, it does not protect against speech that is prohibited under state or Commonwealth legislation, including hate, antisemitic or Islamophobic speech.
- In April 2019, the former Education Minister Dan Tehan wrote to Vice-Chancellors and CEOs encouraging higher education providers to consider adopting the Model Code as policy on a voluntary basis. In 2020, Professor Emeritus Sally Walker AM evaluated the extent to which universities' policies align with the principles of the Model Code.
- On 15 March 2021, the Australian Parliament passed amendments to HESA (as recommended by Mr French in response to his review and development of the Model Code) to:
  - replace the term 'free intellectual inquiry' with 'freedom of speech and academic freedom'.
  - add a specific definition of academic freedom.
- All universities have 'mostly' or 'fully' adopted the Model Code as internal governance policy or have aligned their policies to it.

### ***Hate speech and anti-doxing legislation***

- In September 2024, the Attorney-General introduced the *Criminal Code Amendment (Hate Crimes) Bill 2024* to create new criminal offences and strengthen existing laws against hate speech.
- The proposed new offences build upon the laws and increased penalties passed last year to ensure that glorifying and praising acts of terrorism are serious criminal offences under commonwealth law.
- The *Privacy and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024*, introduced in September, introduces new criminal offences to outlaw doxing, the malicious release of personal data online.
- The Bill will impose a maximum penalty of 6 years' imprisonment for the malicious use of personal data, and a more serious penalty of 7 years' imprisonment, where a person or group is targeted because of their race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, intersex status, disability, nationality or national or ethnic origin.



**Issue:** Universities Accord (Student Support and Other Measures) Bill 2024  
**PBS Pg No.** 13, 22-23, 57  
**Contact:** Ben Rimmer  
 Ph: s 22  
 Deputy Secretary

### Budget – Lowering the indexation of HELP debts

Financial year	2023–24	2024–25	2025–26	2026–27	2027–28	Total
Total Budget Allocation	-22.080	-105.271	-26.659	-39.780	-45.875	-239.665
Education	-18.922	-90.801	-16.986	-29.365	-35.363	-191.437
DEWR	-2.899	-13.763	-9.639	-10.415	-10.511	-47.227
Services Aus	-0.259	-0.247	0.000	0.000	0.000	- 0.506
ATO	0.000	-0.460	-0.034	0.000	0.000	-0.494

### Budget – Commonwealth Prac Payment (CPP)

Financial year	2023–24	2024–25	2025–26	2026–27	2027–28	Total
Budget Allocation		\$3.63	\$104.12	\$121.34	\$140.11	\$369.19

### Budget – FEE-FREE Uni Ready Courses (FFUR)

Financial year	2023–24 (millions)	2024–25 (millions)	2025–26 (millions)	2026–27 (millions)	2027–28 (millions)	Total (millions)
Budget Allocation	0.00	42.2	90.6	103.6	113.9	<b>350.3</b>

### Key Points

- The Universities Accord (Student Support and Other Measures) Bill 2024 (the Bill) was introduced in Parliament on 15 August 2024. It was passed by the House of Representatives on 10 October 2024 and is currently awaiting debate in the Senate.
- Amendments to 3 sets of Guidelines are required to implement measures included in the Bill.
  - SSAF: additional requirements for student-led organisations will be provided in the *Higher Education Support (Student Services, Amenities, Representation and Advocacy) Guidelines 2022*
  - CPP: criteria will be provided in the *Higher Education Support (Other Grants) Guidelines 2022*

### ***FFUR: renaming in the Commonwealth Grant Scheme Guidelines 2020***

- It is a matter for Government as to when the Guidelines be made publicly available. They are not required for debate.
- The Guidelines are subordinate legislation and are disallowable instruments.

### ***Senate Education and Employment Legislation Committee Inquiry***

- Coalition Senators provided additional comments in the report in which it noted that the department advised the Committee that responses to questions taken on notice during the public hearing would not be provided until 11 October 2024, after the reporting date.
  - The public hearing was held on Tuesday, 24 September 2024, with responses to QoNs due less than a week away on 30 September 2024.
  - The department received 44 QoNs.
- Greens Senators also provided additional comments in which they made 3 recommendations:
  - Reverse the Job Ready Graduate (JRG) scheme.
  - Wipe all student debt and make university and TAFE fee-free.
  - CPP to be implemented early and expanded significantly to other disciplines.
- The Government response to the Committee's report is currently being prepared and is due to be tabled within 3 months or by 3 January 2025 – whichever is earlier.

### ***Regulatory Impact Statements***

- Each of the relevant Schedules to the Bill (amendments related to the Student Services and Amenities Fees (Schedule 2), FEE-FREE Uni Ready (Schedule 3) and the Commonwealth Prac Payment (Schedule 4) were considered by the Office of Impact Assessment (OIA) during the policy development stage.
- OIA confirmed that a detailed impact analysis was not required.
- Proposed amendments to the Guidelines to support the relevant provisions in the Bill for SSAF, FFUR and CPP have also been considered by the OIA, which confirmed that a detailed impact analysis was not required.

## Media

- There has been no recent media specifically in relation to the Bill. Media in relation to specific measures has been listed in the relevant hot topic brief on that topic, including:
  - Commonwealth Prac Payments (SB24-000373).
  - HELP Indexation (SB24-000378).
  - FEE-FREE Uni Ready (SB24-000376).

<b>Date Last Cleared</b>	14 October 2024
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**Issue:** University Study Hubs  
**PBS Pg No.** 55  
**Contact:** Ben Rimmer  
Ph: s 22  
Deputy Secretary

## Budget – Regional University Study Hubs

Total Program Funding (existing and new hubs)

Financial year	2023–24	2024–25	2025–26	2026–27	2027–28	Total
Budget Allocation	22.5	20.2	28.3	26.2	26.6	<b>123.8</b>

Accord Implementation Commitments (new hubs only)

Financial year	2023–24	2024–25	2025–26	2026–27	2027–28	Total
Budget Allocation	4.6	4.7	12.8	9.8	10.1	<b>42.0</b>

Note: New Hubs funding from 2023–24 to 2026–27 in MYEFO 2023. 2027–28 funding amounts for new Hubs not publicly available, as program funding shown as single line item in PBS.

Note: Departmental expenditure and Commonwealth Supported Places associated with the program are not included in PBS/MYEFO against the program and not included here.

## Budget – Suburban University Study Hubs

Financial year	2023–24	2024–25	2025–26	2026–27	2027–28	Total
Budget Allocation	0	11.8	8.1	8.4	8.6	36.9

## Key Points

### **Recent Government policy and commitment**

- Priority Action 1 of the Australian University Accord (Accord) Interim Report (July 2023) recommended extending visible, local access to tertiary education by creating more Regional University Study Hubs and to establish a similar concept for suburban/metropolitan locations.
- In response, on 18 July 2023, the Hon Jason Clare MP, Minister for Education, announced \$66.9 million to double the number of University Study Hubs, including expanding the concept to the outer suburbs of our major cities for the first time.
- A comparison of the Regional and Suburban University Study Hubs Programs is at [Attachment A](#).

## **Regional University Study Hubs**

### *Existing Regional University Study Hubs*

- Regional University Study Hubs are community-based organisations in regional and remote locations that provide facilities, internet access and academic skills/wellbeing support for students studying at any Australian tertiary institution.
- Regional Hubs are able to be established in:
  - areas defined as ‘inner regional’, ‘outer regional’, ‘remote’, and ‘very remote’ as per the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Australian Statistical Geography Standard (ASGS) Remoteness Classification.
  - Darwin and Hobart as they are classified by the ASGS as ‘inner regional’, noting they are less competitive given their relative access to a greater number of education offerings. Darwin and Hobart are also eligible for Suburban Hubs (see below).
- **41** Regional University Study Hubs are already operational across Australia (except ACT). 5 additional hubs are expected to be operational by Semester 1, 2025, bringing the total number to **46**.
- As of May 2024 (latest program data), the 33 Regional University Study Hubs in operation were supporting **almost 4,400** (4,390) students.
  - 42% identified as first in family.
  - 11% identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander.

### *New Regional University Study Hubs*

- Up to 20 new Regional University Study Hubs were announced in response to the Accord Interim Report and are being delivered across **2 funding rounds**.
- The first of these funding rounds (**Cohort 4**) was open from 28 September to 15 December 2023 and received 34 applications. On 25 March 2024, Minister Clare announced 12 successful applicants in this round, including funding to support 2 existing Country Universities Centres (CUC) in New South Wales.
- A second funding round to establish up to 10 further Regional University Study Hubs (**Cohort 5**) opened on 21 August and closed on 18 October 2024.
- **43 applications** were received and are being assessed, with an announcement expected in early 2025. Applications were received from every state and territory, except the ACT.

- In this funding round, as a trial, universities are eligible to apply for funding to establish a Regional University Study Hub in collaboration with a regional or remote community.
  - This responds to the Accord Final Report, which recommended further expansion of the program, including allowing eligibility for existing universities to host a hub (recommendation 39c).
  - Similarly, the Regional Education Commissioner's 2023 Annual Report supported this, noting that housing hubs on existing regional campuses may present a cost-effective way to expand access to support for students who are completing their studies online but are not studying with a local provider.
  - Consistent with the foundational policy intent of the program, University operated hubs must be community-embedded and provider agnostic (open to all students regardless of the provider a student is enrolled with).
    - Like other hubs, regular progress reporting and student registration data will be required to be provided to the department, including which institutions students are studying at.
  - To monitor and measure success, the department undertakes a range of activities through regular reporting and analysis.
- Of the 43 applications received, **7** were submitted by universities.
- This funding **round also includes a new requirement for 'New Hubs' only**. Existing facilities which provide similar or equivalent services to a Regional University Study Hub (through other sources of income such as State Government funding) are not eligible to apply.
  - Universities can apply to use an existing, small regional university campus to host a Regional University Study Hub. The applicant must demonstrate that the Hub will provide a **new offering**, separate to the services currently provided by the university.

## **Suburban University Study Hubs**

- The program aims to bring more tertiary education opportunities to outer metropolitan areas by providing campus style study spaces, as well as in-person academic skills/wellbeing support to students studying at any Australian institution.
- Hubs will only be established in a location that will serve one or more locations classified by the ABS as Quintiles 1 (Q1) and 2 (Q2) in Statistical Area Level 2 (SA2), according to the Index of Relative Socio-Economic Advantage and Disadvantage (IRSAD) which is one of the Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA).
  - SA2 generally have a population between 3,000 and 25,000 with an average of about 10,000 people. They usually relate to suburbs.
  - Q1 is the most disadvantaged (20%) according to the SEIFA index. Q2 is the next most disadvantaged 20%. Quintile 5 (Q5) is the most advantaged.
- Where 2 applications are assessed to be of equivalent quality, priority will be given to the applicant that serves one or more SA2 locations in the bottom 20% (Q1) according to the SEIFA IRSAD index.
- Eligible areas include those in:
  - A location categorised as a Major City of Australia under the ABS Remoteness Structure, or Greater Darwin or Greater Hobart under the ABS Greater Capital City Statistical Areas.
  - A SA2 classified as either quintile 1 or 2 according to the ABS SEIFA Index of IRASD.
- A competitive application process was held between 22 April and 29 July 2024.
- Applications were assessed against the eligibility criteria and the key considerations for assessment by a panel of senior executives from the Department of Education and the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations.
- Successful applicants will be announced shortly.
- Successful Hubs are expected to be operational during Semester 1, 2025.
- Future rounds are under consideration but have not yet been determined.

## Media

- ***Sparks fly over Australian bush study centres, Times Higher Education, 21 October 2024***

Quotes UTS equity researcher Danielle Keenan, also an employee of Country Universities Centre (CUC), in raising concerns about the Government's decision to allow universities to apply to operate Regional University Study Hubs.

- ***The case for community-led Regional University Study Hubs, UTS News, 21 October 2024***

Joint article from Danielle Keenan (see above) and Amy Persson, Interim Pro Vice Chancellor, UTS, voicing similar concerns as article mentioned above.

- ***Bringing uni closer to home: Applications open for more Regional University Study Hubs, 21 August 2024***

Joint Media Release from the Hon Jason Clare MP and Senator the Hon Anthony Chisholm announcing the opening of the 2024 (Cohort 5) funding round.

