



National School Reform Agreement

About

The [National School Reform Agreement](#) (National Agreement) is a joint agreement between the Commonwealth, states, and territories, that aims to lift student outcomes across Australian schools. It outlines a set of strategic reforms in areas where national collaboration will have the greatest impact on driving improved student outcomes.

The National Agreement features three reform directions across five years, 2019-2023 and focuses on:

- supporting students, student learning and achievement;
- teaching, school leadership and school improvement; and
- enhancing the national evidence base.

These reforms have been informed by several key reviews including, *Through Growth to Achievement: Report of the Review to Achieve Educational Excellence in Australian Schools*.

National Policy Initiatives

The reform directions are being progressed through eight National Policy Initiatives (NPIs), together with a suite of state/territory-specific activities outlined in bilateral agreements with each jurisdiction.

Supporting students, student learning and student achievement

1. **A(i)**: Enhance the Australian Curriculum to support teacher assessment of student

attainment and growth against clear descriptors.

2. **A(ii)**: Assist teachers to monitor individual student progress and identify student learning needs through opt-in online and on demand student learning assessment tools with links to student learning resources, prioritising early years foundation skills.
3. **A(iii)**: Review senior secondary pathways into work, further education and training.

Supporting teaching, school leadership and school improvement

4. **B(i)**: Develop a national strategy to help build our understanding of how to attract and retain the best and brightest to the teaching profession and attract teachers to areas of need. Achieved through supporting better workplace planning and analysis of future workforce needs.
5. **B(ii)**: Strengthen the initial teacher education accreditation system by ensuring quality, consistency and transparency across Australia's teacher education programs.

Enhancing the national evidence base

6. **C(i)**: Provide a unique student number for every student to help identify and share information between schools, sectors and states to support better understanding of student progress, protect student privacy and improve the national evidence base.

7. **C(ii)**: Establish an independent national evidence institute to inform teacher practice, system improvement and policy development.
8. **C(iii)**: Improve national data quality, consistency and collection to improve the national evidence base and inform policy development.

Bilateral Agreements

Under the National Agreement, states and territories are required to have a bilateral agreement with the Commonwealth that sets out state-specific actions to improve student outcomes. Bilateral agreements include activities that support particular student cohorts such as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, students in regional, rural and remote areas, students with disability and students from a low-SES background.

Annual reports set out state and territory progress in implementing reform initiatives against agreed milestones as detailed in their bilateral agreement for the purpose of assessing compliance with section 22(2)(c) of the Act.

The bilateral agreements and annual progress reports are published on the department's website.

Alice Springs (Mparntwe) Education Declaration

On 12 December 2019, Australia's Education Ministers renewed their commitment to national educational goals and actions for the coming decade through the Alice Springs (Mparntwe) Education Declaration (the Mparntwe Declaration).

Under the Mparntwe Declaration, Australia's Education Ministers agreed to the following goals:

- that education should continue to promote excellence and equity, and
- that all young Australians become confident and creative individuals, successful learners, and active and informed community members.

The goals reflect the changing nature of education, the economy and work. They set out the knowledge and skills required for the 21st century, the importance of learning throughout life from early childhood onwards, and the need for effective transitions between all stages of learning.

The NPIs are mechanisms that deliver the vision of the Mparntwe Declaration for 'a world class education system that encourages and supports every student to be the very best they can be no matter where they live or what kind of learning challenges they may face.'¹

Delivery

Education Ministers maintain oversight of progress of the NPIs. The Australian Government, states and territories, and the national agencies, each work collaboratively and/or lead, delivery of the NPIs.

Project milestones

An annual report outlines Education Ministers' progress in implementing the NPIs against agreed milestones, as detailed in Schedule B of the National Agreement.

The 2019, 2020 and 2021 Annual Reports on progress in implementing the national policy initiatives are published on the department's website.

Productivity Commission Report

Under the terms of the current National Agreement, an independent review to assess the effectiveness of the NPIs was required to be completed by 31 December 2022 for consideration by Education Ministers and to

¹ <https://www.education.gov.au/alice-springs-mparntwe-education-declaration>



inform development of a new National Agreement.

On 4 February 2022, Education Ministers agreed to the Productivity Commission undertaking a review of the National Agreement. The final report was publicly released on 20 January 2023.

The [Study Report](#) is now available.

National Agreement extension and review to inform the next Agreement

In December 2022, Commonwealth, State and Territory Ministers agreed to establish a panel of eminent Australians to inform the next National School Reform Agreement.

This review will focus on driving real and measurable improvements for students from disadvantaged backgrounds. It will identify implementable and meaningful reform priorities for the next agreement and build on the recommendations of the Productivity Commission's Review.

To provide time for this work to occur, the current National Agreement will be extended for 12 months to 2024, subject to agreement by First Ministers.

In December 2022, Education Ministers agreed to establish a panel (the Expert Panel) to inform the next agreement. The Review to Inform a Better and Fairer Education System (the Review) will advise Education Ministers on what reform priorities should be included in the next agreement.

On 29 March 2023, the Hon Jason Clare MP, Minister for Education, announced the members of the Expert Panel that will provide advice on the key targets and specific reforms that should be tied to funding in the next National School Reform Agreement.

The Expert Panel will deliver its final report to Education Ministers by 31 October 2023.

Dr Lisa O'Brien AM, the Chair of the Australian Education Research Organisation and former

CEO of the Smith Family will Chair the panel of experts.

More information about the review and other members of the Expert Panel can be found at [Review to Inform a Better and Fairer Education System - Department of Education, Australian Government](#)

