COAG Reform Council

# Education 2011: Comparing performance across Australia

**Report to the Council of Australian Governments**

**28 September 2012**

**Education 2011: Comparing performance across Australia**



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## About the COAG Reform Council

The COAG Reform Council has been established by the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) as part of the arrangements for federal financial relations. The council is independent of individual governments and reports directly to COAG.

The COAG Reform Council's mission is to assist COAG to strengthen the performance and public accountability of governments.

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Commonwealth, State and Territory governments

Secretariat for the Steering Committee for the Review of Government Service Provision

Australian Bureau of Statistics

Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA)

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28 September 2012

The Hon Julia Gillard MP
Prime Minister
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Prime Minister

On behalf of the COAG Reform Council, I am pleased to present our report *Education 2011: Comparing performance across Australia*.

The report has been prepared in accordance with the Intergovernmental Agreement on Federal Financial Relations, which requires the council to publish performance information and a comparative analysis of the performance of governments.

This is the council's fourth report on the National Education Agreement and the first since an updated agreement was approved by COAG on 25 July 2012. We consider the new agreement provides a better performance monitoring framework and appreciate that many of the changes are consistent with past recommendations from our reports.

The good news in the report is that Australian students are improving in Year 3 reading and Year 5 numeracy. However, we note some disappointing outcomes for young people leaving school, particularly for young people from low socio-economic areas.

Consistent with the council's performance reporting and public accountability role, the council will publicly release this report in November 2012. The council hopes that the findings and recommendations assist COAG with its reform agenda.

Yours sincerely

Paul McClintock AO
Chairman

# Table of contents

# Education 2011: Key findings

### Improvements in reading and numeracy are mainly in the primary years

- Nationally, both the average scores and the proportions of students meeting the minimum standard in Year 3 reading and Year 5 numeracy improved between 2008 and 2011.
  - In reading, Queensland and Western Australia improved in Year 3 average scores and the proportions meeting minimum standards from relatively low starting points.
  - In numeracy, five States improved on both measures in Year 5.
- There was little other change in reading and numeracy between 2008 and 2011.

### The Year 12 attainment rate needs to increase faster than the 2001 to 2011 trend to meet COAG's target of 90% by 2015

- There was no significant improvement in the Year 12 or equivalent attainment rate for 20–24 year olds in any jurisdiction between 2008 and 2011.
- However, school participation recently increased for 15–19 year olds following COAG's agreement to require young people to participate in schooling to Year 10 and then 'earn or learn' until age 17. This requirement may increase Year 12 completions in years to come.

### The proportion of young people successfully moving from school to work and further study remains below the level in 2008

- From 2008 to 2011, the national proportion of 18–24 year olds fully engaged fell by 3.8 percentage points from 76.3% to 72.5%. This was due to a fall in full time employment.
- The Victorian and ACT rates significantly declined, however the ACT is significantly above the national average. There were no significant changes in other jurisdictions.

### The education outcomes for disadvantaged groups remain at low levels

- Outcomes for Indigenous students are still a long way behind non-Indigenous students.
  - Attendance rates generally did not improve across most States and Territories between 2008 and 2011, with Year 10 attendance mainly declining.
  - The proportions meeting minimum standards in reading in Years 3 and 7 and in numeracy in Years 3 and 5 improved between 2008 and 2011.
- Outcomes for young people from low socio-economic groups have not improved.
  - Proportions meeting minimum standards in reading are up to 16 percentage points behind those from the highest socio-economic background in 2011.
  - The largest decline from 2008 to 2011 in post school participation in employment, education or training was for young people from the lowest socio-economic areas.

# Overview

## National Education Agreement: Performance report for 2011

This is the council's fourth report under the National Education Agreement.

In the National Education Agreement, COAG committed to the objective that all Australian school students acquire the knowledge and skills to participate effectively in society and employment in a globalised economy.

In this report, we look at governments' progress toward the objective by assessing their performance against the five outcomes and two of the four targets set out in the agreement (Box 1). (Halving the gap targets are reported in the National Indigenous Reform Agreement report.)

**Box 1 National Education Agreement: outcomes and targets**

**Outcomes**

- All children are engaged in and benefiting from schooling.
- Young people are meeting basic literacy and numeracy standards, and overall levels of literacy and numeracy are improving.
- Australian students excel by international standards.
- Schooling promotes social inclusion and reduces the educational disadvantage of children, especially Indigenous children.
- Young people make a successful transition from school to work and further study.

**Targets**

- Lift the Year 12 or equivalent or Certificate II attainment rate to 90 per cent by 2015.
- Lift the Year 12 or equivalent or Certificate III attainment rate to 90 per cent by 2020.
- Halve the gap for Indigenous students in Reading, Writing and Numeracy within a decade, by 2018.
- At least halve the gap for Indigenous students in Year 12 or equivalent attainment rates by 2020.

Following a review in 2011–12, COAG agreed to a revised performance reporting framework for the National Education Agreement on 25 July 2012 (COAG 2012b). We report against this new framework, where possible.

Our findings are grouped under three key themes.

- Are literacy and numeracy improving?
- Are young people making a successful transition from school?
- Is schooling reducing educational disadvantage?

In general, we look at improvement from the baseline year 2008 to the current reporting year 2011. For selected indicators, we also present trend data from 2001 to 2011.

## Are literacy and numeracy improving?

Lifting literacy and numeracy levels in Australia is a centrepiece of COAG's reform efforts in education. A student's success at school and transition to further education or work is strongly related to their literacy and numeracy achievement.

To consider whether literacy and numeracy are improving, we look at changes over time in:

- average scores in NAPLAN testing, as a measure of overall improvement
- the proportion of students meeting the minimum standards in NAPLAN testing, as a measure of how we are going at lifting all students to basic literacy and numeracy levels.

### Improvements are mainly in Year 3 for reading and in Year 5 for numeracy

In **Year 3 reading**, there were statistically significant improvements nationally, with a higher proportion of students reaching basic levels. Improvement in Year 3 is promising as it is the earliest indication we have of students' literacy and is a strong predictor of performance in later years. Other significant improvements were:

- average scores of Year 3 students improved between 2008 and 2011 nationally and in NSW, Victoria, Queensland, Western Australia and the ACT
- the national proportion of Year 3 students who met the minimum standard increased to 93.8%
- only Queensland and Western Australia had significant increases in Year 3 students meeting the minimum standard
  - these States started from a lower base in 2008, at 87.1% and 89.4% respectively and are now over 92%, close to the 2011 national average of 93.8%.

In **Year 5 numeracy**, there were statistically significant improvements nationally, with a higher proportion of students reaching basic levels. Other significant improvements were:

- average scores of Year 5 students improved between 2008 and 2011 nationally and in all jurisdictions other than the Northern Territory
- the proportion of Year 5 students who met the minimum standard in numeracy improved nationally (to 94.4%) and also in NSW, Victoria, Queensland, Western Australia and South Australia.

### There was little other change in reading and numeracy between 2008 and 2011

In **reading**, overall, the picture is one of little significant change beyond Year 3 between 2008 and 2011. Significant changes were:

- average scores improved significantly in Western Australia in Year 7 and the ACT in Year 5

- the proportion of students meeting the minimum standard in reading improved in Queensland and Western Australia in Year 7
- the proportion of Year 9 students meeting the minimum standard declined in NSW, though it remains high at 93.0%.

In **numeracy**, there were some significant improvements and declines, beyond the Year 5 improvements, as follows.

- In Western Australia, Years 7 and 9 average scores increased from 2008 to 2011—making it the only jurisdiction to improve average scores in three of the four year levels tested.
- Average scores increased in Year 3 in Queensland.
- Average scores for Year 3 decreased in South Australia.
- The proportion of Year 3 students meeting the minimum standard increased in Queensland.
- The proportion of Year 7 students meeting the minimum standard declined, nationally and in NSW and Tasmania.
- NSW had a fall in the proportion of Year 9 students meeting the minimum standard, to the national average of 93.0%.

## Are young people making a successful transition from school?

A key outcome of the National Education Agreement is that young people successfully move from school to work or further study. From 1 January 2010, all young people are required to participate in schooling (or an approved equivalent) to Year 10, and then participate in full-time education, training or employment, or a combination, until age 17.

To consider whether young people are successfully moving from school into work or further study, we look at:

- whether young people are prepared for a successful transition—using the proportion of 20–24 year olds who have attained Year 12 or equivalent or Certificate II or above, for which COAG has set a target of 90% by 2015
- whether young people are engaged in work or study—using the proportion of 18–24 year olds engaged in full-time employment, education or training for Certificate III or above.

### The Year 12 attainment rate needs to increase faster to meet the COAG target of 90% by 2015

There was no significant change in the proportion of 20–24 year olds with Year 12 or equivalent between 2008 and 2011.

Looking at the longer term trend, however, shows a significant increase in the Year 12 or equivalent attainment rate from 79.1% in 2001 to 84.1% in 2011. There were also significant increases in attainment over this period in NSW, Victoria, Western Australia, South Australia and Tasmania.

In last year's report, we stated that Australia was on track to meet COAG's 2015 target of 90% Year 12 or equivalent attainment. We did this based on the trend from 2001 to 2010, which, when projected, reached 88.9% by 2015. Although this was below the target, the presumption was that the trend would improve and reach the projection, given the focus of governments on increasing attainment.

We have now added the Year 12 attainment rate of 84.1% in 2011 to the series. This affects the projected rate in 2015, which is now estimated to be 87.9%. The rate will need to increase faster over the next few years if governments are to meet the target of 90% by 2015.

COAG agreed to introduce a national youth participation requirement from 2010, which requires all young people to participate in schooling to Year 10, and then participate in full time education, training or employment, until age 17. From 2009 to 2011, there has been an increase in school participation of 15–19 year olds of 2.3 percentage points (from 51.7% to 54.0%). This may contribute to increases in the Year 12 attainment rate for 20–24 year olds in years to come.

### Falls in employment are driving a decline in the engagement of young people in work or study

Between 2008 and 2011, the proportion of 18–24 year olds in Australia who were fully engaged in employment, education or training significantly declined by 3.8 percentage points (from 76.3% to 72.5%). This reflects the significant fall in engagement between 2008 (76.3%) and 2009 (72.7%), from which the rate has not recovered. The main factor is the significant fall in full-time employment from 45.7% in 2008 to 39.9% in 2011.

Although the national rate of young people's engagement in work and study significantly declined from 2008 to 2011, only Victoria and the ACT had significant declines from 78.6% to 73.5% and from 87.4% to 79.2% respectively. There were no significant changes in other jurisdictions.

## Is schooling reducing educational disadvantage?

Social inclusion is a major focus of reform under the COAG reform agenda. In the National Education Agreement, COAG agreed to an outcome that schooling promotes social inclusion and reduces the educational disadvantage of children, especially Indigenous children. In this report we look at both Indigenous students and students and young people from low socio-economic backgrounds.

To consider whether schooling is reducing educational disadvantage, we look at:

- Indigenous students' school attendance rates and reading and numeracy achievement
- students from low socio-economic status backgrounds' reading achievement, Year 12 or equivalent attainment levels and post-school engagement in employment, education or training.

### Indigenous students' school attendance in government schools is declining in the secondary years of schooling (Year 7 to Year 10)

Between 2008 and 2011, there was little improvement in Indigenous students' attendance in government schools across primary and secondary schooling years. There were some relatively large decreases in attendance (three percentage points or more) which were concentrated in Years 7 to 10.

- For Year 10 students, most jurisdictions had declines. Attendance fell by 7 and 8 percentage points respectively in NSW and the ACT, and by 9 percentage points in the Northern Territory.
- The Northern Territory had the lowest rates across all year levels—and attendance fell from 2008 to 2011 in all year levels except in Year 6.

In 2011, comparing Indigenous with non-Indigenous student attendance rates, there were:

- large gaps of 10 percentage points or more across all year levels in Western Australia, South Australia and the Northern Territory—with the largest gaps in secondary school years ranging up to 27 percentage points for Year 9 students in the Northern Territory
- relatively small gaps, around 5 percentage points, in Years 1–6 in NSW, Victoria and the ACT
- the lowest gaps (around 1 percentage point) were in Tasmania, from Years 1–6.

### Indigenous reading and numeracy levels show some improvement

There were some significant improvements from 2008 to 2011 in the proportion of Indigenous students reaching minimum standards of reading and numeracy—notably both improved in Year 3. As stated previously, improvement in Year 3 is promising as it is the earliest indication we have of students' literacy and a strong predictor of later performance.

In **reading**, there were significant improvements nationally in Year 3 (to 76.3%) and Year 7 (to 77.1%). Other significant changes included:

- Queensland and Western Australia improved in Year 3 and Year 7
- NSW and Tasmania declined in Year 9, but both remained above the national average (71.9%).

In **numeracy**, there were significant improvements nationally in Year 3 (to 83.6%) and Year 5 (to 75.2%). Other significant changes included:

- Queensland improved in Years 3 and 5, and NSW improved in Year 5
- NSW and Tasmania declined in Years 7 and 9, but remained above the national averages of 76.5% for Year 7 and 72.0% for Year 9.

### Students from low socio-economic backgrounds are experiencing major educational disadvantage

Students from high socio-economic backgrounds—with parents with degree level or higher education—meet basic reading and numeracy standards at uniformly high rates (over 97%) in all jurisdictions.

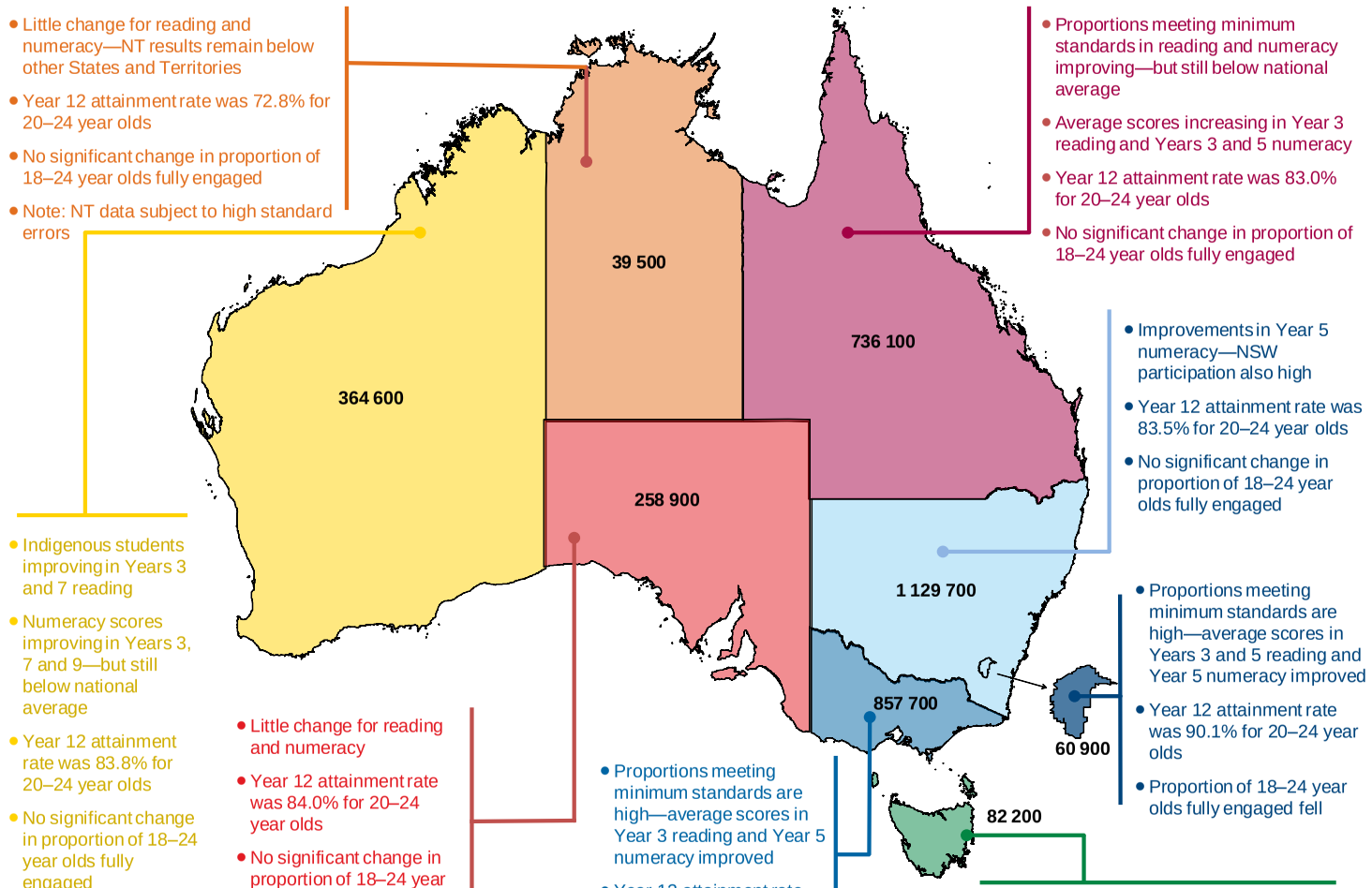
However, there is considerable variation across jurisdictions for students from low socio-economic backgrounds (parental education of Year 11 or lower). Across jurisdictions, the proportion of students from low socio-economic backgrounds meeting the minimum standard for reading ranges from 58% to 89% in Year 3 and 57% to 87% in Year 9 (Northern Territory to Victoria in both years).

Lower levels of achievement for students from low socio-economic areas extend through to Year 12 attainment and to later participation in work or further study.

- In 2011, the proportion of 20–24 year olds who had completed Year 12 or equivalent in the lowest socio-economic group was 74.1% compared with 93.8% in the highest group.
- This has not significantly improved for any socio-economic group since 2008.
- In 2011, only 59.4% of 18–24 year olds in the lowest socio-economic group were fully engaged in employment, education or training compared to 79.6% in the highest group.
- Between 2008 and 2011, there were significant declines in full engagement across the low and the high socioeconomic groups—but the greatest decline was 6.2 percentage points for the low socio-economic group.

The map on page ‘xvii’ presents some key findings from this report for each State and Territory.

## Figure 1 Key findings for each State and Territory




*Note:*
Numbers on the map are full-time equivalent student enrolments, 2011

# Recommendations

### Recommendation 1

The COAG Reform Council recommends COAG **note** that improvements in NAPLAN results are mainly in Year 3 for reading and in Year 5 for numeracy.

### Recommendation 2

The COAG Reform Council recommends COAG **note** the following disappointing outcomes for young people:

- the Year 12 or equivalent attainment rate needs to increase faster than the 2001 to 2011 trend to meet the COAG target of 90% by 2015
- the proportion of young people (18 to 24 years) who are fully engaged in post-school employment, education or training remains below the level in 2008
  - falls in full-time employment account for the lack of improvement
- the decline in engagement has been particularly severe for young people from low socio-economic areas.

# Chapter 1. About this report

## 1.1 National Education Agreement

The National Education Agreement—an agreement between Commonwealth, State and Territory governments—commenced on 1 January 2009. Its objective is that:

> ...all Australian school students acquire the knowledge and skills to participate effectively in society and employment in a globalised economy (COAG 2008a).

In this report, we look at governments' progress toward the objective by assessing their performance against the five outcomes and two of the four targets set out in the agreement (Box 1.1). The halving the gap targets are reported in the council's report on the National Indigenous Reform Agreement, *Indigenous reform 2010–11: Comparing performance across Australia*.

**Box 1.1 National Education Agreement: outcomes and targets**

**Outcomes**

- All children are engaged in and benefiting from schooling.
- Young people are meeting basic literacy and numeracy standards, and overall levels of literacy and numeracy are improving.
- Australian students excel by international standards.
- Schooling promotes social inclusion and reduces the educational disadvantage of children, especially Indigenous children.
- Young people make a successful transition from school to work and further study.

**Targets**

- Lift the Year 12 or equivalent or Certificate II attainment rate to 90 per cent by 2015.
- Lift the Year 12 or equivalent or Certificate III attainment rate to 90 per cent by 2020.
- Halve the gap for Indigenous students in Reading, Writing and Numeracy within a decade, by 2018.
- At least halve the gap for Indigenous students in Year 12 or equivalent attainment rates by 2020.

## 1.2 Review of performance reporting framework

In February 2011, COAG agreed to review the six National Agreements under the Intergovernmental Agreement on Federal Financial Relations, including the National Education Agreement (COAG 2011, p. 2).

The review of the National Education Agreement began in January 2012 and concluded in June 2012. The review's main recommendations were to:

- reduce the number of performance indicators to improve the cohesion of the performance reporting framework
- disaggregate performance indicators by relevant sub-groups where feasible (for example, by Indigenous status and socio-economic background)
- set a national measure of progress for 2016 towards COAG's target of lifting the Year 12 or equivalent attainment rate to 90 per cent by 2020
- increase the reliance on and the quality of administrative data for key performance indicators, such as Year 12 attainment (administrative data is generally a more timely and accurate source).

COAG agreed to a revised National Education Agreement on 25 July 2012 (COAG 2012b). The other review recommendations will be implemented progressively from 2013. The full review report is available at: www.coag.gov.au/meeting_outcomes.

**Figure 1.1 Revised National Education Agreement (July 2012)**


Notes:

1. We report the proportion of young people (18–24 years) in employment, education or training at or above Certificate III as specified in the previous National Education Agreement. The revised indicator (17–24 years) refers to post-school engagement in education, training or employment.

*Source:* COAG (2012) National Education Agreement.

## 1.3 How we report on performance

Each year, the COAG Reform Council (the council) publicly reports on the performance of governments against the outcomes of the agreement. We report to COAG directly and are independent of individual governments.

This is the council's fourth annual report on the National Education Agreement. All three previous reports are available on our website at: www.coagreformcouncil.gov.au.

This year, where we were able to, the council has reported against the new performance reporting framework agreed by COAG in July 2012. Data was provided by the Steering Committee for the Review of Government Service Provision (Steering Committee) prior to this data and where the indicator varies, the text notes this.

### Treatment of data

The council uses the best data available and approved for use in our reports by governments. There are a number of issues with using these data for comparing the performance of governments. Appendix E explains these issues in more detail and notes are provided against each indicator where required throughout the report.

In summary, the key issues with data quality are as follows.

- All data derived from surveys have a certain amount of error. Survey data in this report consider relative standard errors and confidence intervals.
- Where possible, analysis of change over time has been statistically tested for significance. We only use the word 'significant' to mean statistically significant (see below).
- Some adjustments or warnings are provided when reporting change over time for populations with small numbers.
- Some administrative data may not be comparable between jurisdictions or over time.

As 41% of students in the Northern Territory are Indigenous, where data is available in disaggregated form, they are presented for non-Indigenous and total students in the Northern Territory.

When considering survey data, we focus on results that are statistically significant—between States and Territories or within a jurisdiction over time. In thinking about these results, it is important to keep in mind that statistical significance might not always reflect practical significance.

### What is a 'significant difference' or a 'significant change'?

The word 'significant' has a specific statistical meaning. Survey data contain a certain degree of error, because a survey will only include a sample of a population rather than the total population. Surveying a sample of a population means that results might not accurately reflect the population as a whole, but simply reflect those who are included in the sample.

In statistics, 'significant' differences are those which are unlikely to have occurred by chance. It does not necessarily mean 'significant' in the everyday sense of the word. In some cases, apparently small differences between numbers can be statistically 'significant'. In other cases, we might not be able to describe two numbers that look very different as being 'significantly different'.

Sample size affects our ability to identify whether two numbers are significantly different. In particular, this can affect jurisdictions with small populations such as the Northern Territory, the ACT and Tasmania. It can also affect small sub-populations such as the Indigenous population.

Appendix E explains in more detail how 'statistical significance' is determined.

### Treatment of contextual factors

The focus of reporting in this fourth year is on progress made by jurisdictions against agreed outcomes. As such, we are assessing change over time within a jurisdiction, across jurisdictions and for sub-populations where possible. Our baseline year was 2008 and we generally report on change between 2008 and 2011.

Our baseline report in 2008 highlighted contextual differences between jurisdictions that are relevant to interpreting data. Our approach has been to highlight a small number of factors that are high level. As the trends in performance are identified, contextual factors become less relevant to understanding changes in performance within jurisdictions and populations. A summary of the factors relevant to the National Education Agreement is at Appendix D.

## 1.4 Reporting on performance for 2011

This report focuses on those performance indicators for which we have received new data that suggest a possible change in performance or that establish baselines for future comparison. Where there is little or no change in the data for a performance indicator, the data are published in the statistical supplement for this report and not discussed in detail in its chapters.

### What we report on this year

In this 2011 report, there are new data available for the following indicators:

- literacy and numeracy achievement of Year 3, 5, 7 and 9 students in national testing
- the proportion of young people (20 to 24 year olds) who have attained at least Year 12 or equivalent or AQF Certificate II/III or above
- the proportion of young people (18 to 24 years old) engaged in full-time employment, education or training at or above Certificate III
- the proportion of students in the bottom and top levels of performance in international testing (digital reading literacy).

There are also new data for the rate of student attendance at school. Chapter 4 reports data for Indigenous students in government schools. Data for all students and all school sectors are published in the statistical supplement.

## 1.5 Outline of report

This report is structured as follows.

- Chapters 2 and 3—set out comparative analyses of performance against two outcomes of the agreement: literacy and numeracy and transitions from school.
- Chapter 4—presents a comparative analysis of indicators which measure social inclusion and educational disadvantage.
- Chapter 5—reports on digital literacy in international testing.
- Chapter 6—provides an overview of related National Partnerships and their contribution to the agreement outcomes.
- Chapter 7—is about the performance reporting framework.

There are also nine appendices.

- Appendix A outlines information about NAPLAN testing.
- Appendix B contains further NAPLAN data.
- Appendix C contains information on some National Partnerships.
- Appendix D summarises contextual factors for the States and Territories relevant to understanding performance information.
- Appendix E summarises the treatment of data in the report.
- Appendix F lists the roles and responsibilities of the Commonwealth and the States and Territories under the National Education Agreement.
- Appendix G lists the acronyms and abbreviations used.
- Appendix H lists the references used.
- Appendix I lists the tables, figures, boxes and exhibits used in the report.

The statistical supplement includes the performance data provided by the Steering Committee for the Review of Government Service Provision, including data quality statements, and any additional data we have used.