## Attachments

Attachment A – Comparison of Regional and Suburban University Study Hub Programs

Attachment B – Suburban University Study Hubs 2024 Application Round

Attachment C – Regional University Study Hubs Cohort 5 and 4

<b>Date Last Cleared</b>	28 October 2024
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## RUSH and SUSH Program Comparison

	Regional University Study Hubs (RUSH)	Suburban University Study Hubs (SUSH)
<b>Key Aims</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hubs provide open access and support to <b>any</b> student enrolled at <b>any</b> tertiary education provider in Australia.</li> <li>• Improve tertiary education <b>participation</b> and <b>outcomes</b> for underrepresented students.</li> <li>• Increase aspiration for higher education.</li> <li>• Meet a demonstrated gap in support.</li> <li>• Complement, rather than replace, existing and planned university investments and activities.</li> </ul>	
	<p><b>Improve access</b> by supporting <b>regional and remote</b> students (typically studying by distance) to stay in their local community.</p>	<p><b>Reduce barriers</b> to tertiary study for underrepresented and educationally disadvantaged (including low SES, First Nations, disability) students from <b>outer suburban areas</b>.</p>
<b>Eligible locations</b>	<p><b>Regional or remote areas</b> of Australia as per the ABS Australian Statistical Geography Standard (ASGS) Remoteness classifications<sup>1</sup>. (Note: includes Hobart and Darwin classified by the ASGS as ‘inner regional’ who are also eligible for Suburban Hubs)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <b>Major Cities of Australia</b><sup>2</sup> including Greater Hobart/Darwin; <b>and</b></li> <li>○ Statistical Area Level 2<sup>3</sup> classified as <b>SEIFA Quintile 1 or 2</b><sup>4</sup> as defined by the Australian Bureau of Statistics.</li> </ul>
<b>Eligible funding recipients</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide sufficient evidence to satisfy the department that their organisation is, or can become, a <b>body corporate</b>.</li> <li>• Must satisfy a ‘<b>fit and proper person</b>’ requirement.</li> </ul>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Must be ‘<b>community owned or based</b>’ - must have a governing body that draws members from the local community in which it operates or from the local community that it serves.</li> <li>• For Cohort 5, <b>universities are eligible to apply as a trial</b><sup>5</sup>.</li> <li>• For Cohorts 1-4, universities were not eligible to apply.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All organisations eligible for funding under the RUSH program including community organisations and councils.</li> <li>• In addition, <b>Tertiary education providers</b>, including universities, TAFEs and VET providers are eligible to apply.</li> </ul>
<b>‘New hubs’ requiremen</b>	<p>Funding is only available for new Hubs. Existing facilities providing similar or equivalent services are ineligible to apply.</p>	

<sup>1</sup> Areas defined as ‘inner regional’, ‘outer regional’, ‘remote’, and ‘very remote’ [Remoteness Areas | Australian Bureau of Statistics \(abs.gov.au\)](https://abs.gov.au/remoteness-areas)

<sup>2</sup> [Remoteness Areas | Australian Bureau of Statistics \(abs.gov.au\)](https://abs.gov.au/remoteness-areas)

<sup>3</sup> [Statistical Area Level 2 | Australian Bureau of Statistics \(abs.gov.au\)](https://abs.gov.au/statistical-area-level-2)

<sup>4</sup> Bottom 40 per cent of scores for the most disadvantaged areas (Quintile 1 or Quintile 2) [Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas \(SEIFA\), Australia, 2021 | Australian Bureau of Statistics \(abs.gov.au\)](https://abs.gov.au/socio-economic-indexes-for-areas)

<sup>5</sup> Consistent with the foundational policy intent of the RUSH program, universities will need to have an advisory board or committee in place to oversee the hub which includes a range of relevant community members. Additionally, a key requirement of the program is that hubs must support all students undertaking tertiary study at any Australian provider.

<b>t</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Universities can apply to use an existing, small regional university campus to host a RUSH, where they can demonstrate the Hub will provide a new offering, separate to the services currently being provided.</li></ul>	
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### ***Suburban University Study Hubs 2024 Application Round***

- A competitive application process ran between 22 May to 29 July 2024 (approximately 10 weeks).
- In total, 19 applications were received.
- Applications were assessed against eligibility and assessment criteria outlined in an Application Guide by a panel of senior staff from the Department of Education and the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations.
  - Applications were received from the following jurisdictions:
    - Queensland: 3 applications
    - New South Wales: 5 applications
    - South Australia: 3 applications
    - Victoria: 4 applications
    - Western Australia: 3 applications
    - Tasmania: 1 application
  - Applications were received from:
    - Universities: 4 applications
    - TAFE: 2 applications
    - Local Councils: 5 applications
    - Community organisations: 8 applications
- Successful applicants will be announced shortly.
- Successful Hubs are expected to be operational during Semester 1, 2025.
- Future rounds are under consideration but have not yet been determined.

## ***New Regional University Study Hubs***

### Cohort 5

- Applications for Cohort 5 were open between 21 August and 18 October 2024 (approximately 8.5 weeks).
  - 46 applications were received from the following jurisdictions:
    - New South Wales: 14 applications
    - Queensland: 11 applications
    - Western Australia: 6 applications
    - Victoria: 5 applications
    - Tasmania: 2 applications
    - South Australia: 2 applications
    - Northern Territory: 2 applications
    - External Territory: 1 application
  - 7 of the applications were from universities.
- Applications will be assessed against eligibility and assessment criteria outlined in an Application Guide by a panel of Senior departmental staff and the Regional Education Commissioner, the Hon Fiona Nash.
- An announcement regarding successful applicants is expected in early 2025.

### Cohort 4

- Applications for Cohort 4 were open between 28 September and 15 December 2023 (approximately 11 weeks).
  - 34 applications were received from the following jurisdictions:
    - Queensland: 12 applications
    - New South Wales: 6 applications
    - South Australia: 3 applications
    - Victoria: 4 applications
    - Western Australia: 3 applications
    - Tasmania: 3 applications
    - Northern Territory: 2 applications
    - External Territory: 1 application
- Applications were assessed against eligibility and assessment criteria outlined in an Application Guide by a panel of senior departmental staff and the Regional Education Commissioner, the Hon Fiona Nash.
- On 25 March 2024, Minister Clare announced the 12 Regional University Study Hubs funded in Cohort 4, including funding to support two existing Country Universities Centres located in New South Wales.
- Successful hubs:
  - Garrthlala Bush University Study Hub (East Arnhem Land, Northern Territory)

- Fleurieu Regional University Study Hub (Victor Harbor, South Australia)
- CUC Southern Downs (Warwick, Queensland)
- CUC Western Downs (Chinchilla, Queensland)
- Innisfail Regional University Study Hub (Innisfail, Queensland)
- CUC RAPAD Central West Queensland (Longreach, Barcaldine, Blackall, Winton, Boulia, Bedourie, Birdsville and Jundah, Queensland)
- Study King Island (King Island, Tasmania)
- Katanning Regional University Study Hub (Katanning, Western Australia)
- Ashburton Regional University Study Hub (Tom Price and Onslow, Western Australia)
- Gippsland East Study Hub Outreach (Mallacoota, Orbost, Omeo, Heyfield and Yarram, Victoria)
- CUC Mudgee Region (Mudgee, New South Wales)
- CUC Cowra Region (Cowra, New South Wales)
- Successful Hubs jurisdiction breakdown:

State	Successful Hubs in Cohort 4
QLD	4
NSW	2
WA	2
SA	1
VIC	1
TAS	1
NT	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>12</b>

- The department has established Conditions of Grant with all of the successful applicants. Seven of the 12 hubs are currently operational, with the remaining five expected to be operational by Semester 1, 2025.
- Unsuccessful applicants were offered an opportunity for feedback on their application. Feedback was provided to 17 applicants.

# Schools

## Hot Topic Briefs

1	Better and Fairer Schools Agreement	SB24-000359
2	Funding – Recurrent and capital	SB24-000360
3	Funding – Building Boarding Schools on Country (BBSoc)	SB24-000361
4	Priority cohorts – First Nations Students	SB24-000362
5	Priority cohorts – Regional and remote students	SB24-000363
6	Priority cohorts – Students with Disability	SB24-000364
7	Respectful Relationships Education	SB24-000365
8	Student Wellbeing, Anti-bullying and Social Cohesion	SB24-000366
9	Teacher Workforce	SB24-000367

<b>Issue:</b>	<b>Better and Fairer Schools Agreement</b>
<b>PBS Pg No.</b>	40-41 (Program 1.5 – Early Learning and Schools Support Performance Measures)
<b>PAES Pg No.</b>	32 (National Schools Reform)
<b>MYEFO Pg No.</b>	308-311 (Quality Schools funding)
<b>Contact:</b>	<b>Meg Brighton</b> Ph: <a href="#">s 22</a> Deputy Secretary

## Key Points

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

- The Better and Fairer Schools Agreement (BFSA) is a joint agreement between the Australian Government and jurisdictions to lift student outcomes across Australia.
- The Australian Government is working closely with state and territory governments to put all schools on a pathway to 100% of their Schooling Resource Standard (SRS) funding level, and to tie additional funding to reforms that will improve student outcomes.
- As at 21 October 2024, Western Australia, the Northern Territory and Tasmania have signed the BFSA 10-year Heads of Agreement (see further detail below). As of 30 October 2024, all 3 of these jurisdictions have signed a Bilateral Agreement.
- On 30 July 2024 the Australian Government offered jurisdictions the option of a 10-year BFSA Heads of Agreement or a 1-year BFSA Heads of Agreement, which did not include any additional Commonwealth funding.
- On 23 October 2024, a further ‘streamlined’ version of the 1-year BFSA (again not including any additional Commonwealth funding) was offered to NSW, SA, Qld and Vic for their consideration.
- The Australian Government is continuing to negotiate with all remaining jurisdictions.
- A jurisdiction cannot receive Commonwealth recurrent schools funding (for government and non-government schools) if they do not have a signed HoA and Bilateral agreement in place.
  - Jurisdictions that sign before 29 November 2024 will receive the first 2025 payment on 7 January 2025.
  - Jurisdictions that sign before 2 January 2025 will receive the first 2025 payment on 21 January 2025.
  - Jurisdictions that sign before 15 January 2025 will receive the first 2025 payment on 7 February 2025. The next viable payment date is 21 February 2025.

- Discussions between the Australian Government and jurisdictions on the BFSA are confidential. Disclosure of information could prejudice negotiations.
- For further information on recurrent school funding see [SB24-000360](#).

## **Key aspects of the 10-year Heads of Agreement**

- The BFSA commits all parties that sign to 3 core elements: National Reform Directions, National Enabling Initiatives and Improvement Measures.

### **1. National Reform Directions**

- Education Ministers agreed the BFSA will focus on 3 key outcomes to ensure all young Australians access an education which supports them to reach their full potential: **equity and excellence; wellbeing** for learning and engagement; and a strong and sustainable **workforce**.
- The 10 National Reform Directions will help all students reach their learning potential, increase educational equity and improve workforce outcomes. These include:
  - Year 1 Phonics Check and early years of schooling numeracy check to identify students who need additional support.
  - Evidence-based teaching and targeted and intensive supports, including small group tutoring, to help students with additional learning needs.
  - Better connections between schools and other non-school services to support students to come to school ready to learn.
  - Initiatives that support student wellbeing for learning and engagement, for example in-school wellbeing coordinators or access to school counsellors.
  - Providing teachers and school leaders with greater access to high-quality and evidence-based professional learning for teachers and school leaders and the provision of quality-assured curriculum resources developed in partnership with the teaching profession.
  - Reforms to improve teacher and school leader wellbeing to ensure educators can perform their role effectively and better support student wellbeing and student outcomes.
  - Initiatives to increase teacher attraction and retention, including actions which improve diversity of the teacher and school leader workforce such as strengthening Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural safety.



## **2. National Enabling Initiatives**

- National Enabling Initiatives are specific activities that require collaboration between all governments to be achieved.
- There are 5 National Enabling Initiatives which have been designed to support implementation of reforms and future education policy.
- The Australian Government will lead implementation of these policy initiatives, working in partnership with states and territories, the non-government school sector and other key education stakeholders such as First Nations peak bodies and education agencies.

## **3. Improvement Measures**

- All governments recognise the joint ambition for improving student outcomes and signatories have agreed a small number of national level targets in this agreement which demonstrate this ambition.
- These targets align with the 3 priority areas and include:
  - By 2030, increase the proportion of students with Year 12 (or equivalent) certification by 7.5 percentage points, compared with 2022 results.
  - By 2031, increase the proportion of people (age 20-24) attaining Year 12 or equivalent qualification to 96%.
  - By 2030, in the NAPLAN Reading and Numeracy, of Years 3, 5, 7 and 9: reduce the proportion of all students in the Needs Additional Support proficiency level by 10%; increase the proportion of all students in the Strong and Exceeding proficiency level by 10%; and increase the proportion of priority equity cohort students in the Strong and Exceeding proficiency levels.
  - By 2030, increase the Student Attendance Rate, nationally (for all students), to 91.4% (2019 level), and increase to 2019 levels for priority equity cohorts.
  - By 2035, increase the engagement rate (completed or still enrolled) for domestic students enrolled in initial teacher education by 10 percentage points, including for domestic students enrolled in initial teacher education who identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander.

## Q&A

### ***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 and an implementation 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 Prime Minister and Minister for Education have publicly stated the Australian Government has put **\$16 billion** in extra funding on the table for public schools. This is the biggest ever investment in public schools by the Australian Government.
- To reach full and fair funding the Commonwealth will contribute, and the states and territories need to contribute too.
- The 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.
- Western Australia, the Northern Territory and Tasmania have all agreed to contribute additional funding to support their public schools reaching 100% of the SRS.
- The Australian Government will continue to negotiate with the remaining jurisdictions on the terms already offered.

### ***Will states/territories be allowed to retain the ability to include 4% of non-recurrent costs?***

- Funding arrangements for the Australian and state and territory governments will be negotiated prior to the signing of a bilateral agreement.
- Negotiations on additional expenditure will take into consideration the specific context and fiscal circumstances of each jurisdiction and will recognise their broader investment in education.

*If asked about WA, NT or TAS and the BFSA*

- Western Australia, the Northern Territory and Tasmania have all retained their inclusions in their BFSA bilateral agreements, with the Northern Territory able to include their regulatory authorities in line with other jurisdictions.

**Why are jurisdictions on different trajectories to reach 100% of the SRS?**

- As part of the BFSA, the Australian Government will negotiate the timing of funding increases for additional investment with each state and territory. The funding is based on co-contribution model, with matched investment agreed with states and territories (with the exception of the Australian Capital Territory, who are already at 100% of the SRS for government schools).
- The different trajectories and the agreed timing of funding increases will take into consideration the specific context and fiscal environment of each jurisdiction, including the starting SRS shares and the matched investment agreed by each jurisdictions.
- For example, the specific circumstances of the Northern Territory, including the significant concentrations of disadvantage, with the funding needed for a public school student in the Northern Territory almost double the national average needed, means a different arrangement is required.

**Signed Agreements: Northern Territory, Western Australia and Tasmania**

*Northern Territory*

- On 31 July 2024, the Northern Territory became the first jurisdiction to sign up to the BFSA by signing both the 10-year Heads of Agreement and associated Bilateral Agreement.
- This agreement will see government schools in the Northern Territory on a pathway to 100% of the SRS by 2029.
- The Australian Government will increase its share of funding to public schools from 20% to 40% of the SRS by 2029, and the Northern Territory will increase its funding share to 60% by 2029.
- Over 2025 to 2029, the Australian Government will invest an additional estimated \$736.7 million in Northern Territory government schools. The Northern Territory has committed to investing an additional estimated \$350 million.

