

## Variation Agreement extending the National School Reform Agreement

### Preliminaries

1. In accordance with clause 20 of the National School Reform Agreement (the Agreement), the Parties agree to amend the Agreement as set out in this Variation Agreement.
2. In December 2022, Education Ministers agreed to undertake a review to inform the next Agreement. To enable time for this review, Education Ministers agreed to extend the current Agreement for 12 months, subject to agreement from First Ministers.

### Variations to the Agreement

3. The Parties agree to amend the Agreement and schedules as follows:

Item	Clause reference	Variation
1.	Clause 18	'31 December 2023' is replaced with '31 December 2024'.
2.	Clause 19	'31 December 2023' is replaced with '31 December 2024'.
3.	Throughout the Agreement, except for in clause 5 and parts of Schedule A (definitions)	References to 'COAG' are replaced by 'National Cabinet' throughout the Agreement, except for in clause 5 and in the definitions of 'Council of Australian Governments (COAG)' and 'Education Council' in Schedule A.
4.	Throughout the Agreement, except for in clause 5 and parts of Schedule A (definitions)	References to 'Education Council' and 'COAG Education Council' are replaced by 'Education Ministers Meeting' throughout the Agreement except for in clause 5 and in the definition of 'Education Council' in Schedule A.
5.	Clause 5, footnote	Repeal the text of footnote 1 in clause 5 and replace with:  Ministerial Council arrangements may change from time to time. Following the establishment of National Cabinet in 2020, COAG ceased to operate, and Education Council was replaced with the Education Ministers Meeting.
6.	Clause 8	Repeal existing clause 8 and replace with:  This Agreement has been guided by commitments made in the

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		<p>historic Partnership Agreement on ‘Closing the Gap’, including the <i>National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Strategy 2015</i> and the <i>National Indigenous Reform Agreement (NIRA)</i> and sets out actions that will support efforts to lift outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. From July 2020, a new National Agreement on Closing the Gap was signed by all Australian Governments and the Coalition of Peaks to build on and replace the NIRA. It has been informed by the findings of the <i>Review to Achieve Educational Excellence in Australian Schools</i>, the <i>Independent Review into Regional, Rural and Remote Education</i>, the <i>Review to Achieve Educational Excellence in Australian Schools through Early Childhood Interventions</i> and the STEM Partnerships Forum.</p>
7.	<b>Clause 29 – 32 (Review)</b>	<p>Repeal clauses 29 – 32 and insert replacement clauses:</p> <p>29. An independent review was commissioned on behalf of Education Ministers in 2022 to assess:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. the effectiveness of the national policy initiatives outlined in Part 3, recognising that national reform takes time to implement and mature, and for the effects of nationally coordinated reform efforts to materialise</li> <li>b. the appropriateness of the National Measurement Framework for Schooling (Measurement Framework) in measuring progress towards achieving the outcomes of this Agreement.</li> </ul> <p>30. The review did not include any assessment of compliance with section 22A of the Act.</p> <p>31. The reviewer(s) and the terms of reference for the review were agreed by the Education Ministers on 4 February 2022. The review was completed by 31 December 2022 for consideration of Education Ministers to inform the development of a new national reform agreement.</p> <p>32. The reviewer(s) presented the report to Education Ministers prior to publication on 20 January 2023.</p>
8.	<b>Clause 33</b>	‘2023’ is replaced with ‘2024’.
9.	<b>Clause 37 (the sub-outcomes related to NAPLAN)</b>	<p>Insert the following footnote after clause 37:</p> <p>Due to changes to the NAPLAN assessment scale and timing for testing, NAPLAN results from 2023 will not be directly comparable with results from 2008 to 2022. These changes to the NAPLAN reporting agreed by Education Ministers mean that from 2023, reporting of NAPLAN results will not provide data that aligns to the current targets in the NSRA and will be reported as N/A. The sub-outcomes related to NAPLAN will not be amended to reflect these changes in the 12-month extension to 31 December 2024.</p>