# Chapter 2. Lifting literacy and numeracy achievement

## At a glance

### Year 3 students are improving in reading nationally and in some States

- Nationally, both the average score and the proportion of Year 3 students meeting the national minimum standard in reading improved significantly between 2008 and 2011.
  - Queensland and Western Australia also improved on both measures, from relatively low starting points in 2008—the proportions of students meeting the national minimum standard in these States are approaching the average national rate.
  - NSW, Victoria and the ACT also had significant increases in average scores.

### Year 5 numeracy has improved nationally and in most jurisdictions

- Nationally, both the average score and the proportion of Year 5 students meeting the national minimum standard in numeracy improved significantly between 2008 and 2011.
- Five States—NSW, Victoria, Queensland, Western Australia and South Australia—significantly improved both average scores and the proportions meeting the national minimum standard. Top performing States (NSW, Victoria and the ACT) now have over 95% of students meeting the national minimum standard.

### There was little other change in reading and numeracy between 2008 and 2011

- For reading, average scores did not significantly improve after Year 3 except in the ACT in Year 5 and Western Australia in Year 7. Improvements in the proportions meeting the national minimum standard were limited to Year 7 in Queensland and Western Australia.
- For numeracy, there were few significant improvements other than in Year 5. Average scores improved in Queensland in Year 3, Western Australia in Year 7 and 9 and the proportion meeting the national minimum standard improved in Queensland in Year 3.

### Gains in cohorts of students over time varied

- Gain is the difference in average scores between two periods of testing for the same group of students. It is a measure of change between two years of schooling.
- In the 2009 cohort, retested in 2011, Queensland and Western Australia had significantly larger gains in reading and numeracy in Years 3–5 and Years 5–7 than the national gain. However, both States started and finished at lower scores than the national average score.
- Also for the same cohort, NSW and Victoria had significantly lower gains than the national gain in reading and numeracy in Years 3–5 and 5–7. However, they both started at higher achievement levels than the national average and also ended with higher scores.

## 2.1 About this chapter

Lifting literacy and numeracy levels in Australia is a centrepiece of COAG's educational reforms. It is a major contributor to COAG's broader goals to enhance social and economic participation. A student's success at school and transition to further education or work is strongly related to their literacy and numeracy achievement.

NAPLAN data have been available since 2008. High participation rates, nationally comparable data and the capacity to analyse change over time, along with public access to the data, have improved public accountability. The Organisation of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD 2012) has assessed NAPLAN positively as the evidence base for further educational reforms.

### How do we report on literacy and numeracy achievement?

This chapter reports on the outcome that young people are meeting basic literacy and numeracy standards, and overall levels of literacy and numeracy are improving. The indicator is literacy and numeracy achievement of Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 students in national testing. In this chapter, we report achievement for all students in reading and numeracy only. The other areas of testing (writing, spelling, grammar and punctuation) are reported annually in the NAPLAN national report (see ACARA 2012 for most recent report). Achievement for Indigenous students and those from lower socio-economic backgrounds are reported in chapter 4.

There are two measures for this indicator.

- The proportion of students achieving at or above the national minimum standard in reading and numeracy.
  - The national minimum standard is the basic literacy and numeracy standard for that year level. (Appendix A sets out more detail.)
- Average scores in reading and numeracy.

We also report on measures of participation in NAPLAN assessment as context for achievement data.

Where the results for all years or areas of testing form a similar pattern, we only report results for one year or area. Appendices A and B contain further information and data and full results are in the statistical supplement.

Indigenous students generally have poorer results than non-Indigenous students. In the Northern Territory 41% of students are Indigenous. Therefore, for some measures, we report data for non-Indigenous students in the Northern Territory separately.

### What do I need to know about testing for statistical significance?

There are three potential sources of error in NAPLAN data: measurement, sampling and equating error. These are defined in Appendix A. These errors are measurable so standard errors, which are the bases of confidence intervals and statistical testing, can be calculated.

There are many sets of confidence intervals potentially required for statistical testing. Different confidence intervals are calculated for different purposes such as whether comparisons are within a year or across years, or within a jurisdiction or across jurisdictions, or whether data is compared for points in time or cohorts over time.

If appropriate, comparisons used in this chapter have been tested for statistical significance. For this chapter, ACARA has done the relevant statistical testing.

### Future developments in NAPLAN

The Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) has developed a comprehensive research agenda to investigate measurement issues in NAPLAN, including the possible impact of a change of mode in the existing scales (for example from paper to computer based testing).

In 2012, as part of its response to the review of the National Education Agreement, COAG referred the development of 'proficient standards' in NAPLAN to the Standing Council on School Education and Early Childhood. Proficient standards are the expected literacy and numeracy at each year level. The national minimum standard measures the basic elements of literacy and numeracy at each year level.

## 2.2 Participation in NAPLAN

### Why is participation important?

Participation rates are important to understanding NAPLAN data. Participation rates are the number of assessed and exempt students expressed as a proportion of all students. Box 2.1 describes the various categories of participants and non-participants.

**Box 2.1 Participation and assessment in NAPLAN**

**Types of students in NAPLAN**

There are four categories of students relating to participation and assessment in NAPLAN.

- **Assessed:** students who sat the test. They are participants.
- **Exempt:** students with a language background other than English, who arrived from overseas less than a year before the tests, and students with significant intellectual disabilities. Exempt students are not assessed but are deemed to be below the national minimum standard. Results for exempt students are not imputed. They are counted as participants.
- **Absent:** students who were not present at school when the test was administered or were unable to sit the test as a result of an accident or mishap. Results for absent students are imputed from other statistical information and are included in the calculation of average scores and the proportion at or above the national minimum standard. They are non-participants.
- **Withdrawn:** students withdrawn from the testing program by their parent/carer. This provision is intended to address issues such as religious beliefs and philosophical objections to testing. Results for withdrawn students are imputed from other statistical information and are included in the calculation of average scores and the proportion at or above the national minimum standard. They are non-participants.

| Participated | | Did not participate | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Assessed | Exempt | Absent | Withdrawn |
| Assessed | Not assessed | | |

A high participation rate gives a more accurate picture of achievement. This section looks at participation in the reading tests. Results are similar for other areas of testing.

There may be differences in ability between students who do participate in testing and those who do not. This means that a change in participation may affect results for a jurisdiction or sub-group such as Indigenous students.

### There were few changes in participation from 2010 to 2011

Participation in NAPLAN is high, with over 90% of students in every State, the ACT and non-Indigenous students in the Northern Territory, participating in 2011. (When Indigenous students are included in the Northern Territory rates, the range in participation for all students was between 86% to 89%).

From 2010 to 2011, most changes in participation were less than one percentage point.

### Most non-assessed students are absent

Breaking down the reasons why students are not assessed gives insight into where to direct effort to lift participation.

Most students who were not assessed were absent from school on the test day. Absent rates have generally remained stable between 2010 and 2011.

Rates are similar for Years 3, 5 and 7 but change in Year 9.

Comparing Year 3 with Year 9, in 2011:

- Absent rates were generally low in Year 3:
  - NSW had the lowest rate at 1.8%
  - the highest rate was in the Northern Territory, 10.4%
  - the next highest rate was 3.5% in Western Australia.
- Absent rates were generally much higher in Year 9:
  - the lowest rate in Year 9 was 4.9% (NSW)
  - there were high rates in Tasmania (8.2%), South Australia (7.9%) and Victoria (7.8%)
  - Northern Territory had the highest rate at 13.9%.

### Can participation levels affect results?

The reported results for NAPLAN testing include all students, those who participated and those who did not. If the ability of students who participate is different from those who do not, results may be affected.

In NAPLAN, scores for absent and withdrawn students (non-participants) are imputed. These students are assigned scores based on students with similar background characteristics (for example, sex, geolocation and parental education). This is done to reduce the potential for bias in the results due to non-participation. Imputed scores are included in participation rates, the national minimum standard and average scores. It is done at a State and Territory level.

Exempt students are not assigned an imputed score—but they are included in the proportion below the national minimum standard. They are also included in participation rates as participating students but are not included in average scores.

It is ideal to have a high participation rate as this most accurately represents the achievement of students. If a jurisdiction has a low level of participation then more scores will be imputed.

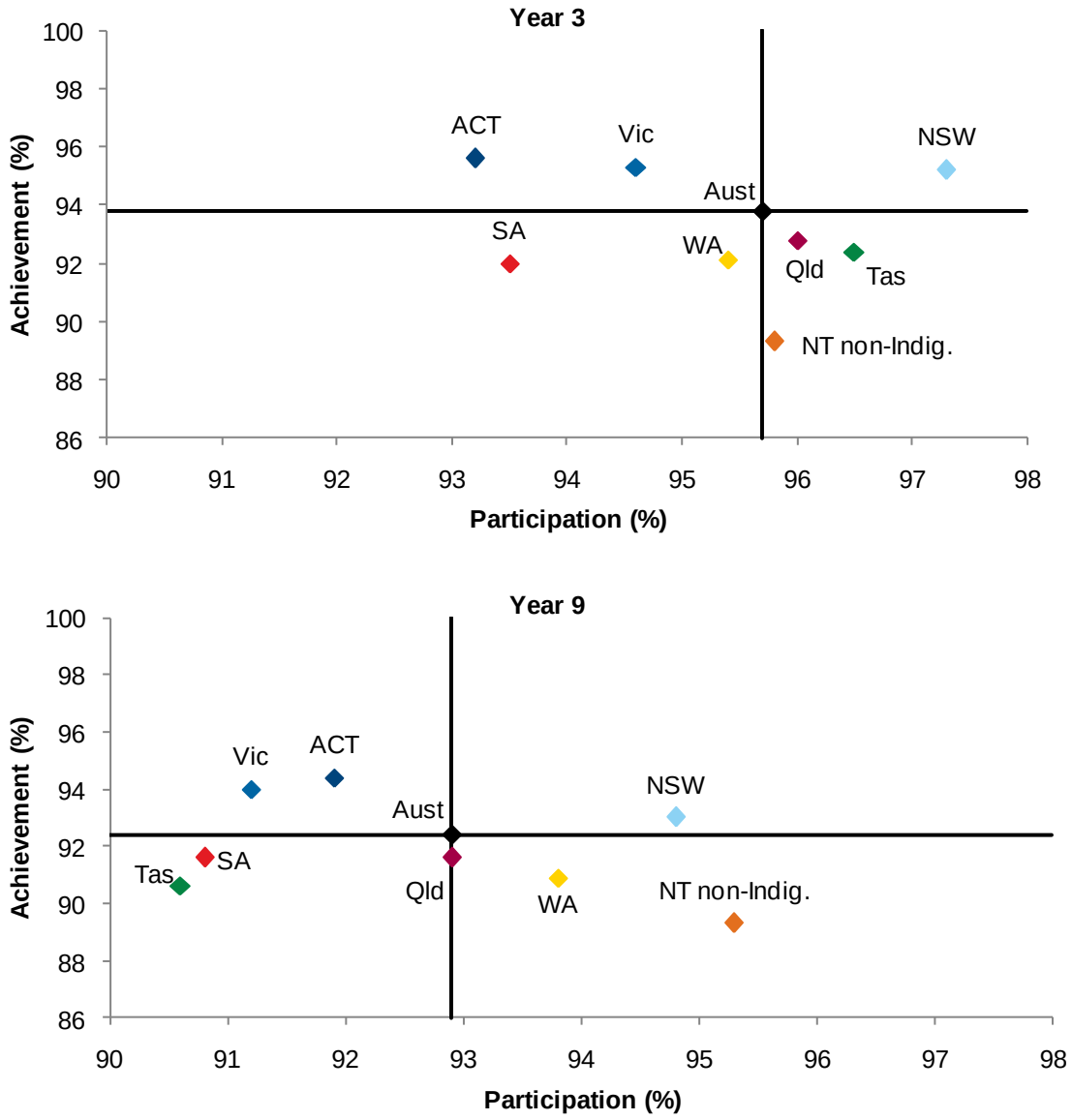
Figure 2.1 shows both the participation rates and the proportions of students achieving at or above the national minimum standard for jurisdictions in reading for Years 3 and 9 in 2011 compared to the national rates.

NSW is a high performer on both measures in both Year 3 and Year 9, with both participation and achievement rates that are higher than the national average. For both Year 3 and Year 9, Victoria and the ACT have higher achievement rates than the national average but lower participation rates.

Work commissioned by the council suggests that there is a tendency for non-participants to be lower scoring students (see Exhibit 2.1). It is stressed that the conclusions in Exhibit 2.1 are exploratory and only the first step in an analysis of participation.

In late 2011, the then Ministerial Council for Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs (MCEECDYA) noted a decrease in participation rates in NAPLAN. They requested further work be done on participation rates in general by a strategic policy working group with ACARA. This group reports to the senior officials committee of the Standing Council on School Education and Early Childhood (the body which replaced MCEECDYA). The report of this group should be completed by the end of 2012. The COAG Reform Council has given Professor Ray Adams' methodology to this group to inform its work.

**Figure 2.1** **Participation in testing and proportion achieving at or above the national minimum standard, Years 3 and 9, Reading, 2011**




*Notes:*

1. Northern Territory data for all students not shown. In year 3, participation was 88.1% and the proportion was 67.6%. In year 9, participation was 85.5% and the proportion was 69.1%.
2. See statistical supplement, tables NEA. 5.26, NEA. 5.35, NIRA. 11(b).1 and NIRA. 11(b).4 for data.

*Source:* ACARA (2011) NAPLAN Achievement in Reading, Persuasive Writing, Language Conventions and Numeracy: National Report for 2011.

## Exhibit 2.1: The effect of participation rates on NAPLAN results

We have noted in this and previous reports that participation rates are important in understanding the NAPLAN data. If the abilities of students who do not sit the test are different from those who do, measures of achievement may change. The council commissioned Professor Ray Adams to do an exploratory analysis of this issue.

**Method**

Professor Adams developed a model which was used to measure the difference in average scores for those who were present compared to those who were absent. Scores for absent students are produced (imputed) as they are assigned a score based on background information, including gender, Indigenous status, language background other than English, school, geolocation, parental education and parental occupation.

**Results**

The analysis showed that there were differences in student performance based on whether they participated or not. Students who were present had the highest average scores but absent students had the lowest, based on estimating likely scores from their background characteristics.

All jurisdictions, except the Northern Territory, have at least a 90% participation rate in NAPLAN testing. Using this rate, average scores for present students could be higher than for absent students by as much as 27 points. To put this into perspective, the national score for all students in Year 3 was around 410 points, in Year 5 around 490 points, in Year 7 around 540 points and in Year 9 it was around 580 points.

**Conclusion**

Participation does make a difference to achievement. Importantly, Professor Adams' report also concludes that the impact of non-participation over time within a jurisdiction is probably small to negligible. However, participation rates may have an effect on jurisdiction comparisons.

The study draws no firm conclusions as to the strength of the relationship between participation and achievement, as it is exploratory and intended to develop models on which further work can be based.

**Further reading**

See Appendices A and B for more information and data about NAPLAN.

Professor Adams' full report on participation is available on our website www.coagreformcouncil.gov.au.

## 2.3 Analysing improvement over time

This section compares results for students in a year level at two points in time, for example from Year 3 in 2008 compared to Year 3 in 2011. This is called improvement and is reported for both the proportion of students at or above the national minimum standard and average scores.

### Achievement in reading, 2008 to 2011

#### Proportion of students achieving at or above the national minimum standard

Nationally, in reading, there was a significant improvement between 2008 and 2011 in Year 3 only. There were few significant differences in other years and States and Territories generally.

- Only Queensland and Western Australia significantly improved, both in Years 3 and 7.
- In all other jurisdictions and year levels there were either no changes or a significant decrease—NSW in Year 9. However, NSW remained above the national average.

Table 2.1 shows the 2011 result and statistically significant changes from 2008 to 2011.

**Table 2.1 Reading, proportion achieving at or above the national minimum standard, 2011 with significance of change 2008–2011, States and Territories**

| | Year 3 | | Year 5 | | Year 7 | | Year 9 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 2011 | Change 2008–2011 | 2011 | Change 2008–2011 | 2011 | Change 2008–2011 | 2011 | Change 2008–2011 |
| NSW | 95.2 | — | 93.1 | — | 95.0 | — | 93.0 | ▼ |
| Vic | 95.3 | — | 94.3 | — | 95.8 | — | 94.0 | — |
| Qld | 92.8 | ▲ | 88.6 | — | 94.3 | ▲ | 91.6 | — |
| WA | 92.1 | ▲ | 89.7 | — | 94.7 | ▲ | 90.9 | — |
| SA | 92.0 | — | 90.1 | — | 94.2 | — | 91.6 | — |
| Tas | 92.4 | — | 90.0 | — | 93.2 | — | 90.6 | — |
| ACT | 95.6 | — | 94.5 | — | 96.8 | — | 94.4 | — |
| NT | 67.6 | — | 61.8 | — | 71.0 | — | 69.1 | — |
| NT non-Indig. | 89.3 | — | 89.1 | — | 92.4 | — | 89.3 | — |
| Aust | 93.8 | ▲ | 91.5 | — | 94.7 | — | 92.4 | — |

*Notes:*

1. ▲ Statistically significant increase, ▼ statistically significant decrease, — no significant change.
2. Significance testing was done by ACARA.
3. See statistical supplement, tables NEA. 5.26 to NEA. 5.37; 2009 report, tables NEA. 4.13 to NEA. 4.24 for data.

*Source:* ACARA (2011) NAPLAN Achievement in Reading, Persuasive Writing, Language Conventions and Numeracy: National Report for 2011.

### Average scores

Improvements between 2008 and 2011 in average scores for reading nationally and for most jurisdictions were in Year 3 only. Apart from these, there were few significant differences.

- Western Australia and the ACT were the only jurisdictions with significant increases in two year levels.
- In all other jurisdictions and years there were no changes.

Table 2.2 shows the 2011 result and statistically significant changes from 2008 to 2011.

**Table 2.2 Reading, average score 2011 with significance of change 2008–2011, States and Territories**

| | Year 3 | | Year 5 | | Year 7 | | Year 9 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 2011 | Change 2008–2011 | 2011 | Change 2008–2011 | 2011 | Change 2008–2011 | 2011 | Change 2008–2011 |
| NSW | 423.1 | ▲ | 495.4 | — | 543.5 | — | 583.0 | — |
| Vic | 433.5 | ▲ | 503.7 | — | 544.8 | — | 585.0 | — |
| Qld | 399.9 | ▲ | 469.4 | — | 533.5 | — | 572.4 | — |
| WA | 400.3 | ▲ | 480.2 | — | 541.3 | ▲ | 577.3 | — |
| SA | 402.2 | — | 478.0 | — | 533.8 | — | 572.9 | — |
| Tas | 410.1 | — | 485.9 | — | 534.5 | — | 574.1 | — |
| ACT | 443.0 | ▲ | 516.3 | ▲ | 561.8 | — | 597.9 | — |
| NT | 322.6 | — | 403.3 | — | 480.2 | — | 525.8 | — |
| NT non-Indig. | 391.0 | — | 473.7 | — | 534.8 | — | 572.7 | — |
| Aust | 415.7 | ▲ | 488.1 | — | 540.2 | — | 579.5 | — |

*Notes:*

1. ▲ Statistically significant increase, ▼ statistically significant decrease, — no significant change.
2. Significance testing is that reported in the 2011 NAPLAN annual report, page 258 and pages 271–278.
3. See statistical supplement, tables NEA. 5.38 to NEA. 5.47; 2009 report, tables NEA. 4.45 to NEA. 4.56 for data.

*Source:* ACARA (2011) NAPLAN Achievement in Reading, Persuasive Writing, Language Conventions and Numeracy: National Report for 2011.

## Achievement in numeracy, 2008 to 2011

### Proportion of students achieving at or above the national minimum standard

For numeracy, most improvements were concentrated in Year 5. Nationally, between 2008 and 2011, there was an increase in Year 5 and a decrease in Year 7. From 2008 to 2011:

- five States and Territories (NSW, Victoria, Queensland, Western Australia and South Australia) significantly improved in Year 5
- Queensland improved in Year 3
- there were significant decreases in NSW in both Years 7 and 9 and Tasmania in Year 7
- in all other jurisdictions and year levels there were no changes.

Table 2.3 shows the 2011 result and statistically significant changes from 2008 to 2011.

**Table 2.3 Numeracy, proportion achieving at or above the national minimum standard, 2011 with significance of change 2008–2011, States and Territories**

| | Year 3 | | Year 5 | | Year 7 | | Year 9 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 2011 | Change 2008–2011 | 2011 | Change 2008–2011 | 2011 | Change 2008–2011 | 2011 | Change 2008–2011 |
| NSW | 96.5 | — | 95.4 | ▲ | 94.4 | ▼ | 93.0 | ▼ |
| Vic | 96.2 | — | 95.6 | ▲ | 95.8 | — | 94.6 | — |
| Qld | 95.2 | ▲ | 93.4 | ▲ | 94.6 | — | 92.8 | — |
| WA | 95.3 | — | 93.4 | ▲ | 94.7 | — | 92.1 | — |
| SA | 94.1 | — | 93.1 | ▲ | 93.9 | — | 91.7 | — |
| Tas | 95.4 | — | 93.9 | — | 92.6 | ▼ | 90.9 | — |
| ACT | 96.5 | — | 95.4 | — | 95.7 | — | 94.6 | — |
| NT | 79.1 | — | 72.5 | — | 71.7 | — | 72.6 | — |
| NT non-Indig. | 94.5 | — | 94.6 | — | 93.3 | — | 91.7 | — |
| Aust | 95.6 | — | 94.4 | ▲ | 94.5 | ▼ | 93.0 | — |

*Notes:*

1. ▲ Statistically significant increase, ▼ statistically significant decrease, — no significant change.
2. Significance testing was done by ACARA.
3. See statistical supplement, tables NEA. 5.28 to NEA. 5.37; 2009 report, tables NEA. 4.13 to NEA. 4.24 for data.

*Source:* ACARA (2011) NAPLAN Achievement in Reading, Persuasive Writing, Language Conventions and Numeracy: National Report for 2011.

### Average scores

Overall, most improvements in average scores for numeracy, between 2008 and 2011, nationally and for almost all jurisdictions were in Year 5.

- All States and Territories, except the Northern Territory, significantly improved in Year 5.
- Western Australia also had significant increases in Years 7 and 9.
- Queensland also recorded an increase in Year 3.
- There was a significant decrease in South Australia in Year 3.
- In all other jurisdictions and year levels there were no changes.

Table 2.4 shows the 2011 result and statistically significant changes from 2008 to 2011.

**Table 2.4 Numeracy, average score 2011 with significance of change 2008–2011, States and Territories**

| | Year 3 | | Year 5 | | Year 7 | | Year 9 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 2011 | Change 2008–2011 | 2011 | Change 2008–2011 | 2011 | Change 2008–2011 | 2011 | Change 2008–2011 |
| NSW | 405.5 | — | 499.3 | ▲ | 548.6 | — | 589.5 | — |
| Vic | 412.8 | — | 499.2 | ▲ | 550.9 | — | 590.0 | — |
| Qld | 384.6 | ▲ | 470.3 | ▲ | 538.7 | — | 574.4 | — |
| WA | 386.6 | — | 479.2 | ▲ | 544.6 | ▲ | 582.2 | ▲ |
| SA | 379.4 | ▼ | 470.9 | ▲ | 534.9 | — | 572.0 | — |
| Tas | 392.3 | — | 478.2 | ▲ | 532.2 | — | 567.1 | — |
| ACT | 414.4 | — | 502.0 | ▲ | 555.5 | — | 593.0 | — |
| NT | 337.8 | — | 423.6 | — | 481.3 | — | 528.8 | — |
| NT non-Indig. | 381.3 | — | 470.1 | — | 532.3 | — | 569.4 | — |
| Aust | 398.1 | — | 487.8 | ▲ | 544.6 | — | 583.4 | — |

*Notes:*

1. ▲ Statistically significant increase, ▼ statistically significant decrease, — no significant change.
2. Significance testing is that reported in the 2011 NAPLAN annual report, page 279 and pages 292–299.
3. See statistical supplement, tables NEA. 5.40 to NEA. 5.49; 2009 report, tables NEA. 4.45 to NEA. 4.56 for data.

*Source:* ACARA (2011) NAPLAN Achievement in Reading, Persuasive Writing, Language Conventions and Numeracy: National Report for 2011.

## 2.4 Gain in average scores

Gain measures follow the same group of students across time. The students in Year 3 in 2009 were in Year 5 in 2011. This is the 2009 cohort and the gain is the difference in average scores between these two test years. It provides a measure of change between two years of schooling.

The amount of gain in average scores over two years of schooling depends on a range of factors. The most important factors are the starting score of the cohort, the stage of schooling, the spread of scores across the scale and the intensity of intervention or support. Generally, gain is greatest in the earliest years of schooling.

In this report, for gain analysis we use the most recent cohort. This is the 2009 cohort which was first tested in 2009 and again in 2011.

We have used the national gain between 2009 and 2011 as a benchmark for gain in each of the periods Year 3 to Year 5, Year 5 to Year 7 and Year 7 to Year 9. States and Territories vary in their starting scores in 2009 for each of these cohorts. A jurisdiction with a low starting score has more room for improvement than one with a high starting score.

The council commissioned research on measuring gain in NAPLAN. The study concluded that the use of raw differences between years over time, such as those used here, is appropriate for transparent public reporting at State and Territory level and nationally. Only small improvements could be made by adjusting the scores for a range of background characteristics. These gains would be offset by the additional amount of interpretation required to understand the results. Further information is available on our website www.coagreformcouncil.gov.au/excellence/docs/improvement/CI_NAPLAN_reporting_Sept_2012.pdf.

### Gain in reading for the 2009 cohort

We report gain for the most recent 2009 cohort and compare State and Territory gains with the national gain from 2009 to 2011 (see Figure 2.2).

Gain decreases with years of schooling. The national gains in reading were:

- Year 3 to 5—77.3 points (State and Territory range 73.1 to 84.7 points)
- Year 5 to 7—46.3 points (State and Territory range 38.5 to 59.6 points)
- Year 7 to 9—38.4 points (State and Territory range 36.1 to 42.8 points).