### *Western Australia*

- Western Australia signed the BFSA on 3 September 2024, including the 10-year Heads of Agreement and Bilateral Agreement.
- This agreement will see government schools in the state funded to 100% of the SRS by 2026.
- The Australian Government will increase its share of funding from 20% to 22.5% of the SRS by 2026, matched by an increase in Western Australia's contribution from 75% to 77.5% by 2026.
- Over 2025 to 2029, the Australian Government will invest an additional \$785.4 million in government schools in Western Australia. Western Australia has committed to investing an equivalent amount.

### *Tasmania*

- Tasmania signed on to the BFSA on 25 September 2024, signing the 10-year Heads of Agreement. Tasmania signed a bilateral agreement on 30 October 2024.
- This agreement will see government schools in Tasmania funded to 100% of the SRS in 2026.
- The Australian Government will increase its share of funding from 20% to 22.5% of the SRS by 2026, and Tasmania will increase its funding share from 74.31% to 77.5% by 2026.
- Over 2025 to 2029, the Australian Government will invest an additional \$153.5 million in government schools in Tasmania.

### **Legislation update**

- The Better and Fairer Schools (Funding and Reform) Bill (the Bill) will implement the Australian Government's commitment to increase its SRS share for government schools in line with the pathways agreed with jurisdictions.
- The Bill will:
  - clarify the definition of an agreement
  - require the Australian Government share for government schools to be set in regulations
  - ensure that the Australian Government share for government schools cannot be set below 40% for a school in the Northern Territory from 2029 onwards or 20% otherwise and that, once set higher, the share cannot be reduced without further legislative amendments

- allow different Australian Government shares to be set for government schools in different jurisdictions to reflect the varied final share and pathways negotiated with jurisdictions through the BFSA
- increase transparency and accountability, including through an annual statement to Parliament by the Australian Government Minister for Education.
- A targeted consultation process on the exposure draft of the Bill was undertaken with jurisdictions, non-government school representatives and First Nations representative bodies.
- The Bill was introduced into Parliament on 10 October 2024.
- On 10 October 2024, the Bill was sent to the Senate Education and Employment Legislation Committee for inquiry and report by 18 November 2024.
- The Australian Government will proceed with developing and introducing the regulations to set the Australian Government share for government schools following the passage of the Bill.

## Media

- ***Labor has proposed a public school funding boost – states, crossbenchers and the Greens want more. What happens now?, The Guardian, 21 September 2024***

Independent senators David Pocock, Fatima Payman and Jacqui Lambie have teamed with the Greens to support calls from NSW, Qld, Tas, Vic and SA that Commonwealth increase its SRS share offer to 25%. Senator Penny Allman-Payne said it was “perverse” that the Federal Government left the “heavy lifting to states on something so vital”.

- ***States rebel over federal funding for public schools, The Australian, 21 August 2024***

State education ministers (NSW, VIC, SA, QLD and ACT), joined the Australian Education Union (AEU), Public Education Association leaders, and teachers at Parliament House to call on the Federal Government to increase its SRS share offer from 22.5% to 25%.

- ***‘Disgraceful’: warning over school funding, The Age, 1 August 2024***

Leading education advocate and former Productivity Commission economist, Trevor Cobbold, stated the “disgraceful squabbling” between state and federal threatens to adversely affect Australian students.

- **Labor’s school *reform* ‘agreement’ delivers a funding war and no national reforms, Statement by Senator Sarah Henderson, 31 July 2024**

Senator Henderson criticised the progress of the BFSA negotiations and accused the Federal Government of starting a “school funding war” and failing to deliver national school reform. Senator Henderson acknowledges the draft agreement includes important reforms (e.g. evidence-based teaching, phonics tests and improved student attendance and performance targets), but states these reforms are “light on detail and inadequate”. The draft agreement also provides minimal focus on improving the national curriculum or addressing classroom disruption.

<b>Date Last Cleared</b>	31 October 2024
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**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  
**PAES Pg No.** Pg 27 and 31  
**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	<b>126,427.4</b>
Committed	<b>28,763.8</b>	<b>29,791.5</b>	<b>30,985.0</b>	<b>32,205.4</b>	<b>33,445.5</b>	<b>126,427.4</b>
<i>Schools Upgrade Fund (government and non-government) (Program 1.5)</i>						
Education *	3.6	-	-	-	-	-
Treasury *	224.9	-	-	-	-	-
Committed	<b>228.5</b>	-	-	-	-	-
<i>Capital Grants Program (non-government) (Program 1.4)</i>						
Budget Allocation	225.4	233.7	239.7	246.7	255.4	<b>975.4</b>
Committed	<b>225.4</b>	<b>233.7</b>	<b>239.7</b>	<b>246.7</b>	<b>255.4</b>	<b>975.4</b>

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 in the *Federal Budget 2024-25* also include other non-recurrent funding components that are not detailed above (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.
- \* \$3.6m provided for SUF Targeted Round – infrastructure commitments and \$224.9m provided for SUF Round 2 \$215.8m + additional \$9.09m.

## Key Points

### Recurrent School Funding

- The Australian Government is working closely with state and territory governments to put all schools on a pathway to 100% of its fair funding level through negotiations on the Better and Fairer Schools Agreement (BFSA).
- To date, the Northern Territory, Western Australia and Tasmania have signed up to the BFSA to increase funding for public schools in those jurisdictions to 100% of the Schooling Resource Standard (SRS).

- The Australian Government will increase its funding to government schools in the NT to 40% of the SRS by 2029, with the NT increasing their funding share to 60% by 2029. Over 2025 to 2029, the Australian Government will invest an additional estimated **\$736.7 million in NT government schools** and the NT has committed to investing an additional estimated \$350 million.
- The Australian Government will increase its funding to government schools in WA and Tasmania from 20% to 22.5% of the SRS by 2026, matched by an increase in both state's contributions to 77.5% by 2026. Over 2025 to 2029, the Australian Government will invest an additional estimated **\$785.4 million in WA government schools and \$153.5 million in Tasmanian government schools**. The WA government will invest at least an equivalent amount, and the Tasmanian government has committed to investing an additional \$195.9 million over the same period.
  - Note funding values for NT and WA are at Budget 2024–25 and differ to the original announced estimates of \$737 million for the NT and \$777 million for WA. The estimated value will continue to vary due to updates to enrolment and indexation projections.
- Amendments to the *Australian Education Act 2013* and legislative instruments are required to implement the Australian Government's commitment to increase its SRS contribution to government schools for those jurisdictions. It allows different Australian Government shares to be set for government schools in different jurisdictions to reflect the varied final share and pathways negotiated with jurisdictions through the BFSA.
- These amendments were introduced into Parliament on 10 October 2024.
- Refer to **SB24-000359** for more information on the BFSA and amendments to the legislation.
- Under current legislative arrangements (i.e. not including new NT, WA or Tasmanian agreements), 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.
  - Despite the average annual growth in overall funding being 3.6% for the government sector and 4.0% for the non-government sector, driven by indexation and enrolment growth, Commonwealth funding for government schools is growing faster on a per student basis compared to non-government schools.



- From 2023 to 2024, per student funding for government schools increased by 4.3% (now \$4,331), while for non-government schools, it increased by 3.2% (now \$12,001).
- Looking ahead, per student funding for government schools is expected to grow at an average of 3.4% per year between 2024 and 2028, compared to 2.7 for non-government schools over the same period.
- Compared to 2023–24 Mid-Year Economic and Fiscal Outlook (MYEFO), Budget 2024–25 has 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 a higher than expected student with disability enrolments for the sector in 2023 with an increase of 11.0% or 44,973 SWD enrolments above projections in MYEFO 2023–24.
  - 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 and student characteristics 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 **SB24-000362**; for students with disability see **SB24-000364**; and for regional and remote students see **SB24-000363**.

## **State and territory funding contributions**

- State and territory funding contributions for 2024 are reflected in the one-year extension of the current National School Reform Agreement (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 at least 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).
- The 2024 RoGS data shows that **Commonwealth funding** per student has grown **faster for the government sector in real terms** than the non-government sector over 2012–13 to 2021–22, however total public spending grew faster for non-government students in the same period.
  - **Total public funding for government schools** increased by \$4,209 (23%) per student between 2012–13 and 2021–22 (or 2.3% on average each year).
  - **Total public funding for non-government schools** increased by \$3,789 (37.0%) per student between 2012–13 and 2021–22 (or 3.6% on average each year).
  - **Commonwealth funding for government schools** increased by \$1,500 (67.2%) per student between 2012–13 and 2021–22 (or 5.9% on average each year).
  - **Commonwealth funding for non-government schools** increased by \$3,324 (44.3%) per student between 2012–13 and 2021–22 (or 4.2% on average each year).
  - 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 \$7.3 million that were announced as part of the Government's 2022 election commitments.
  - As at 17 October 2024, the department has received 190 Closure Reports for the Targeted Round indicating that those projects have been completed, noting the department is currently undertaking quality checks of those reports.
    - This represents an 86% closure rate.
    - A further 29 projects have an alternative submission timeframe.
    - The department is working with the one remaining school that has not provided a closure report.
- 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.
  - As at 17 October 2024, the department has received 1174 Closure Reports for the Open Round indicating that those projects have been completed, noting the department is currently undertaking quality checks on those reports.
    - This represents an 88% closure rate.
    - A further 131 projects have an alternative submission timeframe.
    - 5 projects have been cancelled.
    - The department is working with the 27 remaining schools that have not provided a closure report.
- 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 was received by States and Territories in May and June 2024.

### **Capital Grants Program**

- The Capital Grants Program (CGP) provides funding for non-government school communities to improve 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** (including 2024 indexation).
- The 2023 funding amount was \$215.8 million, the same as the Government School Capital Funding under SUF Round 2.

*For information on Building Boarding Schools on Country see **SB24-000361** and for information on Indigenous boarding grants see **SB24-000362**.*

### **Media**

- **Premier must guarantee full funding if Albanese won't, AEU Tasmania, 27 September 2024**  
AEU Tasmania is calling on Premier Rockliff to commit to use 100% of SRS funding secured through the *Better Schools Funding Agreement* and divert the 4% to schools.
- **Crossbench urges Labor to fully fund public schools, The Greens, Media release, 16 September 2024**  
The media release demands the Commonwealth raise its offer to fund public schools to a minimum of 25% of the SRS to avoid "...another decade of under-resourcing of our public schools".  
The release included quotes from other senators including Senators David Pocock, Fatima Payman and Jacqui Lambie urging the Australian Government to fully fund public schools.
- **Majority of private schools get more public funding than comparable public schools, Australian Education Union, Media release, 5 September 2024**  
The AEU latest report, "A Decade of Inequity", claims more than half of private schools (56%) received more per student public funding than comparable public schools.

The report uses school level funding data as reported by the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority's (ACARA) My School website from 2013 to 2022.

## Attachments

Attachment A – Agreed inclusions in NSRA/BFSA bilateral agreements.

<b>Date Last Cleared</b>	01 November 2024
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## Agreed Inclusions in NSRA Bilateral Agreements

- During negotiations for the National School Reform Agreement (NSRA) the former 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 are able to count towards these additional costs, accounted for **\$2.22 billion** nationally (Table 2).

## Agreed inclusions in the Better and Fairer Schools Agreement

- WA, NT and TAS have retained their existing inclusions in their BFSA bilateral agreements.
- In addition, the NT can include costs for their regulatory authorities.

## Summary of Agreed inclusions in Bilateral Agreements

	Agreement	Costs up to 4% of the SRS				Regulatory costs	Reform costs (excluding capital expenditure)
		Capital Depreciation	Direct school transport	Preschool	Other		
<b>NSW</b>	NSRA	Yes			- NSW Education Standards Authority	(included in 4% cap)	
<b>VIC</b>	NSRA	Yes	Yes			- Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority - Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority	Yes
<b>QLD</b>	NSRA	Yes	Yes			- Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority	Yes
<b>SA</b>	NSRA	Yes	Yes			- SACE Board of SA - Education Standards Board	Yes
<b>WA</b>	NSRA/BFSA	Yes	Yes	Yes - kindergarten		- School Curriculum and Standards Authority - (former) Department of Education Services	Yes
<b>TAS</b>	NSRA/BFSA	Yes	Yes			- Office of the Tasmanian Assessment Standards and Certification - The Teachers Registration Board	Yes
<b>ACT</b>	NSRA	(acknowledged as broader contribution)		(acknowledged as broader contribution)		(acknowledged as broader contribution)	(acknowledged as broader contribution)
<b>NT</b>	NSRA/BFSA	Yes	Yes	Yes - early childhood		From 2025, under the BFSA to include: - Northern Territory Board of Studies - Teacher Registration Board of the Northern Territory	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>2.22</b>

*\*Numbers may not add due to rounding.*

*Source: Department of Education's school funding models as at Budget 2024-25.*

*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.** 2024-25 PBS pg. 43 (Under First Nations Education)  
**Contact:** Fabian Harding – (Ph:) <sup>s 22</sup>  
 First Assistant Secretary,  
 Funding and Data Collection Division

### Budget – Building Boarding Schools on Country

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

### 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-years (Years 7–9) First Nations boarding school, **Manjali** (pronounced MARN-JA-LEE) **Studio School**, in the Kimberley region of WA.
  - **Upgrade one** existing First Nations boarding school facility (Years 10–12), **Yiramalay Studio School**, in the Kimberley region, supporting its existing 78 boarding places.
  - Establish an **Indigenous Education Research Centre (IERC)** adjacent to the new Manjali Studio School.
  - 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.
- SSA signed a construction contract for the Manjali Studio School and IERC with Hutchinson 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 commenced in April 2024 and are well progressed and on budget. The final handover for the project is scheduled for the first week of December 2024 to enable 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 (between May and October 2024) for a streamlined construction process.
- The upgrades to the Yiramalay Studio School are progressing, with enhancements to security, ablution facilities and ICT infrastructure completed in 2023. Additional upgrades in 2024 include new staff/visitor accommodation, solar farm battery storage shed and a new water bore tank and facilities.
- Further works scheduled for Yiramalay in 2025 include a multi-purpose basketball court, electrical and plumbing upgrades, installation of a commercial laundry and upgrading the sports oval.
- The department will continue working with SSA and 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%.*

### ***Initial project measure***

- The previous government committed \$74.9 million over 2021–2022 to 2025–2026 for BBSoc to:
  - **Build 3 new** on-country residential middle-years 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), **Yiramalay Studio School** (Kimberley, WA).
  - Construct an **Indigenous Education Research Centre** to provide a program of professional development for staff.