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10.	Subclause 53(c)	<p>Repeal existing clause 53(c) and insert replacement clause 53(c) as follows:</p> <p>c) continuing public accountability on progress towards meeting targets through existing national performance reporting arrangements.</p>
11.	Schedule A, definition of 'Education Council'	<p>The existing definition of 'Education Council' is replaced with the following:</p> <p>Education Council was established under the former Council of Australian Governments (COAG) arrangements. Membership includes State, Territory, Australian Government and New Zealand Ministers with portfolio responsibility for school education, early childhood and/or higher education, as nominated by their respective First Ministers. It was replaced by the Education Ministers Meeting in 2020.</p>
12.	Schedule A, after the definition of 'Education Council'	<p>After the definition of 'Education Council' insert a new row in the table providing a definition of 'Education Ministers Meeting' as follows:</p> <p>Education Ministers Meeting (EMM) replaces and takes on the functions of the former COAG <i>Education Council</i> from July 2020. EMM is the forum for collaboration and decision-making on early childhood education and care, school education, higher education and international education. Australian, State and Territory government ministers responsible for education attend the meeting. The Commonwealth Minister for Education is the chair.</p>
13.	Schedule A, after the new definition of 'Education Ministers Meeting'	<p>After the new definition of 'Education Ministers Meeting' inserted by this Variation Agreement, insert a new row in the table providing a definition of 'Education Ministers' as follows:</p> <p>Education Ministers are the Commonwealth, State and Territory government ministers that attend the Education Ministers Meeting.</p>
14.	Schedule A, after the definition of 'First Ministers'	<p>After the definition of 'First Ministers' insert a new row in the table providing a definition of 'National Cabinet' as follows:</p> <p>In response to the coronavirus pandemic, the former COAG was discontinued in 2020 and its functions and operations were replaced with National Cabinet. National Cabinet is a forum for the Prime Minister, Premiers and Chief Ministers to meet and work collaboratively.</p>
15.	Schedule B, at item A (ii) in the table	<p>At item A (ii) of the table, after c) in the Milestone column add milestone d) as follows:</p> <p>d) Education Ministers Meeting consider a proposal for sharing existing assessments and assessment items to establish a bank of</p>

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		<p>assessments and an approach to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. aligning the assessment/assessment items to Version 9.0 of the Australian Curriculum, which has aligned and embedded the literacy and numeracy learning progressions;</li> <li>ii. developing suitable measurement scales to underpin the literacy and numeracy progressions initially (followed by other learning areas of the Australian Curriculum);</li> <li>iii. identifying the most cost-effective and expedient way to share assessments with teachers/systems across Australia, using existing national agency infrastructure or an existing share platform;</li> <li>iv. making the assessments available on an opt-in basis for teachers across Australia to use; and</li> <li>v. ensuring that issues of intellectual property, assessment security and integrity are adequately addressed.</li> </ul>
16.	Schedule B, at item A (ii) in the table	At item A (ii) of the table, add 'December 2024' in the Timing column for new Milestone d).
17.	Schedule B, at item C (i) in the table	At item C (i) of the table, 'All students to have a USI by the end of the agreement' in the Timing column is replaced with 'Australian Government arrangements for a USI to be in place by end of 2024'.
18.	Schedule D	Repeal the words 'This template will be used to report to COAG' in Schedule D.

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

Signed for and on behalf of the Commonwealth  
of Australia by

  
The Honourable Anthony Albanese MP  
Prime Minister of the Commonwealth of Australia

2023

*Signed for and on behalf of the  
State of New South Wales by*

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**The Honourable Christopher Minns MP**  
Premier of the State of New South Wales

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24/11/2023

*Signed for and on behalf of the  
State of Tasmania by*

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Premier of the State of Tasmania

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*Signed for and on behalf of the Northern  
Territory by*

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Chief Minister of the Northern Territory of Australia

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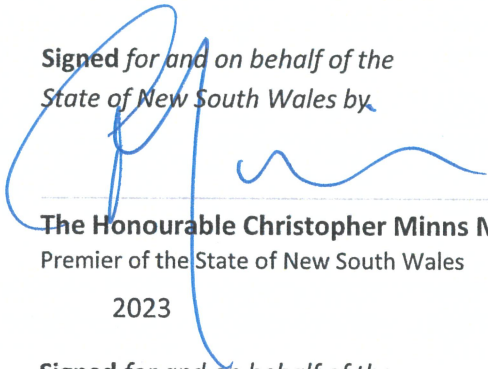
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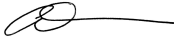
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