In general, in reading, Queensland and Western Australia had gains which were significantly higher than the national gain, but these gains were from a lower starting score. While NSW and Victoria tended to have gains which were significantly lower than the national average, their starting and finishing scores were higher.

Figure 2.2 shows starting and finishing scores for each State and Territory and the gain for each stage of schooling. It also compares State and Territory scores with the national scores.

#### Year 3 to Year 5

Comparing **States and Territories** with the national gain in average score in 2009–2011:

- Queensland and Western Australia were the only States where the gain was significantly higher than the national gain—however, both these States had starting scores below the national average
- in NSW and Victoria, the gain was significantly lower than the national gain—however, in these States the starting and finishing scores were above the national average
- there were no significant differences between the other jurisdictions and Australia.

#### Year 5 to Year 7

Comparing **States and Territories** with the national gain in average score in 2009–2011:

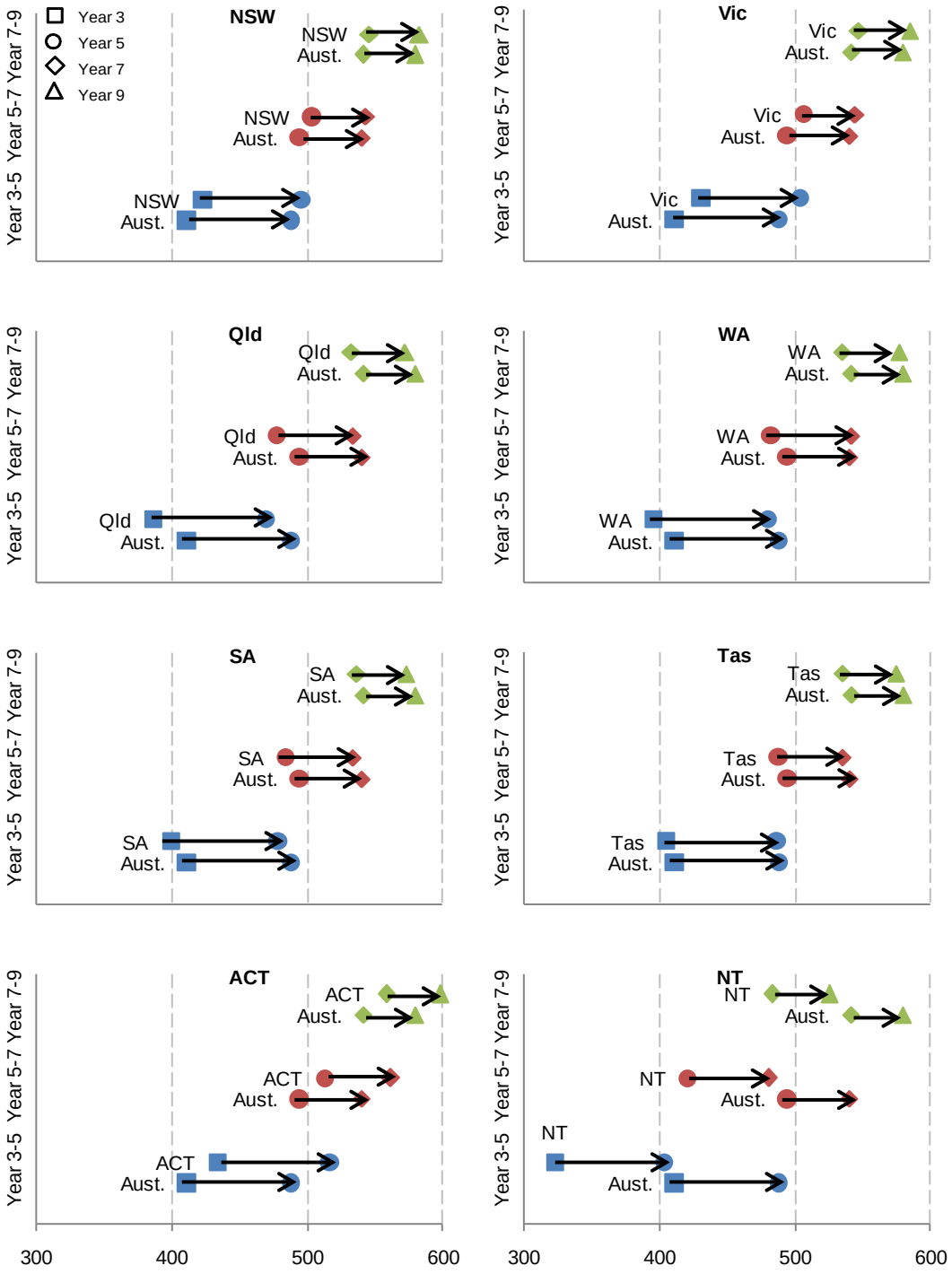
- the gain in Queensland and Western Australia was significantly higher than the national gain—again, the starting scores in these States were lower than the national average
- NSW and Victoria had significantly lower gains than the national gain—starting and finishing scores in these States were higher than the national average
- there were no significant differences between the other jurisdictions and Australia.

#### Year 7 to Year 9

Comparing **States and Territories** with the national score in 2009–2011:

- no State or Territory was significantly different from the national gain in average score.

## Figure 2.2 Reading gain, 2009 cohort, Australia and States and Territories




*Notes:*

1. Significance testing was done by ACARA.
2. See statistical supplement tables NEA. 4.16 to NEA. 4.24; 2009 report tables NEA. 4.33 to NEA. 4.41 for data.

*Source:* ACARA (2011) NAPLAN Achievement in Reading, Persuasive Writing, Language Conventions and Numeracy: National Report for 2011.

### Gain in numeracy for the 2009 cohort

We report gain for the most recent 2009 cohort and compare State and Territory gains with the national gain from 2009 to 2011 (see Figure 2.3).

Gain decreases with years of schooling. The national gains in numeracy were:

- Year 3 to 5—93.9 points (State and Territory range 88.2 to 101.2 points)
- Year 5 to 7—57.8 points (State and Territory range 47.3 and 71.7 points)
- Year 7 to 9—39.8 points (State and Territory range 34.7 to 45.9 points).

Numeracy results were similar to reading. Generally, Queensland and Western Australia had gains higher than the national average but starting scores were lower. Gains in NSW and Victoria were lower than nationally but, like reading, starting scores were higher.

Figure 2.3 shows for each State and Territory, starting and finishing scores and the gain compared with the national scores and gain for each stage of schooling.

#### Year 3 to Year 5

Comparing **States and Territories** with the gain in average score in 2009–2011:

- Queensland and Western Australia had gains that were significantly higher than the national gain—however, both these States had starting scores below the national average
- the gain for Victoria was significantly lower than the national gain—starting and finishing scores were higher than the national average
- there were no significant differences between the other jurisdictions and Australia.

#### Year 5 to Year 7

Comparing **States and Territories** with the gain in average score in 2009–2011:

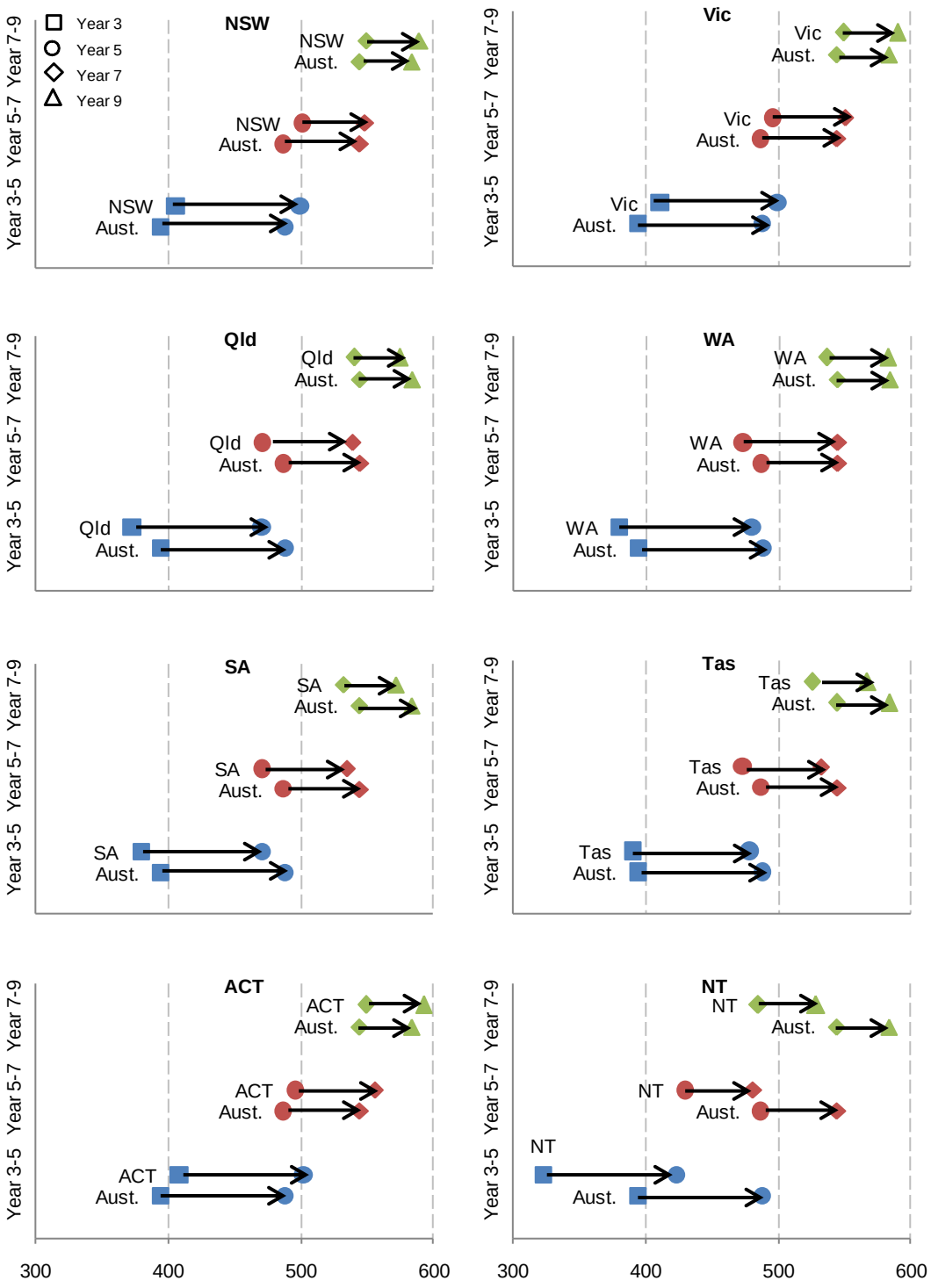
- Queensland, Western Australia and South Australia had gains which were significantly higher than the national average—however, in all these States starting scores were lower than the national average
- the gain for NSW was significantly lower than the national average—the starting and finishing scores for NSW were higher than the national score
- there were no significant differences between the other jurisdictions and Australia.

#### Year 7 to Year 9

Comparing **States and Territories** with the gain in average score in 2009–2011:

- the gain in Queensland was significantly lower than the national average—the starting score was also lower than the national score
- there were no significant differences between the other jurisdictions and Australia.

## Figure 2.3 Numeracy gain, 2009 cohort, Australia and States and Territories




*Notes:*

1. Significance testing was done by ACARA.
2. See statistical supplement tables NEA. 4.16 to NEA. 4.24; 2009 report tables NEA. 4.33 to NEA. 4.41 for data.

*Source:* ACARA (2011) NAPLAN Achievement in Reading, Persuasive Writing, Language Conventions and Numeracy: National Report for 2011.

# Chapter 3. Transition from school

## At a glance

**The Year 12 or equivalent attainment rate needs to increase faster to meet the COAG target of 90% by 2015**

- Nationally, there has been no significant change in the proportion of 20–24 year olds with Year 12 or equivalent between 2008 and 2011.
- Over a longer time series, there was a significant increase in the Year 12 or equivalent attainment rate from 79.1% in 2001 to 84.1% in 2011. However, the rate of increase will need to accelerate to meet the target of 90% by 2015.
- Following the introduction of the national youth participation requirement from 2010, school participation increased. From 2009 to 2011, there has been an increase in school participation of 15–19 year olds of 2.3 percentage points (from 51.7% to 54.0%).
- The increased participation in schooling may contribute to increased Year 12 completions and attainment of VET qualifications for 20–24 year olds in years to come and accelerate progress toward the 2015 target.

**The proportion of 18–24 year olds who are fully engaged in education, training or work remains below the level in 2008**

- Nationally, the proportion of 18–24 year olds fully engaged in employment, education or training significantly declined by 3.8 percentage points (from 76.3% to 72.5%) between 2008 and 2011. This was due to a significant fall in full time employment from 45.7% in 2008 to 39.9% in 2011.
- The proportion of fully engaged young people in Victoria and the ACT significantly declined over this period. However, the ACT remains significantly above the national average. There were no significant changes in other States and Territories.

## 3.1 About this chapter

A key outcome of the National Education Agreement is that 'young people make a successful transition from school to work and further study'. Effective pathways from school to further study, work or a combination of both, are important to maximise Australia's supply of higher level skills to compete in the global economy.

In 2009, COAG agreed that from 1 January 2010 all young people would be required to participate in schooling (or an approved equivalent) to Year 10. They would then be required to participate in full-time education, training or employment, or a combination, until age 17.

### How do we report on youth transitions?

We report on two indicators and one COAG target under this outcome:

- the proportion of the 20–24 year old population having attained at least Year 12 or equivalent or AQF Certificate II or above
- progress towards the related COAG target of 90% of 20–24 year olds with Year 12 or equivalent or Certificate II or above by 2015
- the proportion of 18–24 year olds engaged in full-time employment, education or training at or above Certificate III.

We also review progress toward the COAG target of 90% of 20–24 year olds with Year 12 or equivalent or Certificate III or above by 2020.

### What do I need to know about data quality?

The data for this chapter are drawn from the ABS Survey of Education and Work. This survey does not enable reliable measurement of year to year change in the selected indicators at a State and Territory level. In some cases, there are large fluctuations from year to year, and these changes are generally not statistically significant once standard errors are taken into account.

Because of data quality concerns, we report a longer time series for the Year 12 or equivalent attainment indicator—from 2001. We apply a trend line to the national data to project increases to 2015. We also apply trend lines to State level data to address year to year volatility.

Northern Territory data from the Survey of Education and Work are particularly volatile with large standard errors and should be interpreted with caution. The data do not include Indigenous communities in very remote areas, which account for around 15% of the Northern Territory population. For further information, see the data quality statement in the statistical supplement.

## 3.2 Year 12 attainment and progress towards COAG targets

### COAG target for 2015

Completing Year 12 or the vocational training equivalent is considered a necessary prerequisite for young people to successfully move from school to employment, education or training.

COAG's target is for 90% of 20–24 year olds to have attained Year 12 or equivalent or Certificate II or above by 2015. COAG agreed the 90% national target would be met through specific targets for each State and Territory. For example, the target for the ACT is 95.0%, while it is 71.6% for the Northern Territory.

## Are governments on track to meet the 2015 target?

Nationally, the proportion of 20–24 year olds with Year 12 or equivalent was 84.1% in 2011. This is a significant increase from 2001, when the proportion was 79.1%.

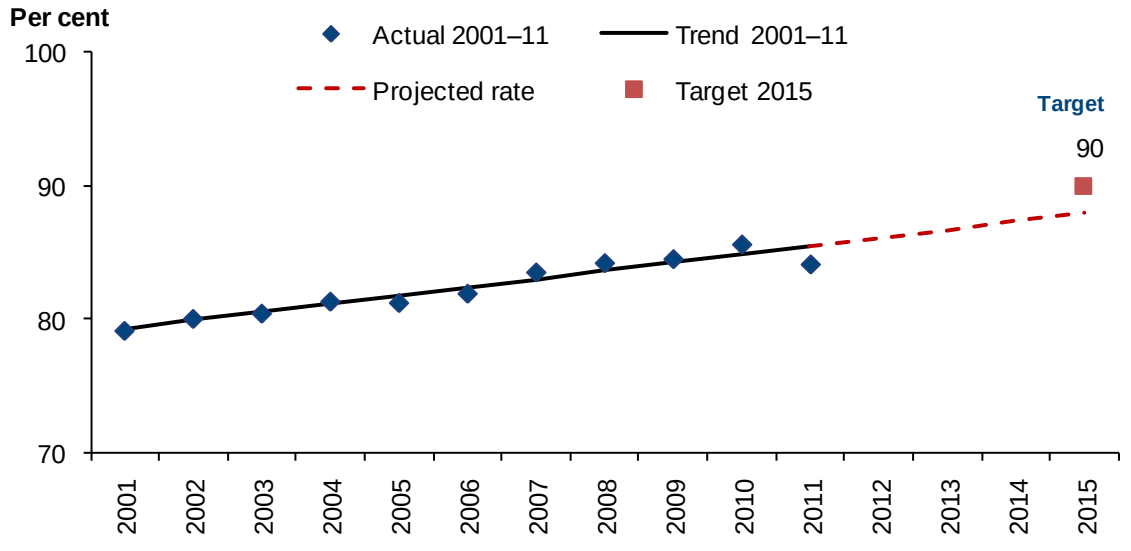
Last year, we reported that governments were on track to meet the 2015 target based on the trend from 2001 to 2010. There was an apparent decline in the Year 12 attainment rate from 2010 to 2011, but it is not statistically significant. We have now added the 2011 national rate of 84.1% to the series, which flattens the trend line and lowers the projected rate in 2015.

Figure 3.1 shows the trend line (red dashed line) for the national data. It shows if the trend of the previous 11 years continues, the Year 12 or equivalent attainment rate would be 87.9% in 2015. This is about two percentage points below the target. The rate will need to increase faster over the next few years if governments are to meet the target of 90% by 2015.

However, there are promising increases in school and vocational education and training participation by 15–19 year olds over 2010 to 2011.

The national youth participation requirement, introduced from 2010, requires all young people to participate in schooling to Year 10, and then participate in full time education, training or employment, until age 17. This requirement, and other programs to support participation and retention, may increase attainment of Year 12 or equivalent VET qualifications in years to come and accelerate progress toward the 2015 target (see Exhibit 3.1).

**Figure 3.1 Proportion of 20–24 year olds with Year 12 or equivalent or Certificate II or above, Australia, 2001–2011 and COAG target 2015**




*Notes:*

1. The trend line is applied to the data 2001 to 2011, projected data from 2012 to 2015.
2. The coefficient of determination ($R^2$) is 91.8%. This measures how well the trend line fits the recorded data. Higher $R^2$ values indicate a better fit.
3. The confidence interval was 1.3 percentage points in 2011.
4. See statistical supplement, table Additional.1 for data and confidence intervals.

*Source:* ABS (2012) Survey of Education and Work 2001–2011.

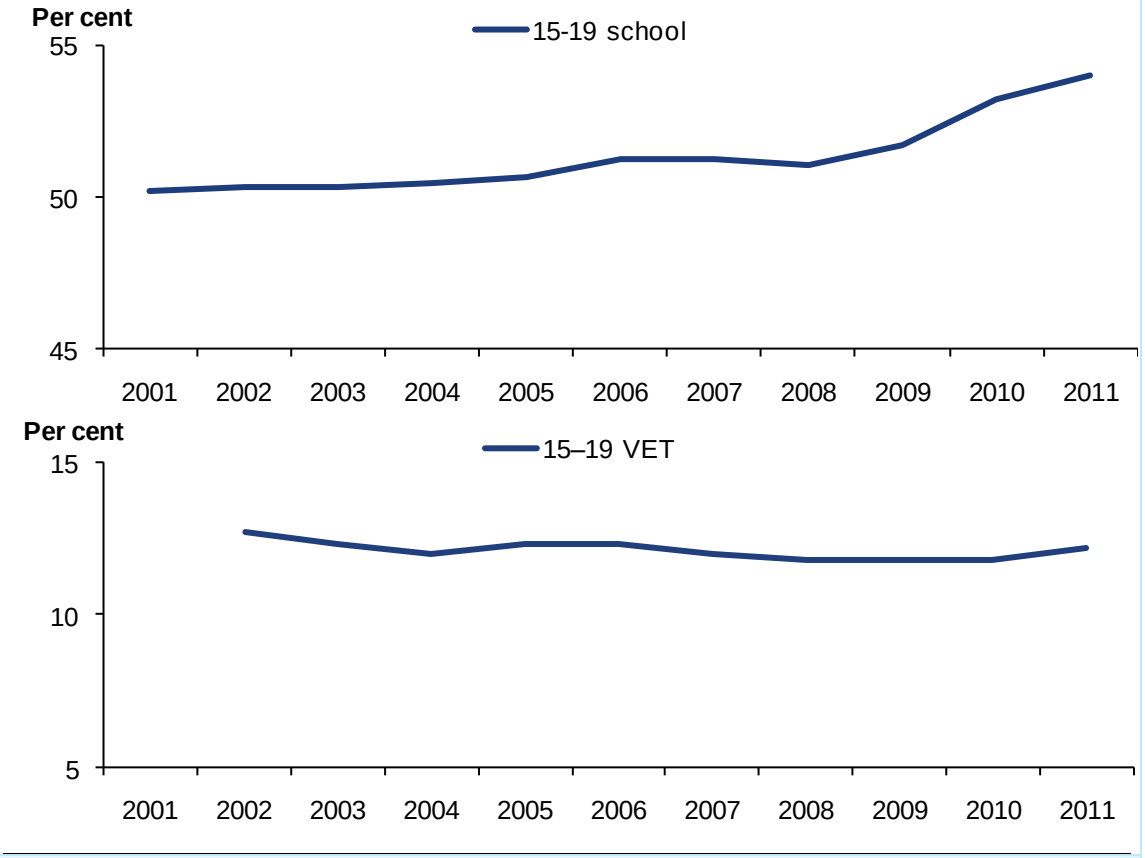
## Exhibit 3.1: Participation among 15–19 year olds in school and Vocational Education and Training

As part of its good practice series, the council commissioned Professor Richard Sweet to write a paper on 'good practice in school-to-work transitions'. This paper examined the effect of the national requirements for school completion and educational participation introduced in 2010. It found that the new requirements have contributed to a sharp jump in school participation and some increase in participation in non-school vocational education by young people without Year 12 from 2010.

Figure 3.2 shows increases from 2009 to 2011, of 2.3 percentage points (from 51.7% to 54.0%) in school and 0.4 percentage points in vocational education and training (from 11.8% to 12.2%). These increases may translate into higher Year 12 or equivalent attainment in the 20–24 year old age group over time.

The full paper is available at: www.coagreformcouncil.gov.au/excellence/good_practice.cfm

**Figure 3.2 Participation in full time schooling and in non-school vocational education by those without Year 12, 15–19 years, Australia, 2001–2011**




*Notes:*

1. VET data available only from 2002–2011.
2. See statistical supplement, table Additional.2 for data.

*Sources:* ABS (2012) Schools Australia 2011, NCVER (2012) Students and Courses 2011, ABS (2012). Australian Demographic Statistics, December 2011.

### Year 12 or Certificate III attainment closely follows Certificate II attainment

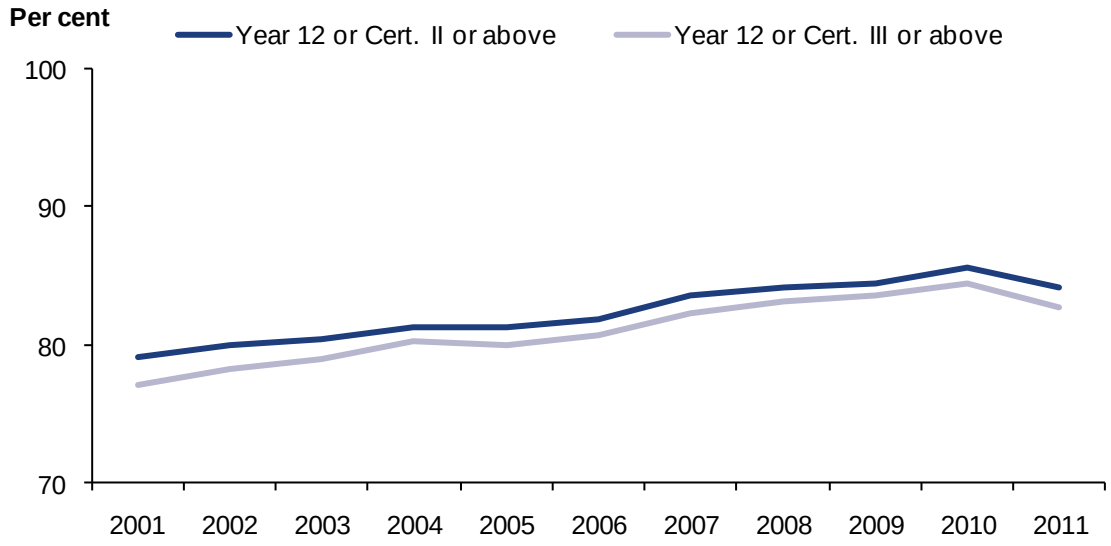
COAG also agreed a related target for 90% of 20–24 year olds to have attained Year 12 or equivalent or Certificate III or above by 2020.

Figure 3.3 shows the proportion of 20–24 year olds who have attained Year 12 or Certificate II or above closely tracks the proportion with Year 12 or Certificate III or above.

The difference ranges from 1.0 to 2.0 percentage points between 2001 and 2011. That is, only 1.0% to 2.0% of the 20–24 year old population have attained a Certificate II qualification only.

As there is little difference between the two indicators, this year we report only on Year 12 or Certificate II or above attainment. This matches with the 2015 attainment target. In future reporting years, our emphasis will shift toward the 2020 attainment target for Year 12 or Certificate III or above attainment.

**Figure 3.3 Proportion of 20–24 year olds with Year 12 or equivalent or Certificate II/III or above, Australia, 2001–2011**




*Notes:*

1. See statistical supplement, table Additional.3 for data and confidence intervals.

*Source:* ABS (2012) Survey of Education and Work 2001–2011.

### What is happening at a State and Territory level?

COAG agreed that the 90% national target would be met through specific targets for each State and Territory based on a 6.5 percentage point increase on 2007 proportions.

Table 3.1 shows progress towards the COAG 2015 target. Most States and Territories require increases to meet the 2015 target based on the 2011 Survey of Education and Work estimate.