### ***SSA project expansion plans***

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

## **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 *Australian Education Act 2013* (the Act) and the Australian Education Regulations 2023 (the Regulations).
- On 21 November 2023, SSA provided a response to the department.
- On 8 February 2024, a follow up letter was sent to SSA, with a response provided to the department on 29 February 2024.
- The department’s compliance investigation is ongoing, with an audit planned to be undertaken by mid-December 2024.

## **Media**

- ***Indigenous boarding school students at ‘serious risk’ as funding dries up, The Educator, 16 September 2024***

The article raises concerns from the Australian peak body for Indigenous boarding school students as Indigenous Boarding Provider grants were absent from the Federal Budget.

- ***Urgent call to support education of Indigenous boarding students, Daily Telegraph, 12 September 2024***

The article raises concerns from Independent Schools Australia regarding funding for Indigenous boarding facilities.

- ***Yiramalay Studio School opens doors to community ahead of major milestones, The West Australian, 12 September 2024***

The article notes the open day on 5 September 2024 to show families and community the new site additions at Yiramalay.

- ***Indigenous teens at Garma Festival youth forum call for school reform in statement for action, ABC News, 22 August 2024***

The article outlines student challenges with schooling in the Northern Territory. Students created a Statement for Action – Our Say at the Garma festival.

## **Attachments**

Attachment A – BBSoc project costs

<b>Date Last Cleared</b>	23 October 2024
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**BBSoc project costs**

	(\$ million excl. GST)	Original funding allocation (Oct 2021)	Revised costs advised SSA (Nov 2022)	Budget 2023-24 (May 2023)
<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
Upgrade to existing Yiramalay 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>Other Administration Costs</b>				
SSA costs		n/a	18.200	16.200
Block Grant Authority Administration		0.450	0.450	0.500
Program Evaluation		0.520	0.520	0.520
Departmental Administration		1.538	1.538	1.538
Unallocated (contingency)		0.398	n/a	n/a
<b>Total administration costs</b>		<b>2.908</b>	<b>20.708</b>	<b>18.758</b>
<b>Total Project and Administration Costs</b>		<b>74.908</b>	<b>193.208</b>	<b>70.758<sup>4</sup></b>

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

2. The revised project scope for upgrades at Yiramalay requested \$2.2 million. The revised scope noted that other enhancements at Yiramalay, 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.

6. Departmental Administration funding is distributed across the period 2021-22 through to 2024-25 and Program Evaluation funding from 2023-24 to 2025-26.

7. The 2024-25 PBS lists program expenses for 2023-24 as \$7.775 million which excludes Departmental Administration of \$0.347m and Program Evaluation of \$0.17 million as the total budget allocation for 2023-24.

**Issue**                      **Priority cohorts – First Nations Students**  
**Contact:**                Meg Brighton  
                                    Ph: s 22  
                                    Deputy Secretary

## Key Points

[Note: see *Financial Table at Attachment A*]

- 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 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, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander loading for First Nations students.
- 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.
  - The latest available (2024) **NAPLAN** results indicate that **around a third** (33.9%) 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.
  - 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.
  - Analysis by AERO indicates Year 3 students who perform below learning expectations are at a high risk of continuing to perform at that level throughout their schooling.
- The Better and Fairer Schools Agreement (BFSA) is an opportunity to drive real improvements in student outcomes, with a particular focus on First Nations students (see **SB24-000359** for BFSA negotiations and funding).

### **Better and Fairer Schools Agreement** (see [Attachment B](#))

- The BFSA was developed in partnership with First Nations representatives and peak bodies and includes a section on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.
- It complements the Government's commitments to the National Agreement on Closing the Gap, including embedding the 4 Closing the Gap Priority Reforms within the BFSA.
- The BFSA identifies First Nations students as a priority equity cohort and outlines a number of national improvement measures to improve student outcomes, including specific measures for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

### **First Nations Education 2024–25 Budget Initiatives**

- The Government has invested more than **\$110.0 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 the national peak body for First Nations education and a member of the Coalition of Peaks.
- The department is supporting NATSIEC's establishment and working closely to strengthen our partnership approach.
- In the 2024–25 Budget, the Government announced \$12.5 million over 4 years (to 2027–28), and approximately \$4.0 million per year (indexed) ongoing after that.
- Engagement with NATSIEC and the Coalition of the Peaks has informed the development of the BFSA.
- NATSIEC has also participated in Education Ministers Meetings (EMM) and Australian Education Senior Officials Committee (AESOC) meetings since November 2023.

## **First Nations Teachers**

- First Nations peoples are under-represented in both initial teacher education enrolment data collections and teacher workforce data collections.
- The percentage of First Nations teachers is significantly lower (1.3%, 2020) than the percentage of First Nations students (6.5%, 2021).
- This under-representation is mirrored in First Nations enrolments (2%, 2021) in initial teacher education programs.

## **First Nations Education Policy**

- The Government has committed to the development of a new First Nations Education Policy to complement the Better and Fairer Schools Agreement, as well as state and territory First Nations education strategies and Closing the Gap Implementation Plans.
- This work will be completed through 2 phases: a discovery phase and a development phase and will be conducted in partnership with key First Nations education stakeholders.
- The project is in the initial planning stages, with a diversity of opinion being collated on a number of aspects critical to the development of a comprehensive Policy.
- An Evaluation Framework will be developed as part of the suite of products associated with this work.
- Development of the Policy is funded to 2026–27.

## **First Nations Teacher Strategy** (*\$2.4 million from 2024–25 to 2026–27*).

- The department is leading the implementation of Action 10 under the National Teacher Workforce Action Plan (NTWAP), that will see the development of a First Nations Teacher Strategy (FNTS) to attract and retain First Nations teachers, complementing state and territory initiatives.
- The strategy will be developed in partnership with First Nations stakeholders to address the significant underrepresentation of First Nations peoples in both initial teacher education enrolment and the teacher workforce.
- An Evaluation Framework will be developed as part of the suite of products associated with this work.



## Targeted Programs (in alphabetical order)

**Australian Indigenous Education Foundation (AIEF)** [*NIAA until 2022/DoE from 2023*] (\$52.0 million over 2022–23 to 2025–26 – DoE funding, this includes \$20.0 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 students from pursuing their education with an AIEF Partner School.
- The 2023 AIEF annual report states the program had a combined 94% retention and Year 12 completion rate.

**AITSL Indigenous Cultural Responsiveness Initiative** (\$3.035 million from 2022–23 to 2025–26 for Phase 2)

- This initiative aims to support the cultural responsiveness of teachers and leaders to enhance their teaching practice, which contributes to cultural safety in schools, a key consideration of the Better and Fairer Education Review.
- Phase 1 (complete) saw the development of a toolkit (developed in partnership with teachers, First Nation education experts and community) that provides resources to support the cultural responsiveness of teachers and leaders to enhance their teaching practice.
- Phase 2 (in progress) focuses on maximising implementation uptake of the resources and tools developed through the first phase of the Initiative. In the 2024–25 Budget, the Government announced a further \$2.0 million to extend this work for another 2 years (to 2026).
- Since the commencement of the Indigenous Cultural Responsiveness trial, total users of the Indigenous Cultural Responsiveness Self-Reflection Tool were 1,251 (Data period from 01 August 2024 – 22 October 2024).

**Aurora Foundation's, Redefining Indigenous Success in Education (RISE) initiative** (\$6.0 million 2021–22 to 2027–28).

- In July 2024 the Australian Government announced an additional \$4.5 million support for continuation of the Aurora RISE initiative.
- Through RISE, Aurora is delivering a series of comparison models of high school supports and undertaking a comparative analysis. The initiative follows more than 450 students in New South Wales (growing to 800) to build a dataset of First Nations education outcomes.

**City-Country Partnerships Program** (*\$26.0 million over 2022–23 to 2025–26*)

- Supports partnerships between high-performing schools and remote schools with a high proportion of First Nations students. Partnerships are designed to be self-sustaining after the Australian Government’s initial financial contribution.
- Program provider, Yadha Muru Foundation, continues to work with partner schools, with 17 approved partnerships totalling \$17.283 million as of 22 October 2024. A small number of proposals are expected to be considered in coming months which will fully expend the allocated funding.
- Partnership activities include but are not limited to professional development for teachers and administrators, access to specialist staff such as psychologists, IT support including electronic tablets for students, and cultural exchanges.

**Clontarf Foundation** [*NIAA till 2022/DoE from 2023*] (*\$98.590 million over 2022–23 to 2025–26, this includes \$32.8 million for the 2025 school year as announced in the 2024–25 Budget*).

- This announcement 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** (*\$14.274 million over 2017–18 to 2026–27*).

- ELLIC was co-designed with the Stronger Smarter Institute and Indigenous communities, to improve English language outcomes for children in the year before fulltime schooling.
- Initially piloted in 20 schools, the extension of funding will see ELLIC in up to 100 schools nationally in remote and very remote locations, supporting students for whom English is an additional language or dialect.
- The extension is strategically designed to address the educational needs of Indigenous children in remote and very remote locations, who are among the most disadvantaged groups in Australia.

## **Evaluation of Closing the Gap Schools Initiatives under target 5.**

- The department has engaged the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) with Ninti One, 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
  - Scaling Up Proven Primary Reading Programs measure including:
    - Good to Great Schools Australia Pilot Program
    - MultiLit (Making Up Lost Time in Literacy) Program
    - Scaling Up Success in Remote Schools Program

### **First Nations Languages Education Program** (*\$14.0 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. The targeted non-competitive grant round opened on 20 March 2024.
- As at 30 September 2024, 27 communities have been invited to participate and all have submitted a grant application. These grant applications are progressing through the assessment process.
- It is anticipated that the assessment process will be finalised, and funding agreements in place by 31 December 2024.

### **GO Foundation** (*\$4.0 million from 2024–25 to 2027–28*).

- In July 2024 the Australian Government announced support for GO Foundation to deliver scholarships, supporting First Nations students to succeed in school and prepare for the workforce. In 2023 GO Foundation supported students in 98 schools across Sydney, Adelaide and Canberra, and awarded 1,294 scholarships.

### **National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Principals Association (NATSIPA)**

- The department commenced funding of the NATSIPA in 2023 and signed a three-year contract in 2024, totalling \$160,425. The existing contract will cease on the 31 December 2026.
- 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.

**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 (44) in Central Australia has received additional funding and is currently implementing initiatives in line with their School Action Plans.

**Scaling Up Proven Primary Reading Programs Measure**  
(\$30.29 million over 2021–22 to 2025–26)

- Funding to expand 3 targeted literacy programs to support teacher professional practice and improve early literacy outcomes for First Nations students. Specifically:
  - Increasing the number of participating schools from 10 to 20 within the Good to Great Schools Australia (GGSA) Pilot Program, which is being delivered from 2021–22 to 2025–26.
  - Implementing MultiLit (Making Up Lost Time in Literacy) Program in 42 schools from 2021–22 to 2024–25.
  - Implementing 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 Western Australia with a high proportion of First Nations students.

**Boarding (including with NIAA)**

- 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 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.
- Making up 18% of the total boarding student population (approximately 6,000 students), First Nations boarders are mostly from remote or very remote areas.
- 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**, examining the investment in boarding and 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 Government has committed \$43.2 million to extend the **Indigenous Boarding Providers Grant** program until the end of 2026.
  - This will support approximately 2,500 students across more than 40 boarding providers.
  - NIAA will continue to administer these grants.
  - The outcomes and reform options from the Review will be considered by the Government in due course.
- The **Central Australia Boarding Response Fund** is providing \$18.0 million (administered by NIAA) to build new and improve existing boarding facilities in Central Australia for First Nations students from remote Northern Territory communities.
  - Yirara College will be offered up to \$10.0 million and St Philip's College up to \$1.7 million to upgrade existing facilities, while Yipirinya School will be offered up to \$6.3 million for a new boarding facility, providing greater capacity to accommodate students in the region.
  - This funding is in response to the **Assessment of Boarding Capacity and Options in Central Australia**.

**Building Boarding Schools On-Country program** *non-indigenous organisation / non-ongoing funding*

- The Government is providing \$70.8 million to Studio Schools of Australia to build a new remote boarding school in the Kimberley region (Manjali), Western Australia upgrade the existing Yiramalay Studio School, and establish a new Indigenous Education and Research Centre, co-located at the Manjali site. For more info see **SB24-000361**.

**Media**

- **There's \$110.0 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 Table.

Attachment B – Inclusion of First Nations Peoples in the Better and Fairer Schools Agreement 2025–2034.

<b>Date Last Cleared</b>	10 October 2024
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**BUDGET GST Excl.**

<b>Financial year \$m</b>	<b>2022–23</b>	<b>2023–24</b>	<b>2024–25</b>	<b>2025–26</b>	<b>2026–27</b>	<b>2027–28</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>AIEF</b>	6.0	16.0	20.0	10.0			<b>52.0</b>
<b>AITSL Indigenous Cultural Responsiveness Initiative</b>	1.0		1.0	1.0			<b>3.0</b>
<b>Aurora Redefining Indigenous Success in Education</b>	1.5		1.5	1.5	1.5		<b>6.0</b>
<b>Building Boarding Schools On- Country<sup>1</sup> #</b>	54.6	8.2	0.5	0.2			<b>63.6</b>
<b>City-Country Partnerships<sup>2</sup> #</b>	18.1	7.4	0.0				<b>25.5</b>
<b>Clontarf Foundation</b>	16.1	32.9	33.0	16.6			<b>98.5</b>
<b>ELLIC</b>	0.1	0.3	2.5	1.9	1.1		<b>5.9</b>
<b>First Nations Languages Education Program</b>	0.4	3.0	10.2	0.3			<b>14.0</b>
<b>First Nations Teacher Strategy</b>	0.3		1.7	0.7	0.1		<b>2.7</b>
<b>GO Foundation</b>			1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	<b>4.0</b>
<b>NATSIEC</b>			1.0	3.1	4.1	4.3	<b>12.5</b>
<b>NATSIPA</b>		0.02	0.03	0.05	0.0		<b>0.1</b>
<b>On-Country Learning</b>	30.0	10.0					<b>40.0</b>
<b>Scaling Up Proven Primary Reading Programs<sup>3</sup> #</b>	7.1	7.1	6.4	4.5			<b>25.3</b>

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

## **Inclusion of First Nations Peoples in the Better and Fairer Schools Agreement 2025-2034**

### BFSA Negotiations

The BFSA was developed in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representatives and peak bodies. Aunty Geraldine Atkinson (representing NATSIEC), and Lisa Charles (representing the Coalition of Peaks) attended six AESOC Sub-Group meetings with state and territory representatives.

NATSIEC and the Coalition of Peaks provided input into the Heads of Agreement, including identifying the role of the Community Controlled Sector in supporting both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and education workforce (in clause 55) and in strengthening Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural safety (clause 84(c)(iii)).

### **Heads of Agreement**

The Better and Fairer Schools Agreement 2025-2034 (BFSA) includes a range of objectives, outcomes, reform priorities and targets to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and educators.

### Preliminaries and Part 1 – Parties, Operation, Roles and Responsibilities

- The importance of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and knowledge to shaping and improving education systems and outcomes, the need for genuine partnerships and engagement, and ongoing commitments as part of the *National Agreement on Closing the Gap* (Closing the Gap Agreement) underpin the BFSA, as outlined in the preliminaries section (clauses 1-7, pp.2-3) and in a specific section acknowledging Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples as partners in the Agreement (clauses 50-55, p.11).
- Actions to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and educators are also embedded throughout the BFSA, reflecting governments' ongoing commitment to working in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.
  - For example, the BFSA embeds Closing the Gap Priority Reforms, including undertakings to support and develop the Community Controlled Sector (clause 55), prioritising funding to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students through needs-based funding arrangements (clause 54, p.11) and commitments to ongoing consultation and partnership arrangements in the implementation of the Agreement (clause 52, p.11).
  - Formal partnerships and collaboration are also included as key responsibilities of all jurisdictions (clause 40(c) and (d), p.8) and of the Commonwealth (clause 42(e) p.9).

### Purpose, Objectives, Outcomes and Improvement Measures

- The BFSA also identifies Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students as a priority equity cohort (clause 73, p.15) and outlines a number of national



improvement measures (pp.15-17) to improve outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, building on the Closing the Gap reform priorities. This includes:

- By 2031, increasing the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people (age 20-24) attaining Year 12 or equivalent qualifications,
- By 2030, returning the Student Attendance Rate for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students to 2019 levels.
- By 2035, increasing the engagement rate for domestic students enrolled in initial teacher education who identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander by 10 percentage points.

### National Reforms

- The three national reform priority areas for the BFSA, as agreed by Education Ministers, are:
  - a. Equity and excellence – schools and education systems are equipped to provide all students with highly effective evidence-based teaching and equitable learning opportunities and support them to maximise their learning.
  - b. Wellbeing for learning and engagement – schools take a structured approach to wellbeing for learning in a way which reflects their school and learning environment, and students have a sense of belonging, safety and engagement with their learning.
  - c. A strong and sustainable workforce – the workforce is respected and continues to grow, and 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 and school leaders bring to students, communities and the economy.

### **Bilateral Agreements**

- To date, three jurisdictions have signed the BFSA: the Northern Territory, Western Australia and Tasmania.

#### *Northern Territory*

- On 31 July 2024, the Northern Territory Government signed the BFSA, which will see public schools in the Northern Territory reach 100 per cent of their SRS funding by 2029. Under the BFSA, the Australian Government will invest at least an additional estimated **\$736.7 million** in Northern Territory public schools. The Northern Territory government is also investing an additional estimated \$350 million over the same period.
- The Northern Territory's Bilateral Agreement includes a number of jurisdiction-specific targets, including increasing the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students attaining Year 12 or equivalent, and increasing employment for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff in public schools.
  - Funding for the Northern Territory under the BFSA will be tied to activities under the three national priority reform areas and will include:

- providing support staff in remote schools with lesson plans and tools to deliver small-group tutoring aligned with best practice
- implementing enrolment-based funding from 2025, addressing the remaining recommendations of the Review of Effective Enrolment with a focus on supporting Northern Territory students to re-engage and keep engaged with their learning
- developing an Aboriginal Workforce Strategy that includes professional learning designed by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

#### *Western Australia*

- On 3 September 2024, the Western Australian Government signed the BFSA to get public schools in Western Australia to 100 per cent of the SRS by 2026. The Australian Government will invest at least an additional estimated **\$785.4 million** from 2025 to 2029 in Western Australian public schools, and the Western Australian government will invest at least an equivalent amount over this period, bringing total additional investment in public schools to approximately \$1.6 billion.
  - Funding for Western Australia under the BFSA will be tied to reform activities in the bilateral agreement such as:
    - continuing and expanding *Ngaparrtji Ngaparrtji* – Two-Way learning, which supports Western Australian public schools to build partnerships with local Aboriginal communities to develop integrated, culturally responsive learning programs that connect Aboriginal knowledge with the mandatory STEM content in the Western Australian curriculum
    - delivering a full-service schools model in at least 4 Western Australian public schools, including working with local communities and service providers to ensure the use of partnership and shared design approaches to meet the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and families
    - developing and delivering culturally appropriate learning modules, including training to support the development of Aboriginal employees in Western Australian public schools, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education officers.

#### *Tasmania*

- On 25 September 2024, the Tasmanian Government signed the BFSA to get public schools in Tasmania to 100 per cent of the SRS by 2029.
  - The Australian and Tasmanian Governments are currently negotiating the specific reform efforts that will be tied to additional funding in the Tasmanian Bilateral Agreement.

**Issue:** Priority cohorts – Regional and remote students  
**Contact:** Meg Brighton  
Ph: s 22  
Deputy Secretary, Schools Group

## Key Points

- In 2024, around 737,000 full-time equivalent school students are studying in around 3,330 regional and remote schools.
- In the Better and Fairer Schools Agreement 2025-2034, students living in regional, rural and remote locations are a priority equity cohort in recognition that school performance and educational opportunities decline with the level of remoteness<sup>[1]</sup> (see [Attachment A](#) for key data).
- Year 12 certification rates in regional (inner regional 68%; outer regional 69%) and remote (remote/very remote 56%) areas are lower than the national average 76% (latest publicly available data (2022)).
- Student attendance rates (years 1-10) are marginally lower in regional (inner regional 87%; outer regional 86%) and significantly lower in remote (remote 81%; very remote 66%) areas than the national average 89% (latest publicly available data (2023)).
- The 2024 NAPLAN results show that NAPLAN performance decreases as remoteness increases.
- Around 1 in 5 students in very remote schools were rated as Strong or Exceeding across all domains and year levels, while around 3 in 5 students in major city schools rated Strong or Exceeding across almost all domains and year levels.
- The performance of Year 9 students in very remote locations is lower than Year 5 students in major cities.

## Australian Government initiatives for students and schools

- In 2024, the Australian Government is providing an estimated \$6.5 billion to regional and remote schools, which includes:
  - \$199.9 million through the size loading, 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 through the location loading, for regional and remote schools recognising it generally higher costs.

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

### **Commonwealth Regional Scholarship Program**

- See [Attachment B](#) for a budget breakdown of the 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.
- The department is undertaking an initial evaluation of the pilot program's outcomes based on feedback from scholarship recipients and relevant stakeholders.
- 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.

### **Australian Government initiatives for regional and remote educators**

- 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.
- 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 new 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, more than 3,000 applications were received, with 985 scholarship agreements signed.

- Recipients will be required to teach for a period equivalent to the length of their ITE program (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.
- The program will undergo a longitudinal evaluation, which will look at all aspects of the program, including the remote placement top up payment, to determine if the program met the aims of attracting more people into the teaching profession including people from rural, regional and remote areas.

### ***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 ran an open competitive grant opportunity for the remaining places which closed on 5 June 2024. Minister Clare announced the successful grant recipients on 29 September 2024.
- \$70.9 million will be provided to ten providers to implement HAT pilots with a focus on attracting new teachers, including those with a STEM background, First Nations peoples, people with disability, teacher aides and people based in remote locations.
- Each provider is responsible for evaluating their own pilot and the Commonwealth is considering options for a program level evaluation.

### **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.
- A program evaluation will be undertaken in 2025 to review of the impact of program settings.

- 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.
- A checkpoint of the program in 2026 will enable early review of the impact of program settings, ahead of the full program evaluation scheduled for 2027-2028.

## Engagement

- The department regularly engages with stakeholders, including the Regional Education Commissioner, education authorities, boarding associations, and parent advocacy groups to ensure government policy is best designed to meet the needs of students and families living outside metropolitan areas.
- The Regional Education Commissioner's 2023 Annual Report contains an overview of her activities for the year, including engagement with stakeholders from regional communities and schools and the key issues that they have raised, research undertaken and involvement with sector reform.
  - This informs issues for consideration that the Commissioner puts forward to the Minister for Education.
- The Isolated Children's Parents' Association is often sought out by education sector stakeholders for information and advice on the views and interests of geographically isolated parents in the education system.
- The department also engages with the Australian Boarding School Association which is a peak body for boarding schools across Australia.

## Attachments

Attachment A – Regional and remote school students factsheet

Attachment B – CRSP budget

<b>Date Last Cleared</b>	23 October 2024
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# 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).

① We have grouped these areas into three: major cities, regional areas (inner and outer regional combined) and remote areas (remote and very remote combined).

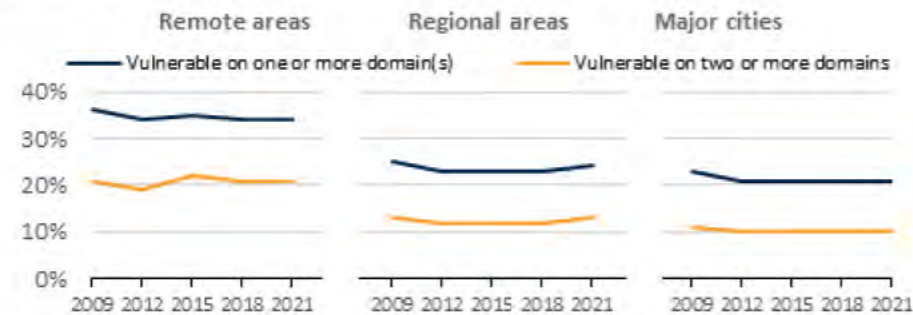
## WHAT ABOUT RURAL AREAS?

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?

① 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?

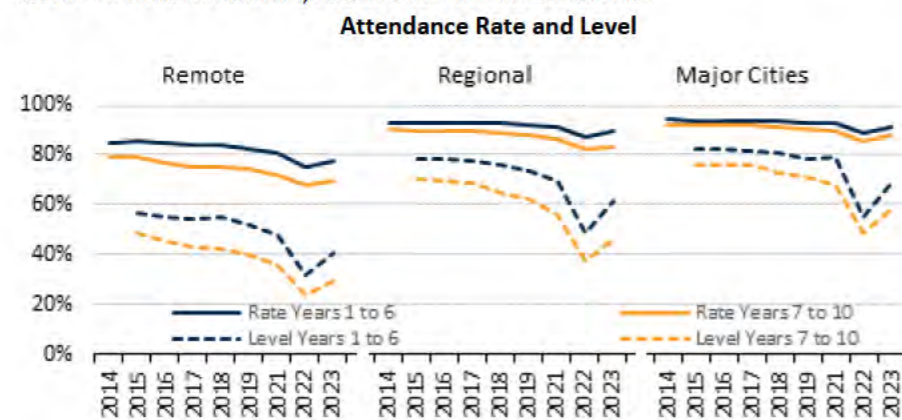
In their first year of school, children in remote areas are more likely to be developmentally vulnerable than those in regional areas or major cities.



Source: Internal departmental analysis of AEDC 2009, 2012, 2015, 2018 and 2021.

## 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.

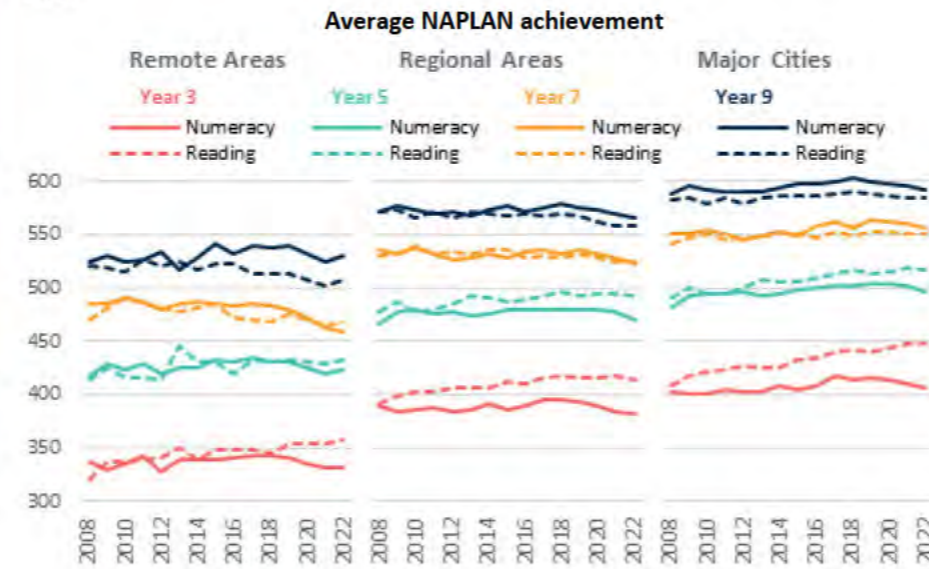
Attendance Level is the percentage of students with above 90 per cent attendance

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.