The estimate for the Northern Territory is currently above its 2015 target. However, this estimate should be treated with caution due to sample coverage and large standard errors.

**Table 3.1 Proportion of 20–24 year olds with Year 12 or equivalent or Certificate II or above, by State and Territory, 2011 and 2015 COAG target**

| NSW | Vic | Qld | WA | SA | Tas | ACT | NT | Aust |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **2011 Survey of Education and Work (and 95% confidence interval)** | | | | | | | | |
| 83.5 | 86.1 | 83.0 | 83.8 | 84.0 | 78.2 | 90.1 | 72.8 | **84.1** |
| +/-2.7 | +/-2.8 | +/-3.4 | +/-3.2 | +/-3.3 | +/-5.9 | +/-4.3 | +/-8.4 | +/-1.3 |
| **2015 COAG target[1]** | | | | | | | | |
| 89.2 | 92.6 | 92.5 | 86.2 | 84.7 | 81.6 | 95.0 | 71.6 | **89.9** |
| **Improvement required to meet 2015 target (percentage points)[3]** | | | | | | | | |
| 5.7 | 6.5 | 9.5 | 2.4 | 0.7 | 3.4 | 4.9 | -1.2 | **5.8** |

*Notes:*

1. 2015 COAG targets are outlined in the National Partnership Agreement on Youth Attainment and Transitions.
2. These figures do not take into account the confidence intervals associated with the 2011 estimates.
3. The Survey of Education and Work does not include Indigenous communities in very remote areas, which affects the comparability of the Northern Territory's results.
4. See statistical supplement, table NEA.7.1 for data and data quality statements.

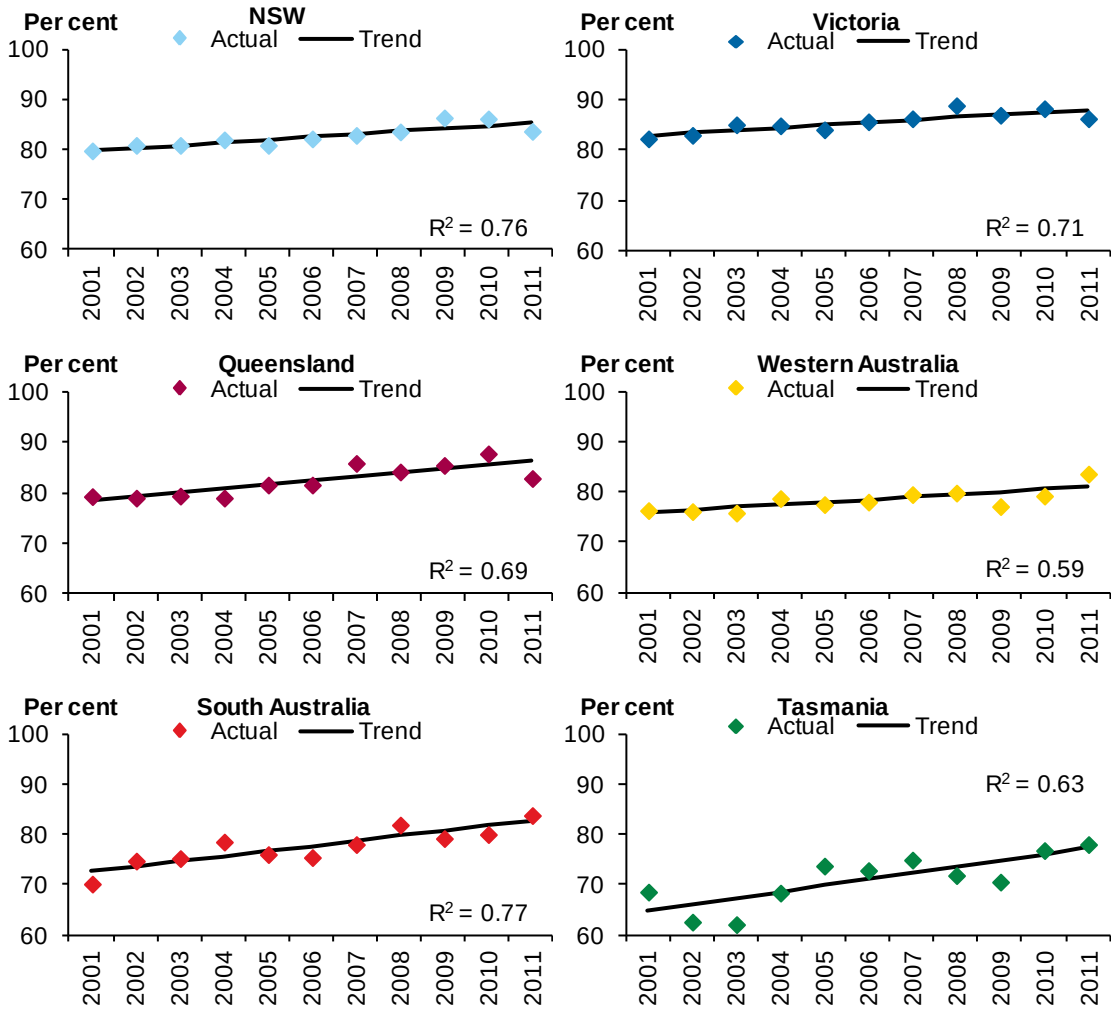
*Source:* ABS (2012) Survey of Education and Work 2011.

Figure 3.4 shows the proportion of 20–24 year olds with Year 12 or equivalent or Certificate II or above for each State over a longer time series—from 2001 to 2011. It also includes a trend line to smooth year to year fluctuations in the data.

Comparing the 2001 and 2011 values, the following changes were significant:

- NSW increased from 79.6% to 83.5%
- Victoria increased from 82.1% to 86.1%
- Western Australia increased from 76.5% to 83.8%
- South Australia increased from 70.3% to 84.0%
- Tasmania increased from 68.7% to 78.2%.

**Figure 3.4** **Proportion of 20–24 year olds with Year 12 or equivalent or Certificate II or above, by State and Territory, 2001–2011**




*Notes:*

1. The coefficient of determination ($R^2$) measures how well the trend line fits the recorded data. Higher $R^2$ values indicate a better fit.
2. The Survey of Education and Work does not include Indigenous communities in very remote areas, which affects the comparability of the Northern Territory's results.
3. Data for the Northern Territory are not included in this figure due to high year-to-year apparent variation.
4. Data for the ACT are not included in this figure due to no trend over time ($R^2$=0.01).
5. See statistical supplement, table Additional.1 for data and confidence intervals.

*Source:* ABS (2012) Survey of Education and Work 2001–2011.

## 3.3 Transition to full-time employment, education or training

This section reports whether young people have engaged in post-school education, training or work at levels for effective and full participation in the labour market. It is a key measure of young people's successful transition from school.

We present some additional analysis by gender to demonstrate the differential impact of changing post-school patterns of work and study for young men and women at Exhibit 3.2. Exhibit 3.3 also outlines recent research on the factors behind successful youth transitions.

The revised National Education Agreement specifies 17–24 year olds as a target group as 17 is the age at which the national youth participation requirement ceases to apply. This year, we are reporting on the former indicator of 18–24 year olds. These data were provided by the Steering Committee for the Review of Government Service Provision by 30 June 2012, in accordance with the existing agreement at the time.

### What changed between 2008 and 2011?

Nationally, between 2008 and 2009 the proportion of 18–24 year olds fully engaged in employment, education or training at or above Certificate III level significantly declined from 76.3% to 72.7%. It has not recovered since—in 2011 the proportion was 72.5%.

Table 3.2 shows the proportion of 18–24 year olds fully engaged in employment, education or training across States and Territories from 2008 to 2011.

Although the proportion declined nationally, only two jurisdictions significantly changed between 2008 and 2011:

- Victoria significantly declined from 78.6% to 73.5%
- the ACT significantly declined from 87.4% to 79.2% but was still significantly higher than the national average.

**Table 3.2 Proportion of 18–24 year olds fully engaged in employment, education or training at or above Certificate III, 2008–2011**

| | NSW | Vic | Qld | WA | SA | Tas | ACT | NT | Aust |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2008 | 74.9 | 78.6 | 75.6 | 79.6 | 72.0 | 66.9 | 87.4 | 69.8 | 76.3 |
| 2009 | 72.8 | 71.1 | 73.7 | 75.2 | 71.4 | 68.8 | 80.6 | 69.7 | 72.7 |
| 2010 | 70.9 | 75.7 | 72.2 | 74.6 | 68.8 | 62.8 | 84.9 | 71.3 | 72.7 |
| 2011 | 72.1 | 73.5 | 70.7 | 75.2 | 71.1 | 70.6 | 79.2 | 67.9 | 72.5 |

*Notes:*

1. 'Fully engaged' is full time employment, full time education or training at or above Certificate III, both part time employment and part time education/training, or both full time employment and full time education/training.
2. The Survey of Education and Work does not include Indigenous communities in very remote areas, which affects the comparability of the Northern Territory's results.
3. See statistical supplement, table NEA.10.1 for data, confidence intervals and data quality statements.

*Source:* ABS (unpublished) Survey of Education and Work 2008–2011.

### Full time employment fell between 2008 and 2011

Table 3.3 shows the main factor behind the fall in 18–24 year old post school engagement is a fall in full time employment. Nationally, full time employment significantly fell from 45.7% in 2008 to 39.9% in 2011.

There was no significant change in full time education or training at or above Certificate III.

**Table 3.3 Proportion of 18–24 year olds fully engaged in employment, education or training at or above Certificate III, Australia, 2008–2011**

| Category | 2008 | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Full time employment | 45.7 | 41.1 | 41.1 | 39.9 |
| Full time education/training at or above Certificate III | 27.5 | 28.9 | 28.7 | 29.5 |
| Combination (both full time or both part time) | 3.1 | 2.7 | 3.0 | 3.1 |
| **Total 18–24 year olds fully engaged** | **76.3** | **72.7** | **72.7** | **72.5** |

*Notes:*

1. Full time employment includes the combination of full time employment and part time education/training.
2. Full time education/training at or above Certificate III includes the combination of full time education/training and part time employment.
3. See statistical supplement, table NEA.10.1 for data, confidence intervals and data quality statements.

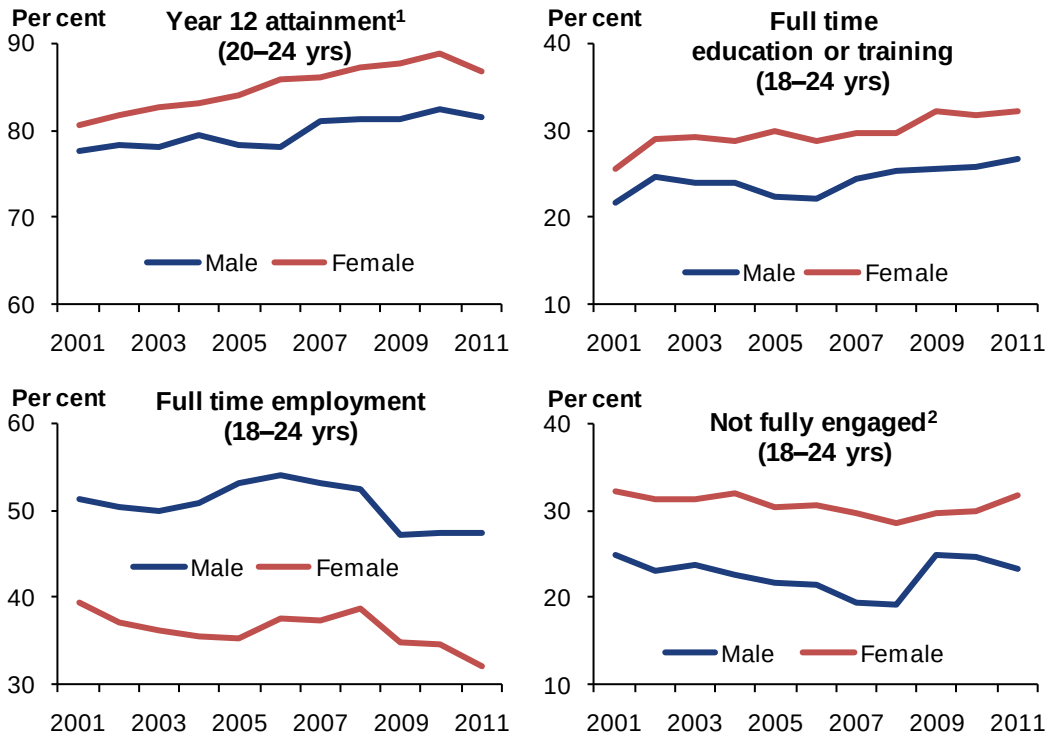
*Source:* ABS (2012) Survey of Education and Work 2008–2011.

## Exhibit 3.2: How do transitions from school vary by gender?

As an extension of our reporting, we examined how youth transitions vary by gender. In general, more young women than men complete school and continue in education. However, young women have lower full time participation in the labour market and many are also not engaged in work or study in proportions higher than men. Figure 3.5 shows the following:

- Young women (20–24 years) have a higher rate of Year 12 or equivalent attainment.
  - This rate significantly increased for both men and women from 2001 to 2011.
- More young women (18–24 years) than men participate in full time education or training.
  - This rate significantly increased for both men and women from 2001 to 2011.
- More young men (18–24 years) than women participate in full time employment. The gap increased from 11.9 percentage points in 2001 to 15.4 percentage points in 2011.
  - The full time employment rate significantly fell for men and women from 2001 to 2011.
- More young women (18–24 years) than men are not fully engaged in work or study.
  - Both significantly fell from 2001 to 2008, then significantly increased from 2008 to 2011. The net result is that both rates in 2001 are not significantly different from 2011.

**Figure 3.5 Transition outcomes disaggregated by gender, Australia, 2001–2011**




*Notes:*

1. Year 12 attainment includes Year 12 or equivalent, or Certificate II or above.
2. Not fully engaged in full time employment, education or training or a combination of part time activities.

*Source:* ABS (2012) Survey of Education and Work 2001–2011.

### Exhibit 3.3: What factors affect successful transitions from school?

The council commissioned the National Centre for Vocational Education Research to write a paper on factors affecting successful youth transitions. This paper used research based on the Longitudinal Surveys of Australian Youth.

Some of the main findings from this research are outlined below.

**Economic and social context**

- Young people are especially vulnerable to changes in economic conditions.
- Having a poor socioeconomic background hinders successful transitions.
- Student perceptions of a positive school environment can moderate the impacts of having a poor background.
- Students in non-metropolitan areas are less likely to complete Year 12.
- Students with parents from a Non-English speaking background are less likely to leave school early. Students born overseas are more likely to attend university.
- The gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students for Year 12 completion rates is decreasing.
- Indigenous students are participating more in VET, but not in university.

**School characteristics and labour market**

- Student perceptions of having access to high quality teachers can have a large impact on successful transitions.
- Having access to career advisors at school can help with successful transitions.
- Working up to 10 hours a week has no impact on academic results at school, while working 20 hours or more has a clear and negative impact.
- Youth Allowance improves course completion rates for those receiving it.

**Personal characteristics**

- Those who achieve high levels of literacy and numeracy in Year 9 are more likely to finish Year 12, move onto university and go on to high status jobs.
- Intentions to complete school and continue with further education, expressed at 14 or 15 years of age, are important indicators of actually doing so.

**Where can I find more information?**

The full paper can be found at: www.coagreformcouncil.gov.au/excellence/good_practice.cfm

# Chapter 4. Reducing educational disadvantage

## At a glance

**Indigenous students' attendance at government schools is not improving**

- There remains a large gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous student attendance rates across most States and Territories, particularly in the secondary schooling years.
- Between 2008 and 2011, there was little improvement in government schools across primary and secondary schooling years and in Year 10 most jurisdictions had declines.

**The proportion of Indigenous students meeting minimum standards in reading and numeracy only improved in some year levels**

- For Australia, there were significant improvements for Indigenous students in Years 3 and 7 for reading and Years 3 and 5 for numeracy between 2008 and 2011.
  - For States and Territories, significant improvements were limited to Queensland and Western Australia in reading and Queensland and NSW in numeracy.
- At the same time, there were significant decreases in reading in Year 9 in NSW and Tasmania and in numeracy in Years 7 and 9 in NSW and Tasmania, but these results remained above the national average.

**Students from low socio-economic groups have lower levels of reading achievement and lower levels of Year 12 attainment and participation in work and training after school**

- In 2011, the proportions of students from low socio-economic backgrounds meeting minimum standards in reading were between 11 and 16 percentage points below those from high socio-economic backgrounds. This gap has not improved since 2008.
- The proportions of students from high socio-economic backgrounds meeting minimum standards in reading is uniformly high, over 97% in most jurisdictions. However, results for students from low socio-economic backgrounds differ between States and Territories.
  - The proportion meeting the national minimum standard was in the range of 60% (Northern Territory) to more than 80% (NSW, the ACT and Victoria).
- The proportion of young people from lower socio-economic areas attaining a Year 12 or equivalent was 74.1% compared with 93.8% for those from higher socio-economic areas.
  - The gap has remained largely unchanged between 2008 and 2011.
- Young people's post school engagement in employment, education or training declined between 2008 and 2011 for the low and the high socio-economic groups.
  - The largest decline was in the low socio-economic group from 65.6% to 59.4%.

## 4.1 About this chapter

Social inclusion is a major focus of reform under the COAG reform agenda. In the National Education Agreement, COAG agreed to an outcome that schooling promotes social inclusion and reduces the educational disadvantage of children, especially Indigenous children.

Educational disadvantage occurs when the benefits of education are not evenly distributed, where there are barriers to access and participation, and when expected outcomes from education differ for particular individuals or groups. Educational disadvantage is usually measured by focussing on the performance of identified groups of students with particular background characteristics correlated with lower outcomes.

### How do we report on reducing educational disadvantage?

There are four performance indicators which can be disaggregated to report against the social inclusion outcome. In this chapter, we bring together these indicators to report on social inclusion in one place, reporting on the outcomes for Indigenous students and young people from low socio-economic backgrounds.

COAG has also set a specific target to halve the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students by 2018. The council's report on the National Indigenous Reform Agreement—*Indigenous reform 2010–11: Comparing performance across Australia*—reports extensively on closing the gap targets and the findings are not included in this report.

#### What we report on this year

The indicators and measures we report on are:

- the proportion of Indigenous students attending school, for government schools only
- the proportion of Indigenous students at or above the national minimum standard in reading and numeracy NAPLAN assessments
- the proportion of Indigenous students who participate in NAPLAN testing
- the proportion of students from low socio-economic backgrounds at or above the national minimum standard in reading NAPLAN assessments
- the proportion of the 20–24 year old population having attained at least Year 12 or equivalent or AQF Certificate II or above, by socio-economic status
- the proportion of 18–24 year olds engaged in full-time employment, education or training at or above Certificate III, by socio-economic status.

### What we cannot report on this year

No data are available to report on:

- the proportion of the 20–24 year old Indigenous population having attained at least Year 12 or equivalent or AQF Certificate II/III or above
- the proportion of children from low socio-economic status backgrounds attending school
- the proportion of the 20–24 year old population from low socio-economic status areas having attained at least Year 12 or equivalent or Certificate III or above.

## 4.2 Indigenous students—school attendance

Increasing Indigenous school attendance is crucial to meeting COAG's Closing the Gap targets in literacy and numeracy and completing Year 12 or an equivalent vocational qualification.

We report data for government schools for Years 1 to 10 and compare Indigenous attendance rates to non-Indigenous attendance rates. While there are differences in Indigenous school attendance across sectors, there are generally smaller numbers of Indigenous students enrolled in Catholic and independent schools and more variation in reporting practices. Data for these sectors are available in the statistical supplement, tables NEA.2.2–2.4.

### What is the pattern for 2011 school attendance?

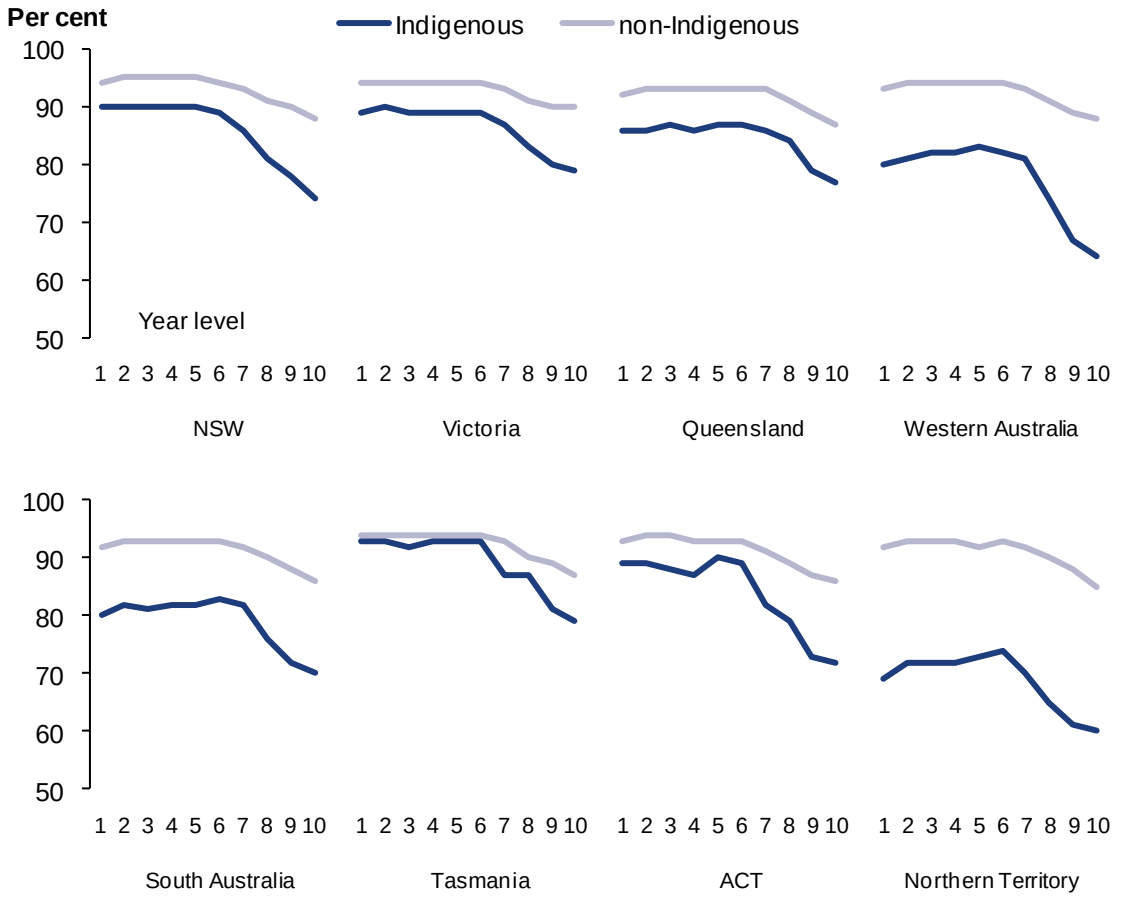
School attendance rates in government schools for Indigenous students are consistently lower than the rates for non-Indigenous students in all year levels across the years of reporting. Student attendance in all States and Territories follows a similar trend. There is relative stability in the primary years of schooling followed by a marked decrease at Years 7 and 8—the first years of secondary schooling.

Figure 4.1 shows the profile of Indigenous and non-Indigenous student attendance rates across year levels at government schools in 2011.

Looking at the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous student attendance:

- there were large gaps, of 10 percentage points or greater, across all year levels in Western Australia, South Australia and the Northern Territory
- the largest gaps were in secondary years of schooling, ranging up to 27 percentage points for Year 9 students in the Northern Territory
- the gaps were relatively small, around 5 percentage points, from Years 1–6 in NSW, Victoria and the ACT
- the smallest gaps (around 1 percentage point) were in Tasmania, from Years 1–6.

**Figure 4.1 Indigenous and non-Indigenous student attendance rates, government schools, States and Territories, 2011, per cent**




*Notes:*

1. No national average is available. Data for States and Territories are not comparable.
2. See statistical supplement, table NEA.2.2 for data.

*Source:* ACARA (unpublished).

## What changed in school attendance for Indigenous students between 2008 and 2011?

Attendance data should not be compared across school sectors, or across States and Territories, due to differing methods of data collection. However, data can be compared *within* States and Territories in a sector over time.

Table 4.1 shows changes in Indigenous student attendance in government schools from 2008 to 2011. Changes of two percentage points or greater are highlighted.

For Indigenous students in government schools, there is little improvement in attendance across primary and secondary schooling years. Furthermore, there are some relatively large decreases in attendance (three percentage points or more) which are concentrated in the secondary years of schooling (Years 7 to 10).

- For Year 10 students, most jurisdictions had declines. Attendance fell by 7 and 8 percentage points in NSW and the ACT, and fell by 9 percentage points in the Northern Territory.
- The Northern Territory had the lowest rates across all year levels which all fell in the period 2008 to 2011, with the exception of Year 6 which did not change.

**Table 4.1 Indigenous student attendance rates, government schools, 2011 and change in attendance between 2008 to 2011, per cent**

| | Yr 1 | Yr 2 | Yr 3 | Yr 4 | Yr 5 | Yr 6 | Yr 7 | Yr 8 | Yr 9 | Yr 10 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| NSW | 90 | 90 | 90 | 90 | 90 | 89 | 86 | 81 | 78 | 74 |
| +/- ppts | (+1) | (+1) | (+1) | (+1) | (+1) | | (+2) | | | (-7) |
| Vic | 89 | 90 | 89 | 89 | 89 | 89 | 87 | 83 | 80 | 79 |
| +/- ppts | (+1) | (+1) | | | | | (+1) | (-2) | (-2) | (-3) |
| Qld | 86 | 86 | 87 | 86 | 87 | 87 | 86 | 84 | 79 | 77 |
| +/- ppts | (+1) | (-1) | | (-1) | (-1) | (-1) | (-1) | (+2) | (+1) | (+1) |
| WA | 80 | 81 | 82 | 82 | 83 | 82 | 81 | 74 | 67 | 64 |
| +/- ppts | (+2) | | (+2) | | (+1) | (+1) | | | (-1) | |
| SA | 80 | 82 | 81 | 82 | 82 | 83 | 82 | 76 | 72 | 70 |
| +/- ppts | | (-1) | (-3) | (-1) | (-2) | | (-1) | (-1) | (+2) | |
| Tas | 93 | 93 | 92 | 93 | 93 | 93 | 87 | 87 | 81 | 79 |
| +/- ppts | | (-1) | (-1) | | | (+1) | (-3) | (+1) | (-2) | (-2) |
| ACT | 89 | 89 | 88 | 87 | 90 | 89 | 82 | 79 | 73 | 72 |
| +/- ppts | (+2) | (-1) | (-2) | (-3) | (+2) | (-1) | (-3) | | (-3) | (-8) |
| NT | 69 | 72 | 72 | 72 | 73 | 74 | 70 | 65 | 61 | 60 |
| +/- ppts | (-1) | (-1) | (-1) | (-2) | (-1) | | (-3) | (-5) | (-9) | (-9) |

*Notes:*

1. ppts—percentage points.
2. Light green shading—increase of 2 ppts. Light orange shading—decrease of 2 ppts. Orange shading—decrease of 3 ppts or more. No shading—difference of less than 2 ppts.
3. The number in brackets is the difference in ppts between 2008 and 2011.
4. See statistical supplement, table NEA.2.2 for data. (2008 report table NEA.2.6.).