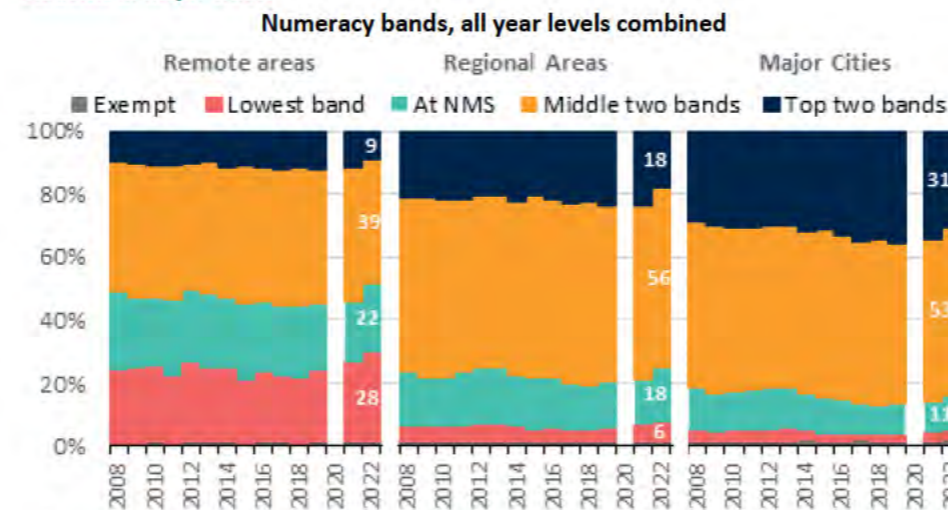
NAPLAN scores represent the level of student achievement in each subject or learning area.



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.



Sources: 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.

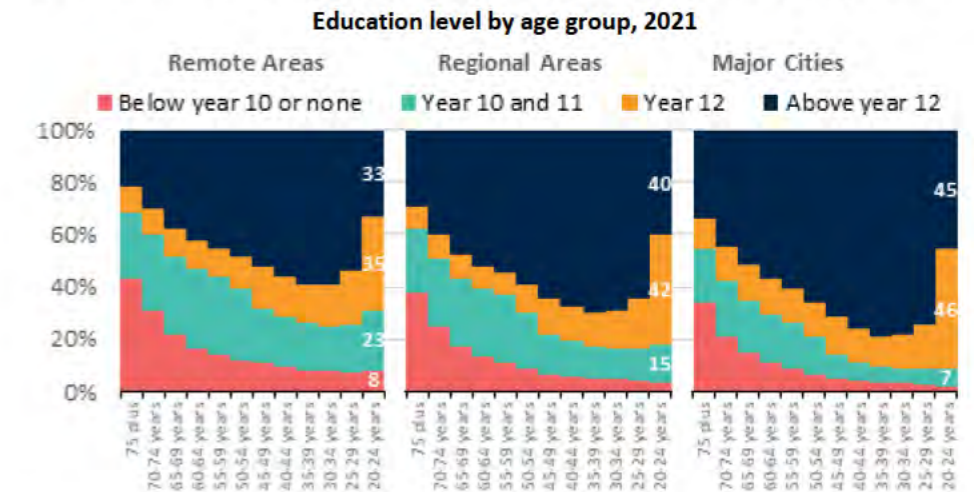
Last reviewed on 21 October 2024 by the Research and Analysis Team  
Developed in consultation with the Regional and Equity Policy Team

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 Better and Fairer Schools Agreement (BFSA) 2025-2034 includes reforms and targets across 3 key outcomes - equity and excellence, wellbeing for learning and engagement, and a strong and sustainable workforce - with a focus on students from priority equity cohorts such as students living in regional, rural, and remote locations. Each state and territory will have the flexibility to design and implement the reforms according to the needs and contexts within their jurisdiction and communities. This approach enables states and territories and the non-government school sector to tailor initiatives and reforms to support students, families, and schools in rural, regional and remote communities.

Source: Review to Inform a Better and Fairer Education System Reports - Department of Education, Australian Government. Study Report - Review of the National School Reform Agreement - Productivity Commission, Australian Government.

### 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)



**Issue:** Priority cohorts – Students with Disability  
**Contact:** Meg Brighton  
Ph: s 22  
Deputy Secretary

## Key Points

- The Australian Government is committed to achieving more accessible and inclusive education for students with disability in Australian schools.

### ***Students with Disability Funding***

- In 2024, the Australian Government will provide an estimated **\$29.2 billion** in recurrent school funding (**SB24-000360** refers). Schools and school systems use their total recurrent funding to meet to needs of all students, including students with disability.
- In 2023:
  - almost 1 in 4 school students, or around 990,000 students, received an educational adjustment due to disability (ACARA, 2023).
  - almost 95% of school students with disability were enrolled in mainstream schools, including 6% of those students who require extensive adjustments (NCCD, 2023).
- To support students with disability to access and participate in education on the same basis as other students, the Australian Government provides an additional loading for students with disability as part of the schooling resource standard (SRS) recurrent funding arrangements.
  - In 2024, this comprises an estimated \$3.7 billion (part of \$29.2 billion in total funding).
- The SRS **student with disability loading** uses the Nationally Consistent Collection of Data (NCCD) which records information on the level of adjustment students with disability are receiving to access and participate in education on the same basis as other students.
- There are 4 levels of adjustment – quality differentiated teaching practice (QDTP), supplementary, substantial, and extensive. Students who receive the top 3 levels of adjustment attract the students with disability loading for their school.
- The NCCD supports schools' obligations under the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* and the *Disability Standards for Education 2005*.

- The student with disability loading is in addition to the SRS base amount. SRS funding is provided as a lump sum to approved authorities and state and territory governments for the purposes of providing school education. Schools and school systems have the flexibility to allocate funding in respect of individual students, or for specific purposes or programs.

### ***Better and Fairer Schools Agreement***

The **Better and Fairer Schools Agreement (BFSA)** includes commitments to:

- The ongoing implementation of Australia's Disability Strategy 2021–31 (Clause 12).
- National Reforms to benefit all students, including students with disability as a priority cohort (Clause 84).
- Review the Measurement Framework for schooling in Australia including consideration of national measures of access, participation and outcomes for students with disability (Clause 88.d.iii).

### ***Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability / Disability Royal Commission (DRC)***

- The Australian Government published its response to the recommendations of the Disability Royal Commission on 31 July 2024.
- The DRC made 15 recommendations focused on inclusive school education, 10 of which relate to joint national action. Attachment A refers.
- The Australian Government accepted-in-principle 8 recommendations and noted 2 recommendations regarding the future of segregated education settings, acknowledging the Commissioners had divided views on the subject.
- In December 2023, Education 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.
- The Commonwealth Department of Education will commence work to inform national system reforms to drive more accessible and inclusive school education and improve outcomes for students with disability.
- This has included meeting with disability representative organisations and stakeholders to inform national system reforms.

- Implementation will progress in a staged and sustainable manner alongside other related reforms.

### ***Our response***

- The Australian Government will partner with states, territories, and the non-government school sector to implement national measures to improve inclusion of all students with disability in schools.
- This initial response is only the first stage of a broader program of reform to address the Disability Royal Commission's recommendations alongside related disability reforms.

### ***Segregated education / special schools***

- The Australian Government recognises the ongoing role of specialist settings in service provision for students with disability and providing choice for students with disability and their families.
- The Australian Government and Joint responses 'note' recommendations 7.14 and 7.15. This reflects the divergent views of the Commissioners and the community on special schools and special settings.
- In their response to the DRC, the WA Government expressed a preference for phasing out/ending segregated education in line with Recommendation 7.14.
- State and territory governments will continue to be responsible for making decisions about registration of schools in their jurisdictions, with the intent to strengthen inclusive education over time.

*Detailed questions on the Disability Royal Commission should be directed to the Department of Social Services.*

### ***National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) reforms***

- The Australian Government response to the NDIS Review is expected to be released later this year.
- The Department of Education will work with the Department of Social Services and with our State and Territory education colleagues on any NDIS reforms which intersect with education.

*Detailed questions on NDIS reforms should be directed to the Department of Social Services.*

### ***Disability Standards for Education 2005 (the Standards)***

- The Standards clarify the existing obligations of education and training providers under the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992*.
- Under the Standards, all education providers must provide reasonable adjustments for students with disability, to enable access and participation in education on the same basis as students without disability unless the required changes to be made would impose unjustifiable hardship on the education provider. (Exceptions are set out in Part 10 of the Standards).
- In response to the 2020 Review of the Standards, the Government has released information resources to:
  - help educators and education providers understand their obligations
  - help students with disability and their families on their rights.
- The Standards are reviewed every 5 years. The next review will occur in 2025.

### ***Nationally Consistent Collection of Data on School Students with Disability (NCCD)***

- The NCCD is an annual collection of information about Australian school students with disability who receive educational adjustments to access and participate in education on the same basis as other students.
- Approved authorities and schools use the NCCD Guidelines to understand and accurately complete the annual collection. The guidelines are approved by Australian Education Senior Officials on behalf of Education Ministers.
  - On 7 June 2024, the department published advice on the NCCD Portal and SchoolsHUB website to confirm the 2023 NCCD Guidelines apply for 2024.
  - On 9 September 2024, the 2025 NCCD Guidelines were published on the NCCD Portal.
- The NCCD Portal provides information and resources for teachers, school leaders and families about the NCCD. It is managed by Education Services Australia.

## Media

- ***The disability royal commission demanded extensive change, Are the government responses big enough? ABC News, 1 Aug 2024***

The article provides an overview of the reaction from disability advocates to the Government's initial response to the DRC. Advocates say the response does not match the scale of reform needed.

## Attachments

Attachment A – excerpt of Australian Government response to joint inclusive education recommendations.

Attachment B – joint press release – Disability Representative Organisations.

<b>Date Last Cleared</b>	18 October 2024
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## Excerpt of Australian Government response to Joint inclusive education recommendations

### **Response to Recommendations 7.2, 7.3, 7.6 and 7.13: Accept in principle**

The Australian Government and state and territory governments support the Disability Royal Commission's vision for more accessible and inclusive education for school students with disability.

Education Ministers commit to work in partnership with people with disability to set out how this vision will be achieved over time.

### **Response to Recommendations 7.8, 7.10: Accept in principle**

The Australian Government and state and territory governments supports the Disability Royal Commission's vision to build workforce capability and expertise and strengthen complaints management practices.

Considerable progress has already occurred in relation to these recommendations as part of the National Teacher Workforce Action Plan and the review of the *Disability Standards for Education 2005* Review undertaken in 2020.

### **Response to Recommendations 7.9, 7.12: Accept in principle**

The Australian Government and state and territory governments support a vision for improved data and evidence on the experience and outcomes of students with disability, building best practice for inclusive education and improving funding for students with disability.

Implementing these recommendations requires further consideration by governments, including further work to consider data collection categories and reporting. In addition, implementing components of these recommendations will require consideration of impacts on workload for schools and data management systems.

State and territory governments will consider how to deliver the intent of these recommendations within their jurisdictions.

### **Response to Recommendations 7.14, 7.15: Note**

The Australian Government and state and territory governments note the differing views held by Commissioners and the community on special/segregated settings.

The Australian Government recognises the ongoing role of specialist settings in service provision for students with disability and providing choice for students with disability and their families.

State and territory governments will continue to be responsible for making decisions about registration of schools in their jurisdictions, with the intent to strengthen inclusive education overtime.

**Disability Representative Organisations regarding Government Response to Disability Royal Commission**

***Government response to violence against people with disability deeply disappointing***

31 July 2024

**This statement is endorsed by:**

- People with Disability Australia
- Australian Autism Alliance (AAA)
- Australian Federation of Disability Organisations (AFDO)
- Children and Young People with Disability Australia (CYDA)
- Community Mental Health Australia (CMHA)
- Disability Advocacy Network Australia (DANA)
- Down Syndrome Australia (DSA)
- First Peoples Disability Network Australia (FPDN)
- Inclusion Australia (IA)
- National Ethnic Disability Alliance (NEDA)
- Physical Disability Australia (PDA)
- Women With Disabilities Australia (WWDA)

**The Joint Statement:**

Today's Federal, State and Territory government response to our four-and-a-half-year Disability Royal Commission is deeply disappointing and fails to respond to the scale of violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation of people with disability.

National disability representative organisations have expressed significant concern that only 13 recommendations of 222 have been fully accepted, and that after nine months, so many recommendations remain still to be resolved across different levels of government.

We call on all levels of government to urgently act on the 222 recommendations including provide clear timelines within the next six months on all recommendations accepted in principle and embed disability leadership through establishing a Disability Reform Implementation Council. This should be led by a diverse group of people with disability and our representative organisations, ensuring we are setting the pace and directly engaged in the Council's outcomes.

Many recommendations directly impact the lives of First Nations people with disability. It is critical that implementation of any and all recommendations adhere to the National Agreement on Closing the Gap, embedding the Priority Reforms and prioritising the most systematically excluded.

The Disability Royal Commission, which ran from 2019 to 2023, heard from people with disability, their families, supporters, kin, advocates and representative organisations about how many of us have been hurt and harmed at school, at work, in hospital, in prison, in public, and in disability services.

The stories that people with disability told filled three full volumes of the Disability Royal Commission final report, showing the scale of abuse against us. The Royal Commission made 222 recommendations across all levels of government, but also to schools, disability providers, health care, police, prisons, employers and more.

This was a once-in-a-lifetime through examination of the scale of violence so many people with disability experience and deserves and demands a response of the same scale.

The Royal Commission found that 'across all age groups, a greater proportion of people with disability experience violence than people without disability. People with disability also experience violence more frequently.' Women with disability and culturally and linguistically diverse people with disability have disproportionate experiences of violence, and need adequate responses.

Key recommendations from the Disability Royal Commission, about how to stop the violence that so many people with disability are subjected to, included national coordination, reform of disability service providers, changes to the law, increased access to support and leadership of people with disability in driving these changes. There is little concrete commitments or funding for any of these areas.

We welcome the commitment to the reform of the Disability Discrimination Act, and funding increase for advocacy organisations.