*Source:* ACARA (unpublished).

### Gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous attendance

There was little change in non-Indigenous student attendance rates in government schools between 2008 and 2011. Across year levels and States and Territories, the gap to Indigenous attendance was generally stable between 2008 and 2011. However, the gap increased for several States and Territories in Years 9 and 10. (See the statistical supplement, 2011 table NEA.2.2 and 2008 NEA.2.6 for data.)

## 4.3 Indigenous students—achievement in reading and numeracy

### Achievement from 2008 to 2011

Nationally, and also in some States, there were some improvements in the proportions of Indigenous students meeting national minimum standards, in both reading and numeracy.

Table 4.2 gives the proportion of Indigenous students at or above the national minimum standard for all years in reading and numeracy. Significant changes between 2008 and 2011 are shown by green (significantly higher) and by orange (significantly lower) shading.

#### Reading

- Nationally, in Years 3 and 7 only, the proportion of Indigenous students at or above the national minimum standard for reading was significantly higher in 2011 than in 2008.

Comparing **States and Territories**, from 2008 to 2011:

- Queensland and Western Australia had significant increases in Years 3 and 7
- NSW and Tasmania had significant decreases in Year 9—however, both jurisdictions had scores which remained above the national average (71.9%).

There were no significant changes in other year levels in the other jurisdictions. It should be noted that there were no significant changes in Year 5 in any jurisdiction.

#### Numeracy

- Nationally, in Years 3 and 5 only, the proportion of Indigenous students at or above the national minimum standard for numeracy was significantly higher in 2011 than in 2008.

Comparing **States and Territories**, from 2008 to 2011:

- Queensland had significant increases in Years 3 and 5
- NSW had significant increases in achievement in Year 5 and decreases in Years 7 and 9
- although Tasmania had significant decreases in Years 7 and 9, scores were above 80%.

In all other year levels and jurisdictions, there were no significant changes.

### Participation of Indigenous students in NAPLAN

In 2011, participation rates for Indigenous students were consistently lower than non-Indigenous rates in all jurisdictions. (Chapter 2 defines participation rates in NAPLAN in further detail.)

- In all jurisdictions, there was a decrease from high levels of participation in Years 3, 5 and 7 to lower levels of participation in Year 9. By Year 9, only about 70% to 80% of Indigenous students are participating in testing.
- Absence from school was the most common reason for Indigenous non-participation in NAPLAN testing. By Year 9, the absent rate on the day of testing ranged from 30% in Western Australia to 13% in Queensland (see Appendices A and B for details and data).

**Table 4.2** **Proportion of Indigenous students achieving at or above the national minimum standard, reading and numeracy, 2011 (number), significance of change between 2008 and 2011 (shading), by State and Territory**

| | Year 3 | Year 5 | Year 7 | Year 9 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Reading** | | | | |
| NSW | 85.0 | 77.8 | 82.6 | 77.9 |
| Vic | 88.2 | 83.1 | 87.8 | 83.2 |
| Qld | 80.0 | 68.0 | 79.9 | 72.1 |
| WA | 70.4 | 55.0 | 72.6 | 63.9 |
| SA | 72.2 | 67.4 | 76.1 | 69.1 |
| Tas | 85.5 | 81.1 | 85.7 | 82.2 |
| ACT | 86.8 | 86.0 | 86.1 | 89.0 |
| NT | 39.9 | 28.5 | 42.9 | 37.2 |
| Aust | 76.3 | 66.4 | 77.1 | 71.9 |
| **Numeracy** | | | | |
| NSW | 89.2 | 83.4 | 80.5 | 74.9 |
| Vic | 89.6 | 86.1 | 86.3 | 80.3 |
| Qld | 86.9 | 77.8 | 80.7 | 74.5 |
| WA | 79.8 | 67.0 | 72.2 | 67.3 |
| SA | 79.0 | 74.2 | 76.4 | 68.2 |
| Tas | 90.2 | 86.9 | 83.2 | 80.3 |
| ACT | 88.9 | 86.0 | 79.6 | 83.0 |
| NT | 59.3 | 45.2 | 43.8 | 42.4 |
| Aust | 83.6 | 75.2 | 76.5 | 72.0 |

*Notes:*

1. Green shading—significant increase between 2008 and 2011. Orange shading—significant decrease between 2008 and 2011.
2. Significance testing for this indicator was done by ACARA.
3. See statistical supplement, tables NEA. 5.26 to NEA. 5.37; 2009 report, tables NEA. 4.13 to NEA. 4.24 for data.

*Source:* MCEECDYA (2008) National Assessment Program—Literacy and Numeracy, ACARA (2011) National Assessment Program—Literacy and Numeracy.

## 4.4 Students from low socio-economic backgrounds—achievement in reading

### What do I need to know about measuring socio-economic status for NAPLAN?

Data collections used in this report measure socio-economic status differently. For NAPLAN reporting, a student's socio-economic status is measured by the educational and occupational status of their parents. In this section, only parental educational status is used as it is highly correlated with occupational status.

High socio-economic background students are defined as those whose parental education level is a bachelor degree or higher. Low socio-economic background is the education level of Year 11 or equivalent or below (see Appendix A for more detail and the annual National Report on NAPLAN for detailed results by State and Territory by parental education and occupation).

#### Data for measuring socio-economic status is incomplete

Non-response rates for data items on parental education background have been very high, but rates have improved each year. Between 2010 and 2011, in all States and Territories, there were improvements in response rates. Due to the large changes in response rates, data over time are not reported. Only 2011 data is reported here.

### Achievement in reading 2011

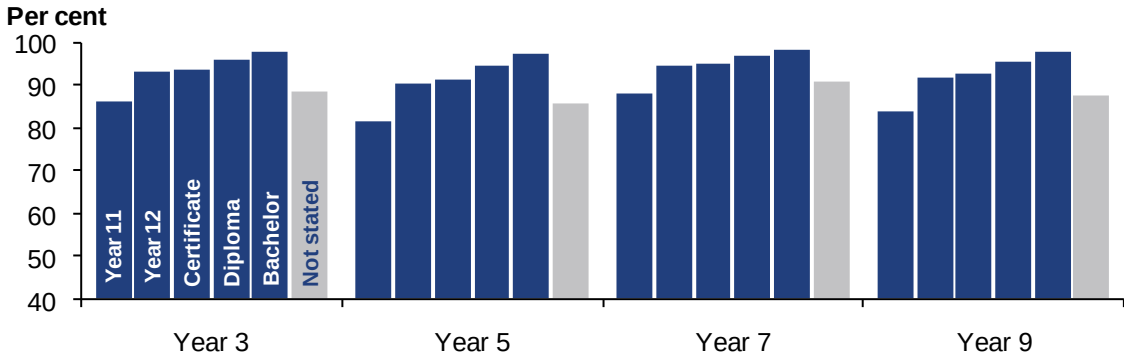
As reported last year, achievement in reading increases as parental education increases. Figure 4.2 shows the gradient of achievement across the five levels of socio-economic background. The 'not stated' result is similar to the lower achievement levels of Year 11 parental education background, suggesting that these students were primarily from the low socio-economic background group.

Nationally, there were considerable differences in the proportions meeting national minimum standards between students from low and high socio-economic status backgrounds. These differences were 12% in Year 3, 16% in Year 5, 11% in Year 7 and 14% in Year 9.

Figure 4.3 shows the difference between low and high socio-economic status background students, in Years 3 and 9 only, nationally and for States and Territories.

- There is almost no difference between States and Territories in the achievement of students from a high socio-economic status background.
  - Generally over 97% of these students achieved the national minimum standard.
  - There is considerable variation in the achievement of students with a low socio-economic status background by State and Territory. Comparing States and Territories it is clear that any differences in results are driven by the proportion of students from low socio-economic backgrounds.
  - The proportion achieving at or above the national minimum standard ranged from 58% (Northern Territory) to 89% (Victoria) in Year 3 and from 57% (Northern Territory) to 87% (Victoria) in Year 9.

**Figure 4.2** **Proportion of students achieving at or above the national minimum standard in reading, by year level, by SES background, Australia, 2011**




*Notes:*

1. Bachelor is bachelor degree or above; Diploma is advanced diploma/diploma; Certificate is Certificate I to IV; Year 12 is Year 12 or equivalent and Year 11 is Year 11 or equivalent or below.
2. See statistical supplement, tables NEA. 5.1, NEA. 5.4, NEA. 5.7 and NEA. 5.10 for data.

*Source:* ACARA (2011) NAPLAN Achievement in Reading, Persuasive Writing, Language Conventions and Numeracy: National Report for 2011.

**Figure 4.3** **Proportion of students achieving at or above the national minimum standard in reading, by SES background, by States and Territories, 2011**


*Notes:*

1. See statistical supplement, tables NEA. 5.1, NEA. 5.4, NEA. 5.7 and NEA. 5.10 for data.

*Source:* ACARA (2011) NAPLAN Achievement in Reading, Persuasive Writing, Language Conventions and Numeracy: National Report for 2011.

## 4.5 Students from low socio-economic backgrounds—making a successful transition from school

### What do I need to know about measuring socio-economic status?

The measure of socio-economic status used for the indicators for this outcome is the Socio-economic Indexes for Areas Index of Relative Socioeconomic Disadvantage (SEIFA IRSD). This reports data derived from measures of disadvantage in a geographic area, not from individuals. Data are reported for five quintiles, ranging from the most disadvantaged (quintile one) to the least disadvantaged (quintile five).

This section covers two indicators:

- the proportion of young people attaining a Year 12 or equivalent or Certificate II or above qualification
- the proportion of young people participating in employment, education or training at or above Certificate III after they leave school (whether they completed Year 12 or not).

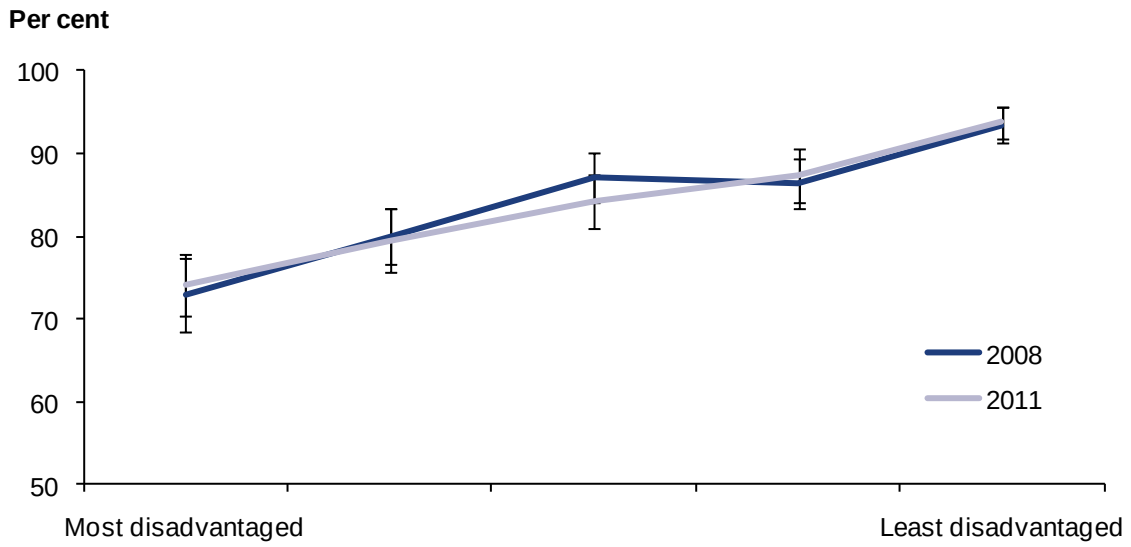
Across the two measures, there have not been any significant improvements at a national level since 2008 across any socio-economic group, but there have been some significant declines.

### Year 12 or Certificate II attainment

Figure 4.4 shows that the proportion of 20–24 year olds with Year 12 or equivalent or Certificate II or above increases as socio-economic status increases.

In 2011, the proportion of 20–24 year olds who had completed Year 12 or equivalent from the most disadvantaged areas was 74.1% compared with 93.8% in the least disadvantaged areas. Between 2008 and 2011, there were no significant changes at a national level.

**Figure 4.4 Proportion of 20–24 year olds with Year 12 or equivalent or Certificate II or above, by socio-economic status (SEIFA IRSD), Australia, 2008–2011**




*Notes:*

1. Socio-economic status is derived using the ABS SEIFA IRSD disaggregated into quintiles.
2. See statistical supplement, table NEA.8.1 for data.

*Sources:* ABS (unpublished) Census of Population and Housing 2006; ABS (unpublished) Survey of Education and Work 2008, 2011.

## Transition to full-time employment, education or training

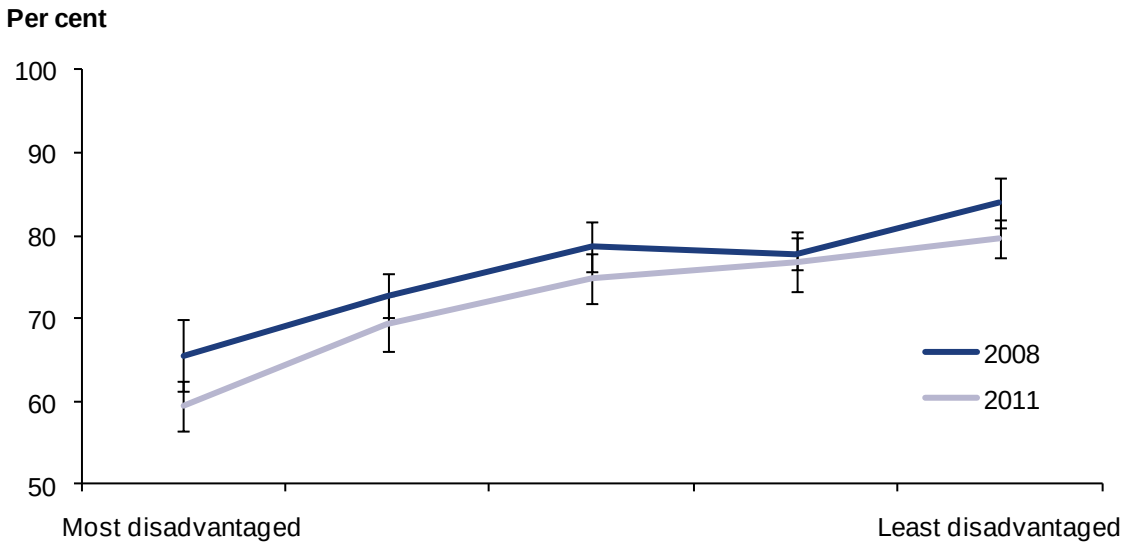
Figure 4.5 shows that the proportion of 18–24 year olds who are fully engaged in employment, education or training at or above Certificate III increases as socio-economic status increases.

In 2011, the proportion of fully engaged young people from the lowest socio-economic group (most disadvantaged areas) was 59.4% compared with 79.6% in the highest group (least disadvantaged areas).

Between 2008 and 2011, there were significant declines across the low and high socio-economic groupings at a national level. Chapter 3 discusses the impact of a fall in full time employment.

- The largest decline was in the low socio-economic group, which declined by 6.2 percentage points from 65.6% to 59.4%.
- The high socio-economic group declined by 4.3 percentage points, from 83.9% to 79.6%.

**Figure 4.5 Proportion of 18–24 year olds who are fully engaged in employment, education or training at or above Certificate III level, by socio-economic status (SEIFA IRSD), Australia, 2008–2011**




*Notes:*

1. Socio-economic status is derived using the ABS SEIFA IRSD disaggregated into quintiles.
2. Persons aged 18 to 24 who are participating in full-time education or training at or above Certificate III, or participating in both part-time employment and part-time education or training at or above Certificate III.
3. See statistical supplement, table NEA.10.2 for data.

*Sources:* ABS (unpublished) Census of Population and Housing 2006; ABS (unpublished) Survey of Education and Work 2008, 2011.

# Chapter 5. Excelling internationally

## At a glance

**New data from the 2009 PISA survey on digital reading literacy were released in 2012**

- Australian students ranked second of 19 countries and were only outperformed by students in Korea.
- The survey was performed in 2009. This was the first time that it had been offered by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) PISA.

## 5.1 About this chapter

This outcome is about examining whether Australian students excel by international standards, focusing on performance at the top and bottom levels of achievement.

Comparing Australia to other developed countries and our trading partners may help to improve our competitiveness in the global economy and labour market.

### What do I need to know about international testing?

To measure this outcome, the council may draw on sources of international testing. The council has been given discretion on the reporting of this outcome by the recent review of the National Education Agreement. The three sources of international testing are:

- Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA)
- Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS)
- Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS).

Last year, the council reported on the reading and mathematical literacy domains of the 2009 PISA survey. We found that Australian students performed well compared to other developed countries. However, Australian scores in international testing in reading (2000 to 2009) and mathematics (2003 to 2009) fell, due largely to a fall in the proportion of Australian students achieving at the top levels.

There is no new international data available for reading literacy and mathematical literacy.

The report on TIMSS will be released in December 2012 and is therefore not reported here. Australia participated in PIRLS for the first time in 2010. The report will be released in December 2012 to coincide with the TIMSS report and is therefore not reported here.

## 5.2 Australia's performance in digital reading literacy

The council has decided to provide some data from the PISA survey on digital reading literacy because it presents an interesting picture of a new and innovative assessment area.

### What is the PISA assessment of digital reading literacy?

In 2009 for the first time, an assessment of digital reading literacy was offered as an international option of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) PISA. The assessment simulated a typical digital reading experience of navigating across multiple web pages and websites. The survey focused on the ability of 15 year old students to read, understand and apply digital texts.

The PISA survey on digital reading literacy is promising. It will help deepen an understanding of whether students have the skills needed to meet real-life problems and situations that arise in a digital world. The survey also allows comparisons between print and digital reading literacy.

### What do I need to know about data quality?

There are some potential quality issues with the data. This was the first time that the survey was conducted. It drew on a sub-sample of students from nineteen countries, including sixteen OECD countries. This was fewer than the 65 countries that participated in the PISA 2009 survey of science, reading and mathematical literacy. 2990 Australian students participated in the survey.

**Box 5.1 What is a digital text?**

PISA defines digital texts as texts that are displayed on an electronic device (such as a computer) with hyperlinks that allow the reader to access text located elsewhere. Digital texts include non-verbal graphic elements like illustrations, icons, photographs and animations. The texts may be content that can only be viewed on a screen or that the reader can contribute to, such as blogs and online forums.

The cognitive skills that readers use to process and navigate digital texts are an important part of digital reading literacy. These skills include locating key pieces of information, interpreting nuances in text, integrating different elements of text, drawing on prior knowledge to relate to a text, evaluating the accuracy of information, and judging the logic of an argument or the suitability of the style.

*Source:* ACER (2012), *Preparing Australian Students for the Digital World: Results from the PISA 2009 Digital Reading Literacy Assessment*.

### How did Australia perform in the PISA survey?

Australia excelled in digital reading literacy compared to other countries.

- Australia's average score of 537 was significantly higher than the OECD average score of 499.
- Only Korea outperformed Australia, with an average score of 568.
- New Zealand's average score was similar to Australia.
- All other countries achieved significantly lower scores than Australia, including Japan, Hong Kong-China, Iceland and Sweden.

For the proportion of students performing at the top (levels 4, 5 or above) and bottom (level 2 or below) proficiency levels:

- 46% of Australian students were in the top levels and 27% were in the bottom levels
  - this was better than the OECD average of 31% in the top levels and 39% in the bottom levels
- Australia performed well below the top performer, Korea (61% in the top levels and 10% in the bottom levels).

Australian students in the highest socioeconomic quartile scored an average of 84 points higher than those in the lowest socioeconomic quartile. This is estimated as equal to a difference of two and a half years of schooling.

### Where can I find more information?

PISA data are published by the ACER, Australian Council for Educational Research (2012) *Preparing Australian Students for the Digital World: Results from the PISA 2009 Digital Reading Literacy Assessment*. The report can be found on the ACER website at: www.acer.edu.au/documents/PISA2009_PreparingAustralianStudentsForTheDigitalWorld.pdf.

# Chapter 6. National Partnerships

## At a glance

- We report performance information for two of the seven education National Partnerships which support the objective of the National Education Agreement and have performance information on common or reportable benchmarks.

**National Partnership on Early Childhood Education**

- Under the National Partnership, all jurisdictions have agreed to targets for access to an Early Childhood Education program of 15 hours per week, for all children in the year before full time school by 2013.
- Performance information was available for five jurisdictions. NSW, Victoria and the Northern Territory did not have approved performance reports in time to be included in this report.
- Queensland (68%), Western Australia (97.8%), South Australia (87.9%), Tasmania (95.8%) and the ACT (107%) met their enrolment targets.
- Queensland (65%), Western Australia (53.5%), South Australia (31.5%), Tasmania (49.5%) and the ACT (41%) met their targets for the proportion of children enrolled in an early childhood education program that is available for 15 hours a week.

**National Partnership on Youth Attainment and Transitions**

- Under the National Partnership, all jurisdictions have agreed to performance indicators on participation, attainment, transition and retention for Indigenous students only.
- We report on the first year of performance information for four performance indicators in the annual reports as at 2010.
- With the second year of information available for our next report, we will report on any changes in performance under the National Partnership in our report next year.

## 6.1 National Partnerships that support National Agreements

National Partnerships between the Commonwealth and the States and Territories are based on agreed policy objectives in areas of nationally significant reform or service delivery improvements (COAG 2008a).

Some National Partnerships involve 'reward funding' from the Commonwealth to States and Territories that deliver on outcomes according to agreed performance benchmarks. The council's reports on these are on our website at: www.coagreformcouncil.gov.au.

Our other role is to publish performance information relating to National Partnerships to the extent that they support the objectives in National Agreements (COAG 20108a, Cl. C5(c)). Our

task is to highlight progress implementing National Partnerships that support the objectives of the National Education Agreement.

State and Territory performance information is provided in progress and annual reports for most National Partnerships. At the council's request, the Commonwealth provides the council with these reports once they have been approved for release by the relevant ministers.

## 6.2 Reporting performance for 2011

Seven National Partnerships support the objective of the National Education Agreement:

- Early Childhood Education
- National Quality Agenda for Early Childhood Education and Care
- Literacy and Numeracy
- Improving Teacher Quality
- Low Socio-economic Status School Communities
- Youth Attainment and Transitions
- Empowering Local Schools.

The council relies on timely annual reports from jurisdictions to report on National Partnerships. We only accept annual reports on National Partnerships until 30 June each year—reports received after that deadline are not included in that year's report.

Each year, the council reviews the progress and annual reports submitted on National Partnerships, and reports performance information that can be linked to the outcomes and objective of the National Education Agreement.

In our reports on four National Agreements submitted in April 2012, we outlined our main concerns with reporting on National Partnerships in National Agreement reports. This included that, for some existing National Partnerships, we cannot link activities or government performance to the objectives of the related National Agreement. The council also recommended that COAG agree that activities under future National Partnerships covered by National Agreements clearly link to the objectives of their related National Agreement. COAG has agreed in principle to the recommendation but noted that there may be instances when it is not possible to do so.

### What we are reporting on this year

This year, we are reporting information received on time, which we can link to the objective of the National Education Agreement and for which there are comparable performance benchmarks. We are reporting on two National Partnerships. Table 6.1 shows the status of the performance information received on these National Partnerships.

**Table 6.1 National Partnerships that we are reporting on this year**

| National Partnership | Status |
|---|---|
| Early Childhood Education | NSW, Victoria and the Northern Territory did not have approved performance reports in time to be included in this report.<br>Performance information for remaining jurisdictions were received on time. |
| Youth Attainment and Transitions | Performance information for 2010 is reported here.<br>Performance information for the reward component is set out in the council's separate 2011 report[1]. |

*Notes:*

1. COAG Reform Council (2011), *National Partnership Agreement on Youth Attainment and Transitions: Participation target assessment report*, COAG Reform Council, Sydney.

## What we are not reporting this year

We are not reporting on five of the National Partnerships. Table 6.2 lists these National Partnerships and the status of the performance information received. Further information on these National Partnerships can be found in Appendix B.

**Table 6.2 National Partnerships that we are not reporting on this year**

| National Partnership | Status |
|---|---|
| Literacy and Numeracy | Concluded. Performance information for reward components is set out in the council's separate 2011[1] and 2012 reports[2]. |
| Improving Teacher Quality | Performance information for the reward components is set out in the council's separate 2012 report[3]. |
| Low Socio-economic Status School Communities | Performance information received. No common indicators or benchmarks. |
| Empowering Local Schools | An initial progress report has been submitted on time in 2012. No reportable indicators. |
| National Quality Agenda for Early Childhood Education and Care | Jurisdictions report on the implementation of the National Partnership to the Standing Council on School Education and Early Childhood every six months. No reportable indicators. |

*Notes:*

1. COAG Reform Council (2011), *National Partnership Agreement on Literacy and Numeracy: Performance report for 2010*, COAG Reform Council, Sydney.
2. COAG Reform Council (2012), *National Partnership Agreement on Literacy and Numeracy: Performance report for 2011*, COAG Reform Council, Sydney.
3. COAG Reform Council (2012), *National Partnership Agreement on Improving Teacher Quality: Performance report for 2011*, COAG Reform Council, Sydney.