People with disability have asked for better legal protection of the rights of people with disability by translating the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD). One of the most important reforms that is needed to safeguard people with disability against violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation is the establishment of a federal Human Rights Act, which our organisations support. Disappointingly, this recommendation has not been fully accepted.

National Disability Representative Organisations will provide more detailed analysis as we work through the 300-page response report.

[Media Statement from Australia's Disability Representative Organisations regarding Government Response to Disability Royal Commission today Wednesday 31 July - People with Disability Australia \(pwd.org.au\)](#)



**Issue:** **Respectful Relationships Education**  
**PBS Pg No.** 42 (Consent Survey)  
**PAES Pg No.** 32 (Consent Survey)  
**MYEFO Pg No.** 14-21 Annexe A (CRRE)  
**Contact:** **Meg Brighton**  
 Ph: s 22  
 Deputy Secretary

### Budget – Consent and Respectful Relationships Education (CRRE)

Financial year	2023–24 \$m	2024–25 \$m	2025–26 \$m	2026–27 \$m	2027–28 \$m	Total \$m
Program Appropriation	20.4	20.4	20.4	8.2	8.2	77.6
Committed	18.8	22.0	20.4	8.2	8.2	77.6

### National Consent Survey

Financial year	2022–23 \$m	2023–24 \$m	2024–25 \$m	2025–26 \$m	2026–27 \$m	Total \$m
Program Appropriation	4.0	1.0	0	0	0	5.0
Committed	4.0	1.0	0	0	0	5.0

### Key Points

- This program of work supports the Australian Curriculum (Version 9.0) which aims to ensure that students from Foundation to Year 10 receive education on positive, respectful relationships and consent, in age-appropriate ways that reflect the needs of their school communities.
- State and territory governments and non-government education authorities are responsible for managing schools and the delivery of the Curriculum. The Australian Government is working in partnership with education sectors to support them in their delivery of 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 age-appropriate, evidence-based and expert-developed, CRRE in primary and secondary schools. This includes:

- **\$77.6 million** in administered funding allocated to states and territories and non-government school sectors via a Federation Funding Agreement Schedule, signed by all education ministers between April and June 2024 at [Consent and Respectful Relationships Education | Federal Financial Relations](#). Funding allocation is based on the number of schools in each sector.
  - Of the \$77.6 million, **\$20.4 million** (\$18.8 million in 2023–24 and \$1.6 million in 2024–25) was paid to states and territories between June and August 2024.
  - Draft Implementation plans from all sectors have been received and approved. Sectors are using their funding towards (but not limited to) professional development for educators and school staff, roll out whole-of-school approaches to building respectful relationships, resources for students and parents, and partnering with external providers (as determined by the sectors).
- **\$5.9 million** in departmental funding is supporting delivery of CRRE, current activities include:
  - A National Respectful Relationships Education Expert Working Group to inform and guide the CRRE measure; established in June 2023.
  - Development of a National RRE Framework to guide schools and school systems with the delivery of RRE; expected to be finalised and released ahead of the 2025 school year.
  - A rapid review into current delivery approaches in jurisdictions and schools to identify best-practice, gaps and areas for improvement was completed in October 2023. The report is an input to the draft National RRE Framework, which will be publicly released.
  - An independent evaluation of the CRRE measure; anticipated to commence in 2026–27 following a procurement process.
- The CRRE measure also supports the Government’s commitment to end violence against women and children under the National Plan to End Violence Against Women and Children 2022–2032.

## National Consent Survey

- The Australian Government is providing **\$5 million** over 2 years from 2022–23 to the Australian Human Rights Commission (the Commission) to deliver a national survey to explore secondary school students' experiences of consent education. Findings are expected to inform future respectful relationships education policy and support the Australian Curriculum. As at 2023–24 financial year, \$4.0 million of the grant funding has been paid.
- The purpose of the survey is to improve consent and respectful relationships education in schools and is expected to be informed by the Australian Curriculum and examine delivery of the Australian Curriculum through student experiences.
- The survey will ask students about their experience of and attitudes towards consent education, and their awareness and understanding of concepts related to consent. The department has asked the Commission to deliver a survey which is safe for all respondents and that considerations of child safety, privacy and duty of care are paramount in the survey design and content.
- *Detailed questions on the survey including timelines should be referred to the Australian Human Rights Commission.*

## Media

- ***Our Watch's Patty Kinnersly calls for consent education funding, alongside Aussie kid social media bans, Daily Telegraph, 19 September 2024.***

Ms Kinnersly says efforts to ban Aussie kids from social media needs to be backed by school-wide education in order to stop boys accessing harmful, misogynistic online spaces. Ms Kinnersly says "that prohibition on its own has never stopped any harmful or potentially harmful activity". She said the solution was to also fully fund respectful relationship education, and engage young Australians in an ongoing, honest conversation about consent and gender inequality in a 'whole-of-school' approach. Ms Kinnersly also called for a stand-alone prevention strategy for the Northern Territory and more funding for grassroots programs, given the scale and severity of violence in the Territory.

- **Media Statement, Meeting of National Cabinet, The Hon Anthony Albanese MP, 6 September 2024.**

National Cabinet agreed on a \$4.7 billion package that harnesses working together to prevent violence, including support for frontline specialist and legal services, better ways to identify and respond to high-risk perpetrators, addressing the role that systems and harmful industries play in exacerbating violence. This package is taking practical steps to accelerate action to end gender-based violence in a generation and deliver on the *National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022–2032*.

<b>Date Last Cleared</b>	22 October 2024
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**Issue:** Student Wellbeing, Anti-bullying and Social Cohesion  
**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 Expended	2023-24 Expended	2024-25 Committed	2025-26 Committed	2026-27 Committed	Total
Student Wellbeing Boost	192.0	-	-	-	-	192.0
Voluntary Mental Health Check tool (My Mind Check)	7.3	3.3	0.3	-	-	10.8
National Student Wellbeing Program	61.4	61.4	61.4	61.4	61.4	307.1
Australian Anti-Bullying Collective	1.2	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.1	5.3
Be You (DoHAC-administered)	23.0	23.0	23.0	23.0	23.0	115.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>284.9</b>	<b>88.7</b>	<b>85.7</b>	<b>85.5</b>	<b>85.5</b>	<b>630.2</b>

Figures in the table and in the text may be rounded. Figures are generally rounded one decimal place, whereas figures in tables are generally rounded to the nearest thousand. Discrepancies in tables between totals and sums of components are due to rounding.

### Budget - Australian Government's ongoing support for Social Cohesion in schools:

Financial year	2023-24 Expended	2024-25 Committed	2025-26 Committed	2026-27 Committed	Total
Together for Humanity	2.1	3.1	3.0	-	8.2
Islamic Museum of Australia	0.3	-	-	-	0.3
Anti-Defamation Commission (Holocaust Education)	0.8	-	-	-	0.8
Social Cohesion Wellbeing Support for Jewish and Islamic students	6.0	-	-	-	6.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>9.1</b>	<b>3.1</b>	<b>3.0</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>15.2</b>

Figures in the table and in the text may be rounded. Figures are generally rounded one decimal place, whereas figures in tables are generally rounded to the nearest thousand. Discrepancies in tables between totals and sums of components are due to rounding.

## Key Points

- Student wellbeing, engagement, belonging and learning outcomes are interdependent and mutually reinforcing.
- Positive mental health and wellbeing are crucial foundations for achievement, engagement, and attendance outcomes for students.
- Wellbeing is recognised as a priority area in the next Better and Fairer Schools Agreement.
- 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, bullying, use of mobile phones and personal devices and vaping.
- All students have the right to attend safe and culturally-inclusive schools. There is no place for antisemitism, Islamophobia or any kind of harassment or discrimination within Australian schools.

### **Wellbeing Boost and Supports**

- The Australian Government committed **\$203.7 million** towards the **Student Wellbeing Boost** from 2022–23 to 2024–25:
  - \$192 million in additional one-off funding to schools to support their students' mental health and wellbeing.
    - All eligible schools received these funds for use by 31 March 2024.
    - Seven jurisdictions have completed their final reporting requirements, with one jurisdiction (WA) yet to sign-off on the final reporting.
    - Each jurisdiction determined a methodology for allocating funding which considered post-COVID mental health and wellbeing needs of students, including school size, location and student demographics.
  - \$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 Australian Government's annual contribution is **\$61.43 million** per year for 5 years from 2022–23 to 2026–27. A total financial contribution of \$307.18 million.

- The NSWWP is managed by state and territory governments and gives schools the flexibility to hire a qualified Student Wellbeing Officer or Chaplain, giving options to schools to choose what is best suited to support the wellbeing of their students.
- In 2023, 3,163 schools participated in the program (data on 2024 will be available in March 2025).
- The Government funds **Be You** in schools through the Department of Health and Aged Care, and it is delivered by Beyond Blue in partnership with Early Childhood Australia and headspace.
  - Be You provides teachers and early learning educators with information, advice and support to teach children and young people skills for good social and emotional development, work together with families, and recognise and get help for children and young people with mental health difficulties.

### ***Anti-Bullying Collective***

- The Australian Government will contribute \$4.2 million over 2024–25 to 2027–28 to the Australian Schools Anti-Bullying Collective (ASAC) to support national bullying prevention initiatives such as the *Bullying No Way* website and resources, and the National Week of Action.
- The ASAC, led by the Queensland Department of Education, is supported by funding from the Australian Government and all state and territory governments.
- In 2024 more than 6,870 schools registered to participate in the National Week of Action.

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

- The Voluntary Mental Health Check Tool (now known as My Mind Check) is part of the Student Wellbeing Boost election commitment.
- My Mind Check has been developed as a free resource for schools to address the concerning upward trend in mental health issues experienced by Australian children and young people which were exacerbated by the pandemic.
- It is a point in time digital check in for students to self-report how they are coping and provide Australian schools with early information about their students' mental health and wellbeing.
- In participating schools, students complete the check in during school time under the day-to-day supervision of a classroom teacher or any other designated staff member, such as a wellbeing coordinator.

- My Mind Check is free and available for schools to use, subject to jurisdiction and sector opt-in decisions, with consent also required from a parent or caregiver.
- Macquarie University has been contracted to develop My Mind Check and support schools to use it.
- My Mind Check provides participating schools with information about their students' mental health and wellbeing and enables schools to support at risk students to get the support they need.
- Data entered into the My Mind Check platform is secure and can be only accessed by nominated, authorised staff at the individual school level. Authorised members of the Macquarie University's My Mind Check team can also access the data for the purpose of supporting schools and managing the project.
- The department and Macquarie University continue to engage with state and territory education departments and the Independent and Catholic sector on the use of My Mind Check in schools. Current opt-in status:

<b>Non-government sector – national opt-in provided</b>	
NCEC	NCEC has provided national opt-in for all Catholic sector schools – with individual diocese to decide on uptake based on local circumstances.
ISA	ISA has provided national opt-in for all independent sector schools – with individual schools to decide on uptake based on local circumstances.

<b>Government sector – jurisdiction wise</b>	
NT	Opt-in
Australian Capital Territory	Position TBC
Western Australia	Position TBC
Tasmania	Opt-out
Queensland	Opt-out
South Australia	Opt-out
Victoria	Opt-out
New South Wales	Opt-out



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

- In October 2023, to address the impacts of the Hamas-Israel conflict on Jewish and Muslim communities in Australia, the Australian Government announced a number of one-off initiatives.
- This included \$6 million in additional funding to provide mental health and wellbeing support for Jewish and Muslim students in Australian schools.
  - 495 schools received this additional funding across all jurisdictions and education sectors. This included schools affiliated to Jewish and Islamic faith; and government, Catholic and other independent 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 a variation to the Student Wellbeing Boost Schedule to the Federation Funding Agreement Education and Skills.
  - On 23 October 2023, the Minister for Education wrote to state and territory Education Ministers regarding this additional support.
  - These letters sought state and territory Education Ministers' agreement to deliver this funding through the variation.
- Schools had to spend or commit to use the funds by 31 March 2024. Information on how schools spent the funds is included in the final milestone reports.
- Final reports from almost all jurisdictions have been received.
- Of the \$6m, \$5.75m was allocated to schools and \$0.25m allocated to departmental funding to administer the measure.

## **Social Cohesion**

- The Australian Government recognises the importance of equipping young Australians to live in a diverse world.
- This includes supporting young Australians develop the skills they need to address intolerance when they experience it or see it happening to others.
  - Under the Australian Curriculum's *General Capability: Intercultural Understanding*, from Foundation to Year 10, students learn to value their own cultures, languages and beliefs, and those of others.

- Since 2020, the Government has also committed over \$21 million (2019–20 to 2025–26) towards a suite of school-focused social cohesion initiatives:
  - **\$12.1 million** over 5 years (2021–22 to 2025–26) to **Together for Humanity** to deliver a program to equip students, teachers, and parents for diversity, and to foster greater inter-cultural and inter-faith understanding and a sense of belonging. This includes an additional \$4 million, as part of the 2024 Budget, to increase their efforts to assist schools to address discrimination, in particular antisemitism and Islamophobia.
  - **\$3 million** over 4 years (2019–20 to 2022–23) to expand the **Anti-Defamation Commission’s (ADC) ‘Click Against Hate’** program, to teach secondary student to identify and respond to intolerance when it happens whether online or in person.
    - A Deed of Variation to extend program delivery for a further 2 years (until 30 November 2026) is in process to allow sufficient time for implementation, at no additional cost.
  - **\$3 million** over 4 years (2020–21 to 2023–24) to the **ADC** to develop digital Holocaust education resources.
    - A Deed of Variation to extend program delivery for a further 2 years (until 30 November 2026) is in process to allow sufficient time for implementation, at no additional cost.
  - **\$3 million** over 4 years (2020–21 to 2023–24) to the **Islamic Museum of Australia** to design and build an educational platform to teach tolerance, inclusivity and respect of differences in regard to the Islamic community.
    - A Deed of Variation to extend program delivery for a further 12 months (until 30 November 2025) is in process to allow remaining funds to be spent.