## 6.3 National Partnership on Early Childhood Education

The objective of the National Partnership Agreement on Early Childhood Education is to deliver universal access to early childhood education. The agreement includes a commitment that in the 12 months prior to full-time schooling, every child will have access to a preschool program:

- delivered by a four-year university qualified early childhood teacher
- for 15 hours per week across 40 weeks in the year
- in accordance with a national early years learning framework
- in a form that meets the needs of parents
- at a cost that is not a barrier to access.

In the lead up to meeting this commitment by 2013, each State and Territory has agreed:

- targets for the proportion of children who will be enrolled in a preschool program
- targets for the proportion of children enrolled in an Early Childhood Education Program that is available for 15 hours a week.

### Performance information for 2011

States and Territories provide annual reports to the Commonwealth Minister for approval. We received reports from Queensland, Western Australia, South Australia, Tasmania and the ACT by 30 June 2012 (the due date). NSW, Victoria and the Northern Territory did not have approved performance reports in time to be included in this report.

Queensland, Western Australia, South Australia, Tasmania and the ACT met their enrolment targets and 15 hours per week enrolment targets. Table 6.3 reports the results.

## Table 6.3 Performance information 2011: National Partnership on Early Childhood Education

| | NSW | Vic | Qld | WA | SA | Tas | ACT | NT |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Indicator: Proportion of children who are enrolled in (and attending, where possible to measure) a preschool program (%)** | | | | | | | | |
| 2008 baseline | 81.9 | 95.8 | 29[3] | 95[4] | 87.2[5] | 96.5[6] | 94 | 88.7 |
| 2011 target | 91.8[2] | ≥95 | 65 | 95 | 87.8 | ≥95 | 94 | 91.8 |
| 2011 actual | ■ | ■ | 68 | 97.8 | 87.9 | 95.8 | 107[7] | ■ |
| **Progress** | ■ | ■ | ▲ | ▲ | ▲ | ▲ | ▲ | ■ |
| **Indicator: Proportion of children enrolled in an Early Childhood Education Program available for at least 15 hours a week (%)** | | | | | | | | |
| 2008 baseline | 29 | 6.5[8] | 0 | 0 | 0 | 6 | 13.7 | 0 |
| 2011 target | 33 | 20 | 57 | 48 | 28 | 39 | 25 | 49.8 |
| 2011 actual | ■ | ■ | 65 | 53.5 | 31.5 | 49.5 | 41[9] | ■ |
| **Progress** | ■ | ■ | ▲ | ▲ | ▲ | ▲ | ▲ | ■ |

*Notes:*

1. ▲ = exceeded target ▼ = did not meet target ■ = met target ■ = did not receive approved reports by 30 June 2012
2. NSW and the Commonwealth agreed to revise the target from 94.9% to 91.8%. The bilateral agreement has not been amended to date.
3. Queensland's low baseline participation rate in 2008 was due to a reconfiguration of schooling from 2007 to introduce a preparatory year as the first year of formal schooling. Previously, Queensland children started and finished school a year earlier than other jurisdictions.
4. Western Australia's 2011 enrolment target of 95% is broken into children that are enrolled in 15 hour kindergarten (47%) and children enrolled in 11 hour kindergarten (48%).
5. In 2012, South Australia and the Commonwealth agreed to amend South Australia's 2008 baseline and performance targets to better reflect the higher than projected targeted population of four year old children. The bilateral agreement has been amended.
6. Tasmania and the Commonwealth agreed to amend Tasmania's 2008 baseline to 96.5% from 97.5% and the annual targets to at or above 95%. The bilateral agreement was amended on 26 June 2012.
7. The ACT figure represents children enrolled in a preschool program in the year before full time schooling for public and non-government schools and long day care.
8. Victoria's baseline figure concerns the weekly hours of service offered by state funded kindergarten services in non-long day care funded settings in 2008. State funded kindergarten services in long day care funded settings were excluded as data on kindergarten specific hours in a long day care setting was not generally available.
9. The ACT figure represents children enrolled in a preschool program in the year before full time schooling for public and non-government schools and long day care.

*Source:* 2011 annual reports provided by jurisdictions. Bilateral agreements on the National Partnership between States and Territories and the Commonwealth.

## 6.4 National Partnership on Youth Attainment and Transitions

The National Partnership on Youth Attainment and Transitions aims to increase educational engagement and outcomes for young people aged 15 to 24 years, and to help them to successfully move from school into education, training and employment. The National Partnership supports COAG's target to lift national Year 12 or equivalent attainment to 90% of young people by 2015.

The National Partnership also:

- provided an entitlement to an education or training place for young people aged 15–24 years (this entitlement expired on 31 December 2011)
- aims to assist people in this age group to make a successful transition from schooling into further education, training or employment
- aims to better align the various Commonwealth, State and Territory programs and services related to youth, careers and transition (COAG 2009, p.4).

### Performance information for 2010

The National Partnership has a suite of performance indicators including participation, attainment, transition and Indigenous young people.

Our first reward report on the National Partnership (2012) assessed progress toward the participation target only. The participation target is the total enrolment of two groups of students in 2010:

- full-time equivalent students in Years 11 and 12
- 15–19 year olds without Year 12 and not enrolled in school who are enrolled in a VET course (full or part-time) at Certificate II level or higher.

The council's report on these targets is available on our website at: www.coagreformcouncil.gov.au.

We received annual reports for the first reporting period (2009 to 2010) of the National Partnerships for all jurisdictions. The council is only including performance information in this report that is quantifiable and has not been reported in the standalone report.

For this National Partnership, we note the following limitations in the indicators:

- the enrolment of full-time equivalent students in Years 11 and 12 will change over time in response to both improved participation and demographic changes
- the Year 12 attainment or equivalent rate has already been reported in the 2010 National Education Agreement report—we will be able to report on the achievement of the 2012 target in our 2012 education report
- the apparent retention indicators for Indigenous students are subject to data quality issues from variation in identification of Indigenous status over time.

The indicator on the proportion of young people (15–24 years) participating in post school education, training or employment six months after school has been removed from the revised National Education Agreement and is therefore not included here.

The information reported in this first year is a starting point from which the council can track activity in each jurisdiction once the next and subsequent year's information is received.

Table 6.4 reports the results of four of the indicators in the National Partnership based on 2010 reports.

**Table 6.4 Performance information 2010: National Partnership on Youth Attainment and Transitions**

| NSW | Vic | Qld | WA | SA | Tas | ACT | NT |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Indicator 1: Enrolment of full-time equivalent students in Years 11 and 12** | | | | | | | |
| 139,969 | 117,514 | 103,454 | 51,359 | 38,887 | 11,157 | 9,337 | 3,824 |
| **Indicator 2: Proportion of young people aged 20–24 who have attained Year 12 or Certificate II or above (%)** | | | | | | | |
| 86.0 | 88.1 | 87.9 | 79.5 | 80.2 | 77.1 | 89.5 | 73.1 |
| **Indicator 3: Apparent retention Years 7/8 to Year 10—Indigenous students (%)** | | | | | | | |
| 98.0 | 90.7 | 99.6 | 90.7 | 99.2 | 110.8 | 96.4 | 81.0 |
| **Indicator 4: Apparent retention Years 7/8 to Year 12—Indigenous students (%)** | | | | | | | |
| 38.6 | 41.8 | 62.3 | 42.9 | 62.1 | 43.4 | 58.8 | 29.8 |

*Notes:*

1. 2010 data for the performance indicator, "proportion of young people aged 20–24 who have attained Year 12 or Certificate II or above", was included in the council's last report on the National Education Agreement.
2. Data for indicators on the apparent retention Years 7/8 to Year 10 and Years 7/8 to Year 12 by Indigenous status included as per Schedule B of the National Partnership. Apparent retention rates may be over 100% if more students enrol than leave during the time period or numbers are small.
3. The attainment measure for 20–24 year olds comes from the ABS Survey of Education and Work. The survey is done in May each year with results normally reported in December of the same year. The data from the survey relates to measures at that point in time.
4. The ABS Survey of Education and Work is a sample survey. The results in the survey are therefore reported with confidence intervals. For smaller jurisdictions, confidence intervals can be substantial. The nature of the survey and the size of the error mean that it may not be possible to accurately identify change over time, even in larger jurisdictions. These data limitations were signalled by the council in 2010.

*Source:* 2010 annual reports provided by jurisdictions containing SEW data published in May 2010.

# Chapter 7. Improving performance reporting

## At a glance

**Revisions to the National Education Agreement have improved the cohesion of the performance reporting framework**

- On 25 July 2012, COAG agreed to the revised National Education Agreement. The revised structure has a reduced set of performance indicators and disaggregates indicators by relevant sub-groups, where feasible.
- COAG also agreed to priorities on data development outlined by the recent review. The council supports these priorities.
  - A greater reliance on administrative data collections to provide annual progress measures of jurisdictional performance on Year 12 or equivalent attainment will be more complete and timely.
  - A focus on data linkages and integration across education and training sectors will help with in-depth data analysis without the burden of extra data collection.
  - Better reporting on sub-groups, along with the focus on administrative data and improvements to data collections, will improve the council's ability to report change over time for small jurisdictions and particular sub-groups with small numbers.

## 7.1 About this chapter

In this chapter we outline the responses to the recommendations in our first three reports on improving performance reporting put forward to COAG. We also confirm our continuing priorities for data development in light of work already underway.

The success of the reform of federal financial relations depends on a robust performance reporting framework, including sound performance indicators and benchmarks as the basis for accountability and public reporting.

Under the Intergovernmental Agreement, the council may advise COAG on how to improve the performance reporting framework (COAG 2008a, C-30). We focus on providing high-level advice on the conceptual adequacy of performance indicators and key data quality issues which limit reporting on outcomes.

## 7.2 Response to previous recommendations

The council's three previous performance reports have recommended improvements to the reporting framework, focusing on:

- the conceptual adequacy of indicators as they relate to an outcome
- improving the alignment between indicators and outcomes
- identifying priorities in data development to improve reporting on the social inclusion outcome
- increasing reliance on administrative collections to improve timely and robust reporting and reporting for small jurisdictions and/or disaggregations.

We also highlighted the need to fast track work on systems and approaches to create data linkages and integration both within and between sectors of education and training. Data linkage has the potential to provide a wide range of data capable of in-depth analysis without the burden of extra data collection. The capacity to analyse longitudinal data is a particular benefit of this approach.

In our third report, the council commended the work that has been done on development of a unique student identifier for the vocational education and training (VET) sector and urged that governments give continuing high priority to developments in this area.

COAG has responded to our recommendations at meetings in 2011 and 2012. The responses are available on the COAG website.

Most importantly, the reports and recommendations were referred to the recent review of the National Education Agreement.

## 7.3 Review of the National Education Agreement

At its meeting on 13 February 2011, COAG announced that the reporting frameworks of each National Agreement would be reviewed to ensure progress is measured and all States and Territories are clearly accountable to the public and COAG (COAG 2011, p. 2).

The review was completed on 30 June 2012. COAG announced its response to the review on 25 July 2012 by agreeing to a revised National Education Agreement and approving the review's recommendations. We have reflected the revised structure of the National Education Agreement in this report.

The council supports governments' work on the review, especially in outlining initiatives to pursue the following priorities:

- greater reliance on administrative collections as the base source of data
- data linkages and integration across education and training sectors supported by the continued development, collection and sharing of student level data.
- better reporting on sub-groups, including coherence in definitions and consistency in the collections across Australia.

The review also requested that the Standing Council on School Education and Early Childhood (SCSEEC) complete a stocktake of the information that could inform measurement of 'engagement in schooling', for example, student opinion data.

### Administrative collections as the source of data

Our three previous reports have called for the use administrative data on Year 12 completions when reporting on Year 12 attainment. This will be more complete and timely than the current reliance on the five yearly Census and the Survey of Education and Work (SEW).

The review of the National Education Agreement recommended that COAG increase reliance on administrative data for the Year 12 or equivalent attainment indicator by using:

- the Census of Population and Housing to monitor State and Territory performance by equity group for Census years
- the SEW to measure performance at a national level between Census years
- unit record level administrative data to provide annual progress measures of State and Territory performance.

The review also recommended that COAG commission the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) to do a comparison of the SEW results and the 2011 and 2016 Census to provide a gauge of 2020 SEW data as the measure of the national 2020 attainment target for Year 12. The information would be provided to the Steering Committee for the Review of Government Service Provision.

### Data linkage and integration

There has been substantial national investment in data linkage infrastructure to build a network of state based and national data linkage units in the health and education sectors.

In the education and training sector, governments have made substantial progress to develop and implement a unique student identifier in the vocational education and training (VET) sector. In April 2012, COAG agreed to implement the unique student identifier for the VET sector by 1 January 2014.

The 2012 review of the National Education Agreement found that the ability to follow student outcomes over time would significantly improve reporting under the National Education Agreement. The review noted the work of the Strategic Cross-sectoral Data Committee (SCDC) on longitudinal education datasets and the alignment of data definitions across educational sectors (that is, from school to further education and training).

The SCDC has sponsored preliminary work to test the feasibility of an Australian Longitudinal Learning Database (ALLD). An ALLD would be an enduring dataset which would link information on the pathways and outcomes for Australian students in early childhood education and care, school and post-school education. An ALLD would combine information from existing datasets. There are several methods to combine data which are being examined. One is to use a unique student identifier such as that being implemented in the VET sector. Another is

to link information based on other student characteristics such as date of birth and usual residence. The ABS is also working on linking school enrolment records with the 2011 Census.

The committee of senior officials supporting the education ministerial council (AEEYSOC) has also initiated work to develop a national strategic roadmap to plan the way forward on data linkage in the education sector.

### Better reporting on sub-groups

The council has previously identified the need for coherent approaches to measures of socio-economic status and commended the ABS on some initial work done on this. The revised National Education Agreement makes a commitment to report on all indicators by relevant sub-groups, where this is appropriate and feasible.

The review recommended that COAG request the SCSEEC:

- to draw together work on current feasible, and possible improved, measures of disadvantage with the aim of inclusion in reporting from 2013
- to analyse the costs and benefits of implementing changes to existing collections or possible new data collections by mid-2013.

Our third report highlighted the challenges in adequately reporting on a range of indicators for small jurisdictions and particular sub-groups with small numbers within a State or Territory.

The review's recommendations to COAG, including the focus on administrative data and improvements to data collections, when implemented, will improve our ability to report on change over time for small jurisdictions and particular sub-groups with small numbers.

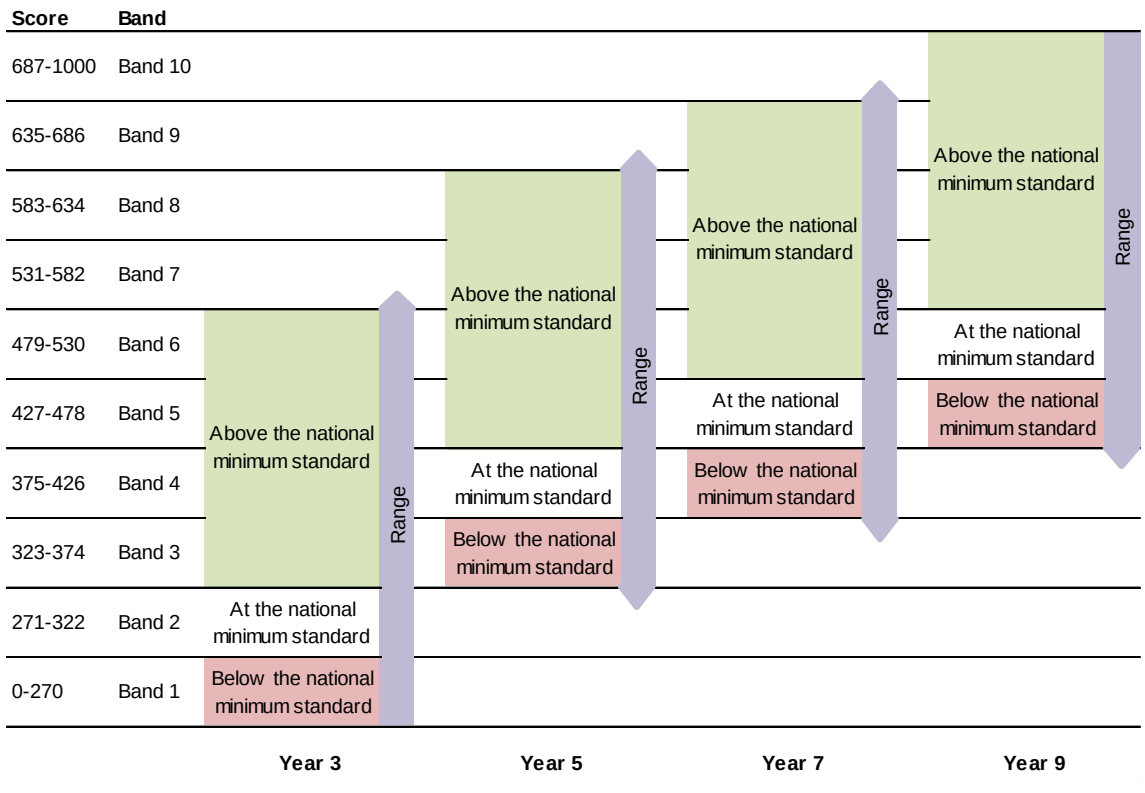
# Appendix A. About NAPLAN testing

## The NAPLAN scale

NAPLAN is a set of nationally consistent tests of literacy and numeracy of children in Years 3, 5, 7 and 9. There are two measures of achievement—the national minimum standard and average scores. The national minimum standard is that required to meet the basic literacy and numeracy standard for a students' year level. NAPLAN results are divided into six bands for each year level (see Figure A.1). The second lowest band is designated as the national minimum standard. As the years increase, the band required to meet the national minimum standard also increases.

Average scores are the average for all students in a jurisdiction or particular sub-group. They are in the range of 0 to 1000 with higher scores meaning higher proficiency levels. Results are assessed on a common scale so differences between year levels can be compared. They can also be mapped to a band (see Figure A.1).

**Figure A.1 NAPLAN achievement bands and average scores**




*Source:* ACARA (2011 and unpublished) NAPLAN Achievement in Reading, Persuasive Writing, Language Conventions and Numeracy: National Report for 2011.

## Sources of error in NAPLAN

There are three potential sources of error in NAPLAN data.

NAPLAN questions are conceptualised as one set of possible questions out of an infinite number of questions. As only a sample of questions are used, a student's performance might vary from one test to the other. This type of error is called measurement error.

Making sure that the questions in one year's NAPLAN test are at the same standard as another year involves some error which is called equating error.

Even though NAPLAN aims to have all students sit the tests, some students, whether by absence, exemption or withdrawal, do not sit the test. As a result, sampling error is applicable.

These errors are measurable. This means that standard errors and confidence intervals can be calculated for NAPLAN data. Standard errors and confidence intervals are used in statistical testing. There are many sets of confidence intervals available for statistical testing, based on whether they are within or across year, or within jurisdictions or across jurisdictions, or whether data is compared for cohorts over time or just at points in time.

Significance testing was done by the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) who were the data custodians of the 2011 collection.

## Measuring socio-economic status

A student's socio-economic status is measured by the educational and occupational status of their parents. If parents have different levels of education or occupation then the higher level is used. In this section, only parental educational status is used. Data for parental occupation are available in the statistical supplement.

The levels of parental education are

- Year 11 or below
- Year 12 or equivalent
- Certificate
- Diploma
- Degree or higher.

High socio-economic background students are defined as those whose parental education level is a degree or higher. Low socio-economic background is the education level of Year 11 or below.

## Measuring gain over time

Gain is the difference between scores over time for a cohort of students. For example, students in Year 5 in 2008 are followed to Year 7 in 2010.

There are now two cohorts available in NAPLAN data—2008 to 2010 ('2008 cohort') and 2009 to 2011 ('2009 cohort'). There are two ways to compare gains:

- the gain for the 2008 cohort compared to the gain for the 2009 cohort
- the gain in one cohort compared to other jurisdictions and the national gain.

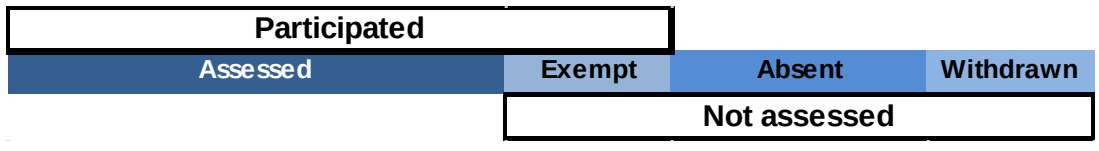
## Participation

### Participation and assessment

Participation rates are calculated as all assessed and exempt students as a percentage of the total number of students in the year level, as reported by schools, which includes those absent and withdrawn. Participation overlaps with *assessment*. Assessed and exempt students are defined to be participants. There are four categories of participation and assessment (see Figure A.2).

- **Assessed:** students who sat the test.
- **Exempt:** the student is eligible for exemption from one or more of the tests if they have (i) arrived in Australia less than a year before the tests and are of a language background other than English, or (ii) the student has a severe intellectual disability. Exempt students are not assessed but are deemed to be below the national minimum standard. Results for exempt students are not imputed.
- **Absent:** students who were not at school on the test day or were not able to sit the test as a result of an accident or mishap. Results for absent students are imputed from other statistical information and are included in the calculation of average scores and the proportion at or above the national minimum standard.
- **Withdrawn:** students withdrawn from participating in the test by their parent or guardian. They are intended to address issues such as religious beliefs and philosophical objections to testing. Results for withdrawn students are also imputed.

**Figure A.2 Participation and assessed**



# Appendix B. Further NAPLAN data

## Participation—State and Territory results

### Participation

**Table B.1 Participation rates, Reading, by States and Territories, 2011**

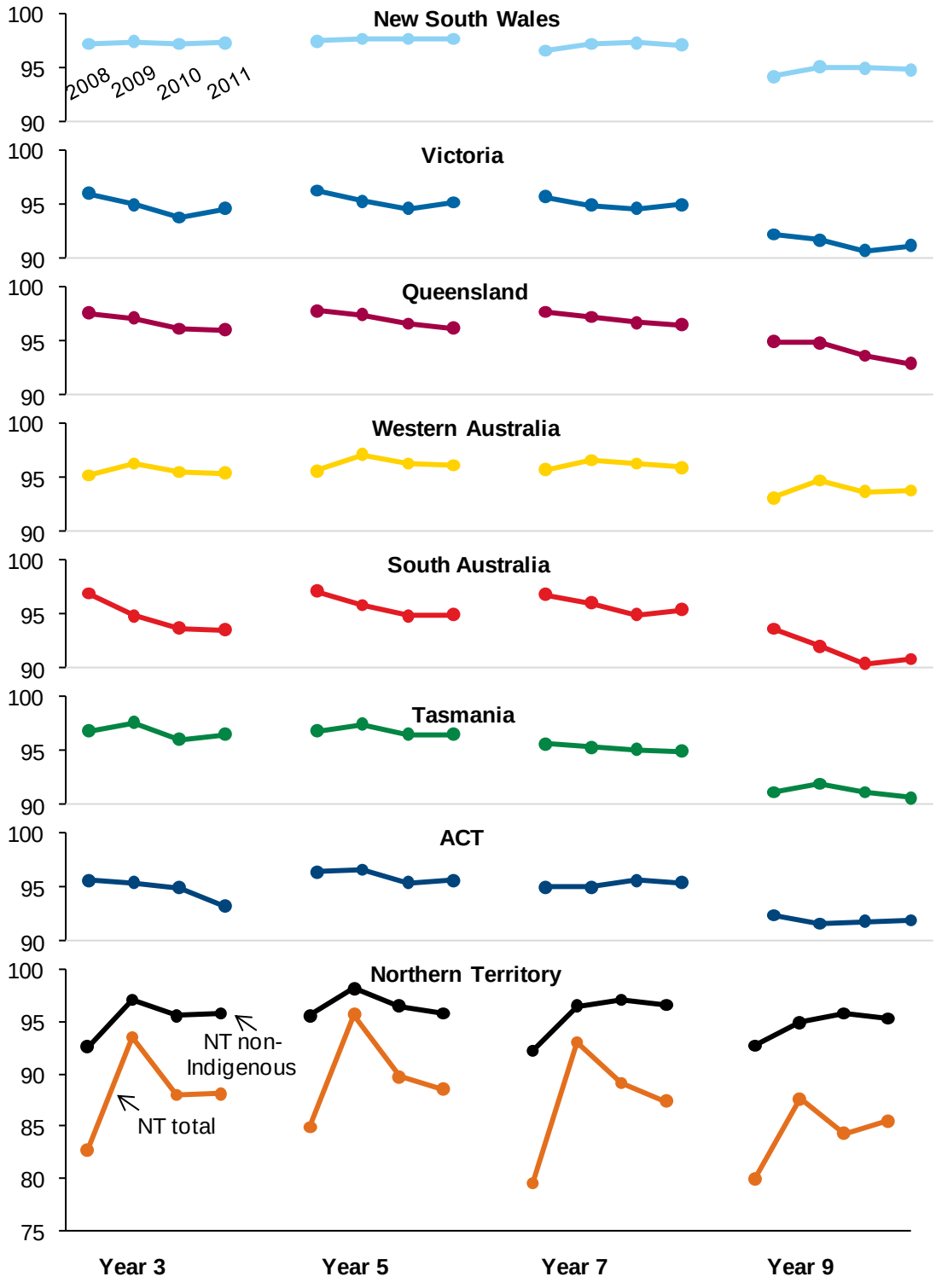
| | Year 3 | Year 5 | Year 7 | Year 9 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| NSW | 97.3 | 97.7 | 97.1 | 94.8 |
| Vic | 94.6 | 95.2 | 95.0 | 91.2 |
| Qld | 96.0 | 96.2 | 96.5 | 92.9 |
| WA | 95.4 | 96.1 | 95.9 | 93.8 |
| SA | 93.5 | 94.9 | 95.4 | 90.8 |
| Tas | 96.5 | 96.5 | 94.9 | 90.6 |
| ACT | 93.2 | 95.6 | 95.4 | 91.9 |
| NT | 88.1 | 88.5 | 87.4 | 85.5 |
| NT non-Indigenous | 95.8 | 95.8 | 96.6 | 95.3 |
| Aust | 95.7 | 96.2 | 96.0 | 92.9 |

*Notes:*

1. Participation refers to the reading test as results for other domains are similar.
2. Results for the Northern Territory are also presented for non-Indigenous students as 41% of students in that Territory are Indigenous.
3. See statistical supplement, tables NIRA. 11(b).1 to NIRA. 11(b).4 for data.

*Source:* ACARA (2011) NAPLAN Achievement in Reading, Persuasive Writing, Language Conventions and Numeracy: National Report for 2011.

**Figure B.1 Reading participation rate, Years 3, 5, 7 and 9, by State and Territory, 2008–2011**




*Notes:*

1. See statistical supplement, tables NIRA. 11(b).1 to NIRA. 11(b).4; 2010 report, tables NIRA. 12.1 to NIRA. 12.4; 2009 report, tables NIRA. 12.1 to NIRA. 12.8 for data.

*Source:* ACARA (2011) NAPLAN Achievement in Reading, Persuasive Writing, Language Conventions and Numeracy: National Report for 2011.

## Not assessed—exempt, absent and withdrawn

**Table B.2 Proportion exempt, absent and withdrawn from reading test, by State and Territory, 2011**

| | Year 3 | | | Year 5 | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Exempt | Absent | Withdrawn | Exempt | Absent | Withdrawn |
| NSW | 1.6 | 1.8 | 0.9 | 1.5 | 1.7 | 0.6 |
| Vic | 2.8 | 3.3 | 2.1 | 2.6 | 3.2 | 1.6 |
| Qld | 1.7 | 2.3 | 1.6 | 1.6 | 2.4 | 1.4 |
| WA | 1.4 | 3.5 | 1.1 | 1.3 | 3.1 | 0.8 |
| SA | 2.4 | 3.3 | 3.3 | 2.0 | 3.0 | 2.1 |
| Tas | 1.6 | 2.3 | 1.2 | 1.3 | 2.3 | 1.2 |
| ACT | 2.2 | 2.3 | 4.5 | 2.9 | 2.1 | 2.3 |
| NT | 2.2 | 10.4 | 1.5 | 2.1 | 10.7 | 0.8 |
| NT non-Indig. | 2.7 | 3.0 | 1.2 | 2.2 | 3.6 | 0.6 |
| Aust | 2.0 | 2.7 | 1.6 | 1.8 | 2.6 | 1.2 |
| | **Year 7** | | | **Year 9** | | |
| | Exempt | Absent | Withdrawn | Exempt | Absent | Withdrawn |
| NSW | 1.2 | 2.6 | 0.3 | 1.2 | 4.9 | 0.3 |
| Vic | 1.9 | 4.3 | 0.7 | 2.0 | 7.8 | 0.9 |
| Qld | 1.6 | 2.5 | 1.1 | 1.4 | 5.1 | 2.0 |
| WA | 1.2 | 3.6 | 0.6 | 1.6 | 5.8 | 0.4 |
| SA | 1.9 | 3.0 | 1.6 | 1.8 | 7.9 | 1.3 |
| Tas | 1.6 | 4.1 | 1.0 | 1.3 | 8.2 | 1.2 |
| ACT | 1.4 | 3.2 | 1.5 | 1.4 | 6.5 | 1.6 |
| NT | 2.3 | 12.0 | 0.6 | 2.2 | 13.9 | 0.6 |
| NT non-Indig. | 2.8 | 3.0 | 0.4 | 2.7 | 4.6 | 0.1 |
| Aust | 1.6 | 3.3 | 0.7 | 1.5 | 6.2 | 1.0 |

*Notes:*

1. See statistical supplement, tables NIRA. 11(b).5 to NIRA. 11(b).7 for data.
2. Results for the Northern Territory are also presented for non-Indigenous students as 40% of students in that Territory are Indigenous.

*Source:* ACARA (2011) NAPLAN Achievement in Reading, Persuasive Writing, Language Conventions and Numeracy: National Report for 2011.

## Participation—Indigenous students

### Table B.3 Participation in Reading, by Indigenous status, Years 3, 5, 7 and 9, by State and Territory, 2011

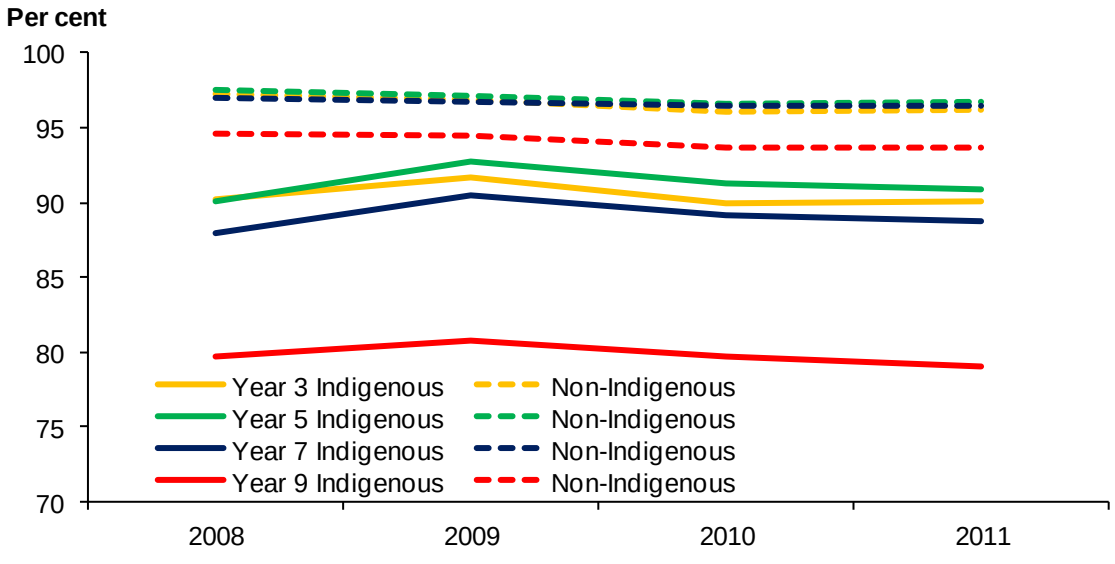
| | Year 3 | | Year 5 | | Year 7 | | Year 9 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Indigenous | Non Indigenous | Indigenous | Non Indigenous | Indigenous | Non Indigenous | Indigenous | Non Indigenous |
| NSW | 93.9 | 97.4 | 94.4 | 97.9 | 91.2 | 97.4 | 81.4 | 95.5 |
| Vic | 88.1 | 95.0 | 90.3 | 95.6 | 87.5 | 95.3 | 70.7 | 91.8 |
| Qld | 93.2 | 96.3 | 93.2 | 96.5 | 92.7 | 96.8 | 84.2 | 93.6 |
| WA | 85.0 | 96.2 | 85.8 | 96.8 | 83.5 | 96.7 | 69.6 | 95.3 |
| SA | 80.8 | 94.3 | 85.0 | 95.5 | 88.5 | 95.9 | 70.7 | 91.7 |
| Tas | 95.2 | 97.5 | 96.6 | 97.3 | 89.1 | 96.5 | 81.5 | 92.3 |
| ACT | 87.4 | 93.5 | 93.0 | 95.8 | 85.1 | 95.7 | 69.5 | 92.5 |
| NT | 80.5 | 95.8 | 80.7 | 95.8 | 76.1 | 96.6 | 69.5 | 95.3 |
| Aust | 90.1 | 96.2 | 90.8 | 96.7 | 88.8 | 96.5 | 79.0 | 93.7 |

*Notes:*

1. See statistical supplement, tables NIRA. 11(b).1 to NIRA. 11(b).4 for data.

*Source:* ACARA (2011) NAPLAN Achievement in Reading, Persuasive Writing, Language Conventions and Numeracy: National Report for 2011.

### Figure B.2 Participation in Reading, by Indigenous status, Years 3, 5, 7 and 9, Australia, 2008–2011




*Notes:*

1. See statistical supplement, tables NIRA. 11(b).1 to NIRA. 11(b).4; 2010 report, tables NIRA. 12.1 to NIRA. 12.4; 2009 report NIRA. 12.1 to NIRA. 12.8 for data.

*Source:* ACARA (2011) NAPLAN Achievement in Reading, Persuasive Writing, Language Conventions and Numeracy: National Report for 2011.

# Gain measures

## Comparing gain for the 2008 and 2009 cohorts

### Reading

**Table B.4 Reading starting score and gain, States, Territories and Australia, Years 3, 5, 7 and 9, 2008 and 2009 cohorts, score points**

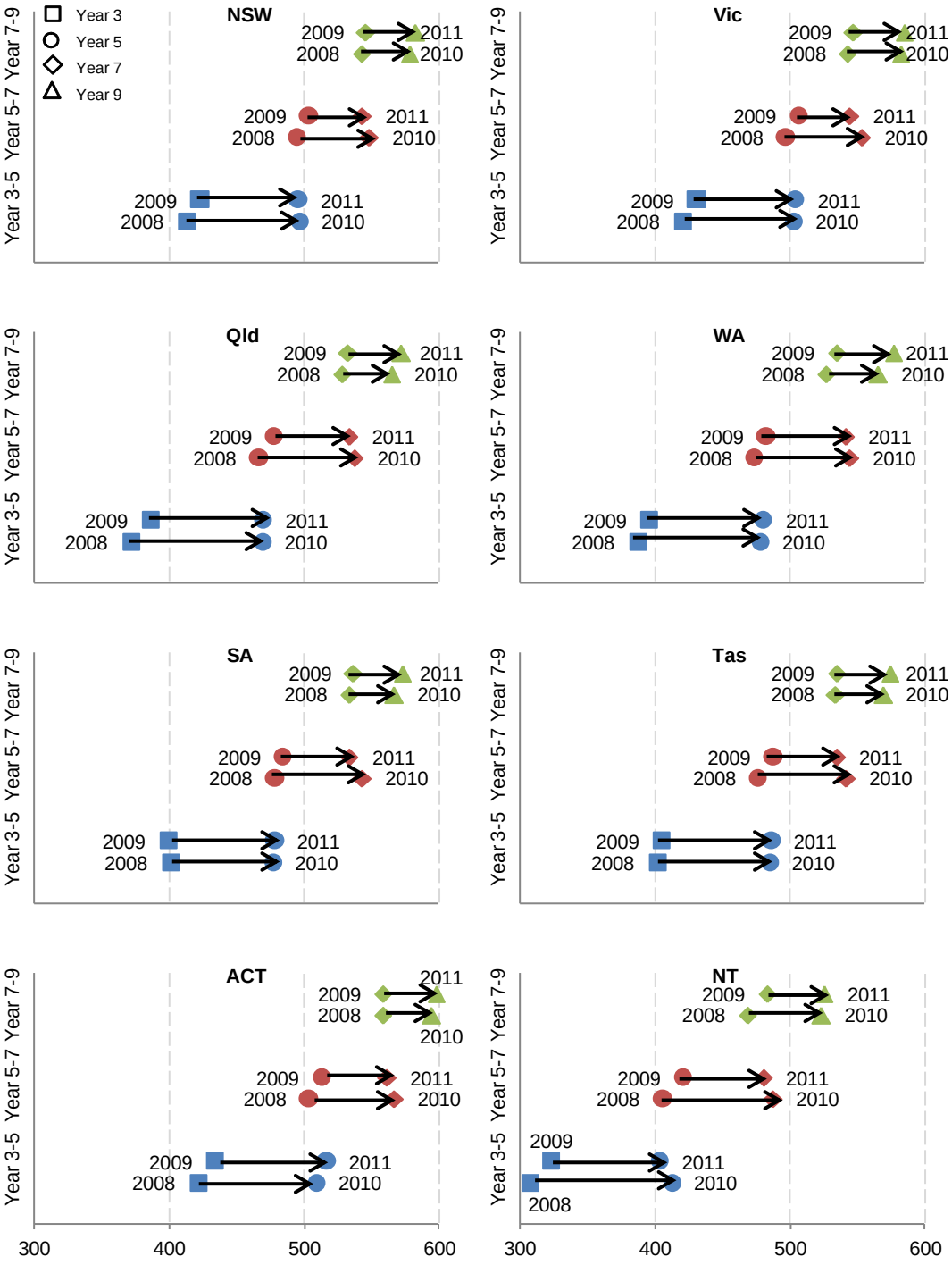
| | NSW | Vic | Qld | WA | SA | Tas | ACT | NT | Aust |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Year 3 to 5** | | | | | | | | | |
| *2008 cohort* | | | | | | | | | |
| Starting score | 412.3 | 419.9 | 371.1 | 386.7 | 400.5 | 401.2 | 421.0 | 306.6 | 400.5 |
| Gain | 83.9 | 82.3 | 97.6 | 90.8 | 76.0 | 83.4 | 87.6 | 105.5 | 86.9 |
| *2009 cohort* | | | | | | | | | |
| Starting score | 422.3 | 430.4 | 385.9 | 395.5 | 399.0 | 404.7 | 433.6 | 322.2 | 410.8 |
| Gain | 73.1 | 73.3 | 83.5 | 84.7 | 79.0 | 81.2 | 82.7 | 81.1 | 77.3 |
| **Year 5 to 7** | | | | | | | | | |
| *2008 cohort* | | | | | | | | | |
| Starting score | 494.7 | 496.7 | 466.1 | 473.6 | 477.9 | 476.4 | 503.3 | 405.1 | 484.4 |
| Gain | 53.9 | 56.6 | 71.4 | 70.9 | 65.3 | 65.4 | 64.0 | 82.6 | 61.6 |
| *2009 cohort* | | | | | | | | | |
| Starting score | 503.4 | 506.3 | 477.8 | 482.2 | 484.3 | 487.2 | 512.7 | 420.6 | 493.9 |
| Gain | 40.1 | 38.5 | 55.7 | 59.1 | 49.5 | 47.3 | 49.1 | 59.6 | 46.3 |
| **Year 7 to 9** | | | | | | | | | |
| *2008 cohort* | | | | | | | | | |
| Starting score | 542.5 | 543.0 | 528.1 | 527.0 | 533.5 | 534.2 | 558.2 | 468.4 | 536.5 |
| Gain | 35.7 | 39.1 | 36.8 | 38.7 | 33.6 | 35.7 | 36.6 | 55.2 | 37.2 |
| *2009 cohort* | | | | | | | | | |
| Starting score | 545.9 | 547.1 | 532.8 | 534.6 | 536.8 | 534.3 | 558.3 | 483.0 | 541.1 |
| Gain | 37.1 | 37.9 | 39.6 | 42.7 | 36.1 | 39.8 | 39.6 | 42.8 | 38.4 |

*Notes:*

1. See statistical supplement, tables NEA. 4.16 to NEA. 4.22, 2010 report tables NEA. 4.16 to NEA. 4.22; 2009 report tables NEA. 4.33 to NEA. 4.51 for data.

*Source:* ACARA (2011) NAPLAN Achievement in Reading, Persuasive Writing, Language Conventions and Numeracy: National Report for 2011.

## Figure B.3 Reading gain, 2008 and 2009 cohorts, States and Territories




*Notes:*

1. See statistical supplement, tables NEA. 4.16 to NEA. 4.22, 2010 report tables NEA. 4.16 to NEA. 4.22; 2009 report tables NEA. 4.33 to NEA. 4.51 for data.

*Source:* ACARA (2011) NAPLAN Achievement in Reading, Persuasive Writing, Language Conventions and Numeracy: National Report for 2011.

## Numeracy

**Table B.5 Numeracy starting score and gain, States, Territories and Australia, Years 3, 5, 7 and 9, 2008 and 2009 cohorts, score points**

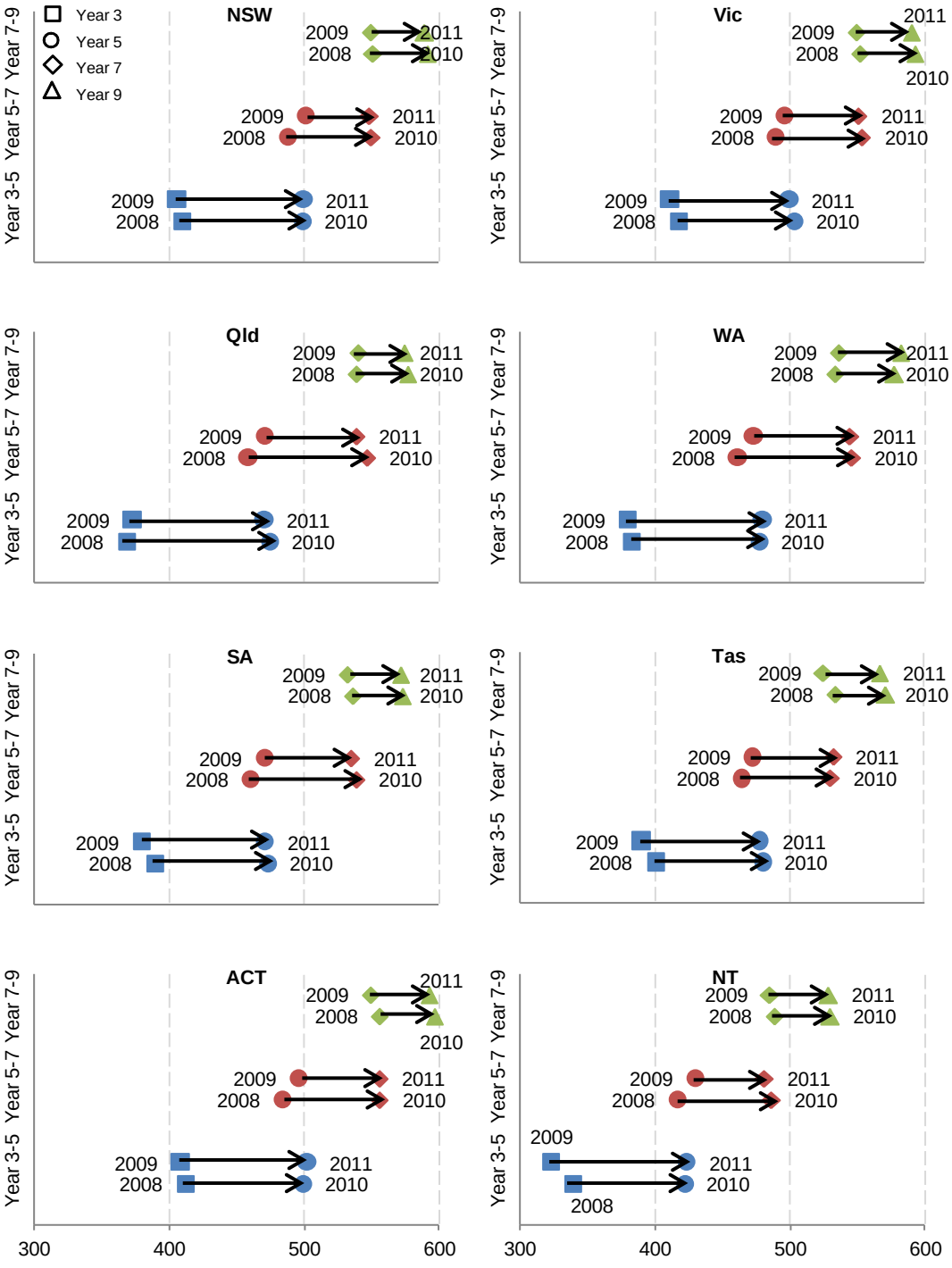
| | NSW | Vic | Qld | WA | SA | Tas | ACT | NT | Aust |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Year 3 to 5** | | | | | | | | | |
| *2008 cohort* | | | | | | | | | |
| Starting score | 408.9 | 416.9 | 367.9 | 381.9 | 388.8 | 399.9 | 411.5 | 338.4 | 396.9 |
| Gain | 89.5 | 85.8 | 106.2 | 94.9 | 83.8 | 79.5 | 87.2 | 83.1 | 91.9 |
| *2009 cohort* | | | | | | | | | |
| Starting score | 405.3 | 410.8 | 372.4 | 379.7 | 379.2 | 390.0 | 408.0 | 322.4 | 393.9 |
| Gain | 94.0 | 88.4 | 97.9 | 99.5 | 91.7 | 88.2 | 94.0 | 101.2 | 93.9 |
| **Year 5 to 7** | | | | | | | | | |
| *2008 cohort* | | | | | | | | | |
| Starting score | 487.8 | 489.7 | 458.2 | 460.7 | 460.4 | 464.6 | 483.8 | 416.3 | 475.9 |
| Gain | 62.3 | 63.9 | 88.0 | 85.1 | 78.1 | 66.0 | 72.4 | 70.3 | 71.9 |
| *2009 cohort* | | | | | | | | | |
| Starting score | 501.3 | 496.1 | 470.4 | 472.9 | 470.4 | 472.8 | 495.8 | 429.6 | 486.8 |
| Gain | 47.3 | 54.8 | 68.3 | 71.7 | 64.5 | 59.4 | 59.7 | 51.7 | 57.8 |
| **Year 7 to 9** | | | | | | | | | |
| *2008 cohort* | | | | | | | | | |
| Starting score | 551.3 | 552.3 | 539.0 | 533.7 | 536.2 | 533.8 | 556.2 | 488.1 | 545.0 |
| Gain | 40.2 | 40.5 | 38.4 | 44.2 | 36.9 | 37.6 | 41.0 | 41.8 | 40.1 |
| *2009 cohort* | | | | | | | | | |
| Starting score | 549.1 | 549.2 | 539.7 | 536.3 | 532.0 | 525.1 | 549.4 | 485.2 | 543.6 |
| Gain | 40.4 | 40.8 | 34.7 | 45.9 | 40.0 | 42.0 | 43.6 | 43.6 | 39.8 |

*Notes:*

1. See statistical supplement, tables NEA. 4.18 to NEA. 4.24; 2010 report tables NEA. 4.18 to NEA. 4.24; 2009 report tables NEA. 4.35 to NEA. 4.53 for data.

*Source:* ACARA (2011) NAPLAN Achievement in Reading, Persuasive Writing, Language Conventions and Numeracy: National Report for 2011.

## Figure B.4 Numeracy gain, 2008 and 2009 cohorts, States and Territories




*Notes:*

1. See statistical supplement, tables NEA. 4.18 to NEA. 4.24; 2010 report tables NEA. 4.18 to NEA. 4.24; 2009 report tables NEA. 4.35 to NEA. 4.53 for data.

*Source:* ACARA (2011) NAPLAN Achievement in Reading, Persuasive Writing, Language Conventions and Numeracy: National Report for 2011.

## Comparing gain between States, Territories and Australia—2009 cohort

### Reading—Year 3 to 5

**Table B.6 Score points gain in Reading, comparisons between States, Territories and Australia, Years 3 to 5, 2009–2011**

| | Gain | NSW | Vic | Qld | WA | SA | Tas | ACT | NT | Aust |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| NSW | 73.1 | | — | ▼ | ▼ | ▼ | ▼ | ▼ | — | ▼ |
| Vic | 73.3 | — | | ▼ | ▼ | ▼ | — | ▼ | — | ▼ |
| Qld | 83.5 | ▲ | ▲ | | — | — | — | — | — | ▲ |
| WA | 84.7 | ▲ | ▲ | — | | — | — | — | — | ▲ |
| SA | 79.0 | ▲ | ▲ | — | — | | — | — | — | — |
| Tas | 81.2 | ▲ | — | — | — | — | | — | — | — |
| ACT | 82.7 | ▲ | ▲ | — | — | — | — | | — | — |
| NT | 81.1 | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | | — |
| Aust | 77.3 | ▲ | ▲ | ▼ | ▼ | — | — | — | — | |

*Notes:*

1. ▲ Significantly higher, ▼ significantly lower, — no significant difference. Significance testing by ACARA.
2. See statistical supplement, table NEA. 4.16 and 2009 report table NEA. 4.33 for data.

*Source:* ACARA (2011) NAPLAN Achievement in Reading, Persuasive Writing, Language Conventions and Numeracy: National Report for 2011.

### Reading—Year 5 to 7

**Table B.7 Score points gain in Reading, comparisons between States, Territories and Australia, Years 5 to 7, 2009–2011**

| | Gain | NSW | Vic | Qld | WA | SA | Tas | ACT | NT | Aust |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| NSW | 40.1 | | — | ▼ | ▼ | ▼ | — | — | — | ▼ |
| Vic | 38.5 | — | | ▼ | ▼ | ▼ | — | — | — | ▼ |
| Qld | 55.7 | ▲ | ▲ | | — | ▲ | — | — | — | ▲ |
| WA | 59.1 | ▲ | ▲ | — | | ▲ | ▲ | — | — | ▲ |
| SA | 49.5 | ▲ | ▲ | ▼ | ▼ | | — | — | — | — |
| Tas | 47.3 | — | — | — | ▼ | — | | — | — | — |
| ACT | 49.1 | — | — | — | — | — | — | | — | — |
| NT | 59.6 | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | | — |
| Aust | 46.3 | ▲ | ▲ | ▼ | ▼ | — | — | — | — | |

*Notes:*

1. ▲ Significantly higher, ▼ significantly lower, — no significant difference. Significance testing by ACARA.
2. See statistical supplement, table NEA. 4.19 and 2009 report table NEA. 4.36 for data.

*Source:* ACARA (2011) NAPLAN Achievement in Reading, Persuasive Writing, Language Conventions and Numeracy: National Report for 2011.

### Reading—Year 7 to 9

There were no significant differences between any State or Territory or Australia for Years 7 to 9 between 2009 and 2011. See Table B.4 for the size of the gain in each jurisdiction.