### ***Vaping in school***

- At the 6 July 2023 Education Ministers Meeting (EMM), Ministers agreed to:
  - continue to work together at a national level to develop and implement mechanisms to address vaping in schools
  - to work with Health Ministers on a national education campaign that educates young people on the harms of vaping and e-cigarettes
  - 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 encouraged 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, third party, vaping resources on the Student Wellbeing Hub, targeted at educators, parents and students about the harms of vaping.

### ***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 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**

Nil

<b>Date Last Cleared</b>	24 October 2024
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**Issue:** Teacher Workforce  
**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.
- The Occupation Shortage List (formerly the Skills Priority List) 2024, produced by Jobs and Skills Australia, provides a detailed view of occupations in shortage in Australia and by each state and territory. It reports that early childhood and secondary teachers are in shortage in every state and territory. There is also a national shortage of primary teachers, but in Queensland this is limited to regional areas and in the Northern Territory there is no reported shortage.
- The shortages can be attributed to several factors:
  - a decline in ITE commencements and completions
  - teachers leaving the profession
  - an increase in the number of teachers needed due to growing student enrolments.

### ***Decline in ITE commencements and completions***

- The number of students commencing ITE declined 7% from 2022 to 2023.
  - ITE commencements declined from 27,676 in 2022 to 25,605 in 2023, continuing the decline from 2021.
  - The number of ITE commencements in 2023 is below the average over the last 10 years (29,131 commencements).
  - The labour market has tightened over this period. Historically, we have seen that people are less likely to go to university when the unemployment rate is low, including for ITE courses.
- The number of students completing an ITE course has also declined by 6% between 2022 and 2023.
  - ITE completions declined from 17,455 in 2022 to 16,485 in 2023, continuing the decline from 2021.
  - The number of ITE completions in 2023 is below the average over the last 10 years (17,187 completions).
  - The Better and Fairer Schools Agreement includes a target to improve ITE completion rates. This is a sure-fire way to increase the supply of teachers.

- NTWAP initiatives will help.
  - For example, both the Commonwealth Teaching Scholarships and High Achieving Teachers program are designed to attract more people into ITE and support them through their course.
- Students who do ITE have great job prospects.
  - In 2023, 78% of ITE graduates were employed as a teacher 4 to 6 months after graduation compared to 69% in 2021.

### ***Teachers leaving the profession***

- Many teachers intend to leave the profession or are close to retirement.
  - AITSL's Teacher Survey for 2022 shows only 27% of all classroom teachers planned to stay until retirement.
  - ABS census data shows 31% of classroom teachers are aged over 50 years – many teachers will retire in coming years.

### ***Growing student enrolments***

- More teachers are needed to meet the growing number of school students.
  - The number of school students in Australia has increased by 12% – in 2023 there were more than 4 million students or around 442,000 more than a decade ago.
  - By the end of this decade there will be around 130,000 more students in our schools. Without taking account of any other factors (e.g. people retiring or leaving the profession), this means we will need another 10,000 more teachers than we have now.
- Despite the shortages, the student-to-teaching staff ratio has improved.
  - The number of permanent school teachers grew by 19% nationally between 2013 and 2023. There were around 311,000 full-time equivalent (FTE) school teaching staff in 2023, compared to around 261,000 in 2013.
  - The student-to-teaching staff ratio has improved from 13.9 students for every permanent (non-casual) teacher in 2013 to 13.1 in 2023. This is driven by improvements in the primary school sector.

### **Additional information**

- Information about teacher salaries is available at [Attachment A](#).
- Work under the NTWAP is continuing.
  - At the June 2024 Budget Estimates, Senator O’Sullivan asked for an update on the progress of each item in the Action Plan, including the allocated budget and expenditure. A response was provided in **SQ24-000730**.
- Work is also progressing in response to 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 Oversight Board has been established to oversee implementation of this change.

### **Attachments**

[Attachment A](#) – Teacher Salaries.

[Attachment B](#) – TEEP high level implementation plan.

<b>Date Last Cleared</b>	29 October 2024
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**Teacher Salaries in Australia (current as at October 2024)**

State/ territory	Lowest salary (and level)	Highest salary (and level)	Date salary based on	EBA start date	EBA end date	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026
NSW <sup>1</sup>	\$85,000 (Step 1 (Graduate))	\$129,948 (Highly Accomplished /Lead)	09/10/2023	09/10/2023	08/10/2024	2.53%	4.27% - 20.61% <sup>1</sup>	n/a	n/a	n/a
Vic <sup>2</sup>	\$78,021 (Classroom Teacher Range 1-1)	\$126,992 (Leading Teacher Range 3- 2)	01/07/2024	17/08/2022	31/12/2025	2.00%	2.00%	2.00%	2.00%	n/a
Qld <sup>3</sup>	\$74,146 (Band 1, Step 1)	\$142,766 (Lead Teacher)	01/07/2024	15/12/2022	30/06/2025	4.00%	4.00%	3.00%	n/a	n/a
WA <sup>4</sup>	\$85,610 (Increment 2.1)	\$137,428 (Level 3.2 Teacher)	30/07/2024	TBC	TBC	3.00% (or \$3,130 <sup>4</sup> )	5.00%	4.00%	3.00%	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%	4.00% <sup>5</sup>	3.00%	3.00%	3.00%
Tas <sup>6</sup>	\$70,571 (Band 1 Level 1)	\$121,810 (Advanced Skills Band 2)	01/03/2024	20/05/2022	19/06/2025	2.35%	3.50% (plus \$1,000 <sup>6</sup> )	3.00% (plus \$500 <sup>6</sup> )	3.00% (plus \$500 <sup>6</sup> )	n/a
ACT <sup>7</sup>	\$84,978 (Level 1)	\$121,038 <sup>7</sup> (Experienced Level 8)	27/01/2024	07/07/2022	26/03/2026	1.50%	1.00% (plus \$3,000)	2.50% (plus \$1,500)	2.00% (plus \$1,000)	n/a
NT <sup>8</sup>	\$84,191 (Classroom Teacher 1)	\$181,006 <sup>8</sup> (Senior Teacher 8)	11/10/2023	18/01/2023	11/10/2024	3.00%	3.00%	n/a	n/a	n/a

n/a – Not available

<sup>1</sup> Source: [Crown Employees \(Teachers in Schools and Related Employees\) Salaries and Conditions Award 2022 - November 2023 variation, Crown Employees \(Teachers in Schools and Related Employees\) Salaries and Conditions Award 2022](#) Dates are those for the 2023 variation. In 2023, NSW transitioned to a new teacher classification structure; this led to the wide range of pay increases as recorded in the table. On 28 October 2024, the NSW Teachers Federation voted to accept an agreement with the NSW Government, under which teachers get a 3% pay rise each year for 3 years. This agreement is not currently reflected in the table because the EBA has not yet been published.

<sup>2</sup> Source: [Salaries-teachers \(education.vic.gov.au\)](#).

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

<sup>4</sup> Source: [General Agreement 2023 \(Schools\) :: SSTUWA , Summary posters - AIP 2023 Schools - 14May24 11am.pdf \(sstuwa.org.au\), School Education Act Employees' \(Teachers and Administrators\) General Agreement 2021](#) The EBA had not taken effect as of 19 September 2024. The pay increase for WA public school teachers on 6 December 2022 was the greater of 3.00% and \$3,130.

<sup>5</sup> Source: [Pay rates and forms for new employees and enterprise agreements \(education.sa.gov.au\)](#) , [Enterprise Agreement 2024 | AEU \(SA Branch\) \(aeusa.asn.au\)](#) The pay increase for 2023 was backpaid on 25 March 2024 back to 1 May 2023.

<sup>6</sup> Source: [Teachers Agreement 2023](#) Reflects new pay structure commencing 27 January 2024. Additional payments of \$1,000 in 2023, and of \$500 in 2024 and 2025 are low-income payments only made to teachers in Band 1, Levels 1-4 inclusive.

<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). The AEU NT Branch website advises the EA for 2024-27 is under negotiation.

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

Rec	Proposed actions/milestones	Authority and funding committed
<b>1:</b> Establish core content and mandate in national accreditation	Implemented: AITSL has published an addendum to the accreditation standards and procedures mandating the core content.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>At the 11 December 2023 EMM</b> Ministers approved the Addendum to the Accreditation of initial teacher education programs in Australia: Standards and Procedures by end 2025, noting in some jurisdictions further steps will be required to embed the additional standards.</li> </ul>
<b>2:</b> 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>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The addendum was published on AITSL's website at the end of 2023.</li> </ul>
<b>3:</b> Strengthen national quality and consistency of initial teacher education programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Board has been established as agreed by Ministers. The Board met on 21 June 2024 and meets next on 24 October 2024. In line with its Terms of Reference, the Board's priorities include:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Monitoring implementation of core content into ITE courses</li> <li>- Reporting on and periodically reviewing nationally consistent, transparent ITE indicators</li> <li>- Support for streamlining of reporting requirements for ITE providers</li> <li>- Cross-institutional Teaching Performance Assessment moderation processes.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• The Board will report to EMM annually.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>At the 11 December 2023 EMM</b> Education Ministers agreed to establish an Initial Teacher Education Quality Assurance Oversight Board (Board) to strengthen the national quality and consistency of ITE programs.</li> <li>• <b>At the 26 April 2024 EMM</b> Ministers approved the Board's ToR and agreed the composition of the Board's membership. Ministers agreed to Tasmania's nomination to the Board out of session in July and early August 2024.</li> </ul>
<b>4:</b> Establish nationally consistent, transparent indicators	Work is underway to consult on the indicators shortly.	<b>At the 11 December 2023 EMM</b> Education Ministers agreed the Board will consult with the sector and develop an approach to reporting on nationally consistent, transparent indicators.



Rec	Proposed actions/milestones	Authority and funding committed
<p><b>5:</b> Streamline reporting requirements in the Accreditation Standards and Procedures</p>	<p>The Board has commissioned AITSL to update standard 6.3 in the Accreditation Standards and Procedures (ASPs). Ministers will be asked to approve the amendments in the context of AITSL's review of all the ASPs in early 2025.</p>	<p><b>At the 11 December 2023 EMM</b> Education Ministers agreed that the Australian Government commission AITSL to update standard 6.3 in the Accreditation Standards and Procedures to action this recommendation.</p>
<p><b>6:</b> Establish a Transition Fund to support embedding of core content.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Australian Government has established the <i>Strong Beginnings (Transition) Fund</i> and has provided all eligible higher education providers with funding. A total of \$4.275 million in grant payments has been approved and distributed to providers.</li> <li>• Arrangements for delivery of the <i>Strong Beginnings (Excellence) Fund</i> are under development and further details will be made available at a later date.</li> </ul>	<p><b>At the 11 December 2023 EMM</b> Education Ministers noted that the Australian Government will establish the Strong Beginnings Fund to support ITE providers to embed core content and foster a culture of continuous improvement.</p> <p>In the 2023-24 MYEFO, the Australian Government allocated \$7.1 million over four years to the Strong Beginnings Fund.</p>
<p><b>7:</b> Establish an Excellence Fund to improve the quality of initial teacher education programs</p>		
<p><b>8:</b> Establish system-wide coordination of practical experience delivery</p>	<p>State and territory education ministers to progress improvements within their jurisdictions and report back to Ministers.</p>	<p><b>At the 6 July 2023 EMM</b> Education Ministers agreed in-principle to all 14 recommendations from the Panel's Final Report, with four recommendations agreed for immediate action. This included developing guidelines to improve the quality of practical experience.</p>
<p><b>9:</b> Develop national guidelines for high-quality practical experience</p>	<p>Implemented: Education Ministers recently agreed the Australian Professional Experience Guidelines which provide guidance to all ITE providers, teacher regulatory authorities and schools to guide the development and implementation of professional experience.</p>	

Rec	Proposed actions/milestones	Authority and funding committed
		\$2.085 million over two years was committed to support AITSL's implementation of TEEP recommendations, including the development of national guidelines to improve the quality of practical experience in teaching.
<b>10:</b> Increase systemic investment in practical experience	State and territory education ministers to progress improvements within their jurisdictions and report back to Ministers.	<b>At the 11 December 2023 EMM</b> Education Ministers agreed that state and territory Education Ministers will progress this in their own jurisdictions and report back to Ministers.
<b>11:</b> Ensure professional recognition for mentor teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• State and territory ministers to progress improvements within their jurisdictions and report back to Ministers.</li> <li>• AITSL provided advice earlier in 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>	<b>At the 11 December 2023 EMM</b> Education Ministers agreed that state and territory Education Ministers will progress this in their own jurisdictions and report back to Ministers by June 2024. They also agreed that AITSL will develop advice on HALTs by March 2024.
<b>12:</b> Develop and expand mid-career pathway programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The High Achieving Teachers (HAT) Program supports mid-career pathways. The Australian Government has delivered HAT in two phases.</li> <li>• 10 providers are delivering over 1600 places in the HAT program pilots many of which focus on mid-career entrants, commencing in 2024 and ending in 2030.</li> </ul>	<p><b>At the 11 December 2023 EMM</b> Education Ministers agreed that recommendation 12 will in part be implemented through the HAT Program Expansion Pilots.</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>
<b>13:</b> Promote mid-career pathways	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The 'Be that teacher' campaign website has been delivered. On the call-to-action page, it includes information on mid-career pathways.</li> </ul>	<b>At the 11 December 2023 EMM</b> Education Ministers agreed this recommendation be implemented through opportunities in the 'Be that teacher' campaign and through the HAT Program

Rec	Proposed actions/milestones	Authority and funding committed
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Providers engaged to deliver the HAT Program Expansion Pilots will promote the HAT Program to mid-career professionals.</li> </ul>	Expansion Pilots to further promote teaching to potential mid-career entrants to the profession.
<b>14:</b> Build the evidence base for mid-career pathways	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.	<b>At the 11 December 2023 EMM</b> Education Ministers noted that improving the evidence base in relation to mid-career programs will be progressed through the HAT Program Expansion Pilots as providers will be required to collect robust data on participants and outcomes and conduct an evaluation of their pilots. TEEP Recommendation 14 will also be progressed through AITSL's ongoing work on the ATWD collection (including survey of teachers).