### Numeracy—Year 3 to 5

**Table B.8 Score points gain in Numeracy, comparisons between States, Territories and Australia, Years 3 to 5, 2009–2011**

| | Gain | NSW | Vic | Qld | WA | SA | Tas | ACT | NT | Aust |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| NSW | 94.0 | | ▲ | ▼ | ▼ | — | — | — | — | — |
| Vic | 88.4 | ▼ | | ▼ | ▼ | — | — | — | — | ▼ |
| Qld | 97.9 | ▲ | ▲ | | — | ▲ | ▲ | — | — | ▲ |
| WA | 99.5 | ▲ | ▲ | — | | ▲ | ▲ | — | — | ▲ |
| SA | 91.7 | — | — | ▼ | ▼ | | — | — | — | — |
| Tas | 88.2 | — | — | ▼ | ▼ | — | | — | — | — |
| ACT | 94.0 | — | — | — | — | — | — | | — | — |
| NT | 101.2 | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | | — |
| Aust | 93.9 | — | ▲ | ▼ | ▼ | — | — | — | — | |

*Notes:*

1. ▲ Significantly higher, ▼ significantly lower, — no significant difference. Significance testing by ACARA.
2. See statistical supplement, table NEA. 4.18 and 2009 report table NEA. 4.35 for data.

*Source:* ACARA (2011) NAPLAN Achievement in Reading, Persuasive Writing, Language Conventions and Numeracy: National Report for 2011.

## Numeracy—Year 5 to 7

**Table B.9 Score points gain in Numeracy, comparisons between States, Territories and Australia, Years 5 to 7, 2009–2011**

| | Gain | NSW | Vic | Qld | WA | SA | Tas | ACT | NT | Aust |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| NSW | 47.3 | | ▼ | ▼ | ▼ | ▼ | ▼ | ▼ | — | ▼ |
| Vic | 54.8 | ▲ | | ▼ | ▼ | ▼ | — | — | — | — |
| Qld | 68.3 | ▲ | ▲ | | — | — | — | — | — | ▲ |
| WA | 71.7 | ▲ | ▲ | — | | ▲ | ▲ | — | — | ▲ |
| SA | 64.5 | ▲ | ▲ | — | ▼ | | — | — | — | ▲ |
| Tas | 59.4 | ▲ | — | — | ▼ | — | | — | — | — |
| ACT | 59.7 | ▲ | — | — | — | — | — | | — | — |
| NT | 51.7 | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | | — |
| Aust | 57.8 | ▲ | — | ▼ | ▼ | ▼ | — | — | — | |

*Notes:*

1. ▲ Significantly higher, ▼ significantly lower, — no significant difference. Significance testing by ACARA.
2. See statistical supplement, table NEA. 4.21 and 2009 report table NEA. 4.38 for data.

*Source:* ACARA (2011) NAPLAN Achievement in Reading, Persuasive Writing, Language Conventions and Numeracy: National Report for 2011.

## Numeracy—Year 7 to 9

**Table B.10 Score points gain in Numeracy, comparisons between States, Territories and Australia, Years 7 to 9, 2009–2011**

| | Gain | NSW | Vic | Qld | WA | SA | Tas | ACT | NT | Aust |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| NSW | 40.4 | | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| Vic | 40.8 | — | | ▲ | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| Qld | 34.7 | — | ▼ | | ▼ | — | — | — | — | ▼ |
| WA | 45.9 | — | — | ▲ | | — | — | — | — | — |
| SA | 40.0 | — | — | — | — | | — | — | — | — |
| Tas | 42.0 | — | — | — | — | — | | — | — | — |
| ACT | 43.6 | — | — | — | — | — | — | | — | — |
| NT | 43.6 | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | | — |
| Aust | 39.8 | — | — | ▲ | — | — | — | — | — | |

*Notes:*

1. ▲ Significantly higher, ▼ significantly lower, — no significant difference. Significance testing by ACARA.
2. See statistical supplement, table NEA. 4.24 and 2009 report table NEA. 4.41 for data.

*Source:* ACARA (2011) NAPLAN Achievement in Reading, Persuasive Writing, Language Conventions and Numeracy: National Report for 2011.

# Students from low socioeconomic backgrounds

## Socio-economic status (parental education) not stated

**Table B.11 Proportion of students with parental education not stated, Reading, Years 3, 5, 7 and 9, Australia, 2008 to 2011**

| | Year 3 | Year 5 | Year 7 | Year 9 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2008 | 45 | 47 | 40 | 44 |
| 2009 | 17 | 25 | 19 | 21 |
| 2010 | 13 | 20 | 18 | 19 |
| 2011 | 11 | 13 | 15 | 16 |

*Notes:*

1. See statistical supplement, tables NEA. 5.25; 2010 report table NEA. 5.25; 2009 report tables NEA. 4.25 to NEA. 4.32 for data.

*Source:* ACARA (2011) NAPLAN Achievement in Reading, Persuasive Writing, Language Conventions and Numeracy: National Report for 2011.

**Table B.12 Proportion of students with parental education not stated, Reading, by States and Territories, 2011**

| | Year 3 | Year 5 | Year 7 | Year 9 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| NSW | 8 | 11 | 11 | 13 |
| Vic | 6 | 7 | 8 | 8 |
| Qld | 16 | 16 | 23 | 22 |
| WA | 17 | 20 | 21 | 27 |
| SA | 15 | 20 | 23 | 19 |
| Tas | 6 | 9 | 9 | 9 |
| ACT | 15 | 23 | 12 | 12 |
| NT | 35 | 42 | 38 | 34 |
| Aust | 11 | 13 | 15 | 16 |

*Notes:*

1. Results are the same for reading and numeracy.
2. See statistical supplement, table NEA. 5.25 for data.

*Source:* ACARA (2011) NAPLAN Achievement in Reading, Persuasive Writing, Language Conventions and Numeracy: National Report for 2011.

# Appendix C. National Partnerships

Each year, the council reviews the progress and annual reports submitted on National Partnerships, and reports performance information that can be linked to the outcomes and objective of the National Education Agreement.

There are five education National Partnerships that we are not reporting on this year because the performance information has already been reported by the council, is not reportable by the council or is unavailable. We have provided some information below on these National Partnerships.

### Smarter Schools National Partnerships

The Smarter Schools National Partnerships commenced in 2009. Jurisdictions report six monthly on the implementation of National Partnerships through progress reports and annual reports.

The National Partnership on Low Socio-economic Status School Communities is focused on students in disadvantaged communities and aims to improve the quality of teaching, foster overall student wellbeing and support better connections with the local community. We will not be reporting on this National Partnership as it does not have common performance indicators or milestones which would allow us to meaningfully report performance across the entire National Partnership.

The council has assessed State and Territory performance under the two reward-based National Partnerships in separate stand-alone reports.

- For the National Partnership on Literacy and Numeracy, the council's recent report assessed progress against 126 targets. States and Territories met or exceeded 64 targets, made progress on 40 targets and did not make progress on 22 targets. This National Partnership has concluded. The council's full report on this assessment is available on our website at: www.coagreformcouncil.gov.au.
- For the National Partnership on Improving Teacher Quality, jurisdictions met most of their milestones (261 out of 271). The council's full report for this assessment is available on our website at: www.coagreformcouncil.gov.au.

### National Partnership on Empowering Local Schools

The National Partnership on Empowering Local Schools aims to empower schools to make decisions at a local level so that they can respond better to the needs of students and the school community.

We will not be reporting this year on the National Partnership on Empowering Local Schools, as the only progress reports to date do not contain performance information that are reportable by the council. An independent evaluation report on Phase One, as outlined in the National Partnership, is forthcoming.

## National Partnership on the National Quality Agenda for Early Childhood Education and Care

The National Partnership on the National Quality Agenda for Early Childhood Education and Care aims to deliver an integrated and unified national system for early childhood education and care and out-of-school-hours care. The National Partnership will deliver the following outputs:

- a jointly governed uniform national quality system for early childhood education and care
- a jointly governed national body to guide and implement the new system
- a single clear National Quality Standard
- a national quality rating system, to provide transparency in accountability and expectations
- a new single streamlined national regulatory system to regulate and enforce the National Quality Standard.

The National Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education and Care began on 1 January 2012. The Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA) was established in 2011 as a new national independent statutory body. ACECQA's aim is to drive national improvements in the quality of early childhood education and care. The Authority will guide the implementation of the National Quality Framework.

Jurisdictions report on the implementation of the National Partnership to the Standing Council on School Education and Early Childhood every six months. From April 2012, the ACECQA reports every six months to the SCSEEC drawing on input from all jurisdictions. In addition, the ACECQA must also provide an annual report to the Standing Council in accordance with the Education and Care Services National Law.

# Appendix D. Contextual factors

Each year we highlight the key contextual differences between States and Territories that are relevant to understanding performance information. These contextual factors are relevant when considering relative performance among States and Territories, and within each State and Territory.

Table D.1 outlines key contextual information relevant to the National Education Agreement.

**Table D.1 Key contextual factors**

| | NSW | Vic | Qld | WA | SA | Tas | ACT | NT | Aust |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Proportion of all persons (%)** | | | | | | | | | |
| In each State and Territory (2010) | 32.4 | 24.8 | 20.2 | 10.3 | 7.3 | 2.3 | 1.6 | 1.0 | 100.0 |
| In most disadvantaged areas (2006)[2] | 20.9 | 16.2 | 17.2 | 13.7 | 24.3 | 31.7 | 1.8 | 29.7 | 18.6 |
| In remote and very remote areas (2010) | 0.5 | 0.1 | 3.1 | 6.5 | 3.7 | 2.1 | na | 44.0 | 2.3 |
| Aged 20–24 years who are Indigenous (2006) | 0.2 | 0.1 | 0.3 | 0.3 | 0.2 | 0.3 | 0.1 | 2.9 | 0.2 |
| **Proportion of Indigenous persons (%)** | | | | | | | | | |
| In each State and Territory (2010) | 2.3 | 0.7 | 3.6 | 3.3 | 1.8 | 4.0 | 1.3 | 29.9 | 2.5 |
| In remote and very remote areas (2006) | 5.2 | np | 22.2 | 42.6 | 18.7 | 3.6 | na | 79.8 | 24.6 |
| Indigenous population ('000) (2011) | 168.8 | 37.6 | 164.9 | 77.7 | 31.0 | 20.6 | 4.8 | 69.9 | 575.3 |
| **Proportion of all students (%)** | | | | | | | | | |
| Who are Indigenous (2011) | 4.6 | 1.2 | 6.7 | 6.4 | 3.8 | 6.9 | 2.3 | 40.8 | 4.8 |
| With a language background other than English (2006) | 25.0 | 23.9 | 12.7 | 16.5 | 14.6 | 6.0 | 19.2 | 25.8 | 20.1 |
| In remote and very remote areas (2010)[3] | 0.1 | na | 1.2 | 2.4 | 0.8 | 0.3 | na | 25.0 | 0.9 |

*Notes:*

1. na—not applicable; np—not published.
2. Most disadvantaged refers to the lowest quintile of the ABS Socio-economic Indexes for Areas classification.
3. Geographic classification is based on the agreed MCEECDYA Geographic Location Classification.

4. See statistical supplement, Tables 8, NEA.C.3, Additional.4, Additional.5, Additional.6, Additional.7, Additional.8.

*Sources:* ABS (2012 and unpublished) Schools Australia, 2011; DEEWR (unpublished); ABS (2011) Population by Age and Sex, Australian States and Territories, June 2010; ABS (2011) Regional Population Growth, Australia 2010–11; ABS (2009) Experimental Estimates and Projections, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians, 1991 to 2021; ABS (2008) Experimental Estimates of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians, June 2006.

# Appendix E. Treatment of data issues

The data used in this report are derived from a variety of administrative datasets and surveys. There are a number of issues associated with using the data for comparing the performance of jurisdictions which vary according to the data source.

Detailed information on each performance indicator and related data quality statements are provided in the statistical supplement.

Data issues relating to NAPLAN are in Appendix A.

## Significance testing

### What is a 'significant difference' or a 'significant change'?

In this report, the word ‘significant’ has a specific statistical meaning. This meaning applies to data that are collected using surveys. Survey data contain a certain degree of error, because a survey will only include a sample of a population rather than the total population. Surveying just a sample of a population introduces the risk that results might not accurately reflect the population as a whole, but simply reflect who is included in the sample.

Error tends to be larger for small populations and as a result, there tend to be few significant changes for those populations.

In statistics, ‘significant’ differences are those which are ‘real’ and unlikely to have occurred by chance. It does not necessarily mean ‘significant’ in the everyday sense of the term. In some cases, apparently small differences between numbers can be statistically ‘significant’. In other cases, we might not be able to describe two numbers that look very different as being ‘significantly different’.

Testing for statistical significance was done for the council by the Australian Bureau of Statistics and the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority.

## Administrative data collections

Administrative data is derived from non-survey or census collections, such as school attendance. For some administrative data, there are limitations related to the comparability of jurisdictions and over time. These may be due to different collection methods and definitions.

The only administrative data in this report are student attendance for Indigenous students.

## Survey collections

### Confidence intervals

A survey collects information from a subset of a whole population (a sample). A confidence interval describes the uncertainty around an indicator due to the fact that the data are sourced from a sample.

In this report we use 95% confidence intervals. This means there is a 95% chance that the true value of the data item falls within the range described by the confidence interval. For example, 80±1.2 means that there is a 95% chance the true value lies between 78.8 and 81.2.

Confidence intervals do not take into account other sources of variation such as the accuracy of responses or errors in processing the data.

#### Survey of Education and Work (SEW)

The Survey of Education and Work (SEW) provides annual information about a range of key indicators relating to educational participation and attainment along with data on people's transition between education and work.

The ABS revised data for 2010 due to amendments to the population benchmarks for the 2010 SEW, however these revisions were generally minor.

Prior to 2009, all people in very remote areas were excluded from the SEW. Very remote areas represent around 2% of the total Australian population and 20% of the Northern Territory population.

From 2009 onwards, the SEW has a slightly wider scope. It includes people in very remote areas but excludes people in Indigenous communities in very remote areas. The current exclusion has only a minor impact on national estimates or estimates by State/Territory except for the Northern Territory where such people account for about 15% of the population.

### Measuring socio-economic status

The Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA) is an instrument developed by the ABS based on the five-yearly Census of Population and Housing. The Index of Relative Socio-economic Disadvantage (IRSD) is one index produced in SEIFA. The IRSD describes the relative level of disadvantage only of Australian communities.

SEIFA is area not person based; it assigns a score to each geographic area. IRSD is created based on the levels of a set of variables including the income, educational qualifications, unemployment, housing, disability, household resources and Indigenous population for each area. A score for each area is calculated and then areas are ranked nationally. Once ranked, areas are divided into quintiles. State and Territory scores are then taken from the scores of the geographic areas in the State or Territory.

For some indicators, the Survey of Education and Work utilises the SEIFA IRSD. The council also reports the lowest quintile of this measure for highlighting 'low socio-economic status background' as a relevant contextual factor.

### Other

#### Population estimates

The ABS population estimates are used as the denominators of many statistics in this report. These have not been updated to reflect the ABS preliminary estimates based on the 2011

Census—released in June 2012. The 2011 preliminary estimates include a significant reduction (approximately 300 000 people in 2011) in Australia's resident population. On advice from the ABS, the council will await release of the final population estimates from the 2011 Census, expected in June 2013, to use in our performance reporting.

### Small numbers

Some data in this report are based on small numbers. This includes small States and Territories and more detailed disaggregations. Care should be taken when analysing data for small populations. The report notes, with an appropriate caveat, when data are based on small numbers. Some data may also be rounded or suppressed due to small numbers.

### Rounding

Data in this report have been rounded. This means that the components of some tables do not add to the total. For example, 18.54 minus 16.56 is 1.98. When rounded, this will appear in our report as 18.5 minus 16.6 equals 2.0. Unrounded data are available in the statistical supplement.

## Measures of change

### Change over time

Change over time is the comparison of data for two time points. It can be difficult to detect change if only comparing data for a few years. A longer time series can reveal patterns that would be masked in a shorter time series.

Change in a series depends on the choice of starting point. If an unusually high or low point is used then there will be very different results. Using trend analysis for a long time series tries to avoid this problem. Where possible, a time series reaching prior to the baseline has been used to identify trends.

# Appendix F. Roles and responsibilities

The National Education Agreement identifies the respective roles and responsibilities of the Commonwealth and State and Territory governments in achieving the Agreement's outcomes. These are outlined in Box F.1 below.

**Box F.1 Roles and responsibilities of the Commonwealth and State and Territory governments under the National Education Agreement**

**The Commonwealth and the States and Territories are**

- jointly responsible for developing, progressing and reviewing the national objectives and outcomes for schooling
- jointly responsible for funding school education to enable improved performance in the nationally agreed outcomes and to achieve national objectives
- responsible for developing policy and reform directions to support achievement of Indigenous education outcomes
- responsible for working together to develop evidence to support the achievement of the national objectives and outcomes, and to promote its application to policy and practice
- jointly responsible for designing the funding mechanism by which the Commonwealth allocates funds to States and Territories to support improved service delivery and reform
- responsible for public leadership which encourages the community to recognise and embrace the importance of the nationally agreed outcomes
- consistent with their roles, responsible for monitoring and reviewing performance of school systems and individual schools to support improved performance against the nationally agreed outcomes, as well as being accountable for these outcomes through the Performance Reporting Framework
- responsible for the development and maintenance of a National Curriculum and for participating in the work of the national education authority that manages national curriculum, assessment and data management, analysis and reporting
- jointly responsible for a nationally consistent system of teaching standards.

**The Commonwealth undertakes responsibility for**

- allocating funding to States and Territories to support improved service delivery and reform to meet nationally agreed outcomes and to achieve the national objective, including for students with particular needs
- ensuring that the funding arrangements for non-government school systems and schools are consistent with, and support the responsibilities of the States and Territories in respect of regulation, educational quality, performance and reporting on educational outcomes
- higher education policy, including its impact on pre-service and post-graduate teacher education and teacher supply through setting higher education national priorities, and its

funding of universities

- investing in actions to secure nationally agreed policy priorities, in consultation with States and Territories
- ensuring that funding agreements between the Commonwealth and non-government authorities will include a provision that the non-government school sector will work with governments within each State or Territory to ensure their participation in relevant aspects of this agreement.

**The States and Territories undertake responsibility for**

- ensuring that all school aged children are given the opportunity to enrol in a safe and supportive school that provides a quality education, including where students have particular needs
- ensuring that children of compulsory school-age attend school and therefore are responsible for developing policy; delivering services; monitoring and reviewing performance of individual schools; and regulating schools
- ensuring that schools provide clear performance reporting to parents, carers and to their local communities
- the regulatory framework for all schools, including registration and accreditation, educational quality and their performance in educational outcomes, in monitoring and reviewing performance of school systems
- the employment conditions of teachers in the government school sector, and its impact on teacher supply
- implementing the National Curriculum
- working with the non-government school sector in their State or Territory to ensure their participation in relevant aspects of this agreement.

*Source:* COAG (2012b) National Education Agreement, pp. 7–8.

### Summary of current roles and responsibilities

State and Territory governments have primary responsibility for the delivery of schooling to all children of compulsory school age. They:

- develop policy
- provide a regulatory framework for the operation of all schools
- are directly responsible for the administration of government schools and provide the majority of government funding for government schools.

State and Territory governments also contribute to the funding of non-government schools.

The Commonwealth Government provides supplementary funding for government schools through National Specific Purpose Payments to State and Territory governments, and is the major source of funding for non-government schools through the *Schools Assistance Act 2008* (Cwlth). The National Education Agreement is associated with the national Specific Purpose

Payment that provides funding to the States and Territories. The Commonwealth also provides funding to the States and Territories in the form of National Partnership payments to:

- support the delivery of specific projects (project payments)
- facilitate reforms (facilitation payments)
- reward those jurisdictions that deliver on significant reforms (reward payments).

The Commonwealth also makes payments directly to school communities, students and organisations to support schooling.

While not part of the National Education Agreement, the Commonwealth Government has primary responsibility for higher education policy, including teacher education, teacher supply and the funding of higher education institutions and places. The Commonwealth is also responsible for funding some employment programs.

States and Territories are generally responsible for funding and/or providing preschool services. They also set standards, license and monitor children's services providers. The Commonwealth Government provides the Child Care Benefit and the Child Care Rebate, provides funding to the National Childcare Accreditation Council, and funds State and Territory governments to support universal access to early childhood education.

## Significant developments that may change future roles and responsibilities

### Review of funding for schooling

In late December 2011, the Federal Government received the report on the Review of Funding for Schooling. The Review focused on the funding needs of students in all schools from Kindergarten to Year 12 across all States and Territories, including government and non-government (Catholic or independent) schools.

The Review Panel proposed a new funding model for schooling and suggested that governments develop and implement a 'schooling resource standard'. The Panel also recommended that the National Education Agreement be revised to meet the requirements of the Review's proposed funding model, including changes to the roles of funding partners.

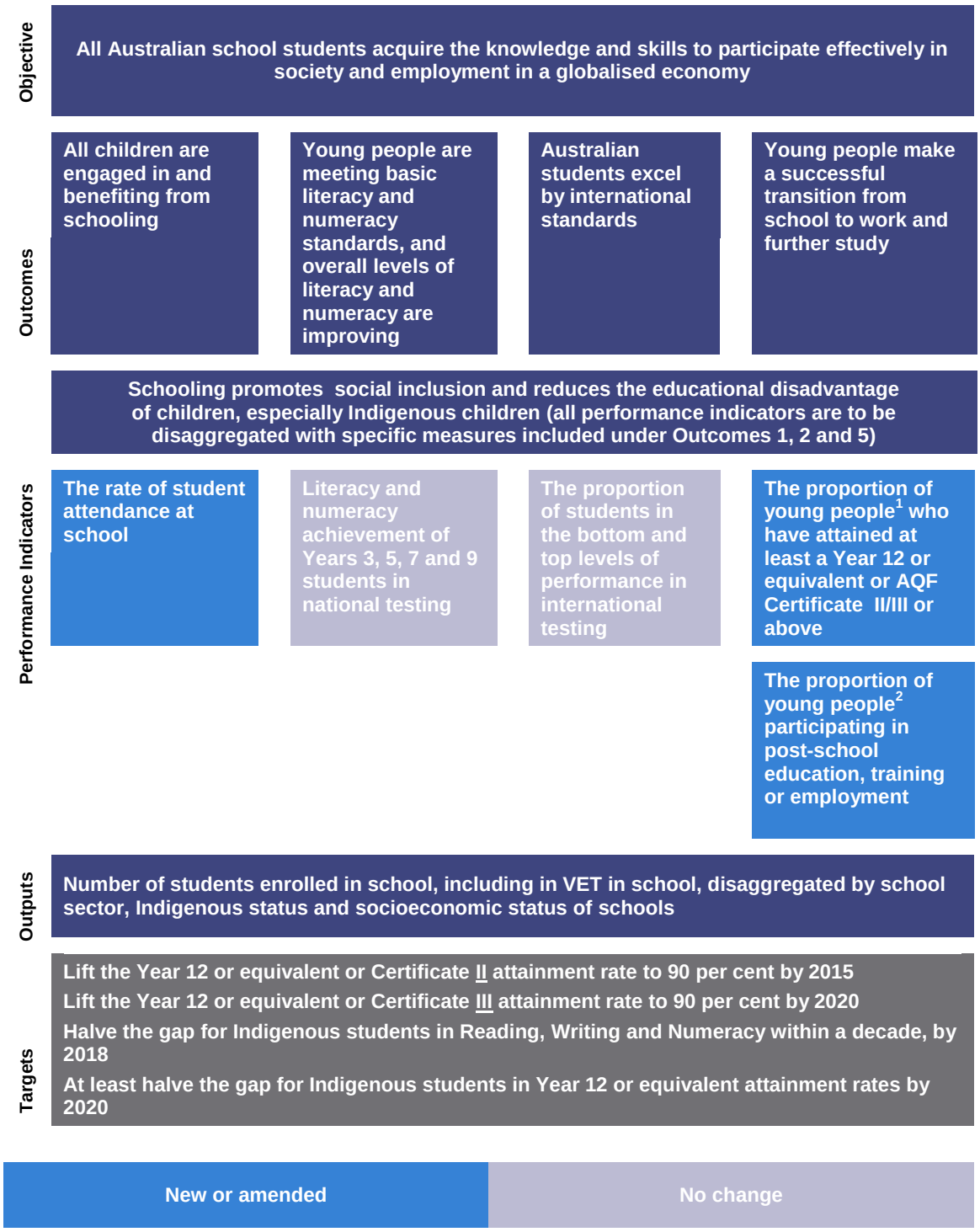
The Federal Government released its initial response to the Review on 20 February 2012. It proposed to take to COAG a set of principles to guide national school funding reform and to work through the reform proposals and options for implementation.

The Review of Funding for Schooling Final Report and the Australian Government's preliminary response to the report can be found on the website: www.schoolfunding.gov.au.

## Review of the National Education Agreement

Figure F.1 shows the structure of the revised National Education Agreement and is colour-coded to represent what has and has not changed.

**Figure F.1 Revised National Education Agreement (July 2012)**




*Notes:*

1. 20 to 24 years old
2. 17 to 24 years old

*Source:* COAG (2012b) National Education Agreement

# Appendix G. Acronyms and abbreviations

| | |
|---|---|
| ABS | Australian Bureau of Statistics |
| ACARA | Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority |
| ACT | Australian Capital Territory |
| ALLD | Australian Longitudinal Learning Database |
| AQF | Australian Qualifications Framework |
| Aust | Australia |
| COAG | Council of Australian Governments |
| DEEWR | Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations |
| IGA FFR | Intergovernmental Agreement on Federal Financial Relations |
| Indig. | Indigenous |
| MCEECDYA | Ministerial Council for Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs |
| na | not applicable |
| NAP | National Assessment Program |
| NAPLAN | National Assessment Program—Literacy and Numeracy |
| NEA | National Education Agreement |
| NIRA | National Indigenous Reform Agreement |
| NSW | New South Wales |
| NT | Northern Territory |
| OECD | Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development |
| PIRLS | Progress in International Reading Literacy Study |
| PISA | Programme for International Student Assessment |
| ppts | percentage points |
| Qld | Queensland |
| SA | South Australia |

| | |
|---|---|
| SCDC | Strategic Cross-sectoral Data Committee |
| SCSEEC | Standing Council on School Education and Early Childhood |
| SEIFA IRSD | Socio-Economic Index for Areas Index of Relative Socio-economic Disadvantage |
| SES | socio-economic status |
| Tas | Tasmania |
| TIMSS | Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study |
| VET | vocational education and training |
| Vic | Victoria |
| WA | Western Australia |

# Appendix H. References

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# Appendix I. Tables, figures and boxes

## List of tables

## List of figures

## List of boxes



## List of exhibits